



While the stress on business efficiency is driving organizations to implement ERP, SCM, and CRM applications, deploying these applications and realizing their benefits is a complicated task fraught with a number of risks. Quite often, an enterprise-wide rollout is a global rollout.

A new system rollout (especially in ERP and CRM applications) involves customizing a standard application to meet the unique needs of an organization, thereby changing the business processes of the organization so that they can benefit from the new application. While there are several risks associated with the mapping of these requirements and business process changes, there are an equal number of risks encountered while rolling out the application and these changes to end users.

During an application implementation, typically, organizations focus on selecting a product and its implementation. For employees, organizations put together training that is restricted to feature and process training. There is inadequate focus on enabling employees to adapt to the change, which is the primary failure point of the application implementation.

ParticipAction adopts a comprehensive training and change management strategy and ensures appropriate user adoption for every role and phase in application implementation through its Ready, Steady and Train methodologies.

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The research

Research from various secondary sources indicates that the primary reason for failed application implementations is end user adoption issues and resistance to change. Based on this research, combined with its experience in application implementations, we have captured some of the key challenges faced while implementing application solutions. These include:

- **Managing change:** Employee resistance to change is usually not factored in while implementing the application, at least not in terms of actionables, and early enough in the implementation lifecycle. In today's scenario, the focus is largely on selection of the application and 'training employees' on its features, and not on managing change in the organization. In addition, change management strategies may not address user fears.
- **Establishing context and impact of change:** The individual context of change for employees along with its impact on their lives is not clearly established. Therefore, employees don't understand the need for change, which in turn leads to higher resistance.
- **Scalability:** Another challenge faced by organizations during application implementation is ensuring that training is delivered consistently across the organization and across different points
- **Multi-location considerations:** Organizations also face the challenge of ensuring that the change initiative along with user training is consistent across multiple geographies.
- **Time to knowledge:** Another challenge is to ensure that employees are not just trained on the application, but are ready to use the application efficiently, with minimal lag from/along with the application launch.

As mentioned above, end-user adoption challenges contribute to the majority of risks associated with application implementations. Let's look at some of these challenges in detail.

User adoption challenges

A typical application implementation life cycle consists of the following phases:

- Business case development
- Requirements and planning
- Functional design
- Technical design
- Build
- Test UAT
- Go live

Typically, organizations initiate focused training activity in the last three phases of the application implementation lifecycle: Test, UAT, and Go Live. This leads to challenges both from a user's perspective and an organization's perspective.

End-user challenges

Though the end user may be undergoing training on the application, there are may be 'soft' feelings that are not tackled. These issues exist throughout the application implementation life cycle. In the initial stages of the application implementation lifecycle, typically, the end user is:

- Indifferent or curious
- Fearful of the change
- Unsure about the WIIFM (what's-in-it-for-me) value
- Uncertain about the impact of change

If these challenges are not addressed, in the later stages of application implementation, the end user, feels overwhelmed with the change, is apprehensive about the new application, does not understand why/how the change applies to him/her. As a result, end users are not confident of using the application; they are trained only on the application's features, and use the application without an appropriate understanding of the context.

Organizational challenges

So, how do the end-user challenges impact the organization? From the organization's perspective, the user challenges outlined above leads to:

- High error count
- Inefficient use of the application
- Inadequate on-the-job support

A lack of or poor employee understanding of the process and the business context leads to resistance to adapt to and embrace the change as a critical business requirement, or low employee-readiness. Thus, key risks emerge in all critical areas: Process, Technology, People, and Cost.

Our Solution

ParticipAction brings a unique, proprietary learning methodology “The Learning Construction Site” to enable application implementation in organizations. From our experience, we understand that there is more to the success of an application implementation than just training. Leveraging this experience, the product provides an end-to-end solution to ensure that all risk areas associated with application implementations and rollout are mitigated.

With pre-built, customizable toolkits for preparing, educating, and training employees on the application implementation change, our product solution overcomes end-user resistance and ensures user adoption in your application implementation. The product solution comprises three main components:

1. Ready,
2. Steady and
3. Train

1. Ready

The Ready Phase is implemented throughout the application implementation. This phase covers a spectrum of pre-built tools to ensure that users are change-ready. The Ready Toolkit comprises change management and communication strategies, and includes customizable templates and formats. ParticipAction works with you throughout the application implementation and customizes the Prepare Toolkit to your organization’s individual culture and environment.

2. Steady

The Steady Phase is implemented through the Build, Test, and UAT phases of application implementation and focuses on establishing business and individual context for the users and clarify the purpose of change. ParticipAction partners with you to drive role-specific context of change using the Steady Toolkit. This toolkit includes pre-built templates for communicating and explaining the key concepts, processes, and terminology, to co-relate procedures in the old and new system.

3. Train

ParticipAction adopts a comprehensive training strategy to provides role-based, hands-on training on the application in the Train Phase. The phase builds on the context established through the Ready and Steady phases and ensures that users are ‘ready-to-go’ and are confident of using the application. The solution framework divides the rollout into different phases and provides appropriate and specific training tools and content for each phase. The training identifies the learner’s needs with specific user roles. It subtly blends e-learning modules created through learning paths, with appropriate classroom training, trainer guides, student workbooks and classroom presentations.

The Train Toolkit comprises pre-built, standardized modules that will be customized based on the application customization. The training strategy in the pre-go live stage ensures a basic understanding that paves the way for the proposed change. In the go-live phase, the user is

supported with job aids to function independently. Our solution ensures continuous support through iterative processes that focus on ensuring 'ongoing training' for the organization.

ParticipAction's Experiential Learning Solution

Based on its experience in implementing application rollouts, ParticipAction has consolidated best practices for mitigating some key risks in these implementations:

- To ensure that the application implementation is successful, ParticipAction has found that generating buy-in across different levels in the organization is critical.
- One of the biggest reasons for application implementations to fail is that the context of change and its correlation with the employees' current work is not established. ParticipAction places emphasis on educating the employees on the process, its business context both at a global and an individual level.
- A major implementation risk for an organization is to create the training material without a significant lag time from the application launch. For mitigating this risk, ParticipAction works with the organization to create training material in step with the application implementation.
- To ensure that training on the application software/product is consistent across the organization and its different geographies, ParticipAction: we offer pre-built, standardized training modules o Creates training for customized modules using a staged delivery model o Creates post go-live user readiness kits

End-to-End Solution

ParticipAction's product solution is your faster, better, and economical solution to ensure successful user adoption in application implementations. With the product, you can:

- Reduce application implementation timeline by 30 – 50%
- Reduce application implementation cost by 40 – 60%
- Ensure standardized, yet fast-track implementation through the use of phase-wise pre-built toolkits and templates
- Reduce management and business resource time
- Ensure employee readiness for change versus only application-trained
- Reduce time to employee-readiness

With ParticipAction's end-to-end change management and implementation solution, you get a comprehensive suite to customize, implement, and rollout application in the organization. Ensure that employees embrace change and become productive faster by partnering with ParticipAction Consulting, Inc.