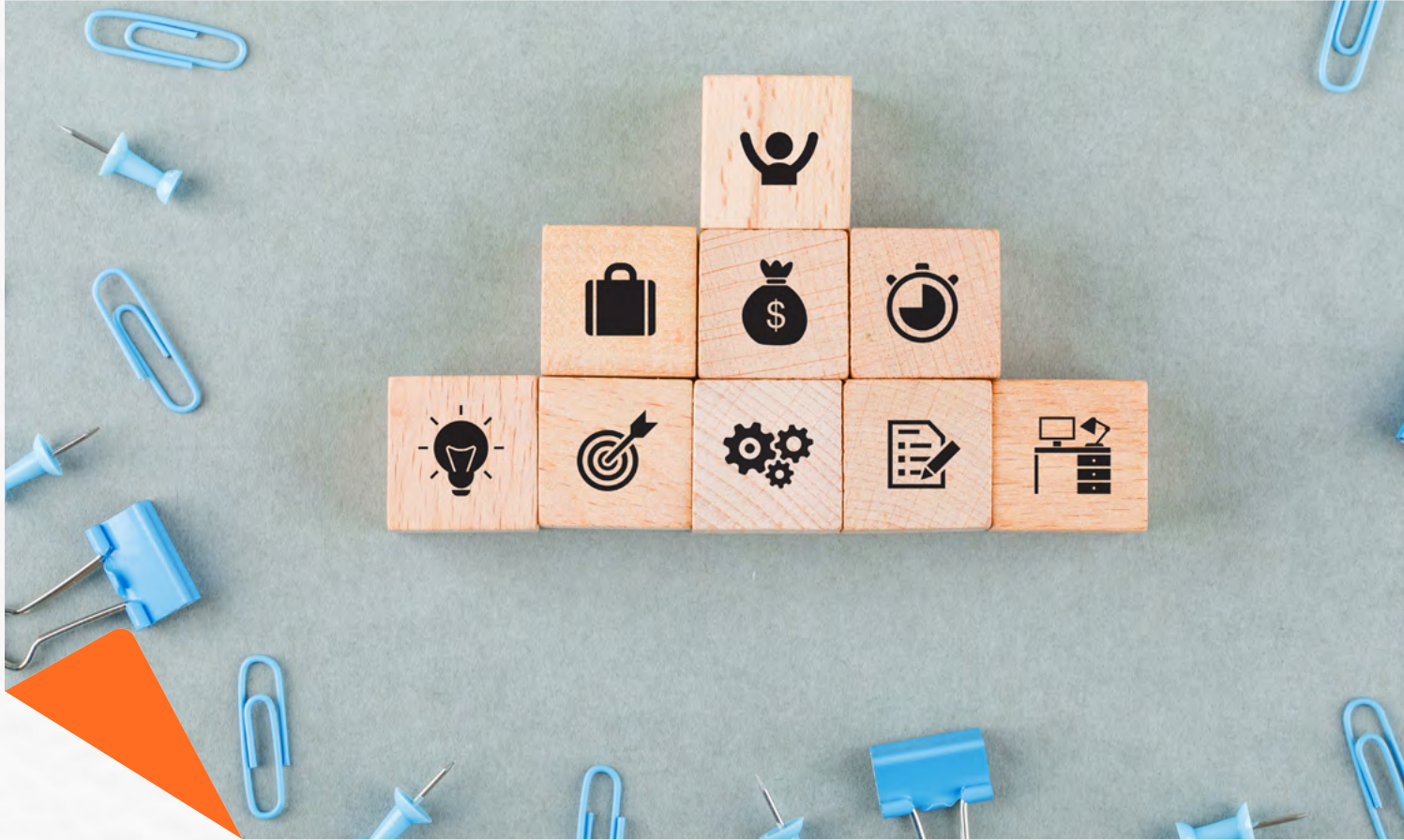




sa.global's approach to accelerated implementation

Take a look at how our toolset and proven methodology can help achieve a faster global ERP implementation and quicker time to value.



In today's fast-paced globalized world, businesses are under constant pressure to innovate, grow, and stay ahead of the competition. To do this, organizations need better visibility of their operations across different countries so they can make these operations more efficient.

To gain a holistic view of the business, reduce costs, and build greater synergies across various functions, organizations would need to rely on implementing a global Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution quickly and effectively. With accelerated ERP deployments, companies can get faster time to value from their technology investments, enabling them to achieve their business objectives faster and with greater efficiency.

There are five factors that ensure a successful ERP implementation. We account for these key factors to deliver on the project.

5-definitive factors influencing an effective ERP deployment

1

Understanding the vision of the business

2

Defining the business value of the implementation

3

Assessing the risks

4

Optimizing the strategy

5

Documenting the action plan

1. Understanding the global vision of the business

Every business has a reason for a [global implementation project](#). It could be to offer a more standardized service/product across the globe, optimize costs by leveraging the global talent pool, or gain a holistic view of the business by bringing together siloed data.

