

Systems Integration vs Human Relationships

Author: Brion Carroll, CEO of Digital Solution Group, LLC

Date: 1-Sept-2022

Reading Time: 7-8 minutes

As the title implies, this article will provide a comparative of how Systems Integration is as vital to business operations as Human Relationships are to a civilization; or as Oxford would define civilization as *“the stage of human social and cultural development and organization that is considered most advanced”*.

It is common knowledge that all normal humans seek out a range of relationships with other humans, consisting of a *family* (mother, father, son, daughter, brother, or sister), *social* (friend) or *business* (boss, peer, or subordinate) profile. In each of these human relationships there are “interface protocols” that are indicative of that relationship:

- **Family** relationships most often implies genetic similarities that result in a common language or tenor, combined with an amassing of shared experiences or knowledge that most often forms a very intimate type of human relationship. There are exceptions that result in “I never got along with him or her”, but we will focus on what is most common.
- **Social** relationships are those between humans outside the immediate family or business environment that are short- or long-term (vs meeting someone at a social event) and are most often based on a shared set of values / interests that result in shared experiences of both a general and / or intimate level. One could have a friend that becomes a lover and then becomes a spouse; therefore, evolving from a social to family relationship.
- **Business** relationships are those established within the work environment, which are formed based on predefined roles, responsibilities, and dependencies. When the roles are ill defined, then that ill definition will result in a conflicting relationship.

In each of these human relationships there is a cadence of communication or activities that is established where each participant in the relationship forms expectations of the other(s); examples being “a son telling his father or mother when he will return home” or “a friend calling her girlfriend when she plans to go to the movies” or “a subordinate providing a progress report to his / her boss every Monday”.

It is also common that a given human can have a *business* relationship (i.e. peer) that evolves to a *social* relationship, that eventually turns into an *family* relationship (i.e. marriage); which demonstrates the versatility of this human relationship model.

Human relationships enable a civilization to be formed. Humans interact with other humans using a range of communication protocols enabling families to be formed, social cultures to be developed, and **businesses to operate**.

So, the question is: **What do human relationship have to do with systems integrations?**

Let’s focus on the human relationships in **business**. Humans serve **specific roles** in a business and perform a predefined (and expected) **set of operations**. When humans perform the various roles in a business, as covered earlier **they communicate** with the other humans that are performing similar or supportive roles.

Each human serving his or her role will pass along information **upon the completion of a specific event**; such as:

- a **Merchandiser** relays to the **Designer** what is required per the “adds” to a product category so design can begin; or
- a Designer passing along their product design to a **Developer** to prompt that Developer to develop the product technical specification; or
- a Developer can share the technical specification with the factory AND the **Product Tester** so wear testing can be organized to execute wear sample testing.

When a system is designed, it is designed to serve a specific human role or range of functions.

Therefore, each role (or set of roles) is assigned one or more systems to use when computerized functions **bring value** to that function. For example:

Merchandisers can be equipped with an Assortment / Range Management system to coordinate the profile of each season’s offering **compared** to using shared Excel spreadsheets; or

Product Designers use **Computer Aided Design (CAD)** tools to enhance their ability to create product designs based on the Merchandiser’s requirements compared to the use of pen(s) and paper; or

Product Developers can continue the use of CAD to develop the detailed construction of the product using the Designer’s CAD content as a starting point; or

Product Sourcing leverages a PLM system to organize the sourcing of the developed product with the **Factory** to manage initial sampling and eventually production.

Since no system performs **ALL** of the functions required by **ALL** of the humans serving **ALL** of the roles in a business, there is **ALWAYS** a need for each human to “develop a means of communicating” with those that serve other roles in the business (organization).

