



## SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION WITHOUT SURPRISES: KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

It's no secret: software implementation isn't always entirely smooth. Regardless of the type of software you're implementing, it's always important to be as well prepared as possible. Solid preparation helps minimize unpleasant surprises. The key to a successful implementation is knowing – and preparing for – what to expect.

### **Know the Costs Involved**

The total cost of a software implementation typically includes more than the cost of the software itself, which is determined by the number of user licenses you'll need. Some costs are one-time-only expenses, such as those associated with migrating data from existing applications into your new system. Others, such as the cost of support, can be ongoing. Depending on the complexity of your solution, there may also be costs related to customizing the software and aligning the solution with your existing applications. And expenditures for both initial staff training and training for new employees must be considered. But when adding up all the costs, you should also take into account how they may be offset by the short- and long-term returns that can result from implementing business management software.

### **Prepare for Data Migration**

In some cases, migrating data into a new solution may be as simple as exporting it. However, it can be more complex. Your implementation partner can help you ensure that existing financial, customer, inventory, and other information can be migrated to the new solution efficiently. If you have in-house data experts, team them with your implementation partner to make certain that data migration efforts go smoothly.

### **Consider Additional Resource Needs**

If your business has a day-to-day IT specialist, you'll certainly want to take advantage of that by enlisting their help. Many companies let their implementation partners take the lead on projects like these, which provides an excellent learning and professional development opportunity for any technology employees.

As you begin working with your partner, consider who in your company can act as a point of contact. Then, after implementation is complete, think about whether you'll require a full-time employee to manage long-term service and support.

### **Train Your Employees**

Software implementation projects can run smoothly and hit their deadlines squarely, but if your staff doesn't know – or want to know – how to use the software, you won't see adequate return on investment. Effective rollout and training are at least as important as data migration. When you announce your software initiative, be prepared to tell your employees how the new system will make their daily tasks easier and how they'll become more efficient. Provide concrete examples.

Then, after the software is up and running, provide education and training that's fast and nondisruptive. Many businesses provide in-person, on-site training. Others have found that e-learning is easier and more cost effective. Ask your software provider about the costs and benefits associated with both options.

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