



Implementation of Business Solutions

Introduction

Your organization is about to implement a standard software package. You know that such an implementation process is no picnic. Furthermore, the results are crucial to your organization. An implementation is not only concerned with the new system. The work processes are changing as well. Employees require training and ways need to be found to convert the data from the existing system. However, the overall project cannot and should not take too long. You are preoccupied with questions such as:

- What is a responsible approach that also produces results?
- How long will the project take?
- How much is this going to cost?
- What is a good approach to ensuring the involvement of employees?
- What changes will be made to the organization and the ways of working?
- How can we ensure that this change is properly and quickly implemented?
- How do we communicate the changes to the organization?

VDVL has more than 10 years experience managing and supporting implementation projects for organizations in the Telecom & Internet markets. We have knowledge of and experience with the implementation of the following types of software packages:

- Enterprise Solutions (ERP)
- Order Management
- Project Management
- Billing
- Configuration Management
- Service Management
- Financial Management

1. Selection of Implementation Strategy

The selection of the strategy/approach determines the complexity and elapsed time of the implementation. The most common implementation strategies are as follows:

Business Process Reengineering Implementation

This is an implementation whereby the business processes are first designed/redesigned after which the ICT software package is configured and developed, followed by employee training and the conversion of existing systems.

'As-is Implementation'

The functionality of the existing systems is incorporated into the new business applications on a one-to-one basis. The business and work processes are in principle the same in the new

and old situations. Such an implementation is really an ICT migration. The processes and functionalities are only optimized at a later stage.

'ASAP Implementation'

Speed is the decisive factor in an ASAP Implementation. The business and work processes are designed in accordance with the standard processes incorporated into the application software. The usual practice is that a version of these three strategies is adopted. The choice is dependent on a number of factors, such as the existing process and system design, the targeted result of the change, the possibilities inherent in the new application software and the availability of manpower, time and money.

The elapsed time of an implementation project is not only dependent on the strategy, but on other factors as well, such as:

- the size of the organization and the number of end-users;
- the complexity of the processes and functionality to be implemented;
- the speed with which the organization is able to take decisions;
- current projects in progress;
- the number of business units in which the software package is to be implemented.

An important first step in an implementation project therefore is that, based on our knowledge and experience, we translate your wishes and expectations into a responsible implementation strategy for your organization.

2. The step-by-step implementation process

In accordance with VDVL's standards, the implementation process consists of five main steps.

2.1. Project Preparation

The project environment is defined, and the project is set up and defined during this phase. Elements include:

- definition of the project organization (steering committee, project managers and project teams);
- identification and documentation of the different responsibilities and staffing from within the organization itself;
- training of project team members in the implementation methodology;
- preparation of the global project plan;
- identification of the required hardware and software;
- a kick-off meeting with the steering committee and project teams, to officially start up the project.



2.2. Business Blueprint Phase

The purpose of this phase is to translate the target business objectives into process and system wishes and requirements. This ultimately results in a so-called 'business blueprint' that describes the new situation. This blueprint is submitted to the steering committee and management for approval and forms the starting point for the execution of the implementation.

2.3. Realization Phase

The standard software applications are configured and if necessary adjusted on the basis of the 'business blueprint'. The result is a system that has been specified in accordance with the customer's wishes, reflects the organization and business processes, contains tombstone data and supports a fully integrated process flow. This also includes extensive testing using situations from actual practice. Maximum knowledge transfer from external consultants to representatives of the user organization takes place during this process. These employees play a central role during the training of other end-users.

2.4. Preparation for the Production Phase

The key milestones in this phase are the training of end-users and the transfer of data and the system to the production environment. The last system tests consist of testing the conversion procedures and programs, and the interfaces, volume and load testing and a final user acceptance test.

