

Four Key ERP Leadership Positions and Who Should Fill Them

Although we believe that the leader of an ERP implementation should come from the functional areas, many leadership roles must be filled for successful implementation.

1. Someone on organization should lead the effort to make the necessary policy decisions and functional decisions. This person will gain consensus around the functional direction of the project.
2. Someone should gain consensus on hardware and software solutions. Someone must facilitate making technical decisions and assign and supervise the project technical resources.
3. Someone who understands modern project management tools and processes should hold a leadership position to successfully schedule, track and control progress against the project plan.
4. Someone at the executive level of the organization must be able to set the vision, provide the resources needed, and be the final arbitrator of conflicting points of view and courses of action. This person ultimately will be responsible for ensuring the project is a success.

To ensure a successful ERP implementation, leaders beyond these four roles and throughout the organization must step forward and actively participate in the project. Other leadership positions include process team leaders, technical team leaders, and steering team members. The implementation team itself is usually led by the project leader (the functional leader) or the project manager

Desirable qualities for the Key ERP Leadership Positions

Beyond functional responsibilities, decisions on the appropriate persons to serve in these roles should include personal characteristics, availability, and willingness to serve in these critical implementation roles.

Characteristics to consider in selecting the individuals for these four roles.

1. **Project Sponsor**
 1. Political clout within the Organization
 2. Willingness and ability to make tough decisions
 3. Enthusiasm and support for the project
2. **Functional Leader**
 1. Respect within the Organization
 2. Strong functional background
 3. Above average leader
 4. Good organization skills
 5. Good interpersonal influence skills
 6. Understanding of the Organization politics
 7. "Enterprise view" rather than "silo view"
 8. Above average communicator
 9. Positive about the project
 10. Willingness and ability to devote the time required

3. Technical Leader

1. Broad technical knowledge
2. Good interpersonal influence skills
3. Ability to communicate well with non-technical stakeholders
4. Respect within the IT organization
5. Respect within the university
6. Good management skills
7. Positive about the project
8. Willingness and ability to devote the time required

4. Project Manager

1. Professional project manager (e.g., PMP)
2. Experience managing an ERP project within higher education
3. Good organization skills
4. Good interpersonal and communication skills

Choose the Right Leaders

An ERP project will be one of the most demanding and complicated efforts undertaken by your organization. The ERP implementation will have a significant impact on the lives of many stakeholders of the organization. Carefully consider selecting the people who will fill the four critical ERP leadership positions for successful implementation.

Source Reference: <http://www.collegiateproject.com/>