

Commentary

Brief Note on Decision Support System

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DESCRIPTION

A Decision Support System (DSS) is an information system that helps a business in decision-making activities that require judgment, determination, and a sequence of actions. The information system supports the mid- and high-level management of an organization by analyzing huge volumes of unstructured data and accumulating information that might help to solve problems and help in decision-making. A decision support system is either human-powered, automated, or a combination of both. A decision support system produces information reports by the gathering and analyzing the data. Moreover, a decision support system is different from a normal operations application, whose goal is to collect the data. In an organization, a DSS is used by the planning departments which includes as the operations department which collects the data and creates a report that can be used by the managers for decision-making. Mostly, a DSS is used in sales projection, for inventory and operations-related data, and to present the information to customers in an easy manner. Theoretically, a DSS can be employed in different domains from an organization to forest management and the medical field. One of the key applications of a DSS in an organization is real-time reporting. It can be useful for organizations that take part in Just-In-Time (JIT) inventory management. In a JIT inventory system, the organization requires a real-time data of their inventory levels to place the orders "just in time" to prevent delays in the production and cause a negative domino effect.

Types of decision support systems

Communication driven: Allows companies to support the tasks that require more than one person to work on the task. It includes integrated tools which may include Microsoft SharePoint Workspace and Google Docs.

Model-driven: Allows access to and the management of financial, organizational, and the statistical models. Data is collected, and parameters are determined using the information provided by the users. The information is created into a decision-making model to analyze situations. An example of a model-driven Decision Support System (DSS) is Decodes-an open-source model-driven DSS.

Knowledge-driven: Provides factual and specialized solutions to the situations by using stored facts, procedures, rules, or interactive decision-making structures like flowcharts.

Document-driven: Manages unstructured information in the different electronic formats.

Data-driven: Helps companies to store and analyze the internal and external data.

Advantages

- A decision support system increases the speed and the efficiency of decision-making activities.
- It promotes training within the organization, as particular skills must be developed to implement and run a DSS within an organization.
- It programmes monotonous managerial processes, which means more of the manager's time can be spent on the decision-making.
- It improves the interpersonal communication within the organization.

Disadvantages

- The cost to develop and implement a DSS is a high capital investment, which makes it less accessible to the smaller organizations.
- A company can develop a dependence on a DSS, as it is integrated into daily decision-making processes to improve the efficiency and speed. However, the managers tend to depend on the system too much, which takes away the subjectivity aspect of decision-making.
- A DSS may lead to information overload because an information system tends to consider all the aspects of a problem. It creates a dilemma for the end-users, as they are left with the multiple choices.
- Implementation of a DSS can cause fear and backlash from the lower-level employees. Many of them are not comfortable with new technology and are afraid of losing their jobs to the technology.

Correspondence to: Pamchin Thug, Department of Tourism, Fudan University, Shanghai, China, E-mail: thugpam@yahoo.edu.cn Received: 14-Mar-2022, Manuscript No. JHBM-22-16369; Editor assigned: 17-Mar-2022, PreQC No. JHBM-22-16369 (PQ); Reviewed: 31-Mar-2022, QC No. JHBM-22-16369; Revised: 07-Apr-2022, Manuscript No. JHBM-22-16369 (R); Published: 15-Apr-2022, DOI: 10.35248/ 2169-0286.22.007 Citation: Thug P (2022) Brief Note on Decision Support System. J Hotel Bus Manage. 11:007.

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