

IMPLEMENTATION TIPS FROM THE TRENCHES

Whitepaper



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Congratulations on the selection of your new ERP software solution! According to a Panorama Consulting Services' ERP Report, 54 percent of implementations take longer than anticipated and 56 percent cost more than budgeted. While these budget and duration overrun numbers are not an accurate reflection of DELMIAworks' services, they are still numbers that no one in the ERP industry can be proud of.

The successful and timely implementation of a new ERP solution requires deep analysis of your unique business requirements and objectives. DELMIAworks has experienced that outside, third-party resellers and implementers do not have the ERP customer's best interests in mind. That is why we deploy dedicated implementation specialists who configure the EnterpriseIQ system to work intricately with your business, including recommending best-use practices so you can take full advantage of the software.

Based on their hard-earned experience on the front lines, below are DELMIAworks' Implementation Specialists' suggestions for keeping your implementation process on track:

Building Your Team

Much like your Fantasy Football league, the members you draft for your team are essential to your success. From experience, DELMIAworks recommends productive, mid-level employees for your starting lineup. We are not suggesting that top management support is anything but critical. It is simply that executive-level employees are busy and tend to make better members of the steering committee. In place primarily to make the tough decisions the core team cannot, steering committee members are important, but do not need to be on the primary "go to" team. The ideal team members are big picture thinkers who understand the overall business and the company's end goals. They are power users who understand their department inside and out and are willing to see where they can align their processes within the new system, rather than trying to implement over what is currently in place. Not every role in the company can be represented in the core team, so task-level employees will need to be pulled in when necessary, but they do not need to be primary team members.

"A knowledgeable, enthusiastic, cross-functional team will be the foundation for your implementation's success," said Kristina Bianchi, DELMIAworks Regional Director of Professional Services. "Look at your whole organization and provide an opportunity to personnel that show a passion for systems. You may find the right team members on the shop floor or in the office." How many members should make up your team? That depends on the size of your organization. In a smaller outfit, one employee may wear many hats, so your team will naturally be smaller. Just be sure that every major area is represented, including the critical separate functionalities within each department. In more sizable organizations, DELMIAworks cautions against assembling a team that is too large. Teams of more than 12 can slow down the decision making process as too many voices struggle to agree.



Mirror Implementation Teams

Sometimes pulling employees completely from their jobs to travel from plant to plant is not a realistic option. In that case, DELMIAworks' implementation specialists recommend the mirror approach to best manage your resources. At your first plant, define the roles that are essential to the team (one from accounting, one from manufacturing, etc.), then mirror those exact roles for the team at the next plant.

"When you can't pull people out of their existing jobs to travel from plant to plant, then I recommend the mirror approach," says Bianchi. "I have specific people in line for the first plant, so when I go to the next plant, I can pull those same types of roles."

Business Process Blueprinting

Well-defined business procedures are the basis for a successful implementation. In fact, nearly industry wide, ERP vendors will agree that business process blueprinting (the gathering and development of flow charts, work instructions and other documents related to your work flow) is a critical success factor of any implementation process.

Some consider business process blueprinting like a marriage. You first need to understand yourself before you begin searching for a long-term partner. The spousal qualities you are looking for can be tweaked, but there are certain attributes you absolutely must have. Most likely, your business process needs analyses are already in place for each department, as those blueprints were utilized in the ERP vendor selection process when researching essential features and confirming whether the new software can solve your unique business requirements.

To prepare for your new system, check that your process blueprints are generic and not tied to the legacy system. For example, instructions such as printing ASNs should not include details specific to the limitations of your legacy system. They should simply state, "Must send ASN." Ideally, DELMIAworks recommends that you understand how your business operates first, define it during the ERP selection and then refine it in implementation.

Implementation Method: Phased or Big Bang?

Finally, the complex and exciting new ERP software system you invested in has arrived on your doorstep. But where to start? Do you implement the entire package at once (commonly referred to as the Big Bang method) or do you roll out the singular modules one at a time (also known as the Phased method)? Neither method is perfect and both contain their own set of challenges:

Big Bang Concerns

Bringing up all the new modules at once and making a clean break from your legacy system seems very enticing. But Business-Software.com said it best in its Top 20 ERP Software Vendors Revealed report when they discussed a common problem with the Big Bang approach:

'Big Bang' ERP implementations come with quite a bit of risk. Few businesses have the resources to handle an all-at-once deployment. Therefore, it is critical to choose an ERP vendor with a flexible and modular platform, so it can be rolled-out in phases.

Phased Concerns

Some companies allow you to bring up one singular module (such as order entry) at a time. The greatest disadvantage to this method is it fosters resistance to change and requires dual efforts throughout your organization. If all you bring online is inventory control, then everyone else down the pipeline (such as your scheduler and shipping department) is doing redundant data entry with the legacy system until their portion is brought online as well.



DELMIAworks' comprehensive system model is unique, so we recommend a hybrid method of the two approaches above. DELMIAworks encourages you to bring up the entire core (sales orders, scheduling, accounting, shipping, inventory, purchasing, etc.) at once because those tools are completely integrated and function at a premium when done in tandem. In addition to the core, DELMIAworks recommends that you select some critical peripherals to bring online in Phase 1, based on individual company needs. Our RealTime™ monitoring system is usually at the top of the list, followed by modules such as quality and warehouse management as we move down the phases. The key is to prioritize.



Setting a Realistic Timeline

Regardless of the implementation method you select, be careful you don't bite off more than you can chew. All parties involved need to be realistic about the timeline. In the end, setting reasonable expectations boils down to available resources. If you can be practical about the number of employees and the percentage of their time you can assign to this project, then your implementation specialist can offer an accurate idea of how long it should take.

