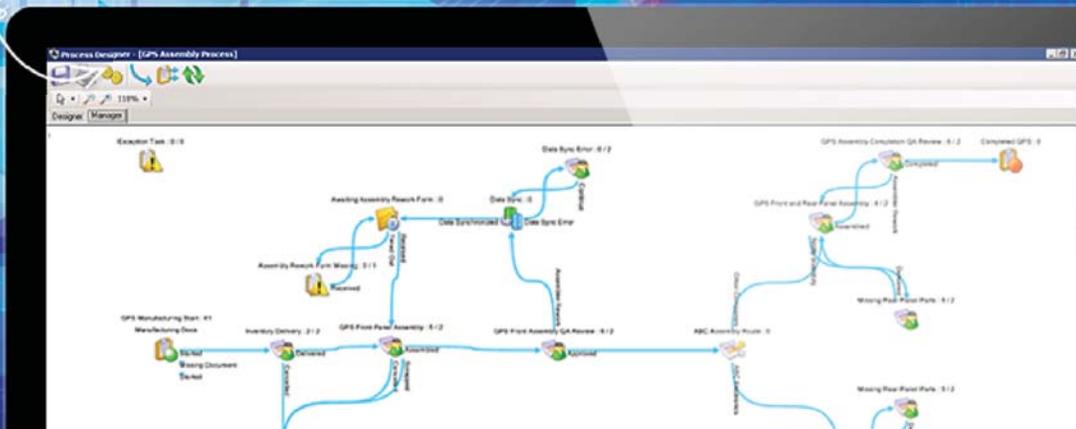


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WHITE PAPER

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT OVERCOMING THE TOP CHALLENGES



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PROCESS IMPROVEMENT OVERCOMING THE TOP CHALLENGES

Taking on the task of implementing any new business solution is often daunting and time consuming. Even the best laid plans are going to come with potential roadblocks, so facing them head on and steering clear of the most common ones means you will have a far greater chance of success.

Process improvement solutions have the potential to help a company cut costs and improve processes, but poorly planned and implemented rollouts can result in financial and productivity losses, and a project failure.

According to a recent industry survey, the following are the top obstacles encountered by firms while implementing new technology, be it Business Process Management, Enterprise Content Management or Process Automation. In this paper, we cover these primary challenges and identify the ways an organization can avoid or overcome them to successfully achieve process improvement that lasts.

CHALLENGE #1

Underestimated process and organizational issues

In general, the initial engagement between vendor and client should follow a clearly defined process, which is

a best-practice for success in the adoption and use of technology. The first step within an organization should be a discovery process to explore the organization's flows and processes and provide suggestions for process improvement and efficiency maximization.

The Solution: This first step is not complete until both the vendor and the client are clear on the architecture of their business processes. If your provider does not offer this assessment, it may be a red flag, and time to find a new solution.

CHALLENGE #2

Lack of training and support

If you don't know how to use the solution, or if it's hard to use, then chances are that your implementation will fail. Time and time again, expensive software purchases go under-utilized because of lack of training and support material. There may be elements to the software that you are not taking full advantage of, or features that are not being utilized correctly due to improper training.

When working with any new technology, especially an out of the box solution that doesn't come with training or an implementation team, chances are there are features that your staff either doesn't know exist or doesn't know how to use.

Without an in-house expert, how can your organization be sure they are taking full advantage of the technology?

The Solution: To safeguard against this problem, choose a vendor that offers continued services, support, education and product enrichment to ensure that the software investment is paying off.

While an out-of-the-box approach is often appealing initially due to the lower price, the costs quickly begin to rise as your business realizes that in-house experts must be hired, you are responsible for properly training the staff, and additional personnel must be brought on to properly implement, manage and support the system.

SharePoint is an excellent example of this exact scenario. Unfortunately, too many organizations underestimate the long term costs of such solutions. As Tony Byrne, founder of CMS Watch, states on Search CIO, "you cannot overestimate the need for SharePoint training among your own staff."

CHALLENGE #3

Project derailed by internal politics

The ubiquitous Achilles' heel of every implementation project: internal politics, which govern and decide the fate of many software investments.

The Solution: To avoid confusion and disagreements during the implementation phase, after discovering the needs and flows of the organization, your provider should offer a customized strategy and expected ROI. A well detailed and thorough plan will avoid any surprises and reduce potential disruptions to the process.

CHALLENGE #4

Uneven usage due to poor procedures and lack of enforcement

Ongoing process improvement and ensuring enterprise adoption are among the requirements to consider an implementation successful.

The Solution: Your system should be designed to ensure compliance with internal and external policies, keep change management efficient and reduce downtime during operation optimization.

CHALLENGE #5

Underestimated the effort to distill and migrate content

Whether its scanning reams and reams of paper documents or importing gigabytes of files, the migration of your mission-critical documents shouldn't be a hassle or a reason to derail an implementation. Come to think of it, your commitment to migrate the content was the reason you probably looked for a solution in the first place. The implementation plan and strategy should ensure that your company feels comfortable with the procedure as you move forward with your solution.

The Solution: Be sure to choose a provider that can assist and provide support to overcome this challenge.

CHALLENGE #6

Poor planning

Thorough planning is absolutely necessary if a program is to succeed. Close to 70% of all process improvement projects fail, according to a recent Wall Street Journal report. Chances are it was not a hasty decision when your organization decided to take on a process improvement project; the planning stages should not be hasty, either. Yet, in the rush to get the new system up and running, too many companies do not spend enough time in the pre-planning phase.

In fact, part of the problem is that businesses are not properly trained or equipped to effectively dissect their own processes in the manner required for optimal success. Also, similar to the old adage "can't see the forest for the trees," businesses can get derailed by (often insignificant) details and can struggle to stay focused on the big picture.

The Solution: When selecting the right technology for your business, choose a vendor that will be your partner, not just your provider. An ideal solution will provide technology and services to ensure you get the solutions you are seeking. Thus, make sure your provider offers a trained and competent staff, not just an IT team, but process experts who can assist your business in the planning stages. Another option is to bring in a third party business consultant that is experienced

in implementations similar to your own project.

CHALLENGE #7

Lack of Goals & Priorities

Priorities and goals need to be established before starting any new system.

Without priorities, there could be delays and more time taken than necessary on any given project, but with the proper priority system in place, tasks can be completed in an orderly fashion and big issues can be solved. This will allow companies to get to the most important, pressing tasks first and go from there.

Without goals, there is not way to measure success.

How will your company know if your implementation and overall system is successful or not?

The Solution: Set objectives and priorities early. Work with your vendor to ensure that goals are aligned with overall business plans and that they are being met at specific points along the way.

Don't wait until 6 months after roll out to evaluate if goals were met, be conscientious along the way and evaluate early and often. Don't be so invested that you cannot be flexible and adaptable, as this is the best way to ensure long term success.

