

Logic Trends Inc. Identity Management Series

White Paper:

Why Identity Management Projects Fail



Logic Trends, Inc.
www.logictrends.com

Atlanta

1050 Crown Pointe Parkway
Suite 295
Atlanta GA 30338
office: 770.551-5050
info@logictrends.com

Dallas

Tampa

Cleveland



Identity Management Solutions for Today's Business Trends

Why Identity Management Projects Fail

To understand why Identity Management projects fail (and to prevent a repeat of similar failures), lets explore past and current Identity Management problems through an analogy that affects each of us on occasion.

Imagine, for a moment, that Henry Ford asks you to design and build an automobile that is sporty, fast, ergonomic, and affordable for the middle class population. Your design must appeal to middle aged, empty nesters, seeking to rediscover their misspent youth. Understanding the power of specialization, you assemble a team with specialized skills in visual trend concepts, combustion engineering, human factors, supply chain economics, and manufacturing. Thanks to the individual talents and power of team work, you lead the team to build a car that comes to be known as the sporty “Shopping Cart Comet”, completing the task to the satisfaction of the great Henry Ford. To your surprise, Henry is extremely pleased and offers you significant compensation. However, satisfaction is the only reward you desire and you only ask to be allowed to enjoy the fruits of your labor by receiving a complimentary vehicle for your own personal use.

Your rapidly growing fame creates instant demand for your talents, causing another great pioneer of the automotive world, William Durant, to solicit your talents with the ever compelling “we’ll spare no expense” lure. Being a wise leader, you accept the challenge, as long as it is agreed that most of the rewards be passed to your team. Once again, your only request is that you be allowed to enjoy the fruits of your labor by receiving a complimentary vehicle for your personal use. Your new assignment is to appeal to middle class families, ranging in size from four to six persons, seeking to explore the rugged outdoors. Specifically, you must build an automobile that is rugged, spacious, and affordable. Once again, understanding the power of specialization and team synergy, you hope to enlist members of your previous team, but quickly discover the new requirements do not align with the skills of your previous team. That is none except one. Fortunately, the affordability requirement is a common denominator of both projects. Consequently (to your relief), you are able to enlist the services of your supply chain economics specialist from the “Shopping Car Comet” project to keep manufacturing costs low. The project completes with out a hitch. You have led the team to build a car that comes to be endearingly known as the rugged “Portal Sportal”.



Logic Trends, Inc.
www.logictrends.com

Atlanta

1050 Crown Pointe Parkway
Suite 295
Atlanta GA 30338
office: 770.551-5050
info@logictrends.com

Dallas

Tampa

Cleveland



By now, you are likely skeptical this article has any relevance to Identity Management at all. Perhaps you have checked the front cover to insure the words “Motor Trend” are no where to be found. Let us quickly get to the point with the conclusion of our story. Now left with a feeling of satisfaction as a prominent automobile creator, you take a moment to enjoy the pleasures of your creation and jump into your own “Shopping Cart Comet”. After an exhilarating two hundred laps around a local two mile oval race track, you do not have enough fuel to complete your journey home. You quickly gas up the “Comet” at the local filling station and head home to prepare for tomorrow’s adventure in the “Portal Sportal”.

You awake the following morning filled with anticipation, as you are about to enter a race to be the first SUV to cross the Rocky Mountains – off road style. Due to exhaustion from the previous day’s 500 mile race, you are running late. As you anxiously head to the starting line in your personal “Portal Sportal”, you notice the fuel gauge is showing a low reading (likely due to the long trip from the factory at 8.5 gallons per mile). Since the race is about to start without you, you quickly pull into the filling station, aligning the fuel pump with the left side of your “Sportal” just as you did the previous day in the “Comet”. To your horrified dismay, the seconds tick away as you realize the fuel cap to the “Sportal” is on the opposite side of the vehicle. Through a cascade of explicative language, you turn the “Sportal” around so the fuel cap is facing the pump and wonder how any engineer in their right mind could design two automobiles with a fuel filler cap on opposite sides of the vehicle.

Analogy fun aside, it is likely you are beginning to see a correlation between our not-so-fictitious automobile analogy and the challenges of Identity Management. If so, you are correct, there are several problematic principles touched upon here that have a corollary to Identity Management initiatives. These principles not only create the identity woes we see today, but also cause on-going failures of initiatives designed to cure the identity nightmare. The remainder of this article will focus on exposing these principles.

Principle 1 – Point of View

The first principle deals with something as simple as point of view. Just as Henry and William provided a list of different automobile project requirements that had little interest, (or budget) in satisfying lofty automotive industry goals, (such as providing a fuel cap on the same side of the car across all makes and models), IT projects have suffered the same fate. Technology teams are often provided a list of application



Logic Trends, Inc.
www.logictrends.com

Atlanta

1050 Crown Pointe Parkway
Suite 295
Atlanta GA 30338
office: 770.551-5050
info@logictrends.com

Dallas

Tampa

Cleveland



requirements driven by the demands (requirements) of a specific business unit also having little interest (or budget) in satisfying infrastructure principles of the entire corporate enterprise. These principles include: common user id, password, profile, groups, roles, password administration, self service, provisioning, work flow, etc.

If corrective Identity Management initiatives allow this limited point of view to persist, Identity Management successes will be quickly undermined by new IT projects whose budgets and points of view do not embrace Identity Management principles. Consequently, just as you were able to introduce affordability and a common vision to both the “Portal Sportal” and the “Shopping Cart Comet,” Identity Management initiatives must accept the broader enterprise scope of their mission by injecting an enterprise point of view into the organization. By structuring a CIO sponsored common architecture team, whose charter is to represent the broader enterprise “point of view” for each new IT project, Identity Management initiatives are not left facing the wrong side of the fuel pump.

