

***Summary***

*Too many ERP implementations are judged failures. To avoid these disappointments, we describe how ERP leaders can manage the five criteria that define a successful ERP implementation—even after the ERP platform has ‘gone live.’*

**Too many ERP implementations are judged failures.**

Instead of managing program success, most ERP implementations allow a vocal minority to have the final say on whether the project was or was not a success. And nine times out of ten, the ‘vocal minority’ setting the agenda doesn’t like what it sees.

What characterizes an organization that has ‘failed’ in their ERP implementation? What are the symptoms surrounding implementations regarded as disappointments?

- People focus obsessively on the implementation’s costs.
- People focus obsessively on the software’s performance (or lack of perceived performance).
- Fundamental changes in business practices, processes, and work are not made—effectively eliminating the business benefits the ERP system could offer.

**What is ERP success?**

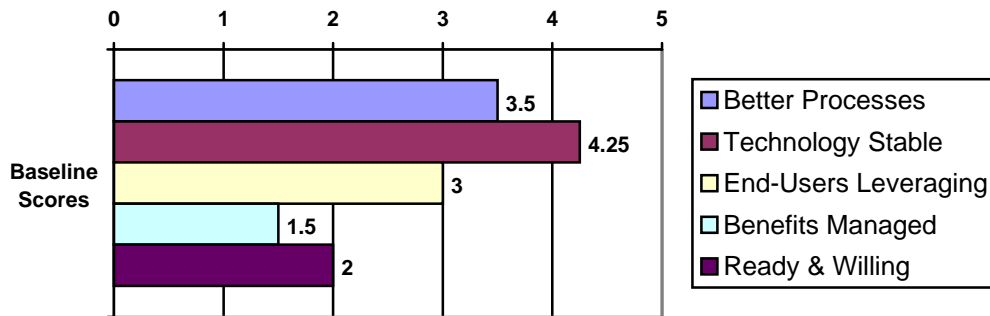
To avoid these disappointments, Meridian Consulting has identified five key success factors for ERP implementations. We call these five characteristics our ‘ERP Delivery Framework.’ Together, they describe what an implementation team needs to accomplish in order to deliver a successful ERP implementation.

1. The ERP technology demonstrably supports better business processes and practices.
2. The ERP technology is stable, reliable, and meets or exceeds performance needs.
3. End-users are leveraging the functionality at or greater than planned.
4. Business benefits are managed, are tracked, and exceed Total Cost of Ownership.
5. The organization is ready, willing, and able to repeat the project.

In this brief whitepaper we outline how Meridian Consulting helps clients turn perceived ERP failures into ERP successes.

## Part One: Control the Perception

As a first step we complete a quick baseline assessment that gauges the extent to which the ERP implementation was successfully delivered.



These baseline scores provide objective, quantitative responses to the rumors and misperceptions currently surrounding the ERP project. The baseline score is accompanied by a Post Go Live action plan that closes critical delivery gaps. The action plan specifies the system-level, process-level, and people-level gaps we observe and indicates the actions required to close these gaps.

## Part Two: Close The Gaps

In Part Two we close the process-level and people-level gaps observed in the implementation's current state.<sup>1</sup>

### *Close Process-Level Gaps*

Process-level gaps equal the degree to which the ERP technology fails to drive better business processes and practices.

Finding these gaps is simple. Ask front-line personnel whether work across the organization has changed. Further probe whether anyone would say that work has gotten better, smarter, faster, or more efficient.

We close process gap by aligning the organization's work, policies, and procedures with the functionality embedded in the ERP system. We accomplish this task by measuring the value added or destroyed by the organization in its current work mode and by re-scripting jobs, policies, and procedures in such a fashion that the ERP technology actually drives better business processes and practices.

The result of this step is a fundamental redefinition of the organization's work, a redefinition that eliminates the substantial labor-intensive, non-value added work every organization supports prior to their ERP implementation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Meridian Consulting looks to your personnel and your implementation partner, if any, to close 'system-level (i.e. technology) gaps.

### *Close People-Level Gaps*

People-level gaps equal the degree to which end-users are not (or cannot) leverage the functionality plus the degree to which the organization is unwilling (or unable) to complete the implementation.

Finding these gaps is simple. Ask front-line personnel how much their day-to-day job has changed since Go Live. Ask whether anyone would say that the implementation was a good idea in the first place.

The previous step—aligning the organization’s work, policies, and procedures with the functionality embedded in the ERP system—begins to close the people gap. But most ERP implementations are cloaked in deep-seated misperceptions. Repair at the individual level is therefore required. These repair steps vary by organization, but typically include:

- Gauging the degree to which the organization opposes the ERP implementation (we use a proprietary tool to complete this unique measurement).
- Restoring the ERP project on the leadership agenda.
- Revitalizing end user networks.
- Fundamentally revising job descriptions using our proven Stop-Start-Change format.

The result of this step is grass-roots acceptance of the system and the new ways of work it supports, accelerating and de-mystifying the transition from old, labor-intensive jobs to new ways of working.

### **Get It Done!**

Our focus on process typically identifies numerous productivity-enhancing and cost-reduction opportunities, creating the opportunity to make this a self-funding program.

Our turnaround program targets the substantial completion of the activities described in this whitepaper in a matter of months.

We ‘slipstream’ into the organization, providing experienced personnel who work alongside your team to make repairs and manage perceptions on the fly.

## **The Results?**

In the words of our clients:

*“With Meridian, I consistently saw real, measurable, data-driven, and results-oriented deliverables that addressed our core issues.”*

VP Finance, Oracle Implementation

*“Since Meridian has been involved, our implementation has been painless.”*

CFO, SAP Implementation

*“The smartest thing we did during our implementation was to hire Meridian.”*

CIOs (twice!), SAP & Oracle Implementations

*For more information:*

Meridian Consulting LLC  
One Center Plaza  
Boston, MA 02108  
617-330-1900, x224

[www.meridian-us.com](http://www.meridian-us.com)