

Integrated Management Applications in the Public Administration in Goiás

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Abstract: This study presents an organizational diagnosis of the Regional Electoral Court in Goiás by focusing on the Information Technology department. It aims to explain the advantages, disadvantages, facilities and difficulties to implement and execute integrated management applications in the structure of the Court. Methodologically, an exploratory and descriptive research was used along with qualitative analysis through semi-structured interviews with IT leaders. These researches provided a better comprehension of the theme by analyzing the actions related to the IT area with focus on innovation and Enterprise Resource Planning at a public agency. The study concludes that Enterprise Resource Planning applications are — even with the considerable disadvantages of development costs or acquisitions — one efficient and viable alternative, with the benefit of streamlining the use of physical, financial and human resources, providing a true revolution in operational and managerial activities through process economicity and optimization. The support given by senior management and the availability of sufficient resources and infrastructure make implementation easier, while the difficulties happen due to resistance to change by end users and cuts in public funding for the development of new systems.

Key words: public administration; innovation; enterprise resource planning

JEL codes: O38

1. Introduction

The organization under study is the REC — Regional Electoral Court of Goiás, a public agency subordinated to the Electoral Justice and the Federal Government in Brazil. Innovation is present in the public sector just as it is in the private one and, without it, practically no business segment is able to persist in the market, taking into consideration the heavy pressure exerted by the competition and the clients for new products and services. That happens due to the importance of constant changes in the business world, as well as the need to bring novelties to the market since any organization is required to improve its practices, services and goods. The Public Administration is no exception to that fact for, even though profit is not its focus, there is great interest in the excellence of the services provided, considering the public and essential character of the actions performed. The importance of this study is the comprehension of how the Government meets society's expectations and needs, especially in times of economic crisis as the one we are currently facing. Reducing costs of managerial processes is an alternative to optimize public money use which, being a scarce resource, must be applied with as much integrity and awareness as possible. In addition, electronic systems run processes without the use of paper, which

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is a socio-environmental measure of fundamental importance.

Therefore, the issue is understanding the difficulties and facilities when it comes to implementing such applications, as well as their advantages and drawbacks. This paper has as its general goal the elaboration of a diagnostic analysis of the Technology Department at the Regional Electoral Court in Goiás concerning such aspects — difficulties, facilities, advantages and drawbacks — for the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning applications — ERP's.

This study is structured, in principle, over a theoretical basis on the topic concerning: public administration, public policies by REC-GO, corporate innovation processes, and ERP's utilized by the agency. Secondly, the methods employed in the research are presented and, finally, the results found, the diagnostic analysis and the final considerations are discussed.

2. Theoretical Bases

2.1 Definition and Goals of the Public Administration

The Public Administration is, according to Meirelles (2010), a set of agencies instituted by the Government having as its goal to offer general public service for the community's benefit. Managing such interest means, consequently, utilizing the whole Government's structure and equipment enabled for services, targeting the satisfaction of our collective needs.

Public agencies are in charge of putting Government's functions into practice, working as competence centers instituted to perform governmental actions through its agents. Thus, each public agency has its own competences and tasks, carried out by means of jobs, positions and agents. Such agents hold commissioned posts or have been approved in public examinations and are responsible for the execution of administrative practices.

The Public Administration has as its main objective the whole community's welfare, not the common good of simply one portion of society to the detriment of another. That means everything the government agent does must be guided by that objective, since the purpose of instituting an entity which manages all public resources is for such entity to promote public policies striving for public welfare.

2.2 The Importance of Enterprise Resource Planning

Slack, Chambers and Johnson (2009) present a series of benefits for ERP — Enterprise Resource Planning — among which the most important are as follows: communication viability between software systems; integration and efficiency in business processes; greater sense of operational control; accessible communication with customers, clients, suppliers and partners; and integration between supply chains such as the suppliers' suppliers and the customers' customers.

