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An Academic Institution Tearing Down Silos

Business Situation:

Silos don't just exist between business units. In mid-size and large IT organizations, silos can form just as easily, as departments take on their own goals and methods of operation that don't allow the departments to work together for the common good of the IT organization as a whole, or for their internal customers. Sometimes the silos can become so significant that people in the same organization refuse to work together. Why expend the effort when we know that in the end, fiefdom-building will have the upper hand in any decision?

Such was the case at an internal IT organization at an academic institution. What was needed to overcome the status quo was a project of great importance to all the IT departments, and to their internal customers. This came in the form of a complex piece of their core IT infrastructure that would affect data management, application development, operations, and support. Selecting the right infrastructure would be key to success in all these areas. A mistake here, or even worse, doing nothing, would result in the IT organization being unable to provide service at all.

Benefits/Results:

With this "do or die" mentality as a rallying cry, the various IT departments came to realize that it was in their best interests to lower the walls around their departments, and to take this project on as a unified team. People that previously were previously unable or unwilling to have a meaningful conversation were now sitting down at the same table and actively working on a common problem. As one staff member put it, "Before, I felt like my job was controlling me. It was hopeless—try as I might to complete a project, the forces around me wouldn't allow it to happen. But now I see the progress, I can organize my day in a meaningful way, and I know we can solve this problem together."

Case Study
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