



CLOUDZONE ONE



Top 6 tips to achieving a smooth ERP Implementation

Planning



Team



Goals



Testing



Training



Manage Change



ERP Implementation projects are particularly notorious for being risky, expensive and hard to execute in the set time frames. But there is good news – by following these few basic tips you will set yourself up for smooth and successful implementation.

Firstly, start with ensuring that the choice of ERP Solution you are implementing, meets your company's specific business requirements. The business needs to have reflected on the company culture, operational and all other business processes – this is usually driven by management teams and should include staff from all areas of the business to give the best overall view.

Once this is established, then you are ready to start with the big game changer – the implementation plan. And the key to success is a formidably designed implementation plan.



Many companies end-up with issues after deployment, because of bad strategic planning and poor project management.

Implementing an ERP system may create some additional work in the short-term but following these tips will help minimise any stress and ensure you achieve your overall goals for the project. By getting the basics right you will set your company up for success and realise the benefits of the new system significantly quicker.



Planning

“Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning.” ~ Winston Churchill.

THE PLAN

Planning for ERP system implementation is the single most important element to a successful ERP Implementation project.

You may confront challenges during the implementation of your new system, but with careful planning and realistic strategies in place you will be able to overcome these challenges and roll-out a successful end-product.

A great way to start with your planning process is to get out of the blocks with a detailed and realistic set of business requirements that the new system must achieve. This will also help you to identify any gaps early on in the project. The more specific you can be in advance, the more detailed the consultants can be in their solution configuration scoping. A great place to start the planning process is discussing internally what inefficiencies you have in your business today and how you would like to improve these with a new ERP system.

Building the implementation project strategy and plan requires the project team's input and effort to incorporate all the critical components required to launch a successful implementation project.

It might be worthwhile getting external expertise to help in creating the overall project strategy and set up the plan and if you engage the right implementation partner, they should be able to assist you in capturing and prioritising your business requirements.

- ▶ Identify the resources needed to fulfill the project responsibilities, taking into consideration what the requirements are to fulfill various functions and roles.
- ▶ Mapping out the day to day actions of the company will reveal the features and functions of the system that are critical to your organisation.
- ▶ Set up workflows based on current business processes to help the implementation team get a better understanding of how the business's day-to-day
- ▶ The ERP system is a tool the business will use to optimise day-to-day tasks, but to achieve that, you need to have defined the business processes in place that will guide the implementation and especially during the configuration phase during the configuration phase.
- ▶ Doing a needs analysis / requirements gathering at the start of the project is extremely important, and will set the foundation for the strategy and plan.
- ▶ It is worthwhile to set unambiguous definitions of the problems and opportunities anticipated.
- ▶ Make sure there is a clear alignment between the defined requirements and the goals and objectives of the business.

A Great Team

Let's talk about the internal and external resources and how it all fits together in setting up your project team.

THE PROJECT TEAM

There are a lot of ways your business can drive success during and after ERP implementation projects. One of the factors that has driven great implementation success before, during and after go-live is the assembled project team.

It's important to make sure you create a cross-functional team to be involved in the implementation process.

The communication between the internal and external resources that make up the project team has to be good to bridge any gap between employees and consultants. Applying effective communication lines will impact the implementation in a positive way.

THE PROJECT MANAGER

A successful implementation needs a skilled and experienced project manager who will lead the team and drive the project to success. The project manager needs to be someone with a diverse skill-set who understands business processes and improves communication and delivery.



INTERNAL RESOURCES

Because the ERP solution will be used by many different parts of the business, it means you need a range of skilled employees from all areas of the business to contribute to the implementation project. This will obviously ensure that all areas of the business are covered, and will optimize the post go-live use of the system.

Create a team based on levels of involvement -employees involved will be appropriately sourced to the roles and responsibilities in the project depending on their availability, time, skills and experience. This approach will drive more effective resource management and application. The three main levels of engagement are:

- **Driver Team:** mostly management and directors. This team is pivotal in aligning the business vision, missions and goals to the ERP Implementation project. They might be involved in some milestone meetings to review that the project is on track.
- **Fundamental Team:** this team consists of the go-getter worker bees. This team usually has a range of members and representatives from all the functional areas of the business depending on the size of your business.
- **Specialist Team:** these are the change makers and champions of the project. This team is very similar to the fundamental team, but are more involved in processes involving defining requirements, validation of requirements and data.

However small or large your business, the Internal Team must be knowledgeable in both current processes and desired objectives, as well as empowered to drive change within your business.



A Great Team

Let's talk about the internal and external resources and how it all fits together in setting up your project team.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

The external resources bring expert skills and extensive knowledge of the system to the project. When evaluating your business partner, ensure they can show both expertise in your chosen solution and that they have extensive experience in delivering the solution using proven methodologies. It is a good idea to consider our questions to ask.

Remember, the most important factor for your project success is how knowledgeable the project team you will be working with is, rather than how many resources they have. Having inexperienced people on their staff does not help your project, so focus on getting the right skills on your team.



QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ▶ Is the Partner a specialist in your chosen solution?
- ▶ Does their project team have the required skills for your requirements?
- ▶ How well does the Partner know your business and/or industry?
- ▶ Do they rely on 3rd parties to deliver your project?
- ▶ Have you met your entire project team and do you feel confident in their skills and fit with your organisation?
- ▶ Has the partner consistently delivered in your timeframes?
- ▶ Is the partner prepared to scope your project in detail before you commit?

GOALS

ACCURATE GOALS

Set the project goals and stick to them. Setting goals will help you convert vision into action.

PROJECT GOALS are the high-level results you are trying to achieve and describe the overall targets.