ERP enables the standardization of the business information system. According to Ferro and Neto (2013), depending on the utilities, ERP may manage a group of activities which allows the managers to keep up with production levels in comparison to what was stipulated at sales forecast or order portfolio. The result achieved is a business with consistent data flow among its units, providing the interested party with proper information in a timely manner.

Among the main advantages brought by ERP, the authors mentioned highlight: improving internal communication; eliminating the use of manual interfaces; optimizing information flow and quality inside the business; streamlining the execution of internal processes; optimizing and helping the decision making-process

and assertiveness; eliminating redundancy of activities, providing economicity; reducing the amount of internal processes; shortening response time to the market; reducing managerial process time; reducing stocks; avoiding human error in tax and payment estimation, among others; streamlining data collection referring to specific scenarios; reducing time for product delivery or client service; and helping dealing with great amount of information.

An important factor to be mentioned is the ROI — Return of Investment — which shows the upgrades brought by implementing an ERP system. Among those upgrades there may be: running cost reduction; time optimization; office supplies saving and others. Basically, the ROI presents results brought by ERP, especially the ones concerning financial resources.

It is also crucial to discuss the main integrated management applications which, in addition to ERP and its own fundamental significance, approach CRM — Customer Relationship Management, KMS — Knowledge Management System — and SCM — Supply Chain Management. Those systems may act alongside ERP or even as its internal components.

As stated by Brambilla, Sampaio and Perin (2008), the CRM is a technique or organizational tool which makes it possible to identify and meet the customers' needs, managing the relationship between them and a business. CRM helps with cost reduction which, in its turn, increases profitability through the organization of processes managing customer relationship as well as clients' loyalty and satisfaction.

CRM is of utmost importance for the business's client retention. Ragins and Greco (2003) see it as a decisive tool for the new organizational stance, being able to map and outline customers' perceptions of the products offered by the company. By identifying and getting to know the customer, it is possible to build and keep consistent relationships.

Canongia et al. (2004) define KMS as a purposeful and articulated process whose aim is to promote the global development of a business, having as its backbone knowledge creation and circulation inside and outside the company. Knowledge management is divided into two types: information management, related to technology and information science areas, with the intent of constructing a codified knowledge basis; and people management, involving areas such as psychology, philosophy, sociology and administration, aiming to understand tacit knowledge creation and dissemination.

According to the same authors, knowledge becomes an asset for the company which holds it in the form of intellectual commodity which, in its turn, is subdivided into: tacit knowledge, the kind that is possessed by an individual; additional or supplementary knowledge, possessed by the network; and codified knowledge, found in books, newspapers, the internet and so on.

The final integrated management application to be presented is Supply Chain Management. According to Brito and Berardi (2010), SCM is a combination of supply, production and logistics functions, performing complex tasks. It provides an integrated view of business and information management, adding value to customers and other stakeholders.

Managing the supply chain is of utmost strategic importance in terms of international competition and time reduction in different stages of the chain. In this globalized and dynamic world "that ability to establish a close and continuous relationship with strategic partners has become a crucial factor to create competitive edge" (BrITO, Berardi, 2010, p. 158).

Finally, when it comes to facilities of implementing integrated management systems, some favorable aspects

make such implementation easier, such as the engagement shown by the upper management in the project, communication between users, familiarity workers already possess with similar systems, a competent and dedicated team and the feeling of belonging by employees concerning the ongoing changes. Thus, as stated by Ferro and Neto (2013), people's mindset must change in the sense that the job becomes the sum of all of them, each part (employees, supervisors and managers) being committed to their assignments and generating organizational synergy.

The main difficulty found in implementing those systems, besides the high acquisition and maintenance costs, happens most of the times due to resistance to novelty and changes in routine. Operational level employees aren't always open to new experiences and thus create barriers in face of the situation and hinder information fluidity. However, with time, ERP systems reveal themselves to be friendlier and more "tangible", promoting satisfactory upgrades in organizational processes and activities.

