Remove risk from your ERP project

Eight questions which will identify and remove risk from your ERP project so your business can transform with confidence.

IFS

enterprise
Consulting, Inc.

Contents

1. What are your project KPIs and objectives?

It's all too easy to rush in and place all your focus on operational matters, but do your KPIs link to the strategic objectives of your business? Ask yourself, will this transformational project support the focus areas defined in our company report?

In practical terms, this means starting at the very top, with your strategic objectives, then working down through individual functional areas. Begin by asking, what's the Chief Executive looking at? The Chief Financial Officer? The Chief Marketing Officer? Then move down a level, to each of their direct reports. What initiatives are they leading? What are they being measured on?

At the beginning of any project, an important task is to scrutinize and challenge the value that's expected.

Business Value Engineering supports this process as it facilitates a common vision and value system, both articulated in the same language, so it means the same thing to all parties. Quantifying the intended value of the software–in

financial terms–enables you to clearly communicate the project goals so you can align your stakeholders with the expected outcomes from the beginning.

We use the IFS Six Box Model™, which we complete with you at the beginning of a project to help you define your strategy. We break it into a series of enablers and blockers, and then create a board-level business case.

IFS Six Box Model

Business Initiatives	As-Is-Landscape	To-Be-Landscape
Business Case	Obstacles	Enablers
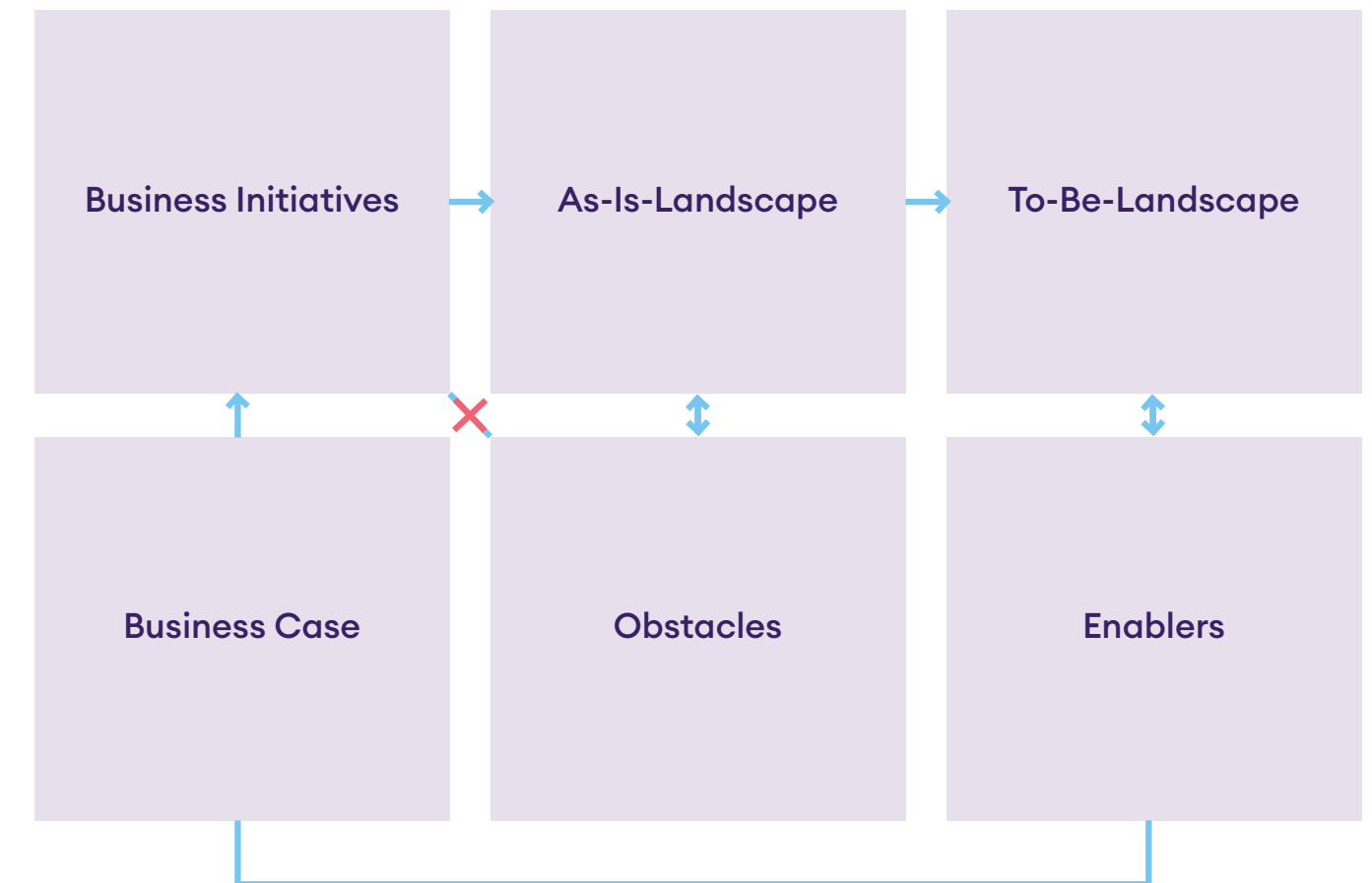
2. Who is governing each stage of your project?

