

# DAMN, YOU'RE STUCK!

Hey there.

So you clicked on my link which indicated you need help.

Don't worry, I'll be contacting you before you can count to 1,000.

Having a tough go are you?

Or maybe you had a question regarding how my methodology can be applied to your situation. No worries, we'll get you back on track.

In the meantime, I've put together a list of things you could possibly do while you wait for me to contact you. One of them just might be the one you're looking for.

Here are some of the most common issues facing an implementation at go-live:

## ***Love for the legacy system***

Are the users still lovin' on the legacy system? You know, the old one you're trying to replace?

It's very common to have people latch on to something familiar while rejecting something that is unfamiliar to them (the new software system).

But to steal a line from the song Closing Time, "Every new beginning grows out of some other beginning's end."

When it comes to transitioning to the new system, it's best to sever ties with the old system ASAP. As in the day you go live with the new system, the old one gets shut down.

I know, I know. "But how do we fix the data that is in the old system if we turn it off?!" Please read [blog post](#) regarding Phase 4 of the training and implementation plan. There is a section in there that talks about cutover.

*You've got to have a solid cutover plan to be able to leave your legacy system behind.*

Send your last invoice from the old system. Ship that last customer order from the old system. Close the books one more time in the old system.

LET IT GO

If there's an invoice or customer order that needs to be fixed after you have transitioned to the new system, you'll have to make the fix in the new system.

*For example:* when I was rolling out the Project Module, there were some invoices that were sent in the old system but the customer came back to us and told us there was an error on the invoice that needed to be corrected.

To do this, we had to first cancel (void) the invoice in the old system. Only a handful of people in accounting still had access to this legacy system and we had to work with them to get it voided.

After that, we simply created the correct invoice in the new ERP system and sent the revised invoice to the client.

You have got to have this type of plan in place when you cutover.

What I just described was an issue from a systems/process perspective.

What about the people side? How do you get them to let go of the old system?

After a certain ERP implementation, I visited about 10 to 20 key users of the system and observed their operations. While they used the new system for the basic requirements, they were not using it fully.

I found that in many of these cases, they were still using the legacy system. So...I started a campaign called, "Say No to [LEGACY NAME REDACTED] and in three months ensured that the legacy system was physically removed from all the computer systems. This resulted in full use of the new ERP system.

You too might have to start a campaign. Who knows, maybe some day you'll make into politics afterward.

### ***User resistance***

Ah yes, the stubborn users. We all encounter them during an implementation don't we?

A user's resistance to change from a system they have used for years can quickly turn into a roadblock during your implementation. This usually happens because the processes involved in the new system are very different from the legacy system.

Especially when implementing behemoths like Oracle and SAP.

The new system may require accessing additional screens, more mouse clicks, etc.

In addition, a large ERP system uses a centralized and integrated database with more controls on processes, thus needing more checks, interlocks and database postings, when compared to the old system.

This gives the impression (or it just might be true) that the ERP system is slow and users, who may already be resistant to the change, often start complaining.

So how do you handle this situation?

Well, first we have to look at why the user is being resistant to change.

Here are some reasons along with an explanation:

<b>Reasons of Resistance</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Parochial self-interest:	Resisting change to prevent losing something of value
Misunderstanding and lack of trust	Misconceptions about the implications and insufficient information of the benefits and gains
Different assessment:	Employees see more costs than benefits and those initiating the change see the reverse as true
Low tolerance for change:	Fear of not sufficiently developing the skills and behavior required
Increased efforts:	Additional efforts or abilities needed for the job

Where does your particular user(s) fall in that table? Once you have identified the reason and the explanation work on getting him/her back on track ASAP.

One thing is for certain: BE PATIENT

Often you'll see users who have been in the legacy system for some time be the ones giving you grief.

Depending on the person you could expect red herring excuses when these users are confronted with their lack of user adoption.

Be prepared to put in extra effort with the "resistors" in order to get them to support the new system. With some persuasion and extra coaching, most of them can be brought around.

Finally, recognize you are probably going to have a few hold outs that will respond only to the stick side of a carrot and stick approach. You need to be supportive of people going through the change, but not at the expense of jeopardizing the project.

It may be that you'll have to lay down the law to a few holdouts to get them with the program. However, be sure to get management involved before doing so.

Change management is one of the most difficult parts of implementing software applications. It's not technically difficult, but it involves changing people's attitudes and in many cases the corporate culture.

The upside for you?

Studies have shown that 55.8% of users indicated a *lack of user training and education* as the reason for resisting the change the new system.

Why is it an upside you ask? Because by following our comprehensive training plan this issue fixes itself! :)

[Here the entire plan in PDF.](#)

### ***Someone didn't get invited to the party***

Also known as: lack of user involvement during the pre-implementation phase.

Often organizations do not involve key users during the implementation process or seek their active support

In the implementation guidebook link I shared with you above, there is a "Prerequisites" section that talks about you going out to meet and learn from the experts in the organization. When you meet with them, the goal is to sit down and document all the business processes this expert is responsible for.

This is know as getting key users and stakeholders involved early and often. If a new system is implemented like a routine software upgrade, then it will only result in a half-hearted acceptance of the system.

Big ERP implementations require lot of pre-implementation activities like: process modeling, process mapping, etc--activities that require extensive interaction with key users.

It not glamorous, nor fun, but it's GOT to happen. These are very critical steps to the success of your software launch.

How do you fix it?

