

## *Teaching Case*

# The Integration Dilemma: When an IT Start-Up meets a Conglomerate

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### **Abstract**

This case is a narrative of the acquisition of HIRA, a healthcare IT startup, by Conversant, a large global consulting powerhouse from a few years back. The clash of two different company cultures, their conflicting business strategies, different IT infrastructures and very different customer sets created significant challenges in their integration after the acquisition. The case requires the reader to analyze the initial backlash from multiple stakeholders and then to build a project management structure to execute the integration project and successfully align business goals. The strategic vision of the merger provides an articulation of the ideal state of resource usage (human and technology) and a context for decision-making to select collective strategic initiatives to implement in order to achieve the desired integration successfully. When HIRA was acquired by Conversant, a global conglomerate with significant offshore personnel, a service area of HIRA needed to be automated to improve their business profitability. This was more easily conceptualized and realized when HIRA leaders applied metrics to their information technology service management processes. This complex integration project could only succeed through the active participation and leadership of both companies and by carefully addressing their conflicting strategies, policies, cultures, technology and human resources.

**Keywords:** IT Strategy, IT Management, Merger and Acquisition, Software as a Service, Integration, Change Management.

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