There is generally a set of triggers that drive a business to choose a global implementation. Understanding these challenges and then defining a unified vision for how the business can overcome those issues will be the first critical factor that impacts the effectiveness of the implementation.

2. Defining the business value

Defining the business value of an ERP implementation is the next step. Every country or business entity has specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), just as different organizational functions have their own metrics that they care about. You need to consider all of them while defining the business value that the global implementation will offer them specifically besides the big-picture benefits.

It is also important to define return on investment (ROI) to measure the success of the ERP implementation.

ROI can be calculated by comparing the total cost of ownership of the system to the benefits realized by the organization. This helps in quantifying the value of the investment and justifying the cost of the implementation.

Having this metric ready in the early stages of the implementation project will help you make the case for the project. It helps different stakeholders quantify the project's significance – their approval and support can then ensure its success.



3. Assessing the risks

Implementing an ERP system can be a complex undertaking for any business. A global organization typically uses multiple systems, each performing a specific task. Different business functions may adopt the “best-of-breed” solution that works well for their specific needs, and different business entities could have multiple systems.

While implementing a global ERP, the business and the implementation partner need to assess which of these existing solutions should be retained and which are redundant. The solutions and processes that you decide to keep should work smoothly after the global implementation, and the risks could be to get the customizations to work without spending too much time and effort. Quite frequently the escalations in costs will threaten the viability of the entire project.

To assess these risks, you can use various methods such as surveys and brainstorming sessions. Surveys can provide insights into the concerns of different stakeholders involved in the implementation process. Brainstorming sessions with a group of experts can identify potential risks associated with the implementation process.

4. Optimizing the strategy

Once you identify the risks, the next step is to put strategies in place to mitigate the risks. There could be separate strategies for each of the business functions, business entities, and countries. At this stage, you can also consider the localization needs of business entities.

5. Documenting the action plan

Documenting the action plan along with detailing the specific timelines, ownership of responsibilities, milestones and checks, and an escalation matrix will be an important part of the implementation.



Delivering the project

Besides these five key factors, it is essential to measure the success of the implementation at every stage of the delivery of an ERP project. This ensures that the project meets the predefined business outcomes and that any issues are addressed promptly. Measuring success can be done by comparing the project's progress against industry benchmarks for impact and checking if it meets these standards.

It is also important to evaluate user adoption as this is a critical factor in determining the efficacy of the deployment. You need to check if the system will be used as intended or if people will fall back on using manual processes. To measure user adoption, organizations can track the number of users actively using the system and conduct surveys to identify any issues.

Global rollouts with sa.global

Over the past 30+ years, sa.global has been helping clients in over 80 countries with their implementation needs. Leveraging this experience, sa.global has developed a toolset to accelerate an implementation. While these tools are important for any implementation project to ensure faster time to value, they become critical in a global rollout where a small delay can have a cascading effect and the consequent delays can cause huge cost escalations.



sa.global toolset for accelerated implementation



ACCelerate DevOps

Azure DevOps was developed by Microsoft to help partners deliver projects more efficiently. sa.global has taken this a step further and added enhancements that make it easier for all team members working on the project and different stakeholders to gain visibility on the project and collaborate.

sa.global has developed a custom platform to make the implementation process repeatable across different implementation cycles.

It gives you and your teams the visibility needed to track the progress of the project.

The dashboards on this platform give you real-time visibility on the project status which means you no longer need to attend endless status update meetings or go through long email chains to find the relevant information.

The platform will be useful even after the go-live because it acts as a central repository for all the documentation and conversations related to specific implementation decisions and customizations. This information can be used by the support or managed services teams to understand the context and reason why certain decisions were taken during the implementation.



Config compare tool

There will be differences in data between two or more business entities, even if they have implemented the same version of Microsoft Dynamics 365. A business entity may have multiple environments or you may have separate environments for each business entity. Comparing the data among these environments and getting them aligned to the standard can be easier when you work with a Microsoft Partner who has experience in your industry and has developed the necessary tools to automate the comparison process.

When you create your golden configuration and prepare to migrate data from different environments, it helps to have an automation tool that can evolve and become increasingly more accurate and efficient with each data migration cycle. This is especially important when you have to perform data migration for a global business with multiple business entities in different countries. In such cases, you would have to go through the entire lifecycle of data migration from planning, audit, and clean-up to testing, execution, and post-migration checks for each business entity.

A global implementation is typically a phased project. Whether the phases are for specific modules (some businesses prefer to start with the Finance module) or by business entity, for data migration you can rest assured that you will not need everything in the first phase. Data comparisons and scope can be defined for each phase and executed accordingly.

By using an automation tool, the data migration process will become more efficient as you progress through different phases.



Data migration tool

Migrating your existing data to the new system will bring its own set of challenges. You would have new processes, missing data, or new names in some of the data categories.

In this phase, your implementation partner will download the data, check for accuracy and completeness, map the relevant fields in the new system, upload the data, and share it with your team for testing. This happens in multiple cycles that are known as Extract, Transform, Load (ETL).