2.5. Go-live and Support

Support must be provided to the production organization immediately after the system is transferred to production. After all, becoming familiar with the new processes and systems affects production. To close the initial production period, an evaluation is conducted with all end-users and management. The outcome of this evaluation provides direction for any required changes and improvements in the design of the processes and the system in the future.

3. Critical Implementation Success Factors

The selected vendor, implementation partner and strategy, and the methodology applied, determines 50% of the success of the implementation. The other 50% is determined by a number of critical success factors:

3.1. Management Commitment

This is the most important success factor. Management must be represented on the steering committee, must be able to decide rapidly about project opportunities and communicate the importance of the project throughout the entire organization.

3.2. Freed-up Project Team Members

An energetic project team. The project team members are freed up for 100% of their time to participate in the project (minimum is 70%). The team consists of representatives of each central business process involved in the implementation; usually these are key users within the organization. Their contribution is of essential importance. Work groups should not have more than 4 to 5 members. Any more creates additional review and consultation effort.

3.3. Manageable Scope (Functionality)

The scope of the implementation project must be manageable. This means that initially only the primary business processes are included as part of the project. All so-called 'nice to have' functionality is shifted to a subsequent phase. Implementations that incorporate all functionality and associated changes in one go, almost always lead to protracted and unmanageable projects in which actual costs exceed budget.

3.4. Clear Business Objectives

There must not be any confusion about the business objectives and the business processes to be automated. If this is nevertheless the case, this will lead to the need for many and lengthy discussions during the implementation project to clearly identify the objectives and processes.



3.5. Make use of Standard Business Processes

Business application software often incorporates standard business processes. For example, the SAP software includes approximately 800 standard business processes constructed on the basis of the experience of thousands of customers. To prevent the wheel from being reinvented, it is therefore recommended to make use of the standard business processes incorporated into the software package (also referred to as 'best business practices') as much as possible. This also means no or as few as possible modifications to the system. If speed is of the essence, the abovementioned success factors are then augmented with two other success factors:

- Little or no reengineering
- Few organizational adjustments

This is because both of these steps take time due to the required conceptualization, discussion and consultation efforts. These processes easily take 6 to 12 months.

4. Who actually carries out the implementation?

In most cases, the vendor of the business software package does not look after the implementation. As a customer, you are consequently faced with the question as to who can carry out the implementation. VDVL can, in collaboration with you, select the 'system integrator', who not only has extensive knowledge and experience, but also is a good fit for the culture of your organization. We will then assume the role of architect for the implementation and ensure that your objectives, interests, wishes and requirements are incorporated into the configuration of the applications and in the implementation within your organization. Furthermore, we will guide and support you and your organization during the change management process that goes hand in hand with the implementation of the business applications.

5. Quality Management

Monitoring and managing quality provides an essential contribution to the project results. VDVL is of the opinion that the quality assurance function must be independent of the ICT project organization and the project manager. This means that:

- An independent party must fulfill this role.

- This party must have an objective and expert perspective in relation to this area.
- The quality manager has his/her own direct reporting line to the project's customer.

Quality management is on the one hand concerned with the quality of the process used to obtain results and on the other hand with the product, i.e., the results to be achieved. Quality management is also focused on the objective to be achieved, i.e.:

- an operational ICT system;
- an adjusted organization structure and a new way of working;
- a reliable, accurate and fully operational system;
- an appropriate management organization.

For further information about quality management in support of software package implementations, please see our white paper: Quality Management.

6. Conclusion

The success of the implementation of a commercial software package depends on the following:

- a responsible implementation strategy;
- the identification of critical implementation success factors;
- a realistic project schedule and a stable project organization;
- the selection of a good vendor;
- the selection of an experienced implementation partner.

Given its knowledge and experience, VDVL can, together with you, fulfill these conditions, so that you can rely on:

- an optimal relationship between the required time, costs and functionality;
- a responsible implementation for the organization;
- the efficient use of people and resources;
- improved business operations following the implementation of the commercial software package that matches your expectations.

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