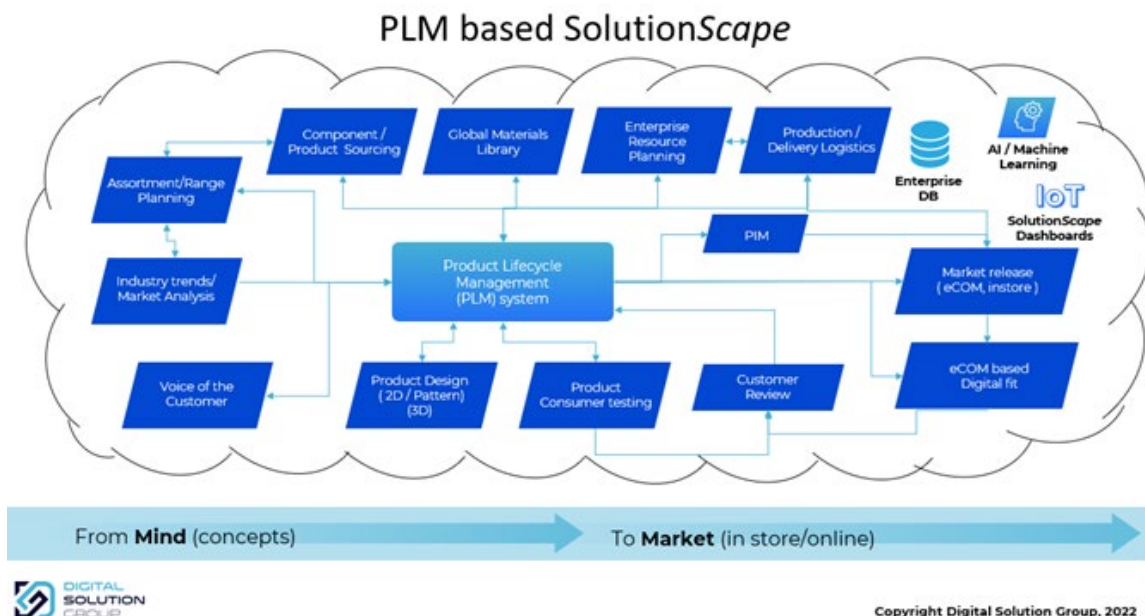
If the systems used by the various roles are **NOT** communicating information on behalf of the humans that use them, **then the humans have to manually** (1) **identify the information** that needs to be communicated with the other humans serving the other roles; (2) **determine the best method** of communicating the information in a way that will be understandable by the human serving in those various roles; (3) **communicate the information** to the other humans serving the other roles and **service any requests** by those humans when the information is incomplete or not understandable.

*When systems integration is not present to support this form of “communication” in business relationships then it is comparable to requiring that each human in a **social relationship** be required to **write** what they want to “say” on a **piece of paper**, hand it to the other human, **wait for it to be read**, and eventually **read the response** using the same paper-based process.*

Brands or Retailers that have systems that are **not “communicating”** as efficiently and effectively as humans can communicate, then the business is placing the **burden** on those filling the roles. Brands or Retailers that require “human communication” **on behalf of systems that should communicate directly** are losing valuable resources in both **time-to-market** and **cost of operations**.

The fact is that **technology exists** that enables role-based systems to “communicate” with each other just as humans communicate.

The profile represented by the image below (**PLM Based SolutionScope**) depicts that **ALL** of the role-based systems are connectable. A given Brand or Retailer may only have a few or may have several (or all) of the systems represented by the “role-based modules”; but in **ALL** cases, the systems can and should **be interconnecting** with the PLM system that represents a form of “hub-n-spoke” profile.



To learn how **Digital Solution Group** can support **any Brand** or **Retailer** in their efforts to **save product lifecycle time-to-market**, **role-based resource cost** (and *stress*), and establish a form of **digital fluidity** that models the means of communication that humans have been exercising socially for thousands of years, check out [“The Need for a Systems Integration Strategy / Tactical Plan”](#).

You can also contact Digital Solution Group by clicking on the link below.

In all things ... stay safe.

Brion Carroll

CEO

Cell: +1603-566-5382

<http://www.digitalsolutiongroup.com/contact.html>

