

Are you prepared for ERP success?



How XSOL makes an ERP transition smooth sailing

Selecting and implementing an ERP solution is one of the most challenging change events that a business can undergo. Yet systems that integrate all of an organization's business functions are indispensable for enabling the organization to operate effectively in today's trading environment. Manual systems, are too time consuming and too error prone to be a viable alternative.

ERP implementations, like many IT software projects, often fail to deliver what was expected and have a high rate of *restarts* – the situation in which an implementation is halted and then restarted based on the lessons learned during the initial attempt.

Yet successful ERP implementations show that the problem is not the ERP itself. It is the process of change itself - the way job functions are adapted to a new work environment and the way the new system is extrapolated from what is currently being done. Existing work functions must be either:

1. Carried forward as is, or...
2. Altered to fit the ERP system and the new way of doing things, or...
3. Eliminated because either the ERP makes it redundant or it was unnecessary in the first place.

For ERP implementations, as with most projects, preparation is the key ingredient for success.

Why things get choppy

The traditional approach to ERP implementation is to define the new work environment (known as *requirements gathering*), configure the software, and then train staff to perform the ERP functions.

The quality of the requirements directly impacts the success of an ERP implementation, and it is a tough ask. The result depends on a supplier knowing the business, their ability to ask appropriate questions, and the ability of staff to provide accurate answers.

This is challenging for supplier and staff when they have no shared experience or frame of reference to provide a common understanding. The problem is worse if managers or supervisors are asked to describe what their staff do.

Every organization should have documents that describe precisely what their processes and people do, but this is rarely the case. They may have procedure manuals or compliance documentation for ISO, SOX, etc. but these are rarely up-to-date or accurate. Critical knowledge is often transmitted verbally or through informal systems, which with time and personnel changes become unreliable.

Knowing what is happening in a business and how it needs to be modified to cater for the new ERP needs a cost effective way to accurately extract and gather information; emphasis on cost effective, since having consultants start with a blank sheet is an expensive and one-off exercise.

Fast track to the finish

In most situations administration functions should be fairly standard making it possible to employ a pre-defined set of *Best Practice* processes that require little or no change. This enables you to focus on the processes that add value and make the organization unique.

XSOL employs real life constructs such as desks and work centres that force staff to think about what is really happening in their own work environment, ensuring that the requirements that the supplier and staff define are as accurate as possible. But what makes XSOL so valuable is its ability to enable change – to modify predefined processes to fit your specific needs.

“The XSOL models we now have are built to a level that someone can come off the street, understand our business and very quickly be brought up to the level of how to do the job.”

US industrial company

Invest now or invest far more later

Invest early in defining what the organization does, so that an ERP vendor can commit to supporting what makes you successful ...otherwise, run the risk of an ERP implementation restart.

XSOL prevents restarts and gives you a platform on which to build new business capability:

- Management analysis of business for planning and determining operational success
- A common language so staff can describe operations using the same terminology
- Ability to change quickly - because structure prevents mistakes from being made
- Compliance audits (ISO, SOX etc.) initiated at any time, with little additional cost.

“If you are implementing ERP, XSOL is a must-have. After the first pass our efficiencies have improved, our documentation has improved, the level of detail has improved and business ownership has improved. We have got systemic benefits all the way around.”

US industrial company