For these and many other reasons the implementation and execution of integrated management applications is so significant, be it in public agencies or private ones. Innovation in corporate world occurs with the purpose of achieving organizational goals as well as the interested party's goals (clients, shareholders, government, citizens and others), fostering upgrades in the company's internal and external processes and its continuity and growth in the market.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodological Approach

For this study, support was sought in qualitative research of the descriptive-exploratory kind, and then, based on the procedures employed, of the bibliographic kind.

The descriptive-exploratory research allows for the discovery of new ideas, making a better understanding possible on the part of the researcher about the aspects surrounding the paper's theme. According to Collis and Hussey (2005, p. 24), "the purpose of this kind of study is to search for patterns, ideas and hypotheses instead of testing or confirming a hypothesis".

The bibliographic research was carried out via consultation of books, articles, and other forms of publication on the subject and was, in accordance to Gil (2002), developed supported by previously elaborated material consisting mainly of books and scientific articles.

Such type of study was chosen due to its potential to meet the aimed requirements in the study process, such as: bibliographic search, questionnaires and results analysis. Material exploration was developed along with the organization and categorization of the data search procedures.

3.2 Case Selection

The Regional Electoral Court in Goiás is part of the Union's Judiciary Branch and has as its highest court the Superior Electoral Court — SEC. The REC, along with the SEC and the Electoral Wards — which act in first instance, performs a fundamental role for the building and carrying out of Brazilian democracy, managing the electoral process in the state of Goiás and its cities. Its main competences are stated by the Federal Constitution and the Electoral Code.

The REC's mission is to guarantee the electoral process's legitimacy. Its vision is to consolidate the Electoral Justice's credibility, especially when it comes to effectivity, transparency and safety. The REC was established in 1945 (after Getúlio Vargas' regime ended) in the city of Goiânia-GO and restated by the Electoral Code in 1965. It

currently employs 521 workers (data from September of 2015).

As for its administrative units, the REC has a General Board, in addition to the Judiciary Office, the Administration and Budget Department, the Personnel Management Department, the Information Technology Department, and the Internal Control Coordinating Body. The units are subdivided into sections with the purpose of better managing and carrying out their tasks.

One major unit is the Regional Electoral Ombudsman, in charge of receiving complaints and reports related to the violation of fundamental rights and liberties, illegalities or misuse of power, and judiciary and administrative services malfunction from not only the REC but also the Electoral Wards, forwarding all of those to the authorities in charge. It's also responsible for elucidating doubts and receiving suggestions, critiques, complaints and compliments from users of the Electoral Justice in Goiás concerning the services offered.

The REC also has the Electoral Judiciary School whose aim is the capacitation, improvement and updating of magistrates, members of the Public Prosecution, Electoral Justice workers and other Electoral Law operators, striving for efficiency and quality in services offered to the population.

3.3 Data Collection

The following data collection tools were used: semi-structured interviews carried out in October and November of 2015 with the System Management and Development Coordinator for the Information Technology Department (Roberto Lima Manoel da Costa) and the Administration and Budget Department Advisor (Cristina Tokarski Persijn).

3.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

This topic's goal is to present an analysis of the collected data, taking into consideration the theoretical development of this research. The approached issues have been divided into five sessions: the first session is related to Public Administration aspects; the second session concerns public policies for the Electoral Justice and the REC; the third one is linked to the innovation process in the context of Public Administration; the fourth session discusses the ERP's; and the fifth and last session studies the importance of ERP as well as the difficulties and facilities for its implementation.

3.4.1 Diagnosis under the IT Manager'S Perspective

(1) Session 1: Public Administration Issues

The interviewee stated that Brazil's Public Administration's goals are achieved by means of activities and services provided by each governmental segment. At the Electoral Justice, a specialized type of justice, for instance, such goals are achieved through legal provision and elections contributive to the democratic processes in the country. The REC's focus is, besides providing jurisdictional services, promoting the election process, fomenting democracy in the state of Goiás.

