

FAST NOT FURIOUS SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING CLOUD ERP

OVERVIEW

Whether you are transitioning from an existing system or this will be your new implementation of Cloud computing, you want to make sure your implementation is a success. According to analyst firm Gartner, approximately 75 percent of all ERP projects fail, despite the industry's focus on delivering better customer service and advanced IT systems. Given that a Cloud project is one of the biggest IT investments businesses make, particularly mid-size companies, it's imperative that your cloud journey from start to finish is a smooth one.

We have compiled the following guidelines that will help you to steer your Cloud projects towards success, faster but not furiously:

SPONSORSHIP

For a successful project, it is imperative to have a strong sponsorship voice from the executive team articulating clear vision of the project. No matter how strong the grass root team is, without a strong leadership from up top, success of the project can be at stake. Make sure the mission of the project is clearly communicated across the board and everyone is committed to make it a success. If critical decisions need to be made, you should seek executive involvement. This shows that the team is committed from top to bottom and there is a general consensus across the enterprise on the mission of the project.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Don't try to create a rocket-ship, avoid bells and whistles wherever possible in your system. Don't try to create a nirvana solution to solve all the exceptions in your processes and systems. First try to streamline and simplify your processes and then fit a system into it. When you throw best of the breed software into undefined processes, you will be mixing oil and water. ERP thought leader Robert Sorrell suggests to "keep it simple" from start to finish. In a SaaS model, software is already designed for the vast majority of the industries and companies. It is your business that needs to fit into the software, not the opposite. You will not customize but rather adapt to the software. Having this expectation from day one of your project kick-off will help you to stay on track. Remember SaaS solution needs to be configured and not customize for your company.

EARLY BUY-IN

Using traditional ERP implementation approach to implement a Cloud project may not be very effective. Instead, you may want to consider Agile or a Collaborative model (collaboration of

Waterfall and Agile methodology). You can use Waterfall in the early phases (Requirements, Fit Gap, High-level designs) and then Agile during the iterative design and deployment phase of the project. This way you can get into the pilot mode of the project faster, speeding up the overall delivery. This approach will bring solutions and benefits in the early stages and last throughout the life cycle of your project. Collaborative approach will not only foster confidence but also reliance in the system and processes from start to finish.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change management plays a vital role in the cloud projects especially if your organization is already running certain systems for many years. Phasing out the old and bringing in a slew of redefined processes and systems can be overwhelming, and can add roadblocks to a successful delivery. Considering shorter life cycle of the cloud based projects, you may consider a change management strategy in place from day one. "I have been doing this for so many years, why change?" this is a mindset that can add unnecessary burden to a fast moving cloud project and bog it down.

TRAINING

Best of the breed software can easily lose its charm, if the users are not properly trained in running it. Poor training leads to low morale, low quality and high cost. Make sure users all across the organization from the executive to the floor are fully empowered to perform their functions. When you roll out new features and functionalities impart incremental trainings so users are abreast of these enhancements.

CONCLUSION

Cloud ERP projects require nimble implementation methodology, swift mindsets and agility in making decisions. The above guidelines will ensure that your organization can implement cloud projects successfully, and you can reap the benefits from day one of going live.