

Documenting ERPs for Non-Technical Users of Software

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Content

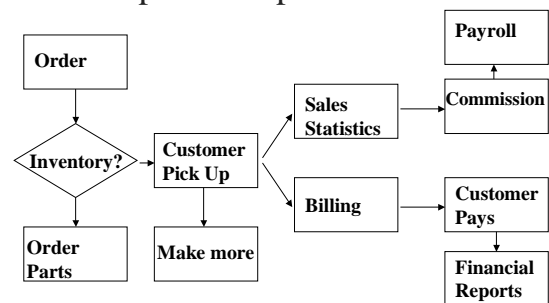
- What is an ERP
- Why ERP
- How ERP
- Who of ERPs
- Technical Communications and ERP
- Tips for succeeding

ERP

- Enterprise Resource Program
- Enterprise Resource Planning Software

- An integrated software system that can automate all departments and functions across a company

A Simple Example of ERP Flow



ERPs

- SAP
- Oracle Applications
- PeopleSoft
- Baan
- JD Edwards
- Seibel Systems

Why Implement an ERP?

- Y2K
- New technology
- Cost savings
- Reengineering -- automate tasks
- Competitive edge

The Truth about ERPs

- Complex
- Expensive
- Require a team
- Consulting Opportunities

Implementation Partners

- Vendors (SAP, Oracle, etc)
- IBM Global Services
- ICS DeLoitte
- Earnst & Young Cap Gemini
- Price Waterhouse Coopers
- Andersen
- Accensure

Key Implementation Roles

- Business Analysis
- Configuration
- Programming
- Project Management
- Change Management
 - Super Users
- Documentation
- Training

Technical Communication Roles

- Change Management
- Documentation
 - Technical
 - Non-Technical
- Training

Change Management

- Prepares workforce for change
- Facilitate communications
 - Reduce fear and resistance
 - Build executive sponsorship
- Newsletters
- Other campaign strategies
- Ensures successful implementation

Training

- Curriculum design
- Instruction materials
- Hands-on exercises
- Testing and certification
- Classroom instruction
- Distance learning
- Job aids

Training Sources

- Vendor
- Implementation partners
- In-house training departments

Custom Training

- Every implementation is unique
- Combination of technical and non-technical
- Ideal - specific to post-implementation roles
- Lots of opportunities for work!

Documentation

Needed every step of the way

- Pre-implementation processes
- Planned processes
- Specifications
- Post-implementation procedures
- Work instructions

Success Factors

- Know your audience
- Document sensibly
 - Common design
 - Documentation standards
 - Style guide

Practical Tips

- Be clear
- Be precise
- Be concise
- Speak the language
- Say exactly what to do
- Just the facts, mam!

Working with SMEs

- They are always busy
 - Don't waste their time
 - Be prepared with specific questions
 - Schedule periodic times
- Helps to know the lingo
 - Sit in on meetings
 - Listen and learn

Characteristics of Non-Technical Users of ERPs

- They are experts in the work they do
 - Accounting
 - Human resources
 - Shipping ...
- Not experts in software technology
- Busy
- Software is a tool, not a goal
- Learning software may be frightening

Common Pitfalls

- Isn't this a neat feature!
- Look at all the choices you have!
- This is how the software works ...
- This is a standard part of the software / this is a custom feature for this location

Better Approaches

- This is how you
- Currently you _____. With the new system you will _____.
- Never _____
- Always _____
- Required, Mandatory, Optional fields
- Document transactions before overviews

Why Enter the ERP Market?

- There are jobs
- There will be jobs for the foreseeable future
- Often pay more than other tech comm jobs
- Contracts tend to be long -- 6 months or more is not uncommon

How to Start

“Use what you got to get what you need” James Brown

Leverage your:

- Business knowledge
- Training experience
- Technical writing experience
- Software design experience
- Foreign language knowledge

Gaining Entry

- Vendors
- Major implementation partners
- Smaller implementation partners
- Small sub-contracts with all of the above