(2) Session 2: Public Governmental Policies for the Electoral Justice and the REC

Regarding governmental actions, whose intent is to bring better results for the state's population, the IT manager assured programs such as "Voter of the Future" and "Volunteer Registrar of Voters" are crucial. The first program teaches children and adolescents from our community the importance of voting and consciously choosing people's representatives to act in the Executive and Legislative Branches. The latter strives to sensitize the population to the significance of the work done, especially on voting day, since there would not be an election in its current layout without registrars of voters. That would frustrate the democratic process.

There are also, according to the manager, programs devoted to the environment. The Environmental Committee, for instance, is composed of REC's civil servants from several fields and endeavors to put into

practice actions and projects to maintain and improve natural conditions, such as tree planting, and campaigns for the reutilization of residues such as used batteries, among others. Additionally, there is a committee tending disabled people's accessibility to the head office building, as well as to other electoral registry offices in the state.

(3) Session 3: innovation process and innovation in the Public Administration context

Concerning innovative breakthroughs achieved by public agencies and if those breakthroughs have been sufficient, the interviewee said “the word ‘sufficient’ in this aspect is a tricky term. If breakthroughs are considered sufficient, opportunities for improvement end up being limited. Certainly, there have been breakthroughs, especially in Electoral Justice and other public agencies as well, but there is always room for improvement.” The manager mentioned as an example of that the voting machine, *urna eletrônica* in Portuguese — an electronic device designed to speed the voting process — implemented in 1996. After almost 20 years there has been much debate in IT meetings concerning the next steps to be taken for the evolution of the equipment.

With regard to fomenting innovation on a daily basis, the interviewee stated such encouragement is given through events in which workers from all Regionals take part. Those events are periodically and nationally held and strive to stimulate and award innovative projects. An example would be, according to him, the National Showcase of Judiciary Quality, an event held not only by the Electoral Justice but all of the Judiciary Branch's agencies. Another event, the Computer Science and Innovation in Public Management — CONIP, in Portuguese, is acknowledged as the main forum on innovation, pointing out the trends for technology use in public management and also debating and encouraging the best ideas to assist the public sector's heads with the making of proper decisions in difficult times.

Another project of national impact implemented by the REC is the Removal Examination System, presented during the Eighth Showcase on Quality Jobs in the Judiciary Branch. After its implementation, the saving of resources (physical, financial and human) has increased drastically. Previously to the system, removal examinations took 90 days to be completed on average, since the workers who wished to move to a different county had to send the necessary documents via regular mail, which encumbered the process. Upon the development and implementation of the system, the average time spent in the process was reduced to three days, for all of the stages are carried out online, via the intranet available for the REC and other electoral registry offices in the state of Goiás. In addition to time and cost reduction, the need for staff working on the examination system has also decreased. Only one active servant is now needed, compared to the number of five or six servants employed before.

This sort of initiative stimulates the daily fomenting of innovation in public agencies. After the system revealed itself to be successful, other agencies contacted the Court showing an interest in the technology and received not only the platform but also the REC's assistance for its operation. Actions such as this promote institutional recognition for the Court's servants in addition to economicity in their doings.

(4) Session 4: Enterprise Resource Planning — ERP

When it comes to the value of integrated systems, the interviewee stated that such tools are essential for the evolution of any enterprise, be it public or private. Since those tools maximize the institution's results as a whole, their application happens by means of an analysis of the enterprise's processes and of the information and knowledge produced in it, facilitating the decision-making process by the managers.

When asked about the systems used by the Court, the IT manager named a few of them as the most relevant ones. According to him, over a hundred systems of various types are currently employed by the REC. Some of those are similar to the ERP, others work as service monitoring or decision supporting systems, and project and

processes management systems, among others.

