

Why Naming Conventions Are the Key to Successful Integration

Imagine merging three kitchens into one. Everyone agrees it'll save time and space - until you realize one person calls what's inside a jar "flour," another insists it's "powder," and the third just labels it "white stuff." But wait - it gets worse. The "flour" jar from kitchen one is not quite the same as the "powder" jar from kitchen two, and neither matches whatever kitchen three considers "white stuff." Now imagine trying to bake a cake under these conditions. Welcome to the chaos of merging systems across different LoBs without standardizing naming conventions.

This isn't just hypothetical - big players have faced this. When Microsoft acquired LinkedIn in 2016, both platforms had to merge data like contact information and user IDs. They had fields for user accounts and personal data, like "username" and "email," but their definitions weren't aligned. When American Airlines and US Airways merged in 2013, their reservation systems had to merge too. They used different terms and structures for customer IDs, booking references, and loyalty program numbers. This caused major headaches, from duplicate records to misplaced reservations - until they adopted standardization and reconciliation.

In the examples above, when seeking unity, each company found themselves stuck in a maze of mismatched concepts. But once they adopted a universal naming system, order was restored, and they became some of the strongest players in their industries.

Standardizing naming conventions isn't about stripping away identity but adding thoughtful layers that make the system inclusive and adaptable, so that no one's stuck in the middle of a system-wide food fight. Think of it as adding lanes to a highway- some drive on the left, others on the right, but the system supports both with clear signs and rules.

By adopting the majority's naming system (e.g., Program, Project, Work Packages, Purchase Order) as the foundation, we establish a common framework that most can relate to and understand. This reduces ambiguity, speeds up collaboration, and eliminates redundant or conflicting concepts. At the same time, introducing new terms (e.g., Program Area, Project Area, Purchase Request) ensures flexibility for LoBs with unique requirements.

Together, we can move from mismatched systems to a unified, efficient approach - because the best way forward is a road we all travel on together.

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