The Cloud Doesn’t Guarantee Project Success

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Just because you have chosen to go with a cloud solution or a SaaS application doesn’t mean you will have guaranteed project success. The risk of IT failure still exists. As a result, organizations must realize that cloud does not mitigate improper project management procedure.

After all, the same tasks must be undertaken to ensure project success as an on-premise system. The same criteria and tasks that exist for an on-premise system must be adhered to for cloud/SaaS solutions to achieve IT success. So many issues have to be considered: employee training, employee adoption, contingency planning for the system, administration, storage, business disruption, manual processes, realization of changes to business processes, documentation of procedures and processes, supplier notification and data setup from trading partners, data setup and testing, how security and protection of your data will occur, importing and migration of data from older systems and possibly legacy based systems, importation of contacts, supplier setup, designation of new administration procedures, adherence to timelines, project management approval and sign-off, UAT, technical support responsibilities and most importantly the change management that must be handled by the organization to ensure a proper go-live and an IT success.

Cloud/SaaS implementations introduce different KPIs that should be addressed by the organization. These newly created KPIs should be weighed correctly in the TCO and ROI calculations when implementing a cloud solution as they are different from that of on-premise. A cloud/SaaS implementation only mitigates the risk of hardware installation and reduces the time for installation. Meanwhile, the organization must still recreate their processes and relay the configuration of the

system to the vendor for the vendor to get the organization’s configuration correct. A point of delay may actually be the enterprise software vendor itself. Cloud and SaaS have gained so much hype that organizations are spending on this type of delivery model and often there are delays for the vendor to deliver upon your organizational timeframe. Because it is a cloud solution doesn’t automatically mean it can be installed in short order. In some cases, some more popular enterprise vendors are actually looking for sales engineers, business analysts, configuration specialists, specific vertical expertise, and application-specific expertise to keep up with the new pipeline of customers. The availability of the vendor to deliver the cloud model software or infrastructure either through a reseller or from the vendor directly is affected. They face resourcing issues themselves. That said, organizations must build this timeframe delay into their overall project plan to compensate and to adhere to its own organizational timelines.

With a cloud implementation, security of data, business redundancy, administration, backups and SLAs must be considered. It is these areas that require more scrutiny as the software vendor will handle the corporate data, security, and delivery requirements. The challenge is to manage the implementation from the vendor and the organization, as well as have a seamless handoff of pre-implementation steps to post-implementation between the vendor and organization. It is this project management that must still be followed to prevent IT failure. As can be seen from the long list of pre-implementation steps, effective project management still has to guide and manage these tasks for IT success. Just because you have chosen a cloud/SaaS option doesn’t automatically ensure everything will work out. Good luck, but don’t take a cloud/SaaS lightly as there are still a lot of steps and tasks to succeed.

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