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You have to have an executive sponsor. You have to have someone who's really championing the project.

CIO, March 2020

There are many things that can go wrong if project management isn't up to scratch. Projects can go over time and over budget. If projects are put on hold or take too long to deliver value, it can adversely affect the project team's reputation and the investment can be reconsidered.

The project should be divided into a series of stages with key milestones, so you can track and communicate progress. Assigning each member of the project team a clear role and set of responsibilities, ensures they have ownership of their deliverables. This also enables you to assess if the team has the relevant skills, competence and capacity to deliver the project as planned.

3. What are your project controls?

The biggest bump in the road is often an unexpected decision during implementation to change plans or to extend or lessen the project.

It can be a challenge to manage everyone's expectations when this happens. Assessing the impact of the change on the original schedule and cost, then gathering feedback and effectively communicating this to stakeholders will keep the project on track.

By having clear, transparent guidelines, agreed expectations and defined milestones, you can ensure that the solution delivers value at regular intervals and the business stays engaged long-term to drive disruptive but transformational programs of work.

The ability to react to changing business demands is difficult to manage without previous experience in encountering these types of challenges. For example, what if a function that a senior executive relies upon is overlooked during the requirements gathering stage and this is raised after the project commences? There are several options which must be evaluated including:

- Can we identify a way of achieving the same outcome with standard functionality?

- Is there a valid workaround so that this request can be handled after the key project milestones are delivered?

- Do we retrospectively amend the project scope which will have an impact on cost and timelines?

Working with experts who have deep knowledge of the software and understand the business impact is key to handling this in an efficient and empathetic way. Effective project controls keep the project on track to help you achieve long-term business acceptance of the solution.

4. How will you ensure your solution design meets your business specifications?

Reduce implementation time

Customers achieving a 90% solution fit with pre-defined industry elements have seen a 50% reduction in implementation time and cost in comparison to their peers.

IFS 'Accelerators' study 2019 based on five implementations using best practices.

The key here is to have the right experts involved in the decision making. People who can bring the right industry, product, solution and functional experience are critical to the project's success.

This can be a big ask. How can you be sure that people who are making decisions that will influence your business performance over the next 10 to 15 years are the right people to make those calls?

Say you're a maritime company, a shipbuilder, and you're making key decisions about how a process flow is going to work with your Customer Service team—you need input from someone who understands the current situation as well as the ambitions of the company. In this instance, consulting a stakeholder such as the Head of Sales or Customer Experience can help ensure the right decisions are made.

Bringing in experts who can check the test approach, specification, readiness and acceptance criteria are valid enhances your ability to deliver a high-quality solution that fulfills business needs and requirements.

Top tip

Utilize best practice tools such as the IFS Scope Tool™ which visualizes the solution and business process flows, mapping all key objects to the solution.

