Data Warehouse Project Management

By Sid Adelman, Larissa T. Moss

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Data Warehouse Project Management By Sid Adelman, Larissa T. Moss Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #340365 in Books
- Published on: 2000-09-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.10" h x .80" w x 7.30" l, 1.50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 448 pages

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

You have been a project manager for years and have successfully implemented many systems, but on your data warehouse project nothing seemed to work. All those proven techniques you've acquired over the years did not smooth the path. The methodology you so faithfully followed for years did not seem to help you as much in controlling the activities on the project. Tasks had to be repeated many times, and some new tasks that you had never considered before had to be performed. Roles and responsibilities assigned to your staff seemed inadequate and sometimes inappropriate. Your users had not planned on spending so much time on your project, and you had not realized what was going to be required of them. You knew your source files had some bad data, but you had not anticipated the impact it would have on the extract/transform/load (ETL) process.

Maybe you are just planning your first data warehouse project and you have heard that it will be different and difficult. In either case, whether you already managed a data warehouse project or you are planning your first data warehouse project, this book will help you pave the road for a successful implementation. But before you immerse yourself into the content of this book, we would like to explain how we organized the book and provide a roadmap to guide you.

Purpose of This Book

The hardest aspect to data warehousing is to manage a highly dynamic project. Data warehouse projects are dynamic because the requirements are usually not as well defined as they are for an operational system, and the process of building a data warehouse often leads to adjustments of these requirements or to discovery of new ones. Furthermore, these projects are staffed with talented but often inexperienced personnel. The complexity and learning curve on the new technology components are often underestimated. Management on both the IT and the business side all too often do not understand the complexity of a data warehouse project and put unreasonable demands on the team and the project manager. In other words, these projects are extremely challenging to manage.

The purpose of our book is to address the typical challenges on a data warehouse project and to educate the project manager on how to recognize the roadblocks and pitfalls. We give examples of risks and failures where we've encountered them, and we offer suggestions for avoiding them, or at least for mitigating them. At the end of every chapter is a section titled "A Cautionary Tale" that briefly describes our own experiences. Each chapter concludes with a workshop to practice what you have learned.

Who Should Read This Book

If this is your first or second attempt at a data warehouse project and you are not familiar or accustomed to using a different approach to managing this type of project, this book will help you. If you have already managed a data warehouse project that has been less than successful and you would like to do better on your next project, this book will provide some explanations for the difficulties you"ve encountered as well as suggestions for avoiding or mitigating these difficulties. This book is not meant to be a tutorial for basic project management. Instead, it is meant to be a guide for the experienced project manager who needs to know about the differences between a data warehouse project and a traditional project and who can use a helping hand from someone who has already been there.

How This Book Is Organized

Our approach to this book was to write each chapter in such a way that it could stand on its own because we recognized that some project managers will want to use it only as a reference. In order to accomplish this, it was unavoidable to include some overlapping material in various chapters. However, we present the overlapping material within the context of its chapter and hope that it will not affect the reading pleasure of those who wish to read this book cover to cover. Every chapter begins with a short list of its topics, followed by our experience from the field, highlighting landmines to watch out for, and concludes with a summary and a set of workshops. Some chapters also have appendices, which may be templates or worksheets, or additional guidelines. The workshops as well as the templates and appendices are stored in electronic format on the CD to make it easier for you to reproduce them. We encourage you to make use of these templates. They will help you standardize the process within your organization and simplify your own job. We made every effort to write this book in gender-neutral format. At times, however, when we did have to use a gender, we chose the masculine "he." We most certainly realize that there are many women project managers, but alternating genders or using terms like "he/she" interrupted the flow of the book. Therefore, we hope that our readers will forgive us for taking this shortcut. This book is on a serious subject and is written in a serious tone—most of the time. However, to keep our readers entertained, we chose to interject some wit, occasionally purposefully avoiding political correctness. We hope that our readers will not be offended. Whether you plan to read this book cover to cover or use it only for reference, we suggest you start with Chapter 1, "Introduction," in order to understand our mindset and our terminology. All of the topics presented in this book culminate in Chapter 12, "Project Planning," which brings together all the chapters into one completed picture for the project manager.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1, "Introduction to Data Warehousing," gives an overview of the data warehouse world. It compares traditional decision support to data warehousing and lists the differences between these two environments. This chapter also addresses the difficulties of managing these projects and explains the views and positions of the authors on this subject.

Chapter 2, "Goals and Objectives," has an in-depth discussion about the deficiencies of traditional decision support systems and addresses the short-term goals as well as the long-terms goals of data warehousing.

Chapter 3, "Indicators of Success," discusses the measures of success, describing the determinants by which a project has succeeded or failed. It also talks about critical success factors, which are the project characteristics that are necessary for the project to be successful, and how to measure results.

Chapter 4, "Risks," presents the types of failures that various data warehouse projects have experienced. It lists the inherent risks with all of their attendant horrors and then suggests techniques to deal with each of them.

