SELECTING NEW SYSTEMS
IMPLEMENTING THE CHOSEN SYSTEM

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This presentation is designed for small/medium sized companies, who do not have anything like the project budgets and resources available for new business systems projects, but who's requirements are often as complex as their much larger counterparts.

The advice therefore is aimed at being practical, rather than necessarily following formal and 'recognised' methodologies to their full extent.

This is the third and final presentation, in this short series and is focused on some advice surrounding the implementing of your chosen new systems. Separate presentations show the process of first identifying the potential suppliers and then narrowing down the final choice and negotiating best terms.

Implementing the chosen system

- What is the biggest single reason for project failure?
  1. Software just does not work as it should?
  2. Supplier does not deliver anyway?
  3. Other?
- YOU and "the day job"
  - Key staff having enough time is **critical** to the success
  - But they all have jobs to do, other than putting in systems…

There are of course examples of projects that have gone wrong, because the chosen system simply does not meet the requirements, or the supplier has failed to deliver. But if you have done your selection of supplier and systems diligently, then you should have minimised the chances of this. That is why it is so important that YOU get those early decisions right.

By far the biggest factor, that is directly under your control, that could lead to project failure, is not making sufficient time, of the key people in your organisation, available to the project. These are the same people who are likely to be critical to the day-to-day operation of your company, so it is not an easy balancing act to achieve.

The big secret…

- What do you do if key staff just will not be able to make sufficient time available?
- DON'T GO AHEAD WITH THE PROJECT!
- So where can you get help?
  - Backfill where possible, <u>but needs budgeting</u>…
  - Do bring in an external Project Manager to run the project and manage the supplier, <u>but needs budgeting</u>…
  - Possibly bring in testing 'experts', but DO NOT abdicate responsibility, <u>but needs budgeting</u>…may be some of this can be offset with the supplier?

If the project is that important then you <u>have</u> to find a way of making sufficient time available

You can (and should) bring in external help, but make sure that you budget for it upfront, don't let it be a surprise down the track…

Bring in an external Project Manager, to manage you and the supplier, again this is an area where I can help you. This does not mean that an internal person should not also have some project lead/ management responsibility, but unless you are running projects of this magnitude regularly they are unlikely to have the experience, unlikely to have the dedicated time and may not be able to be sufficiently impartial.

You cannot abdicate testing totally to someone else, as your people will know what the results should look like the best. BUT an external organisation can help develop some really meaningful test scripts and can help execute them (and perhaps repeat them many more times) and record and report back results to the supplier.

If you are implementing relatively new software from the supplier, or into a new industry sector, then perhaps they can share in the costs in some way, as they are also benefiting?

What to do and what not to

- Do NOT compromise on testing
  - Do not allow your or the supplier's testing time to be squeezed (project runs over, end date stays the same…)
  - An hour spent now will save many, many times over if the problem is found in live running
  - There is no solace in blaming the supplier, if your business and your customers are feeling the impact
  - And if you have 'signed off' on the system it is likely to be at your cost…
  - And contractual norm would be go-live is deemed as acceptance…

I have seen it so many times…the project starts late, or delivery overruns, but the end date stays unchanged and so the testing has to give…

This really is a false economy and a fundamental error

Even if the supplier is largely to blame, contracts cannot protect you from damage to your reputation and the impact of a poor implementation is always going to be felt primarily by you and your customers

And the cost of putting it right is likely to be yours also….after all, who would go-live on a system that they knew was not fit for purpose?

What to do and what not to

□ Do NOT underestimate data conversions
  ▫ It is highly likely that your existing data has errors and omissions
  ▫ You cannot spend too much time making sure that the data has converted correctly and can be reconciled to your old system (at least know the reasons for differences)
  ▫ As with software testing; an issue resolved prior to go-live will be multiple times easier than an issue found post go-live

I have seen it so many times…the project starts late, or delivery overruns, but the end date stays unchanged and so testing has to give…

A real false economy

Contracts cannot protect you from damage to your reputation

And the cost is likely to be yours also….

Who would go-live on a system that they knew was not fit for purpose?

What to do and what not to

- Plan <u>and budget</u> for a phase 2
  - Go-live is just a milestone
  - Do not keep extending the scope of phase 1
  - Get some benefits delivered earlier than later
  - Get some stability
  - Get some practical experience
- The real priorities will surface…be organised to deal with them promptly

Don't be tempted to keep adding to the original scope of the project

Get some of those original benefits delivered on time

Get some stability in the new system and processes

No matter what people think they need, some of that will change when they get practical experience of the system – suddenly some things will not seem so important, while some ,missing functionality will really stand-out

Keep the project team in-place long enough to deal with the real and immediate priorities; again this needs budgeting for

And good luck!

GOOD LUCK!

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