"Implementations have a huge impact on your time," says Hoium. "Most of the people picked for the team are already busy doing a full time job currently and we are asking them to do another full time job on top of that. I try to help people realize how much time they have to offer and then schedule the project accordingly."

If it helps, you can begin by breaking the implementation process down into key milestones:

Hardware Requirements

Take a good look at your hardware needs (and we don't just mean servers). Do you have scanners? Do you have label printers? Are you installing RealTime? Are you using tablets or any other mobile devices on the shop floor? Do you have wireless access in the building? Hardware requirements are an often overlooked, yet a significant milestone to consider when planning your timeline.

Data Migration

The old adage, "garbage in, garbage out," has never been more accurate than when it comes to data migration. Carefully consider your data collection and input process (including sales orders, inventory items, BOMs, customers, vendors, etc.), then begin deciding whether you plan to cleanse and start fresh from scratch, input every bit of data you own or scrub your current data and only enter what you need? Will you manually input your data or data load? If you are manually entering data, be realistic about the amount of time your employees will be able to devote. Are they 100 percent dedicated or 10 percent dedicated? Do they have other responsibilities?

"I am always amazed at people's expectations. Is it realistic to expect to go live when you have 10,000 bills of materials with only one person entering them, giving 10 percent of his time? No. You have to be realistic about how long it is going to take and whether that meets the guidelines of what you are trying to achieve by go live," said Bianchi.

You must also consider your data strategy in regards to historical data. What do you need to import in order to maintain an accurate history? What do you do with the old data that you are not planning to import?

Process Analysis and Training

This phase of implementation is where work instructions and standard operating procedures begin to take shape. Together with your implementation specialist, you will work to adapt the system to solve your operational needs while beginning the training process.

“This is your opportunity to make changes. Just because you’ve done something one way for the last 20 years doesn’t mean it’s good or it’s right. It doesn’t mean it’s wrong, it just means we should evaluate,” said Hoium. “What sets you apart from your competition? Those are the things that we’ve got to protect. Everything else should be on the table to discuss.”

It is essential that you begin to shift work responsibilities at this stage. If you are introducing new functionality, such as warehouse management, be sure that the employee embracing this new project can be relieved of his other duties in order to focus on the new product and sufficiently train his team members. How much time do you plan to allow your employees for training and is management on board to follow up with those employees to check in on milestones along the way?

Gap Analysis and Conference Room Pilot

This milestone identifies and uncovers areas of improvement before go live. Your implementation specialist will walk each department through their required daily activities, making sure the final work instructions and processes can be mapped for future use. Do you understand how to do your essential daily responsibilities? What do you still need to be trained on? Are there any unknown “gotchas” lingering out there?

At the end of the implementation process, DELMIAworks’ goal is to have no surprises that come out of the system and complete work instructions in place. That way, when it is time to flip the switch and go live, you can reliably pull out your work instructions and be successful.

Go Live

This is the exciting moment when you bring EnterpriseIQ live at your facility. Then it’s all about successful repetition for Phase 2 or a new facility, if applicable.



Most Common Implementation Problem

It is time to reveal the most common implementation problem that plagues companies of every size, in every industry. No surprise, it is Time Management. Regardless of your type of organization, time management is always a trying issue that rears its ugly head in every aspect of implementation, from data migration to training.

“It’s very common for people to wait until the last minute. They realize, oh my goodness, I am going live AND then there is a mad rush. The largest challenge is that you can’t batch learn with EnterpriseIQ, because that is not how your day to day works. You have to do your processes side by side with your old software so you can feel and know how EnterpriseIQ is reacting compared to the way your legacy system reacts,” said Bianchi.

Sometimes time management reveals itself in the form of procrastination because employees are uncomfortable or afraid of the new system. Employee change management issues manifest into time management problems. When DELMIAworks’ implementation specialists are not on-site, employees still need to train, record their standard operating procedures, make sure work instructions are in place and not get lax.

If you can manage it, DELMIAworks recommends that you have one employee 100 percent dedicated to the implementation 100 percent of the time. They are the on-site driver offering assistance where departments might be lagging and making sure everyone is sticking to the timeline and getting their tasks done. Without a dedicated resource, it is hard to keep things moving forward.

Hopefully the information in this whitepaper has emboldened you to take charge and embrace your implementation process. Armed and ready with these important tips, you have taken steps in the right direction to conduct a successful implementation. The implementation process is not easy, but the efforts taken today will pay off handsomely in the future.

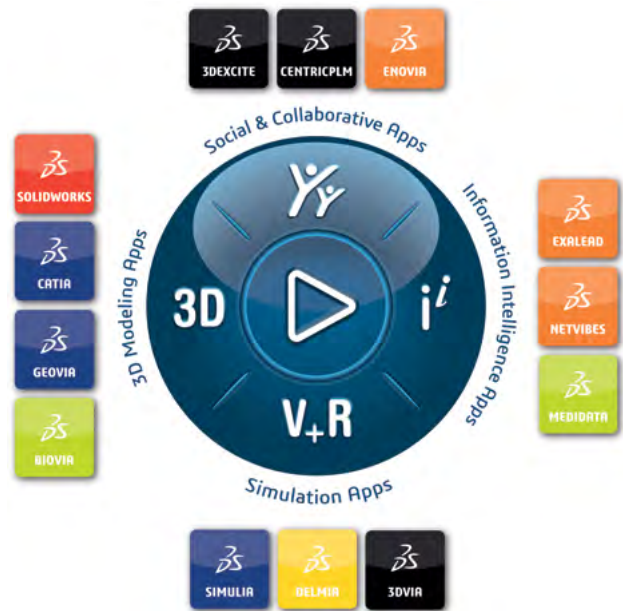
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