

# SAP Upgrade Checklist

White Paper Prepared by:

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## 1. Determine your upgrade requirements

### *1.1 What are the business reasons for upgrading?*

Support from the business for an upgrade project is most important.

If there are no business reasons for upgrading, then you should probably not do it.

Included here are the business risks incurred by not upgrading.

### *1.2 What are the technical reasons for upgrading?*

Included here are the technical risks incurred by not upgrading.

(Posture increasing maintenance fees for old versions or complete support withdrawal as a business risk – not a technical risk.)

## 2. Upgrade Planning

### *2.1 Define the upgrade scope, and get the business to agree to it.*

Do not proceed without this agreement. Many upgrade projects exceed budget or fail due to scope creep.

### *2.2 Capacity Planning.*

Will the upgrade system require larger and faster hardware, network, or database to function properly?

Will the number of end users decrease, increase, or remain the same in the upgrade system?

Does the upgrade system provide processing support for functions that were not handled in the upgrade system?

### *2.3 Timing*

When is the best time in the business cycle to start the upgrade process?

How long is the upgrade process expected to take?

When is the best time in the business cycle to cutover to the upgrade system?

### *2.4 In-house skills assessment*

Do you have the proper functional and technical subject matter experts on staff?

How will you back-fill their jobs and keep the business running while your subject matter experts are busy with the upgrade project?

What expertise do you need to acquire externally?

### *2.5 Cutover planning*

Do you plan to cut over your entire ERP system all at once, or only one or a few modules at a time? If you plan to cutover only a few modules at a time, what interim bridges need to be built between the legacy system and the upgrade system to keep the business running?

How do you insure that, between the time the old system (either the entire ERP system or single modules) is turned off and the upgrade system is turned on, no business transactions are lost?

How will you continue to report business metrics during the cutover phase?

For how long can you operate the business without your ERP system?

What is the contingency plan if the upgrade fails?

## **2.6 Budget**

Understand what the project is expected to cost, and allow for an overrun contingency.

Be realistic with time and cost estimates, and do not take short cuts simply to save money.

You will end up paying more for the short cut in the end, and then everyone will complain about how the project exceeded the expected costs.

Do not proceed if the business does not approve the project budget.

## **3. Technical Risk**

### ***3.1 Do you know where your customizations are and what they do?***

Take an inventory of them if you do not already have one, as some or all of them will need to be implemented in the upgrade system.

### ***3.2 Do you have supporting functional specification documents from the business and their associated technical specification documents?***

Some audit processes require that this documentation be in place to insure that the business, and not technical IT, is determining how the ERP system functions.

### ***3.3 What is the nature of your customizations?***

Have any of your business processes changed significantly enough so that some customizations are no longer needed?

Are any of your customizations within the SAP namespace?

Are any of the customizations already handled in the upgrade system?

### ***3.4 Are you changing the operating system in the upgrade?***

Do you know what ERP system code or authorization changes need to be made for a new operating system?

### ***3.5 Are you changing databases in the upgrade?***

Do you know what ERP system code or authorization changes need to be made for a new database?

### ***3.6 Are your customizations actually being used by the business?***

If you determine that customizations are not being used, eliminating them decreases the upgrade risk.

***3.7 Does the upgrade system meet all expected audit requirements?***

Internal audits, outside audits (e.g. financial, government), regulatory audits (e.g. FDA, FAA), certification audits (e.g. ISO, KEMA), etc.

## **4. Functional Risk**

***4.1 Do you know where your customizations are and what they do?***

This includes custom configuration and requested custom code modifications.

Take an inventory of them you do not already have one, as some or all of them will need to be implemented in the upgrade.

***4.2 Do you have supporting functional specification documents for the customizations?***

***4.3 Do you understand whether or not the upgrade system already covers any of your requested code customizations?***

If the upgrade system already covers requested code customizations, then lower the upgrade project risk and make sure that the code customization is not migrated to the upgrade system.

***4.4 Do you understand whether or not the upgrade system behaves the same or differently over all of your business processes?***

SAP may have enhanced and/or changed the function of a business process in the upgrade system. It is imperative that you understand how it will work in the upgrade system.

***4.5 Do you know of any customizations that are no longer used?***

If you do, then lower the upgrade project risk and do not migrate these customizations to the upgrade system.

***4.6 Does the upgrade system meet all expected audit requirements?***

Internal audits, outside audits (e.g. financial, government), regulatory audits (e.g. FDA, FAA), certification audits (e.g. ISO, KEMA), etc.