

Failing to Pinpoint IT Requirements Leads to Failure



By DYLAN PERSAUD, Managing Director, Eval-Source

When embarking upon a software selection process, it is imperative to determine the correct business objectives as to why your company is looking to implement a system in the first place. We have seen cases where companies buy a software application for needed feature and the application then fails to meet many other requirements. It is this short-sighted buying process, where the software is implemented and the organization only uses a fraction — usually about 15 percent — of the overall functionality the system is capable of delivering.

The consulting company doing the software evaluation must have the capabilities to differentiate between the types of software in the market and apply that knowledge to alignment of business initiatives. The consulting company must also build the appropriate requirements gathering procedures to evaluate current and future requirements and walk the organization through prioritization of those needs — in terms of organizational importance and how they integrate with each other. It is this step that organizations often miss that leads to IT failure. If not properly defined, the application purchased often cannot deliver the depth of functionality for a specific requirement or the agility required by the business to respond to changing needs.

This often leads to overselling, where organizations buy too much for what they need and do not utilize the full functional capabilities of the system. Our research illustrates that 65 to 75 percent of companies do not use their current ERP to its maximum performance capabilities. In many cases, organizations are unaware of these features/functions and are surprised that they have something that has

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already been paid for but is not in use. The issue of not recognizing features or business requirements is fundamental in selecting the correct software for your company. If an organization does not utilize the application it purchased to maximum capabilities, the perception of IT failure may become the company perception and attitude, although the software is capable of performing the preset-defined functions.

Pointed solutions are growing to incorporate many new and complementary functions, which confuses the decision process even more as to a pointed solution or best of breed ERP or system suite. Many applications, such as CRM, have grown to incorporate social media, collaboration, business analytics, marketing automation, customer service/help desk functionalities. Furthermore, Project Management Apps have grown to see collaboration, billing, resourcing, and some CRM capabilities incorporated in some PM applications. The growing range of functionality from these point solutions can quickly obscure the project scope as where to draw the line and what budget is available for that project.

A proper impartial software evaluation process that considers non-tangible and tangible aspects, strategic organizational fit, proper requirements gathering and prioritization, budget formulation, vendor viability, implementation/consulting cost, as well as a documented/structured evaluation process and project scope are aspects that must be considered in a software evaluation process. The software evaluation process should arm your organization with the most correct and up-to-date decision-support information to achieve project success. A proper evaluation process can sometimes identify red flags with potential vendors and save the headache of implementing the wrong solution.

Eval-Source is an Analyst/Consulting consulting firm that offers enterprise software evaluation, cloud computing consulting, business process optimization, and technology planning for organizations.

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