Principle 2 – Priority

Now imagine that both Henry and William come to you, demanding you remedy the fuel filler cap situation in order to relieve the assault of incoming customer complaints. In your own defense, you argue that you successfully delivered each and every automobile design requirement given to you. Since the original request did not specify which side of the automobile the fuel should be dispensed, it’s an unjust request to bear the burden alone. Recognizing that you have a valid point, both Henry and William agree to create an independent, “Fuel Filler Cap Management” (FFCM) task force. The task force’s job will be working with the respective “Automobile Support Teams” to recall either all “Portal Sportals” or all “Shopping Car Comets” in order to move the fuel filler system to a common side of the automobile.

You are probably thinking things are about to get a bit sticky. We now have a tough problem to solve with many points of view:

- 1) The Fuel Filler Cap Management Team (a.k.a., FFCM, Identity Mgt Team)
- 2) Owners (a.k.a., Management)
- 3) Automobile Support Team (a.k.a., Application Support Team)
- 4) The Customer (a.k.a., User)
- 5) The Original Builders (a.k.a., Original Development Team)


Logic Trends, Inc.
www.logictrends.com

Atlanta

1050 Crown Pointe Parkway
Suite 295
Atlanta GA 30338
office: 770.551-5050
info@logictrends.com

Dallas

Tampa

Cleveland

The FFCM team begins by asking you, the original builder, if they can consult with your build teams to formulate a plan for fuel filler system modifications. You think this is an excellent idea until you speak with your former team members. You learn they have all taken new jobs, but since they have all forgotten how the fuel filler system works, it really wouldn't matter anyway.

Next, the FFCM team consults with the "Comet" and "Sportal" automotive support teams to formulate a "fix". Both the "Comet" and "Sportal" support teams would love to help but declare they are understaffed making critical enhancements and tactical fixes and can't worry about a problem as daunting as re-engineering the fuel filler system from one side of the car to the other.

Finally, in desperation, the FFCM team turns to management, Henry and William, explaining the problem and asking for advice. The team is told they were hired to solve the problem. The FFCM team, recognizing the limitations of their control, set out to solve the problem on their own. They construct policies, standards, and a left side only fuel filler system that must be used by all manufacturers. They send out large descriptive instruction manuals, post bulletins signed by management enforcing the new standards, publish a web site with a comprehensive description of what must be done, and finally, they send out recall notices to all existing "Comet" and "Sportal" customers. While the FFCM declares victory, the new "Bill Thrill" automobile rolls off the assembly line with a fuel filler system hidden beneath the license plate.

The "build it and they will come philosophy" for Identity Management is a path of certain failure. Identity Management initiatives are not simply composed of "off the shelf" products, but rather, composed of off the shelf products, existing applications, processes, teams, users, and organizations. Only by turning Identity Management project dependencies such as application support teams, users, management, and processes into participating members of the Identity Management team can success occur. The equation is simple, Identity Management must be proclaimed as "Job 1" at the executive level to instill the commitment at all levels necessary to create success. Anything less equates to a never ending project full of frustration, budget over-runs, and in the end, failure.

Principle 3 – Habits



Logic Trends, Inc.
www.logictrends.com

Atlanta

1050 Crown Pointe Parkway
Suite 295
Atlanta GA 30338
office: 770.551-5050
info@logictrends.com

Dallas

Tampa

Cleveland



Our principles thus far are “point of view” and “priority”. At first glance, these are not earth shattering concepts. However, a pattern is beginning to emerge. There is nothing in these principles associated with technology. This is a big clue toward unearthing a deeper understanding of the challenges encompassing Identity Management solutions for the enterprise. Could it be that Identity Management technology is merely a set of tools that helps solve a universal problem?

Yes. It has been the expectation through many Identity Management project failures that by creating a team to integrate off the shelf Identity Management technologies, success is around the corner. However, history has shown otherwise. If we take a closer look at the origins of this idea, we begin to see a false expectation derived from the resistance human beings portray when forced to change. Consider the following subset of established identity related habits...

- 1) application users enter a handful of user ids and passwords before getting it right
- 2) customer calls the help desk when they forget their password
- 3) call centers pulls up multiple applications to change multiple user passwords
- 4) sales force faxes a provisioning request for a new customer/user to the operations group
- 5) developers create their own authentication and authorization database

Though none of these processes are efficient, they have been occurring for years as work-a-round measures to address bigger identity management problems. It is important to accept that old habits die hard and even a change for the better is often rejected.

Identity Management teams are not experts in human psychology and like any other habit, identity related habits demand a delicate psychological adjustment program for habits that have become familiar vices for many. Since change must come slow for acceptance to occur, it is important that a user education program be established early and often for the Identity Management project life cycle. This should begin with education of the user community six to twelve months prior to deployment of Identity Management technology.

The future of Identity Management is now. Technology is ready; Return on investment is certain. The only thing standing in the way of success is understanding the complete



Logic Trends, Inc.
www.logictrends.com

Atlanta

1050 Crown Pointe Parkway
Suite 295
Atlanta GA 30338
office: 770.551-5050
info@logictrends.com

Dallas

Tampa

Cleveland



nature of the problem. Technology is only half the solution. You can send car owners the recall notice, but you can't make them drive their car to the shop. Out of necessity, some people fall into the habit of stretching the fuel hose to the other side of the car.



Logic Trends, Inc.
www.logictrends.com

Atlanta

1050 Crown Pointe Parkway
Suite 295
Atlanta GA 30338
office: 770.551-5050
info@logictrends.com

Dallas

Tampa

Cleveland

