BuildingEngines

Guide

Avoiding Costly Mistakes when Deploying Property Operations Software

You Bought CRE Software. Now What? Don't Make These Mistakes.

Most Common Mistakes When Deploying New Technology

If you're on track with the rest of the industry to adopt new technology across your properties, you're likely considering how best to ensure fast, and successful implementation.

Once you select a new tool such as a property management system, it's important to consider how best to realize the value from what you buy.

There are some common mistakes that companies make after they make the decision to purchase or license some new technology, and begin the deployment process. Here's where many companies get off on the wrong foot:

1. Trying to Go it Alone

Bill Greenhaus, principal at REdirect Consulting and an expert in large scale and complex software deployments recommends organizations seek help where necessary early in the deployment process.

"Bringing on an independent consultant is important. Some companies go into this thinking they can do it themselves. They're experts in their business and in real estate. They're not experts in the business of exploring technology. Usually we find, if they think that they can kind of do it on their own, that they don't understand what's involved – such as the amount of time and commitment that it's going to take from internal resources in the business."

When working with a consultant, it's important to assign one internal person to function as an internal project manager. They'll act as the gatekeeper for all things that are going on in the deployment of the new software.

2. No Executive Buy-in from the Top

For a project to succeed and move from start to finish efficiently and thoroughly, organizations need someone at the top who understands the need and is committed to making it happen.

If executives at the top of an organization don't share a vision for the importance of a new software implementation and adoption, they will impose competing priorities. Even if end users of the software along with middle management are committed to the project, and anticipating the benefits, without executive buy-in and commitment, their efforts will fall short.

There simply won't be the appropriate amount of resources dedicated to the successful implementation of this new software, if executives do not consider it a priority.

3. Setting the Wrong Expectations

Software implementation is rarely a one-size-fits-all task. It's important to set the right expectations internally about what resources, changes, and time will be required to see the results of the tool you've purchased.

Bill advises, "It depends on the complexity of the project, what software you're implementing, how much of that software you're planning to implement, what software you're moving from. All these are factors. Then, of course, there's the resource allocation. How much commitment are you making to putting internal resources on the project? There's no one size fits all. All our projects, in any one properly done implementation will be tailored specifically to the individual needs of that company."

You should also consider the specific personality and style of your organization. Bill continues, "Each business has a different culture, and a different personality. Some companies like to spend a lot of time discussing each point. They'll have multiple meetings, bringing in stakeholders from all areas of the company. Things go a little slower. This is a valid process, but it means a longer time table."

Whatever the preference of your organization, set the right expectations early.

4. Fail to Make a Change in Process

Software alone is not a strategy. Some level of process change is required to see the most benefits from most CRE technologies. Companies often fail to see successful adoption if they're not willing to make the necessary changes internally.

Nobody likes change, as it brings uncertainty and risk. So, many teams want to do things the way they've always done them, hanging on to the status quo. But if you're able to demonstrate to users how they can fully leverage your new technology by making small changes to their process, you'll work to convince them of the potential gains.

Always answer the question "What's in it for me?" for your users.

5. Jumping in Without a Pilot

A pilot phase is critical to successful deployment of a software, especially one that touches many aspects of your building operations. Test the features and functionality of the software you're evaluating, and put the system through its paces to ensure that what it does aligns to what you need, and that you're equipped to make the most of the technology.

Building Engines offers a full pilot program for property owners and managers. We incorporate real data from customer buildings and offer expert-led training and guidance from our team in a fast and easy deployment. Once data is in the system, it only takes a few days to get up and running. At the end of the pilot, participants see exactly how Building Engines can improve tenant satisfaction, increase their team's efficiency, and offer new visibility into building operations. If you're interested in taking us for a test drive, request your pilot program here.

6. Lack of Internal Training

Once software is purchased and a successful pilot is run, it's important to invest in proper training. Your new technology initiative simply won't succeed if people aren't using it.

Bill offers some tips for training your users:

- ✓ Rather than roll out generic, scripted training for your users, address specific problems that your business faces, and how the software helps.

- ✓ Train in small groups to allow users to be hands-on.

- ✓ Provide a variety of options, as people consumer information and learn differently. Provide remote training where necessary, quick guides, even video.

- ✓ Build customized training guides (a combination of policies and procedures along with any user guides that the software vendor might provide.)

- ✓ Remember to deploy continuous refresher trainings

Related resource:

[Podcast interview with Bill Greenhaus](#), principal at REdirect Consulting and an expert in large scale and complex software deployments

Summary

Keys to Speedy and Successful CRE Technology

In order to realize the most value from your new CRE technology, follow these tips for a fast and successful deployment:

1. Don't go it alone, bring in external expertise where necessary

2. Gain executive buy-in from the top for resource allocation and prioritization

3. Set the right expectations and timetables based on your specific organization

4. Help the organization to change process where necessary

5. Run a pilot program or stabilization period first

6. Deploy best practices for training and user adoption

Selecting the Right Software Partner

When choosing a software partner for your commercial properties, here's what to look for:

Easy to get started with. You should be able to get up and running quickly with your software partner, whether setting up the system for the first time, or migrating from an older tool. If you've chosen the right partner, they should guide you through this process with confidence and a clear plan.

Expert-led training for your team. Look for expertly guided, live webinar training sessions, as these are an integral part of the deployment experience. Training sessions provide the perfect opportunity to review key aspects of the system such as workflow configuration, work order life cycle, user management, and reporting – and by attending a training session, your staff is able to get answers in real time from true expert.

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✓ Excellent support. Your partner should have a wellbuilt, centralized, and easily searchable Support Center and on-demand help. This should include webinars, user guides, self-help FAQs, and numerous other resources for improving your workflow and expanding your knowledge of the system.

✓ Addresses your challenges as a business. It should address the specific operational and service goals that you are responsible for delivering.

✓ Designed with you in mind. Look for a software tool that is both powerful and intuitive, and highly configurable to meet your specific needs.

✓ Peer validation. Seek a company with deep industry experience, reputable clients, and proven customer service, one that is well loved by other property managers like you.

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