It was also stated, concerning ERP's, that the Court has four systems with greater coverage: Digital Administrative Process (DAP); Process Distribution and Monitoring System (PDMS), Human Resources Management System (HRMS); and ELO — in charge of managing the register of voters at the head office and all the electoral wards in the state and the country, such as the biometric register system, with approximately 140 million voters registered all over Brazil. The IT manager highlighted the fact that no other public agency in the country keeps an updated register of this size.

It was made clear by the interviewee that there isn't a single system that integrates every area and activity in the Electoral Justice. Due to the existence of several business processes, it is challenging to run such type of system at a public agency.

When questioned on how long ago the REC implemented the ERP's and in what way the ERP's hiring or development was carried out, he affirmed there are software products that have been implemented over 15 years ago and others that were and still are implemented according to the Court's needs, being in constant evolution. The oldest tools such as ELO and PDMS (1999) were employed in a more empirical way, not taking notice of methodologies or objective criteria due to the lack or even inexistence of guidelines at that time.

The DAP had its execution project developed in the second half of 2013 and was operational at the beginning of 2014. It has promoted significant change in terms of human, financial and operational resources reduction. Its planning (in which the interviewee took part) lasted on average, from its elaboration and production, four to five months. Such success is largely due to the support offered by the senior managers, the president himself taking part in meetings and encouraging innovative ideas involving information technology. Very frequently, the workers who are supposed to execute the new systems show some sort of resistance to change, the support and promotion of new features being, thus, indispensable.

(5) Session 5: The Importance of ERP's — Facilities and Difficulties of Implementation

When asked about the advantages and disadvantages of using ERP's, the IT manager said he does not "see them as disadvantages, but costs. After all, there is the cost-benefit ratio in Public Administration, that is, in order to achieve certain goals, one must bear the necessary costs." The enterprise must analyze if a specific tool is about to bring future benefits greater than the resources allocated for its hiring or development. In this regard, an example implemented by the Court is a tool named Skills Management, devised internally by the IT team and predicted to be operational in November of 2015.

As for the difficulties and facilities run into during and after those systems' implementation, the manager stated that "there are always difficulties and changes aren't easily accepted. Surely, in certain units and with certain systems, that difficulty decreases. But that doesn't happen in other cases."

Concerning the facilities, he affirmed "resources and infrastructure available in federal public agencies can be mentioned since, even though there have been some budget cuts, there are excellent working tools and structures." Another crucial factor that makes it easier to implement ERP's is the high educational level of the workers, which eases adaptation.

Although its agencies do not seek profit, the interviewee affirmed the REC uses the ROI due to the necessary economy of resources and optimization of processes. Besides that, the systems have motivated public servants, who had the chance to see, in practice, their jobs being developed and executed. Such opportunity promoted improvements in the ways those jobs are carried out and boosted the feeling of belonging to an integrated system, in which each employee performs an important role.

3.4.2 Diagnosis under the Planning manager's perspective

(1) Session 1: Public Administration issues

With regard to the Brazilian Public Administration's objectives, the interviewee stated she believes "the programs, actions and projects designed to promote welfare and democracy are specified by the Federal Government's Multiannual Plan (MP)."

(2) Session 2: public governmental policies for the Electoral Justice and the REC

In the manager's opinion, when it comes to governmental actions with the purpose of bringing better results to the population of Goiás, the most important program by the Electoral Justice is the Voter of the Future program. It gives young and future citizens (children and adolescents) the opportunity to perform an active role at an election in all of its extent (planning, executing and supervising) and to understand the responsibility of each role performed: Public Prosecution, Electoral Prosecutor, Electoral Judges, candidates, party supervisors and voting stations.

(3) Session 3: innovation process and innovation in the Public Administration Context

As for innovative breakthroughs achieved by the agencies and how sufficient they have been, the interviewee said "it all depends on the concept of sufficiency, since public agencies, as opposed to private enterprises, have a very different degree of acceptance for risk-taking. The breakthrough may be obvious, but it is still important to bring sustainable practices to public institutions' daily actions, with quality and transparency, as a routine and not a legal demand."

