

Lessons Learned From Difficult ERP System Integrations



ARTICLE 06.27.23 PHILIP MASSEY

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) integrations come with high stakes. If you get everything right, your team will be fully prepared to utilize a robust new system to transform everything they do for the better, and the implementation will be a game-changer for the whole company.

However, if the implementation goes sideways, it can put the company in a worse position than it was before, causing setbacks that are difficult, and sometimes impossible to overcome. It's not unheard of for failed ERP implementations to sink a company.

That's why it's important to follow proven models that *work*. Thankfully, we can learn from difficult ERP integrations of the past and identify what does and doesn't work.

Lessons Learned

- **Don't Fly Blind** – When so much needs to go right (but can easily go wrong), it's essential to plan each step of the ERP implementation, including setting timelines, budgets, team roles, and much more.
- **Be Selective** – Find the perfect ERP – one that checks each box in terms of features, price, scalability, support, etc. – will be easier to implement than an option that's merely adequate. Repeated examples from the past confirm it's not worth undertaking the implementation just to end up with an underwhelming ERP.
- **Get Management Onboard** – Management at all levels, and especially in the C-suite, needs to be not just onboard with the implementation, but enthusiastic and involved as well. Management can remove roadblocks during implementation and ensure the final product meets the needs of executive decision-makers.
- **Budget Everything** – It's a fact: ERP implementations are a major drain on time, energy, money and every other resource that matters. Budget the resources allocated to the project to keep it on track and indicate early when something isn't working.
- **Go Slow** – ERP implementations can move slowly, but they eventually end up with a viable product. Rushed implementations, on the other hand, rarely result in an ERP that lives up to expectations. Good results take time – the key is to make the best use of that time.
- **Customize Carefully** – Customizations make the implementation more difficult (and more risky as a result) but they also enrich the finished product. Choose which customizations are essential or impactful and cancel (or delay) any others.
- **Involve Employees** – The people who will actually use the ERP should be involved early and often. Make plans to conduct training throughout the implementation period. Just as important, solicit feedback from end users about what they want, need, like, and dislike.
- **Test and Test Again** – Never assume that something works (or still works) as intended. Take the time during implementation to systematically test and retest everything so that the best product possible goes live on day

one.

After planning, executing, and optimizing scores of diverse ERP implementations, Dean Dorton has learned what works, seen what doesn't, and developed a proven process for achieving a successful implementation. Leave nothing to chance – the stakes are too high. [Contact Dean Dorton.](#)