5. Do you have access to people with the skills and experience?

Sourcing talent with the right mix of skills sets isn't easy. Your delivery team will need a knowledge of your business and how to configure the software to support the business processes with the greatest efficiency. This is often a collaboration between current staff who know your business and outside resources that know how the software best supports your industry and/or business.

For each deployment, you need many different specialist skills working together to achieve the intended outcome. Choosing the right mix of complementary skills can bring value to your program and ensure best practice delivery.

Having the right mix of skills in the project team will help you complete the project with a standard solution that is easy to maintain and upgrade. Experienced business analysts within your project team will be able to limit modifications by advising on less invasive ways to achieve the business outcome, such as using standard functionality elsewhere in the application or configuring the solution.

6. How will you validate that your infrastructure is fit for purpose?

The two biggest challenges here are the initial sizing and understanding of the deployment model. For example, there may be a fundamental misunderstanding in the organization of what it means to have your application running in the cloud. Or if your company's own hardware is used, there may be a lack of skill and understanding in-house to size it correctly, which may lead to issues later on.

Utilizing the right level of testing helps you identify and address any issues. For example, if hardware isn't sized correctly and there isn't an adequate testing approach, there is a risk that business transaction volumes will affect the system performance.

Experienced system engineers and technical solution managers can deal with this very quickly, gauging requirements, validating testing approaches and thoroughly mitigating risk. It's a quick win that is often overlooked and helps prevent unforeseen costs later in the project.

> " The interface between the keyboard and the chair—the human being—ultimately holds the keys to our success or failure"
>
> Dave Coplin, 'The Rise of the Humans, How to outsmart the digital deluge'

7. How will change management be handled?

Business acceptance is key to a successful project however change management is often overlooked. Many organizations struggle to define who is responsible for it and how best to deliver it.

Getting the system up and running is just the beginning. You also need to ask: Are the business users prepared to work in a different way? Do they understand the benefit of this change and the value it will bring to them and the organization?

For some, it can be fairly easy. They log in to a different screen and get on with their day. For others, your project may fundamentally change what they do. Understanding the readiness of the organization to receive the result of the project and the impact on individual users, and effectively managing this change through the business, will enhance the chances of project success.

Productivity

IFS users increase productivity by 18%. That's the equivalent of almost an extra day of productivity every working week. That extra time provides an opportunity for IFS users to add value to the organization in new ways.

IDC White Paper, sponsored by IFS, The Business Value of IFS Enterprise Solutions with Industry-Specific Use Cases, September 2019.

8. How will you manage system operations post go-live?

Project go-live is just the beginning. You need to ensure that the solution can deliver value to the business. Who will manage the systems day to day? When business requirements change, who will decide how the software should adapt to meet those changes and maximize the value it delivers.

This is essential if you want the software you deploy to remain relevant. If your business software isn't an enabler, it can become a simple facilitator, or worse still, a constraint.

Planning how to support operations post go-live ensures your solution will stay relevant. There are several approaches to resourcing an IT Operations or Business Systems Support function so you can choose what works best for your business.

About IFS

IFS develops and delivers cloud enterprise software for companies around the world who manufacture and distribute goods, build and maintain assets, and manage service-focused operations.

Within our single platform, our industry specific products are innately connected to a single data model and use embedded digital innovation so that our customers can be their best when it really matters to their customers—at the Moment of Service.

The industry expertise of our people and of our growing ecosystem, together with a commitment to deliver value at every single step, has made IFS a recognized leader and the most recommended supplier in our sector.

Our team of 4,000 employees every day live our values of agility, trustworthiness and collaboration in how we support our 10,000+ customers. Learn more about how our enterprise software solutions can help your business today at **ifs.com**.

#MomentOfService

About Enterprise Consulting

Enterprise Consulting is passionately committed to helping companies achieve business results with IFS. We offer services to support companies throughout their lifecycle including implementations, upgrades and optimizations. Enterprise Consulting can also manage a customer's IFS deployment in their Enterprise Managed Cloud hosting solution. Want to learn more about how we can help you? Request a free consultation at https://www.enterpriseconsulting.net/contact.