

The skill of delivering real business value through ERP

Software choice pales in comparison to the importance of the skills of those driving the project

Key to the successful implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project is ensuring that the entire project value chain is aligned with the business purpose of the relevant venture. ERP is a combination of software and activities that many companies use to manage operations.

“Defining a business’ purpose for the ERP project will enable companies to ensure delivery of that purpose through the chosen systems,” says Hein Pretorius, the founder and CEO of Onpro Consulting - specialists in delivering value through ERP. “Clients and vendors need to be part of the same value and supply chain to ensure real business value is delivered through ERP,” explains Pretorius. “It is therefore critical to ensure that the project team – whether consultants or employees – have the right skills for the task at hand.” Pretorius highlights that it is the executive’s responsibility to guarantee that the project is staffed with skilled employees who are able to ensure the business purpose of the project is achieved successfully. “The technology utilised pales in comparison to the importance of the skills and focus of those driving the project,” warns Pretorius. ***Focus on preparation, not deadlines***

One of the biggest problem areas is that companies can spend up to six months negotiating the price, and then rush the project because of a deadline.

“Surely it is more important to have skilled employees on hand and knowing that they are going to deliver a quality solution at the end of the project. If a company understands its business purpose, as opposed to wasting time haggling over a price, it will not rush the project and have it fail at a huge cost,” says Pretorius. “Giving the project team sufficient time to prepare properly is much more important than the deadline date. In this respect quality is really more important than the deadline. If you compare it to a physical goods supply chain, each player in the supply chain has a role aligned to one

another so it can deliver value to the end customer who buys it from the retailer's shelf.” ***Focus on business purpose, not project***

purpose

“To make South African business more competitive, companies should clearly define its purpose within the broader context,” says Pretorius. “This will stimulate businesses, making them more competitive within the world economy.” “Being passionate about driving the solutions in ensuring the project's business purpose is achieved, is what companies should strive for. ERP is a critical link in guaranteeing the success of a project. It is also important during implementation in identifying what is wrong with the system and delivering solutions to improve it,” concludes Pretorius.