OBJECTIVES are the low-level results you want to achieve and have more specific outcomes and deliverables.

To achieve the goals, they need to be well-defined and achievable. Goals should also be measurable, realistic and compliant to your business values. Setting these goals and measures will allow you to track the performance and success rate of processes during and after the implementation project.



Just a few examples of the type of resources used to help to set goals:

- **Budget:** the goal is to keep within the set budget. You need to know what the expenses and overall costs will be. Be aware of hidden costs that can show up later in the project
- **Project timeline:** the project milestones need to be set up with specific dates and deadlines
- **Business processes:** the different business processes of the company will create the basis for creating goals around the business needs, and will set the aim of what will be achieved in different parts of the business
- **Project Team:** human resources involved in the project, especially the system users will be able to help defining the goals and objectives based on their current experience and daily tasks they fulfil

When considering the above points, remember to ensure the chosen business partner is aligned with your goals and fully supports them. If they are reluctant to provide you with detailed documentation that supports your goals, then they are likely the wrong partner to deliver the project successfully for your business.



Testing & Fixing

TESTING

This phase can be overlooked and rushed because it is so close to the end of the project. During testing the users and consultants get the opportunity to push the system functionality to breaking point to find the gaps and defects made during the configuration phase. Finding the issues will help to resolve them before the big go-live. Simultaneously testing throughout the implementation process can be a good way of evaluating the results to find the gaps faster.

Testing should be one of the project's highest priorities, it's necessary because most ERP systems are customisable and very flexible - but if not configured correctly may not deliver the required outcomes expected at the outset.

In order to execute the testing you need to focus on having reliable master data for the testing to ensure the tests are relevant and effective.



FIXING

Another key consideration when planning the testing and fixing stage is to ensure you have allowed enough time to clean your data. All companies accumulate a lot of data but when considering a new ERP system, ask yourself what value is this data to your current operations. If you want rapid ROI then consider the essential data for go Live and leave historical data outside of the project. Even with the essential data identified, ensure you consider if this data is accurate and plan to spend some time on fixing any inconsistencies. The effort now will generate significant returns once live in the new ERP system as now your company can make informed decisions on accurate information. Business processes and workflow testing:

Different types of testing approaches

Business processes and workflow testing:

This type of testing covers all the functional elements of the system. This includes business rules, process flow, functional elements and how they all fit together.

Usability Testing:

This type of testing usually includes testing attributes i.e. the user interface, navigation, ease of use, content and system presentation/appearance.

- Because ERP Systems are mostly not out of the box and need in depth testing to ensure they are configured to meet your specific business needs.
- Because of integrations with other systems.
- Data migration from old systems to new systems can cause inconsistencies.



TRAINING

USER TRAINING

Training during and after go-live cannot be emphasised enough. For the employees to accept and use the newly implemented system, they need to properly understand how they do their job in the new system.

The system users need to be updated and informed on the functionality and the benefits they will gain by using the system. Transparency and information will encourage them to explore the new features and how they can apply their knowledge to the new system.

Ensuring that your employees are trained well on the new system will keep them enthusiastic and engaged in the changes that are taking place and will motivate them to be involved and positive in the transition.

Factors to consider when planning training:

- Training Types – what type of delivery will work best for the business?
- How many people should be trained?
- Training Content – Who will create the content, what type of content will work best for the business?
- Training resources – Is your Business Partner able to deliver the training required by your team?
- Time frames – What are the exact time frames to complete the training?

Align training with change management

Implementing a new ERP System brings on a lot of change and business process improvement to the business, and thus there might be employees that struggle with change more than others. But don't fear, there are many ways to make the transition process as easy as possible. Focusing on a good training process will ensure better acceptance and transition to the new system.

Reasons why it's better to align your training with the change management strategy:

- It will encourage better adoption by employees.
- It will help to improve the overall attitude of the employees towards change.
- It will help to improve the usability of the system, and it will get the employees to apply their new knowledge to work on and use the system as it is intended.



Change Management

MANAGE CHANGE

The final measure of success is how the new system is accepted by the wider team. With proper training and change management techniques, this will be done successfully.

To make sure the project team and the employees are on board with the implementation, you need to create a well-planned change management strategy before the change is happening.

Different change management techniques are available to implement. The role as change manager can be assigned to an internal project team member, this can be very beneficial because they will have an existing relationship with the other employees.

What you need to consider when planning change management:

You first need to evaluate the current state of the business before you start planning the change management process and strategy that will evolve from the implementation of the new ERP System.

A few factors to consider when planning your change management strategy:

- Identify the affected groups or employees
- Communication about the changes in advance
- An indication of the planned timeframes in which the changes will take place
- Current state of the business
- Explain the reasons and the effects of the ERP Implementation
- Be open and give all impacted by the change visibility of the project



CONCLUSION

Every business implementing a new ERP system, will experience some issues. The good news for companies considering cloud solutions is that the benefits of a new ERP system are quicker to realise than with older technologies.

The right cloud solution provider not only knows how to deploy the application correctly for your needs, but will also be able to demonstrate how they can partner with you to achieve the results you require as quickly as possible.

CloudZone One is a specialist in NetSuite and JCurve Cloud ERP applications and offer rapid deployments for all our clients. We have implemented many solutions for small and large organisations through-out New Zealand. Our team is fully trained and expert in ERP solutions.

If you are considering a new ERP Implementation but still concerned about the process, CloudZone One can also complete a Business Requirements Gathering session with your team before you make any commitment to a new system.

For a chat about implementing your new ERP solution, contact David Rainbow on 09 930 6101

