



ENSURING SUCCESSFUL SOFTWARE ADOPTION

You've chosen new software, prepared for implementation, and installed and tested the applications. Your company is ready to start using the software. At this critical time, it's wise to make sure that you consider potential challenges so that the process is as smooth as possible.

Some of these potential challenges include making sure that users are comfortable with the new software, and that they have enough time to learn to use it properly. Other challenges include software functionality itself, and making sure that user opinions about functionality are collected and carefully considered.

Prepare

Let your employees know that changes are afoot – good changes. Prior to implementing the software, give people real-life examples of how their jobs will be easier to perform and how they'll be able to make better decisions using the new software. Consider creating a document that outlines old, manual processes and new, automated processes.

Educate

Education and training are key to successful software adoption. Depending on the number of people who need to be trained, the ways in which they prefer to learn, and your current resources, consider one of the following options that may be available from your implementation partner:

- **In-person classroom training** – This option typically takes place over the course of one day.
- **Web-based training** – Like classroom training, Web-based training is offered as a live session. However, it's conducted over the Internet, so employees can log on from virtually anywhere.

- **E-Learning** – This self-paced training allows employees to learn at times and in places that are convenient for them.

You may find that you have to provide incentive for people to attend training sessions – usually, time is an issue. If that's the case, consider whether it's possible to off-load some responsibilities while the training is taking place. Or consider holding multiple, short training sessions instead of one long session.

During the training itself, make sure that the information presented is relevant to the learners' specific roles, job functions, and tasks they need to perform. Facilitate training with documentation and reference materials.

Gather Opinions

To minimize culture shock and establish buy-in, consider creating a committee to hear user feedback and suggestions, and make sure that the committee captures all comments. This information will be exceptionally useful to you; it can form the basis of streamlined processes and greater productivity.

If your resources are spread too thinly to form a committee, you might consider setting up an anonymous way for people to tell you what they think of the new software and to provide suggestions for improvement. Again, this information should be aggregated so that you can use it to make further refinements.

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