Chapter 5, "Satisfying the User," emphasizes the importance of understanding the business and then examines all areas that either affect or are affected by the users, from gathering the requirements from them to communicating with them.

Chapter 6, "Cost Benefit," discusses the need for cost-justifying each data warehouse project. It deals with the typical costs and with the expected benefits and provides a template for you to develop the cost justification for your own project.

Chapter 7, "Selecting Software," presents categories of data warehouse tools, suggests how the tools fit in an organization's architecture, discusses the process of determining product requirements, and deals with

weeding out the vendors you want to avoid.

Chapter 8, "Organization and Cultural Issues," examines the roles and responsibilities of team members on a data warehouse project. It explains the structure of data warehouse teams and discusses staffing issues, such as recruitment and retention, training and mentoring.

Chapter 9, "Methodology," explains why the traditional waterfall methodology is not applicable to data warehousing. It also describes the various parallel development tracks, such as the extract/transform/load (ETL) process, the data delivery process, and the metadata collection and navigation efforts.

Chapter 10, "Data Models," examines the analytical purpose and usefulness of a logical data model, the primary technique for data integration, as well as the database design purpose of a physical data model. It compares the traditional database design schema of a two-dimensional entity-relationshipnbased architecture to the popular multidimensional star schemanbased architecture.

Chapter 11, "Data Quality," defines what data quality means in a data warehouse and explains the cost of existing nonquality data. It also defines the various dirty data categories found on source files and suggests some triaging steps for data cleansing.

Chapter 12, "Project Planning," coalesces the previous chapters into one cohesive picture for managing a data warehouse project and guides the project manager through the development of a project plan. It presents some estimating guidelines and tips on how to control the project on an ongoing basis.

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From the Back Cover

> "Anyone who finds *Data Warehouse Project Management* has found for themselves a veritable gold mine, a wealth of wisdom and experience from some real pros . . . it is the most thorough and thoughtful work on data warehouse projects I have ever read."
> --From the Foreword by John A. Zachman

Data warehouse development projects present a unique set of management challenges that can confound even the most experienced project manager. *Data Warehouse Project Management* addresses these challenges and provides a comprehensive roadmap to managing every aspect of data warehouse design, development, and implementation. Drawing on their extensive experience in the field, Sid Adelman and Larissa Moss point to critical success factors, reveal the many pitfalls to watch out for, and offer proven solutions that will enable you to put a successful data warehouse project into place.

You will find in-depth coverage of such topics as:

- Critical success factors and reasons for failures
- Measuring results
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Selecting the right software and vendors
- Roles and responsibilities of team members
- Methodology, including rapid application development and parallel development tracks
- Developing a logical and physical data model for smooth data integration
- The important issue of data quality and how to cleanse dirty data from source files

At the end of each chapter, "A Cautionary Tale" warns you of potential problems, and a workshop enables you to practice what you've just learned. The book concludes with a comprehensive example that illustrates project planning and management in action, from determining milestones, schedules, and tasks to maintaining control when the project goes off course. An accompanying CD-ROM contains the workshops in electronic format as well as helpful templates and additional reading material.

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About the Author

Sid Adelman is founder of Sid Adelman & Associates, an organization specializing in planning and implementing data warehouses. He presents regularly at data warehouse conferences and conducts a Data Warehouse Project Management seminar. Sid is also a founding member of the BIAlliance. He jointly developed a methodology that provides a master plan for implementing data warehouses. He wrote *Data Warehouse Project Management* (Addison-Wesley, 2000) with Larissa Moss.

Larissa Moss is founder and president of Method Focus, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in business intelligence and data warehousing. She is a frequent lecturer and speaker at conferences in the United States, Europe, and Asia on data warehousing, project management, development methodologies, and organizational and cultural issues. Her articles on these topics are regularly published in magazines such as *DM Review* and *Journal of Data Warehousing*. She is coauthor of *Data Warehouse Project Management* (Addison-Wesley, 2000) and *Impossible Data Warehouse Situations* (Addison-Wesley, 2003). She is a senior consultant at the Cutter Consortium and one of the authors of their *Business Intelligence Executive Reports*.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Patrick Perkins:

Here thing why that Data Warehouse Project Management are different and dependable to be yours. First of all examining a book is good however it depends in the content of it which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. Data Warehouse Project Management giving you information deeper as different ways, you can find any book out there but there is no guide that similar with Data Warehouse Project Management. It gives you thrill reading through journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing that will happened in the world which is maybe can be happened around you. It is easy to bring everywhere like in recreation area, café, or even in your approach home by train. If you are having difficulties in bringing the published book maybe the form of Data Warehouse Project Management in e-book can be your alternate.

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Catherine Ng:

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Matthew Schwartz:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make anyone to understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information easier to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, paper, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher that will print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended to you personally is Data Warehouse Project Management this publication consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some investigation when he makes this book. That's why this book suitable all of you.

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