EMPOWER Staffing Requirements

EMPOWER is designed for implementation in a wide range of institutions with varied technical and user support capabilities. Our clients include very small colleges like seminaries and professional schools as well as universities with over 13,000 students. In order to provide a useful and supportable system to such a wide diversity of clients, EMPOWER includes extensive tools for support.

EMPOWER clients appoint a "champion" to deal with any questions, interface with our staff, and generally manage the system. This assignment is a part time job and may require a few hours each week. Training for the champion is included with the implementation process. In many cases the champion attends a portion of the user training to have a broad understanding of the system.

At the simplest, EMPOWER runs unattended with no need for a specially trained database administrator. Housekeeping chores like back ups run on a scheduled basis with a need only for media changes for off-site retention.

A technically-oriented staff member is trained to apply the regular updates of EMPOWER. This process involves retrieving a file from our FTP (file transfer protocol) site and following the "cook book" directions to apply it to the non-production database for users to try out new features without concerns for data corruption. After staff members review the update, the administrator applies the update to the production database and sets security permissions on new screens in accordance with the college policies. If clients wish to have help with this, we are glad to apply the updates remotely for a small fee. (Technical services are included in Hosted and SaaS plans.)

On the rare occasion when Oracle, ColdFusion or another of the underlying programs needs an update or other service, we provide full documentation to assist the administrator in doing the work. Again, if there is discomfort in doing this work, we can do much of it remotely or visit you on campus for a reasonable fee and travel expenses.

When schedule, catalog or billing information and parameters are copied over to the next period or term, it is normal for the champion to run this process as it requires some coordination between departments.

Security permissions and log-on privileges are managed by a designated administrator. This task is often assigned to the EMPOWER champion. The process is fairly simple and training is provided at implementation time.

End user departments are trained to manage their own module resources. For the most part this involves policy decisions and the maintenance of coding, parameters and values. Examples: financial aid codes, formulas, budgets, tuition tables, admission activities, and so forth. Variable data like form letter text is maintained by the affected department(s).

EMPOWER contains over 600 standard reports, extracts and queries. These resources are intended for user access and require no technical support. Most reports are run via selection screens which allow users to customize and filter the output. Clients generally have needs for some reports or report formatting that is not included exactly as required in the standard reports. The database is completely open for access by any ODBC-compliant tool. While many reporting tools are intended for end-user application, it is often best to have a more technical employee undertake the more complex reports as they may require use of many tables and views in the database. EMPOWER teaches classes in data access to assist in this process. (Please see the document "EMPOWER Reports" for more information).

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