You might be able to salvage this relationship/issue depending on your personal skills. It might take a little butt kissing and in extenuating circumstances, an apology (I don't recommend saying "sorry" outright at work unless you really f&\*^ed up).

However, re-engage with that person and acknowledge that you need his/her help with this. Ask them what they would do in this situation.

Ask them the question over lunch. And be sure to buy their lunch.

In this instance you're basically doing what you should have done in the beginning. Better late than never I guess?

### ***Poor planning and time management***

Ugh. This one is not good. Companies often tend to be intimidated by the time and money required for an implementation and then seek to accelerate the go-live date.

Without the right strategy and tools, implementation acceleration has the risk of inadequate end user training, an ineffective change management strategy, reduced reengineering of business processes, and other problems that can lead to higher overall cost of ownership and the erosion of benefits from the new system.

On the other hand, extending the implementation period has its own share of drawbacks.

Excerpt from a client: "We have taken a very long cutoff period for implementation, i.e., we have decided to go live in August 2010 instead of doing so in April 2010. To do this we had to backdate the server, and adjust some stock transactions, accordingly. However, this is now proving to be a major challenge while reconciling accounts."

Often when a go-live date gets pushed out, it's not a good sign. And if it's because project personnel need more time, then it's a personnel/resource issue and not a software issue. You might have to look at your resources.

So what to do?

This one is tough because both a hasty launch or a delayed launch are not what anyone wants. You're going to really have to do a thorough risk analysis on your project and especially

scrutinize the critical business processes. Start with those and ensure that they work. Maybe you can live without other parts of the business not operating for a certain period of time.

Or see if there are temporary work-arounds you can implement to keep parts of the business running. It may even have to be something that is manually tracked in Excel and then later put into the system either manually or through a data load.

To avoid this in the future, be sure your implementation is done incrementally and in a phased manner.

Time is your enemy here...GET GOING!

### ***Lack of top management participation***

This list keeps getting more challenging!

There's no way around it: this particular roadblock to your implementation can prove to be fatal.

No top management support = no success.

So often a software implementation project is seen as an IT project rather than a business project and as a result, top brass of the organization refrain from actively participating in the implementation process.

This is why an IT driven implementation is sure to fail.

In smaller firms it's not as prevalent simply because the CEO is closer to ground operations and thus has an interest in seeing the project succeed.

With larger firms, you've got to keep an eye out for how meetings and corporate communications are being handled (email, TV, blog, posters, etc).

**Side discussion:** If you're part of top management or can influence top management, here's a reference table of "what not to say" during an implementation.

<b>Do Talk About</b>	<b>Don't Talk About</b>
Larger deals	Higher productivity
Happier customers	Tighter management
Less wasted effort	Automation
Improving business processes	Job elimination
Achieving goals easier	Leverage
Giving employees tools they need to succeed	All-inclusive system

If employees get the feeling that you're bringing in new software to unify the company and make it more coherent and coordinated, they will follow your example.

But if they sense you're going to use the system to lay blame or fuel political battles, they will subtly sabotage the system as they would any enemy. Instead, celebrate the small wins you are accomplishing while rolling out the system.

Don't try to do everything at once. This will overwhelm the organization and more importantly: the end-users. Without the support and engagement from the end-users the implementation will fail before it ever began.

So how do you get top management to buy in?

In reality, top management needs to be properly engaged early on so they can "sell" the project to the rest of the organization.

If they aren't selling for you, then you have a tough road ahead. But all is not lost...

There are two things you should do immediately:

1. Revisit your project plan and make realistic changes to it. If there are resources unavailable or interruptions in the timeline, make changes and notes
2. Have a forum/venue to share this updated plan (like a steering committee or governance board meeting)

This is the forum you should use to raise issues around resource availability and to highlight any negative effects on the project.

Why? The steering meeting is typically attended by the project sponsor (who should be one of the senior management team). The role of the sponsor is to support the work of the project manager and to assist in the resolution of contentious issues.

This is where honesty and integrity come in. Be absolutely clear with them as to what is going on with the project.

### ***Over Promising***

And under-delivering? Yikes.

At least 50% of all ERP system implementations do not meet expectations, and one third are utter failures.

This is another one that should have been handled upfront when first defining what business processes will be handled by the software.

Repeat this to yourself and never forget it: always be aware of scope creep! What is scope creep? It's when we can't say no to features that end users want. Rather than focusing on the critical features and getting them out the door, we say yes and continue to build and test and build and test and then delay the rollout and/or fail altogether.

So what to do here?

Depending on your situation and where you are in your career, you may have to bite the bullet on this one and acknowledge that promises were made that could not be kept.

Or...you look at what's not working and either temporarily shelve it, gather up support and resources to finish your promise, or scrap it altogether.

None of the options are going to be easy to deal with.



Always, always be clear to the users about what to expect with the new system. If you are ever asked if the software will be able to do “this” or “that” simply say “that is a great idea! Let us look into adding this feature and we’ll get back to you”

If the software can’t do it, it can’t do it. Should have selected a different one upfront.

Or pay bookoo bucks to have someone create a custom application to meet your “unique” business needs.

With all of the software available to us these days, I’m sure there is an application to suit every business’ need.

## **DID YOU COUNT TO 1,000 YET?**

You ought to have received an email from me by now. If not, just email me right now at [caguilar@lisocorp.com](mailto:caguilar@lisocorp.com) or call me at 623-203-7037 and I’ll be happy to help you.

Chat soon!

Carlos