Does choosing the right ERP solve all your problems…..!

A Company's biggest Challenge to adopt an ERP is their readiness !!

We do have choices to select the best among the comparable lot… having said that it is quite tedious to really measure an appropriate ERP application, on features, functionalities, reports etc., for an organization given the innumerable choices available in the market – Tier I, II, III, Hosted, Near Premises, on cloud, SOA…..

A Bigger challenge a SME is faced with, given the way they are being targeted to sell an ERP Application, is their readiness to take on the new challenges which comes bundled with introduction of an integrated workflow enabled process driven application are quite internal to the organization delving upon the idea of ERP'ize themselves.

These invisible, unarticulated challenges are hardly or never discussed by the sales team who sell the ERP, nascent project management team that is formed in a jiffy only to expedite the go live target, master data upload, few real time transactions training hands on, short review meetings where the primary agenda is only to discuss what is complete, pending and why or because of whom; take the necessary signoffs before follow up of payment is thrust upon for having completed the agreed project milestone as signed and planned.

Thus being a regular scenario of fast track implementation where the ERP sales team rejoices for having reached or neared its target of sale, implementation team rejoice for having taken the necessary signoffs, quite content having handed over the customer or its team the ERP solution. The users later realize that the benefits derived are far lesser than expected or realize that a lot could have been avoided if they were given some space to understand, explore and adapt to the dynamics of changes on hand. These realizations are in spite of having signed with the best of the class ERP application available in the market.

Avoid the Pitfalls!

A calculated and perceived approach to avoid such pitfalls are to have a check list of preparedness for the changes that comes with such integrated business process definitions via ERP are listed below …..

A Proven process for effective ERP implementation is to have a simple checklist!

....It works!!!

- *Explore the gaps*: What we mean by gap is not process gaps, the gaps *wrt* Skills and competencies in employees and management; gaps can be broadly classified as:

  a. Domain
  b. Other Skill

- *Deliberate options*: Now that you have identified the gaps, it is time to deliberate as to how you can acquire skills, the options available are:

  a. Training
  b. New Hires
     i. Permanent
     ii. Contract
  c. Consultant

- *Re-define Roles*: With the clarity of options it is appropriate to have a re-look at the organization structure, reporting mechanism, resolution methodology etc

- *Communicate*: All the exercise would derive better results if the employees are communicated about the purpose, objective etc.,

- *Form 'A' Team*: The 'A' Team has to have the right blend of attitude - optimistic, sense of commitment, principles or values they carry personally, reasons that bind them to the organization

- *Incentivize the 'A' Team*: An incentive also gives a boost to the team individually. All Incentive need not be monetary, it can be a letter of appreciation, reward in kind etc., a group photo of the team at the reception / notice board / web site will make a lot of difference to the team and the employees reporting to the team..

- Organize Trips: Organize a trip to the 'A' Team to experience few sites where implementations are in progress or have completed; allow the team to interact with the site team, exchange thoughts, drawbacks, success, failures. Carefully select the blend of sites to visit.

Lastly we strongly believe that retain the spirit of the 'A' Team after the implementation is over with go live… as the ERP process engineering is a continuous, concurrent activity till the application is in use!

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