

ULTRA

CONSULTANTS

6 SOFTWARE SELECTION & IMPLEMENTATION PAIN POINTS + SOLUTIONS

For manufacturers, operating in today's tough business environment is one more challenge in a long list that includes difficult-to-manage processes, variable raw materials prices and complex supply chains.

Distributors, too, face new challenges brought on by changing marketplaces, increased competition and a critical need to create differentiation and added value.

The solution for many companies – big, medium and small – is modern ERP solutions and other technologies that help them manage more effectively, streamline key functions and enable digital transformation.

Of course, the ERP selection and implementation processes often present challenges of their own. To steer you around trouble and help you drive success, Ultra's expert consultants compiled this list of common pain points – and their solutions.

6 Software Selection & Implementation Pain Points + Solutions

PAIN POINT 1

Establishing accurate requirements and relevant priorities

Incorrect requirements will yield the wrong software choice, and faulty priorities direct attention and effort away from core issues.

Solution

- Determine and document the current state.
- Develop a succinct and focused list of requirements and opportunities.
- Develop and vet priorities with leadership and core users.
- Formalize documentation to support.

PAIN POINT 2

Selecting and negotiating with the solution vendor and implementation partners

Homegrown selection protocols are seldom successful, and will create limitations that will not be discovered until well into the implementation process.

Solution

- Develop and apply a structured approach to selection.
- Develop standard measurements and criteria.
- Evaluate functional fit as the primary focus, but also consider technical, implementation and cost fit.
- Ensure apples-to-apples grading.
- Utilize intelligent and appropriate negotiation techniques.
- Pay attention to contract clauses.

PAIN POINT 3

Generating a feasible and realistic implementation plan

Relying on a vendor-templated plan, which rarely caters to special needs, may leave many parameters unmet.

Solution

- Leverage the vendor's approach but create a customized version that addresses unique requirements and includes all supporting activities.
- Have realistic expectations that align with a transformation roadmap.
- Generate a budget that will meet the needs of the plan.

PAIN POINT 4

Estimating resources needed, making a backfill plan, and upgrading aging hardware

The implementation effort often is misunderstood and underestimated. Most implementation failures are attributable to resource issues.

Solution

- Develop a realistic view and honest assessment of resources available.
- Mitigate conflicts with backfill plans.
- Anticipate circumstances that will result in utilizing outside resources or purchasing new hardware.
- Gain solid leadership support and core team sponsorship.

PAIN POINT 5

Building effective organizational change management

These aspects often are forgotten, and even the most robust implementation plan will fail without them. ERP implementation does not simply carry existing processes into a new platform. In many cases, these initiatives require a redesign of the way things are done at multiple levels of the organization. Change causes stress, and knowing who will be impacted—and proactively communicating to all stakeholders—will go a long way toward mitigating uncertainty and fear, and will help ensure a positive outcome.

Solution

- Implement strong governance protocols and have effective collaboration tools in place.
- Document accountability measures, and get buy-in and sign-off from all relevant parties.
- Prepare for resistance to change—and be ready to manage it.

PAIN POINT 6

Managing implementation partner performance and ensuring accountability

Project charters without specific deliverables, guarantees, performance incentives, breach penalties and exit clauses are almost worthless.

Solution

- Insist on a proper project charter.
- Pay close attention to contract details and clauses—and demand clarity.
- Establish a risk management plan to avoid mid-implementation questions and confusion.
- Monitor adherence to budget, timeline and scope.
- Communicate effectively when there are risks—and escalate when appropriate.

For more than 25 years, Ultra Consultants has utilized its proven methodology, ERP expertise and industry knowledge to deliver measurable business performance improvements to manufacturers and distributors in virtually every vertical.

WHY ULTRA?

- Our services are built for your industry. **We understand your processes and requirements.**
- Our solutions leverage our expertise. **We help you choose software to meet your unique needs.**
- Our results reflect our ERP experience. **We minimize risk, maximize benefits and deliver success.**