Moving ERP to the Cloud:
Pascal Dutrieux shares his insights

The market for ERP implementations is projected to be USD 48 billion by 2022. Any ERP implementation can be make or break for a company. Fortunately, there is a lot of experience out there.

Pascal Dutrieux, QA Manager at itecor, shares his insights into ERP Cloud migrations as well as what keeps him up at night. He tells us why, despite the risks and responsibilities, he enjoys these projects and keeps coming back for more.

What do you understand by moving ERP to the cloud?

When people talk about moving ERP to the cloud this is a really broad topic. We might be talking about a more technical project like taking SAP from on-premise to HANA in the cloud or it could be a complete change of ERP, such as implementing Microsoft Dynamics. Whatever it is, it's never simply a technical move.

As a QA Manager you need to understand the words behind the program mission statement. Is it an opportunity to review master data management? What about interfaced systems? Where will the BUS reside? What about security?

Pascal Dutrieux

"Communication is the number one skill"

How would you define your role on an ERP Migration project?

As a quality manager I see it as my role to ensure that this transition will happen properly. I want to take any aspect of quality into consideration and ensure that nothing is forgotten – but most of all I need to know that people will be able to do their job. Of course I take care of testing as well, but the role is much broader than this.

I am fortunate to have a lot of experience on SAP implementations and although I'm currently working on a Microsoft Dynamics project I was able to take a lot of the best practices from SAP and apply them: definition of processes, fit-gap analysis, custom development.

What's the most important skill in your role as QA Manager?

Communication is the number one skill. If we look at testing, everyone has their own view of what testing means and how it should be done and they are not afraid to let you know! My role is to ensure that it's all manageable and for this, I need to be very diplomatic.

Ultimately we all want the job to be done properly, but you need to pick your battles and be pragmatic. There are some golden rules in testing, but these all need to be implemented in the context of the company, the team and the tools you have to work with. Of course, having experience helps!

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What are the biggest challenges for quality on an ERP Migration project?

Scope You need to ensure the scope is clearly defined and you know what you are doing. Very often people discount it as just another IS-IT project and think that all you have to worry about is licensing, server sizing and getting the contract signed.

However there always impacts to be thought through: how are your services changed; will your current tools still fit your purpose; is your team impacted.

Best practices for QA Strategy

Communicate You need to talk with all the stakeholders. Talk with the program manager and understand their vision. Talk to the sponsors. Talk to the different teams involved with the current ERP. Ensure that everyone understands the urgency, but most importantly that everyone will be able to do their work afterwards and that no-one gets left behind.

Adapt Whenever you start a program of this size you start with a vision but then you always need to be ready to adapt. On my project we have taken the decision to adopt the Sure Step methodology from Microsoft.

For a QA Manager, the methodology used can have a big impact on how you structure processes and deliverables so I'm looking forward to learning more about this and integrating it into the overall test approach.

If you could do something over again what would it be?

In the past I've not always been involved from the beginning and I had to arrive in fire-fighting mode. On my current project I have no excuses and have been able to construct the Test Strategy as I saw it.

What keeps you up at night?

Oftentimes people underestimate the time or skills needed for proper testing and no amount of convincing can change them. My advice is to be patient - but to prepare for the moment when they will need additional support.

Finally – how would you measure the success of an ERP implementation?

Of course, there are the objectives of the project to consider (savings, process improvements, financial targets) and these are very important. But for me, more than anything it means happy people: that the users are ready and able to do their daily business and don't have to struggle with bugs or workarounds.

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