The manager, being asked about the encouragement given to innovation on daily practices, stated that "innovation is indeed encouraged, but still timidly, mostly due to normative force than to independent actions".

(4) Session 4: Enterprise Resource Planning — ERP

As for the importance of ERP's, the interviewee believes "they are essential for planning, execution and supervision activities — PESA. At public agencies, they minimize the impact of a structure that is inadequate for the actions performed, automation being, thus, a good option."

It was also stated by the manager that the systems are used by the REC "depend on the area; for the administrative field they are as follows: Process and Document Management (PDM); Digital Administrative Process (DAP); Financial Management Integrated System (FMIS); Budgetary System (BS); Budgetary Proposal Management System (BPMS); Governmental Purchases System (GPS); Budget System (BUP); Financial and Budgetary Data Management System (FBMS); Federal Volunteer Transfers and Covenants Management System (FVTGMS); ASIWeb (Patrimonial Control System); Managerial Treasure (Financial and Budgetary Researching and Monitoring System); SPIUnet (Real Estate Assets Control System for the Federation); SDIARIAS (Lodging Concessions Systems); GESPLANES (Strategic Planning Management and Monitoring System); SIMPLES (Election Monitoring and Management System); GERIM (Real Estate Management System for the Electoral Justice); SICAF (Suppliers Register System for the Federal Government); CADIN (Register of Defaulters)."

The manager told us, when asked about the main criteria taken into consideration when hiring or developing the software programs, that "most of the times, the criterion applied is merely regulatory, since public agencies must comply with the guidelines given by senior agencies such as the Superior Electoral Court.

On the subject of the users' (the civil servants') receptivity toward the new applications, she said "there has been and still is some resistance, which is quite natural, but it disappears when the tool's effectivity is proven."

(5) Session 5: the importance of ERP's — facilities and difficulties of implementation

With respect to the advantages and disadvantages of implementing ERP's, the Planning manager said "the

advantages have already been indirectly mentioned: expediency, traceability, facilitators of every PDCA cycle, but mainly transparency and access to information. Disadvantages: dependency on data infrastructure, since one weak link (inadequate instruction of documents and processes) may jeopardize the quality of the information stored in there.”

It was stated by the interviewee, concerning the difficulties and facilities run into during and after the implementation of these systems, that “the difficulties are mostly due to resistance and utilization culture. There are several facilities such as information traceability, expediency and resource optimization.”

On evaluating those systems by making a historical comparison between what was in use in the past and the current reality at the Court, the manager told us “there is no comparison. When I first began as a civil servant, the only system used was the FMIS. I’m passionate when it comes to information transparency, so it feels as if we have left the Dark Ages.”

When asked about the ROI, she said “we do not possess organized data on that matter. We have noticed reduction in the operation during process stages, information flow and, especially, public interaction with the information, since all governmental websites keep public access field in obedience to the Information Access Law (IAL)”.

3.5 Results Presentation and Analysis

In the face of the aspects discussed above, some results obtained through the research are revealed, essentially orbiting around the theoretical themes covered.

With regard to Public Administration, both interviewees’ statements converged when affirming goals are reached by means of State actions, through elections, which makes for a more democratic and egalitarian country.

On the second topic, concerning public governmental policies for the Electoral Justice and the REC, the interviewees highlighted the importance of a program called Voter of the Future. The Electoral Justice’s concern about tomorrow’s voters and voting awareness is thus demonstrated, since the program endeavors to teach children to be alert and critical to politics and the direction the country is going.

Both of them also stressed that the term “sufficient” confines potential improvements, for there is always room for innovation. Incentive to innovation, even though in a timid and regulated form, is seen at events held all over the country and internally at the REC, encouraging new ideas and solutions to local or national issues. Nevertheless, they believe there is still some lack of global and spontaneous commitment on the part of the agency as a whole when it comes to practicing innovation on a daily basis, independently on normative rules demanding and promoting such actions.

