HR Data Visualization and Validation
Making Big Data Actionable

White Paper
Introduction
Implementing new HR systems or merging existing systems are necessary functions for most organizations. Although essential, this process can be unpredictable, protracted and very costly for many reasons. The sheer magnitude of mapping the functionality in one system into a new one is a huge undertaking, especially if the data in the older system or systems is inaccurate and inconsistent with the requirements for the new system, which is often the case. When organizations are presented with these system implementation challenges, Saba’s Planning@Work can be a valuable asset to them, reducing data validation and cleansing phases to a fraction of their expected durations, and providing an updated and complete view of the organization throughout the process.

Without Saba’s Planning@Work, data mapping, validation and correction are cumbersome, manual processes usually managed by a staff of expensive consultants. It not only drains financial resources, but requires significant time commitment from line managers to review and update information as well as manage the project. The typical system implementation looks something like this:

Step 1: Locate data in each existing system.
Step 2: Manually compile organizational structures from different sources.
This data will reflect the organization at this specific point in time. However, a lot of organizational data isn’t easily accessible in systems — it’s often stored in spreadsheets, manual org charts, even PowerPoint and Visio files. An example of a company who faced this challenge is British Telecom, who has around 120,000 employees. It would take the large telecommunications company 3-6 months just to get an accurate org chart for their organization due to the disarray of data in their systems and the manual process required to create charts.

Step 3: Validate data.
Identify data errors such as employees with no “reports to” information, groups with no manager, employees with obsolete cost centers, etc. This validate step requires days of pouring through spreadsheets and reports to identify errors and then manually correcting them. Within the validation step, there are five more steps just to x the problem data once it is found:
1. Identify data errors
2. Identify orphans (employees who have no one to directly report to)
3. Communicate error to administrative department
4. Change the data to reflect the correct information
5. Validate again

Step 4: Coordinate spreadsheets.
Once the data looks clean, it needs to be validated with managers to confirm it is current. Unique spreadsheets or org charts need to go to each individual manager for validation. Containing sensitive information, these spreadsheets can easily be sent to the wrong person, left on the printer or compromised in other ways. Not only is the process risky, but also error prone.

Step 5: Validate consolidated data.
Once managers have reviewed data, it needs to be consolidated into a single source to upload to the new system. However, because data was extracted at a specific point in time, updates such as hires, res, promotions or transfers need to be reflected in the data prior to loading it.
Step 6: Run systems in parallel and cut over to new system.  
To make sure nothing is overlooked, old and new systems need to run in parallel for a period of time, with updates being manually entered into both to ensure the data stays current.  
With Saba’s Planning@Work, the data validation process is streamlined. Information from all source systems can be compiled in Saba’s Planning@Work, where awed data is instantly revealed through an intuitive visual interface. Managers or HR business partners can then review it to x the data and correctly reflect current structure in the org chart. Security rules ensure that each individual can access just the information they are authorized to see, so that sensitive data remains protected.

Here is what a system implementation would look like using Saba’s Planning@Work:

Step 1: Map data fields for existing systems to Saba’s Planning@Work fields. These fields could include name, “reports to” and any other desired field. Saba’s Planning@Work combines information from all data sources to create a single org chart. Unassigned individuals or teams can be included as “orphans” or “islands,” eliminating the need to search for each one individually throughout the data.

Step 2: Assess data quality.  
View unassigned employees or groups, duplicates and more to quickly assess the quality of the data and make initial corrections.

Step 3: Validate data.  
Provide managers with access to their own individual charts to make corrections. Because everyone is working from a single, updated data source, corrections can be made quickly and there is no need to go back and compile all of the individual spreadsheets into a single information source. Also, because data is updated daily in Saba’s Planning@Work to reflect organizational changes during the validation process, the final data is accurate and ready to implement into the new system.

Conclusion
Using Saba’s Planning@Work reduces the steps required in the typical implementation or merging of HR systems by half. This saves time for both consultants and line of business managers, as well as administrators and data managers.

It also ensures that the new system is implemented with clean, up-to-date data, maximizing its value and improving downstream processes that rely on accurate HR information.

Saba’s Planning@Work enables the consolidation of data from many source systems, which is especially valuable during a merger and acquisition, reorganization or restructuring. In these instances, there may be multiple divisions involved, each with their own discrete systems. Saba’s Planning@Work provides a holistic organizational picture that is almost impossible to capture elsewhere, and ensures that time and money are utilized in the most efficient way possible during the implementation process.

Before moving Robert, we can model the change to see quickly how it will impact our organization and key metrics. Traditionally HR sends out budget and headcount information, but now takes the opportunity to suggest a serious look at career development for staff, skills and competencies monitoring for key areas, and the ongoing need to reward and retain the workforce. If managers are supplied with visualization and modeling, tools they can identify salary or career development issues, then try moving people around and see the implications of their plans. Once each manager has settled on an optimal scenario, the HR team can aggregate the plans into a single workforce “blueprint” and monitor progress as the workforce moves through steps to the final structure. Access to visualization and modeling tools allows for better decisions and improved career progression of employees.
As we progress down this technology road, I believe we will see visualization become our standard of viewing HR information in the near future, aided by further standardization of HRXML data formalization to allow for cross discipline information integration. We’ll also see workforce metrics becoming more business oriented and standardized, and will have more and more examples of how companies have seen a positive impact to the business through access to metrics and visualization tools.

To learn how easy it can be to visualize your organization and critical workforce metrics, or request a free trial of Saba Planning@Work, please go to www.saba.com.

With greater visibility of the information across the organization worldwide, people are more likely to let us know if there are any incorrect details. This has significantly improved our data quality and, consequently, has enhanced the value of dependent systems.
Saba delivers a cloud-based Intelligent Talent Management™ solution used by leading organizations worldwide to hire, develop, engage, and inspire their people. Intelligent Talent Management uses machine learning to offer proactive, personalized recommendations on candidates, connections, and content to help your employees and organization lead and succeed.

© 2014 Saba Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Saba, the Saba logo, and the marks relating to Saba products and services referenced herein are either trademarks or registered trademarks of Saba Software, Inc. or its affiliates. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.