

ALIGNING IS/IT WITH BUSINESS PURPOSE: A Challenge for Sri Lankan Managers

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ABSTRACT

The importance of Information Systems (IS) varies from industry to industry. According to Michael Porter and Victor Millar, the 'information intensity' of an industry can be gauged by looking at the information content of the product/service and the information intensity of the value chain. Industries that are characterized by a high information intensity of the value chain or high information content of the product, or both, are fruitful areas for the application of IS as a competitive weapon. Some of the industries that are high on both dimensions include banking, newspapers, and airlines. New developments in Information Technology (IT) can offer endless opportunities for such firms to achieve competitive advantage.

This paper discusses the importance of having a right 'fit' between an IS management style and the needs of top management with particular reference to high 'information intensity' industries. It argues for a new breed of IS Manager whose functions will be largely different from those of the current Data Processing Managers of most organizations.