As for the ERP’s, both interviewees displayed knowledge on the software programs used at the REC. The number of programs surpasses one hundred and some present ERP features while others are designed for decision support, process and project management and service monitoring.

The most relevant systems are: DAP, PDMS, HRMS and ELO. There isn’t a single system to integrate all of the agency. Most of the times, those systems are developed or purchased to solve a specific problem at the Court. They have been in use by the agency for approximately 15 years and, since their implementation, there have been great technological breakthroughs and innovation in this aspect.

As for the criteria adopted when hiring or developing ERP’s, it was possible to understand they agree with the rules that bind the Public Administration and the Electoral Justice, originated at high management agencies belonging to the Judiciary Branch, such as the SEC. The aspects taken into consideration when developing or hiring the systems are: efficiency, economicity, and expediency, among others.

It was noted that ERP's, as well as the support applications, are fundamental for an enterprise, whichever it may be, and boil down to advantages in celerity, transparency and information access promotion, in the case of Public Administration. Disadvantages, on the other hand, revolve around data infrastructure dependency, documental instruction deficiency and communication gap.

The main factor connected to the difficulties in implementing those systems was the resistance to novelties on the part of final users, who find it hard to get used to a new tool and to abandon their comfort zone. What makes it easier, however, are the resources and infrastructure available at federal public agencies which, despite a few problems, still offer great tools and working structure.

When evaluating ERP's, the interviewees found it possible to realize their significance as a breakthrough and essential feature for the enterprise. Older applications were perfected throughout the years and the most recent ones bring all the necessary planning, hence largely improving the servants' and managers' jobs at the REC, providing considerable time, procedural, and resource optimizations.

4. Conclusion

This study carried out an organizational diagnosis in connection with the Technology Department at the Regional Electoral Court in Goiás. It also intended to verify the advantages and disadvantages as well as the difficulties and facilities when it comes to using ERP's at a public agency.

By means of theoretical review and data collection it was possible to comprehend how the process of hiring or developing ERP's at public or private agencies happens.

Through our research, we were able to notice that aspects as important as constitutional principles are achieved with the help of these managerial resources such as the promotion of democracy, access to information, and transparency of governmental action. The paramount aspect would be the rational use of public resources in administrative activities, which must constantly be taken into consideration by agents and enterprises, both public and private ones

When innovation was the issue at hand, it was brought to our notice that there has been a breakthrough related not only to technology but also to initiatives which aim at constant improvements at the organizational environment. In general, the REC and other agencies belonging to the Judiciary Branch in Brazil hold events with the purpose of encouraging public servants to take part in the developing of innovative and creative ideas so that the available tools are optimized and new solutions and alternatives to existing problems and future issues are presented.

The advantages of employing ERP's are found in aspects such as economicity of physical, financial and operational resources; efficiency and expediency of internal processes, which flow more speedily between units; and transparency and accessibility of public information to society. The disadvantages are in essence a matter of acquisition or development time and costs, which are high due to the need to adapt the software to the organizational reality of the agency.

Facilities in ERP usage occur mainly due to the support offered by senior managers, who perform an active role in planning, and due to the favorable conditions provided by the organization's infrastructure which, despite a few problems, offers excellent physical and technological resources. Difficulties are seen in the budgetary aspect, since all financial resources come from the Federal Government and suffer cutbacks owing to the current recessive economic scenario; and, also, the hard time users have while adapting to the novelty, displaying some

resistance and fear to leave their comfort zone and work routine.

The results achieved with this study will help enterprises to systematize their own strategic actions concerning IT and encouragement to innovation, as well as serve as a reference point to other studies related to the theme and studies specifically discussing the quantitative aspect of the benefits brought by ERP's, be it in public or private sectors.

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