

# Building a Project Team for a No-Fail ERP Implementation



ERP implementation is an undertaking that affects all departments and touches every employee. It takes a cross-functional project team with a strong leader, executive sponsorship, clear objectives and sufficient resources to implement ERP successfully.

The implementation team should be organized and managed mostly like any other project team. The differentiator with ERP is that the heart of the team—and therefore the implementation—needs to be your users. The system belongs to the users, not IT, and it is up to the users to integrate the system's functionality into the successful day-to-day running of the business.

Here are the key components of an ERP implementation project team built for success:

## Executive Sponsor with the Vision, Authority, Resources and Time

Without executive commitment and involvement, the project will likely fade in importance and be shunted aside in favor of something more important or more immediate. The executive sponsor needn't be full-time—just involved enough to inspire the team, keep resources dedicated to the project and resolve any conflicts that can't be settled at lower levels.

## Project Leader

The project leader is a key role and should be filled by a person who knows your business, can manage a project and work with a wide variety of personalities. This is a leadership and communications role. The project leader keeps the teams organized and focused on the tasks. He/she chairs weekly meetings and coordinates between the various working groups. The project leader shoulders the lead responsibility and represents the implementation team to company management.

## A Well-Managed Plan

Whatever project management approach and tools are used, it is critical that the project is mapped out with a complete schedule, resource plan and an individual assigned with responsibility for each task. The plan must be reviewed and updated weekly. Any deviations or concerns need to be addressed and resolved as soon as possible so they don't get out of hand or affect other tasks and schedules.

### ERP LINK

Another key to success is to choose an ERP implementation partner experienced in implementing ERP in companies like yours. Read ["Choosing an ERP Implementation Partner"](#) for tips on how to find and select a provider of these services.

### Motivated Team Members

The project will be broken down into a large number of identified tasks with schedules and dependencies. Each task will have a leader assigned and a team of participants to accomplish the task. Each of these sub-teams must be motivated to complete their task on time and on budget. The best way to do that is for each task team member to have some skin in the game—something to gain by successful completion of the task. Involving the direct beneficiaries (people implementing their own part of the system) is best.

Sub-task leaders are de facto members of the overall project team and may step in and out of that role as their task is active, about to begin, or has a dependency on other active task(s).

### Communications

It is important to keep good records and communicate your progress in order to keep everyone motivated, informed and on the same page. Document each team meeting and distribute the information throughout the team and the company.

The project team must also closely track and manage budgets for the implementation, as well as formally “close out” the project with documented achievements, challenges, solutions, costs and benefits.

### The Users

System implementation is always a team effort—it really can't be done any other way. The team members should be active participants from the very beginning. The best way to get user buy-in and “ownership” (a sense of responsibility for the system's success) is for them to participate in the selection of the system and implementation planning. This way, they are implementing THEIR OWN system, and have a stake in its success.

Learn more about [Three Implementation Strategies for ERP](#) and check out [The Hidden Costs of ERP](#) to help keep your project's budget in check.



With over two decades of experience and 400+ customers, Western Computer provides enterprise solutions and services that meet our clients' unique needs and outperform their ROI objectives. Contact us to learn more about how we can help with your ERP, CRM, supply chain management and business intelligence solutions.