

## Viewpoint

# Avoiding Implementation Pitfalls

## Achieve a Successful Cutover

Warehouse management implementations are long, challenging processes. Without proper guidance, implementations can get out of hand quickly, leading to disorganized, postponed, or even cancelled go lives. Defined goals, proven methodology and strong leadership are vital characteristics to successful implementations. However, there are several mistakes companies can make during the implementation process that can greatly hinder its success.

### Failure to set expectations

Without a clear understanding by all parties of the end goal, many implementations are doomed from the beginning. Cutover dates, adjusted headcount requirements, ROI numbers, and potential interruptions all need to be taken into account ahead of time. Sales, marketing, and IT all need to be made aware of all the changes. Clients need to make sure there are one or more point persons on the project and adjust his/her schedule accordingly.

### Lack of leadership

This one should go without saying, but there are countless examples of implementations that failed due to lack of leadership. Often times, project managers from the client side are still required to do their full time operation or IT duties in addition to the implementation. The client manager needs to be someone whose first priority is the implementation.

### Lack of communication between parties

Lack of communication is another critical mistake in many implementations. Often project decisions are made without key parties present. Whenever this occurs, those present need to make sure the absent parties are updated of the decisions. Pushed dates, process changes, outstanding issues, and project updates all need to be shared with each and every key project resource so that everyone is on board and working toward the same goal.

### Lack of ownership by operations

Once the go-live is complete, project teams are going to clear out and move to their next project. Operations will be left to run the system. End users will approach them with

many questions and executives will want them to pull data. Stress to the operations team how critical this is so they can use the available resources before they move on.

### Insufficient Testing

You can never test enough. System, end user, volume, and field acceptance tests are all vital to the success of the project. Don't just test the functionality of the new modifications. Test all of the processes surrounding each of the modifications. Run through testing iterations multiple times. Get end users familiar with the system by pulling some of them into the testing cycles. The more interaction they get with the system the more comfortable they are going to be during and after go live.

### Insufficient Training

Provide super users and end users with multiple training sessions. Allow supervisors to train their employees. Not only do end users get to see a familiar face training them, it gives the supervisors good practice with the system. In addition, do not train too early. The majority of the information will be gone by go live if the training happens too soon. If schedules force you to train early, offer a refresher course close to the go live date. Cheat sheets for users is a good way to provide quick reminders on how the software works.

By being aware of the pitfalls and taking proactive measures to avoid them you will help ensure a successful implementation.

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