

Buying accounting software? Get buy-in.

If you're looking to buy software, make sure you get management and employee buy-in. Otherwise, you could wind up spinning your wheels—or worse, spinning your company out of control with accounting solutions that don't add up.

In many cases, initial optimism about new accounting system software lulls management and employees into a false sense of security. Notes business consultant Eric Kimberling in a June 11, 2008 online article: "Early in their software [selection process](#), these companies are usually filled with optimism...However, something changes once they hear the starting gun and start the actual ERP implementation. People have a tendency to move from wild-eyed optimism to modes of fear, panic, and defensiveness once the race begins."

Writer Dusty Alexander offers a summary solution in an ezine article. He notes, "What separates the successes from those less so? In a word: **Involvement**...[implementation](#) is more than a fix and more than a series of processes; rather, implementation is the dedicated system-wide effort of continuous improvement that researchers tell us employ[s] people, education, management, and timing for success. All four of these elements are often seen as hurdles to overcome for implementation, and indeed if there is not a sense of involvement regarding each then implementation can be a grueling and, perhaps, unsuccessful, task."

In an August 4, 2008 article headlined, 'Top 10 Success Factors in ERP Deployment,' author Alex Hankewicz recounts results of a study featuring IT professionals involved in a recent or prospective Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) deployment.—the umbrella under which accounting system software upgrades fall. Following are references from Hankewicz's article spotlighting top [success factors](#) impacting such undertakings as an accounting software [upgrade](#):

Management Support—Senior management must play an active role in providing top-down leadership for the project and participate in key decision-making.

Project Team Knowledge—The project manager (PM) must be able to assess the relative skills sets required, where they will be required, and what to do if there are skill shortfalls.

Interdepartmental Cooperation—The PM builds interdepartmental teams, resolving schedule conflicts and constraints along the way.

Clear Goals & Objectives—In the project-mapping process, a blueprint is defined and goes through an evolutionary process to validate and refine it.

Project Champion—This senior management team member champions ideas and deals with concerns of the PM, communicating with senior executive management for resolution.

Project Communication—It's key to communicate effectively across several levels of management, in different time zones and to be able to manage priorities.

As the buy-in process unfolds, managers and the overall project manager of the accounting system software implementation need to be sensitive to employee fears or resentment related to the new accounting solutions. These can spread like wildfire and demoralize a substantial portion of the workforce, turning accounting solutions into major problems. Two areas requiring constant vigilance are fear of layoffs/changing roles, and uncooperative behavior.

A Bnet.com article discussing SME implementation issues—and relevant to challenges faced when installing new accounting software—emphasizes, "It is important that employee fears are addressed right at the start...Further, the new roles and responsibilities that employees will be required to undertake need to be clarified as early as possible...The ERP implementation process requires absolute cooperation from the client's employees...The knowledge that the ERP project has the full support and backing of their top bosses...draws acceptance and support from the employees."

Make your accounting software solution [work for you](#). When looking to buy software, make sure to look for buy-in to make the entire spectrum of accounting services function productively, as well.

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