

Are You Getting the Most From Your New System?

HR and payroll systems don't last forever. Sooner or later, they will need to be updated, if not completely overhauled. When this happens, outside vendors are usually brought in to implement and optimize the replacement system. But how do you make sure you're getting the system that you need? Where does the training come from? And how can you tell if your new system is optimized to your requirements?

In this article, we'll look at all of these issues, and offer specific guidance on how to get the most out of your new system implementation.



IS YOUR SYSTEM OPTIMIZED?

Implementation services from the vendor are generally based on a standard number of hours, requiring all implementation activities be completed within a specified time frame. The amount of time allotted for requirements-gathering is restricted which makes it essential that you to state everything you want in your system before the implementation begins. While this approach can be an efficient information gathering method, the downside is that your requirements may end up being incomplete or may not address the full vision of your system implementation needs.

It is imperative to uncover and completely understand your needs to ensure your system is fully optimized. This is why many vendors will ask their clients to fill out a “discovery document” to define the new system requirements. Unfortunately, it is inevitable that clients will tend discuss their needs based on their current situation rather than looking into potential future needs. However, a new system could and should provide new options and workflows that the client may be unaware of. Good implementation discovery methods should support clients by providing them with probing questions to elicit this information.

Clients installing new systems may be looking to expand their business—but it may not be clear to them how their company will function if they succeed in this growth. These future requirements may not make it into a discovery document. Clients also may feel pressed for time and resources through implementation without enough time to discover or discuss possible new work methodologies and needs. If these issues are caught in time, additional requirements can be added to the implementation process, which may increase the projects costs and the time it takes to complete it. If the implementation is complete before the additional requirements are discovered, then costs and timescale changes will be more significant.

If the client lacks experience with system implementation, then it is likely that they will not know what questions to ask their vendor. As a result, they may not understand why the system is set up in the way it is, or how to validate the system is indeed optimized to the requested specifications. It is not always possible to fully understand how a new system is going to be used, so to avoid cost and time-delay issues, it is imperative that you carry out a comprehensive review of your needs and wants before implementation.



THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIP

Once you have the opportunity to really dig in and focus, you may feel comfortable taking on these additional functionalities and begin using the system to its maximum potential. However, if as a result of your increased understanding of the intricacies of planning something as time consuming and detailed as an implementation, you feel like you don't have that knowledge or expertise in-house, then reaching out to a third party can be an effective solution for you.

Finding a partner with specific system expertise provides an opportunity to have someone work with your department during and/or after implementation to design new work flow processes, carry out advanced configuration procedures, create complicated reports, and help you to achieve specific departmental and company goals. You can take the partnership with a third party further and specifically look for an outside expert to coach you on your new

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THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIP *(CONTINUED)*

system and what is possible when using its features to their fullest potential. An expert coach can show you in a more direct way than a training video how to maximize your skills or help you and your team discover any unused system functionality. Your outside coach could work specifically on a short, two- or three-day contract or liaise for a longer period on a long-term project.

Whether you take the task on internally using these tips, or hire a partner who can bring their implementation knowledge and system experience to the project, your company will benefit through enhanced productivity now and in the future.



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