

Advice :

IT professionals that we surveyed had some great advice to pass-on. Here's a few of the key messages they stressed:

Advice on Process

"Define and document your business processes before you implement ERP, do not underestimate the time and the budget that's needed for the project. Be careful when you are selecting the consulting company that will implement the systems."

"Do not customize/modify during implementation. Implement only standard functionality and minimum packages/modules for go-live. Only after implementation you can begin to optimize and consider minimum modification."

Advice on Management Support

"Ensure that management understands the magnitude of implementing an ERP and that it will significantly affect your entire organization. It is very labor intensive and requires that your best people leave their regular jobs to work on the implementation. Management has to be fully committed and a strong advocate."

"Get all departments to buy into the project. Don't underestimate the necessity of office politics. It can make or break a project of this size. The technical details are trivial in comparison."

Advice on Education

"Make sure your ERP budget includes a healthy allowance for education ((What is ERP, what will it do, what won't it do, etc.) Approximately 6% of our ERP budget is for education. We have seen that come back to us several times during our implementation process to date."

"Get an excellent project manager. Communicate at all levels of the organization that will be impacted by the ERP implementation. Involve the accountants so that project costs may be accurately monitored on a weekly basis. Have frequent ERP implementation team meetings with the objective of identifying problems early and to prevent project creep."

Advice on Sourcing and Vendor Negotiation

"Take it in chunks if at all possible. Implement a proven release of software. Be tough but fair with consultants and vendors. Expect the staff to take ownership, not the contractors. Staff the project with business people on a full-time basis. Get their hands on the system as quickly as possible. Hire an outside group to train; the internal staff will be too busy before go-live."

"Have a strong project leader with specific goals. Executive staff must be involved with the project. Do your homework before spending money on consultants. Get the commitment and involvement from the users."

"Ensure you have a business partner working with you on the implementation, not just a consulting firm. Build internal skills to support and enhance the application for the future."