Executive Summary: This paper will present information relative to a technology project managed by the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) of Zions Bancorporation that spanned nearly 3 years and successfully standardized the Charts of Accounts for 4 legacy computer systems, across 6 regional banks. The final launch involved an overnight conversion of each bank's computerized general ledger codes to reflect the new account charts, involving the moving of millions of loan records and deposit accounts, totaling approximately $60 billion. Project success was defined as converting each record to its new ledger code, and shifting every penny to its new chart location, with total accuracy.

Although the project's goals were successfully achieved, there were a number of significant risks and obstacles that presented themselves during the course of the project, causing delays and costs. This paper will identify the major risks and will describe how they were overcome.

Project Sponsorship: There was no single executive or project sponsor engaged from inception through implementation who assumed overall ownership of the project and who was ultimately responsibility for strategic decisions. This presented considerable risk to the project's scope and change management processes, since the various computer systems within the different banks had distinctive operating characteristics. Also, the managers of those systems had varying opinions about every facet of the undertaking. Decisions, therefore, were derived through an inordinate number of conference calls and meetings in order to gain consensus among the stakeholders, substantially increasing delays and expenses.

Scope: Requirements were well-defined with respect to the lending systems; but not for the deposit systems, the scope of which was delineated by two disparate groups having different objectives. Thus, the EDW managers rather than the business customers assumed responsibility for deciding specifications and deliverables for the deposit system.

Resources: While the geographically-dispersed nature of the project team presented a minor challenge, the single greatest risk to the project came from the multiple "number one" priorities that several key people had to juggle. Most notably, resources were not dedicated to the project and were constantly being re-directed to higher priority programs; thus, responsibilities and tasking were constantly shifting, causing further delays. By assigning tasks to both a primary and secondary individual, team members could be rotated in and out of the project with less risk of delay.

Design & Development Phase:

Because of conflicting priorities, key members of the Information Technology (IT) department did not provide adequate input on the technical specifications for the project, so a marginally-qualified Business Analyst within the EDW department developed the code requirements. Errors and conversion problems that arose during the subsequent unit and cycle testing were then identified and corrected by individual IT developers. Again, costs and delays were incurred because of the need to re-code much of the conversion programs.

Testing Phase: Testing Cycles were minimized due to time constraints, which made it impossible to guarantee reconciliation of the general ledger, post-

conversion. During testing, it became apparent that technical requirements needed some modifications, which were accomplished ad-hoc, in violation of Change Management policies. Overcoming this risk was done through effective issue tracking, coordination and communication among dedicated individuals in the analytical, testing and implementation teams.

Summary: Primarily due to excellent cooperation by numerous geographically-dislocated individuals, as well as proper use of risk management techniques for tackling issues and action items and a well-orchestrated implementation plan, the project was successfully accomplished. The goals of standardizing the general ledger codes and moving funds to the proper accounts were achieved despite the hazards presented by lack of executive project sponsorship, weak contributions by the IT department, lack of adequate testing, and shifting priorities and resources.

The most important lesson learned from this project was that a firm set of working agreements with an Executive Sponsor and/or Project Sponsor are vital toward meeting all project goals - including milestones, budget and deliverables. Often, business executives are not well-schooled in project methodologies, and need guidance from the Project Manager on their role and responsibilities as facilitators and decision makers. A chart listing the usual duties of sponsors is contained at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Executive & Project Sponsors
Typical Roles and Responsibilities in a Technology Project[1]

Role	Responsibilities	Typically Carried Out By..
Executive Sponsor	1. Owns the project; may directly fund the project 2. Is responsible for the benefits. 3. Provides appropriate resources and key Subject Matter Experts (SME's) to the project in a timely manner. 4. Works closely with the Project Manager to deliver the benefits. 5. Chairs the Steering Committee (if required) 6. Approves: ⇨ Project Initiation Plan ⇨ Statement of Scope ⇨ Project Plan ⇨ Any changes to the Plan, scope or benefits 7. Monitors project progress and works to keep the project on track. 8. Gives advice to the project manager on business strategy, priorities and other business matters. 9. Acts to resolve issues quickly, understanding that unresolved issues can cause significant project impact. 10. Ensures all key project deliverables are appropriately reviewed and approved (such as Requirements Spec, Implementation Plan, Business Impact Statement).	Business Unit Head (such as Registrar, CFO, Director Facilities, V-P HR) Senior Academic CIO

Role	Responsibilities	Typically Carried Out By..
Project Sponsor	1. Appoints the Project Manager (If it is a "business" project, the project manager is appointed by the business sponsor and the technical lead is appointed by the IT Director to whom that individual reports.) 2. Consults with the Executive Sponsor to establish a form of 'contract' to deliver the project against agreed terms (such as resources and time). 3. Sits on the Steering Committee. Represents IT's interests on the SC. 4. Approves: ⇨ Project Initiation Plan ⇨ Statement of Scope ⇨ Project Plan ⇨ Any changes to the Plan, scope or benefits 5. Monitors project progress and works with the project manager to keep the project on track. 6. Gives advice to the project manager issues regarding technology and technology priorities. 7. Works with the project manager and executive sponsor to resolve issues quickly. 8. Ensures a good working relationship continues with all other IT groups. 9. Reports to the CIO on all Group Projects.	Bus./Technical Manager or Director Director of IT Group Any other CIO direct report

1. Princeton University Project Office. Retrieved 5 October 2007 from http://web.princeton.edu/sites/ppo/StakeholderRoles.doc