Each ETL cycle can take a month or more, depending on the size and complexity of the data. If this is a manual process, and you have 8 or 9 cycles to complete, the implementation can take longer than what you and your team may be comfortable with.

sa.global's data migration tool helps automate the process. Imagine one ETL cycle that takes a month being reduced to just 1-2 weeks. In addition, the time taken reduces in each cycle, and the process gets more efficient with feedback after user testing.



Data compliance tool

Data privacy and security are critical aspects of any implementation project. When sensitive information is stored on-prem or in the cloud, it is important to ensure that only the people who need to have access to sensitive data can view it while restricting everyone else.

Regulatory agencies have also mandated technology partners to ensure data security and privacy. This means that when technical staff manage data for taking a backup or while offering support, the data needs to be obfuscated to make it unreadable. sa.global's data compliance tool automates this process to protect your data without compromising the speed of implementation.



Test automation tool

Implementing an ERP system across the globe is just the beginning. You will also need to consider system maintenance and regular updates.

Post go-live, your team or your implementation partner will need to be ready to manage the system updates that typically happen once a month. You need to check if the update impacts any of your core systems, customizations, and integrations. Corrective action needs to be taken annually to ensure business continuity.

sa.global's testing tool automates the update process thereby reducing the time it takes to check the functionality of all the systems. The tool helps the testing team complete their work faster and identify issues more accurately.

sa.global's test automation tool complements the ACCelerate DevOps platform to document business processes and technical details that will help you manage updates efficiently.



A photograph showing a close-up of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hands are positioned over a document that features various business charts, including a bar chart and a pie chart. The document is slightly out of focus. In the bottom right corner of the image area, there is a large, solid orange triangle pointing upwards.

Support from Microsoft

In order to make the implementation a success, Microsoft has developed the FastTrack for Dynamics 365 program. The program was developed after learning from over 3,000 cloud deployments.

The FastTrack program relies on Success by Design principles that offer prescriptive guidance. This is in the form of recommended approaches and best practices that have worked in the past for designing, building, and deploying the Dynamics 365 solution. The approach helps to predictably deliver measurable impact for your business.

The guidance is offered at no additional cost and is delivered through partners like sa.global.

Building your high-impact implementation team

The success of a global implementation depends on multiple factors, but the one crucial factor is the internal implementation team that you choose. This is not just the IT team. Although the IT team will have a major role to play, it is equally important to get representation from every business unit within the business entity where you intend to start the implementation, in case you choose the phased implementation method. You also need to add to this team representatives from each of the other business entities or countries as observers.

The representatives from the different business units will offer suggestions on the functional requirements that can help them deliver better results after the implementation.

Many of the improvements that businesses witness after a global implementation are because of efficient business process reengineering and change management. Technology is only an enabler that will help different teams achieve those pre-defined business outcomes.

There are multiple layers of teams that you will have to build to ensure that you gain the maximum value from everyone from across the business. This multi-tier approach will also help in change management later.

You can start with the core team that will include a member – the Project Lead who takes the lead role and ownership of the entire implementation. This role is ideal for a senior executive who has been with the business for a long time and can work well with stakeholders in different countries. This is important because a global implementation can take more than a year to complete.

The Project Lead should be supported by a Business Analyst from the business entity where you will start the implementation. The Business Analyst's job would be to map all the business processes by working with different teams and then finalizing the process improvement needs and options.

There should also be a senior member from each of the business functions – someone who has a deep understanding of the business processes in the relevant department. The person chosen from the IT department for this role has more responsibilities because this person needs to put together the overall system architecture, building out the different systems used by different business units, the types of customizations done to the core system, and the integrations with all the external solutions.

Apart from the core team from the business entity where you will begin the implementation, the Project Lead also needs to coordinate with a global team comprising stakeholders from different countries or business entities. This team should be in the loop about what is happening and understand the technical challenges, which will help them prepare for similar challenges when the implementation happens in their geography.

Each member of both teams will need to work with other teams in their respective sphere of influence, which will trickle down to the users who will work on the new ERP solution after it is implemented.

Giving the users visibility on the implementation and seeking their input will help in faster adoption of the new solution.



Why work with sa.global

sa.global has been helping businesses like yours for 30+ years and has ERP implementation experience in 80+ countries. We have helped clients with their multi-country implementation and have even worked on project rescues by taking over delayed and faulty implementations that did not meet business expectations.

The reason why sa.global has been so successful in global implementation projects is our strong experience. A global implementation for a particular industry has a set of processes, customizations, and integrations that need to be mapped and these tend to be mostly common for other businesses in the same industry. Successful implementations help our consultants build best practices and create templates that make the success repeatable.

If you would like to know about how we can deliver a global implementation project within budget and predefined timeframes, please connect with our consultants at info@saglobal.com



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**Member of
Microsoft's Inner Circle**
for 12 years

11-time Winner
of the Microsoft Dynamics
Partner of the Year Award

Let's talk

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