

An Investigation of Business-to-Business Relationships within Large Multi-Vendor Software Implementations based on Commitment-Trust Theory

I would like to invite you to participate in a study being conducted at Lancaster University Management School, which is exploring the roles that commitment and trust between project personnel play regarding the successful implementation of large software projects. Please consider the following information carefully before deciding whether or not you want to take part. It is important that you understand why the study is being done and what it will involve.

What is the study about?

The purpose of this study is to explore the roles that commitment and trust play regarding the successful implementation of large software projects. Particular emphasis will be placed on the commitment and trust dynamics between vendor and customer, and also between different vendors, throughout the lifetime of large multi-vendor software implementation projects.

Why have I been approached?

I wish to gain insight into how professional project managers believe the concepts of commitment (*of team members to the project*) and trust (*between team members of the project*) affect the likelihood of successful implementation of large software projects that use multiple vendors. Team members in this instance can be either project or vendor personnel, and can be either permanent staff or subcontractors who are employed for any period during the lifetime of the project.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is completely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You do not need to offer an explanation if you decide not to take part.

There are no incentives given for agreeing to take part in this study. However, it is hoped that the research findings from this study will contribute to the development of new project management concepts and techniques around the management of project team members. Ideally, we would like to ascertain how we might harness the complexity inherent to interactions between project team personnel (be they customer or vendor), in order to facilitate a greater likelihood of project success, and thus reduce the likelihood of project failure due to commitment and trust issues.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decide you would like to take part, a date, time and place will be agreed upon for the interview to be conducted. At the start of the interview, you will be asked to read and sign a Consent Form.

The interview will be in-depth, semi-structured, and likely to take up to an hour. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. The recordings will then be sent to an external professional transcriber, who will not know your identity, and is bound by a Confidentiality Agreement.

It is important that you understand that you can withdraw from the study up to 14 days after the interview has taken place.

Will my data be confidential?

The information you provide is confidential and will be anonymised when it is disseminated at conferences or in publications. Only Mr Williams will be aware of the identity of the interviewee.

During and after the lifetime of the study, the interview data will be Mr Williams' responsibility. All data collected for this study will be stored securely on University premises. Audio recordings of the interview will be deleted once it has been transcribed. The typed version of the interview will be kept in a locked filing cabinet on University premises and will be destroyed within five years of the study being completed. The data is kept for this length of time to allow for the research findings to be disseminated. The files on the computer will be encrypted (that is no-one other than the researchers will be able to access them) and the computer itself password protected.

What will happen to the results?

The results from the study are likely to be written in the form of an article to be submitted for publication in an academic or professional journal. The results may also be presented at a national or international conference in the field of project management or operations research.

Are there any risks?

There are no risks anticipated with participating in this study. However, if you experience any concerns during the interview, the interview will be stopped and the tape-recorder switched off. You will then be invited to continue with the interview. If you decide not to continue with the interview, you will be contacted a week later to see if you wish for the data collected to be included in the study.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Chair of Lancaster University's Research Ethics committee and funded by both Lancaster University and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Where can I obtain further information about the study if I need it?

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Mr Williams (r.williams4@lancaster.ac.uk / 01524 592214).

Who can I offer feedback to about any aspect of the study?

If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this study and do not want to speak to a member of the research team, you can contact:

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