White Paper

Key Roles and Stakeholders in SAP Implementation

Who's involved and how must they collaborate?

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Theo van Kaathoven

Theo has an IT education to bachelor level, and has obtained a master's degree in Business Administration.

He has worked for over 25 years on IT projects carrying out various roles from programmer to project manager.

In the last 15 years he has participated in various large SAP implementations. For the last 10 years he has been implementing SAP Solution Manager as a tool to support SAP Projects and SAP Application Management

This paper aims to show the Key Roles and Stakeholders involved in any SAP implementation; who is involved and how they should collaborate.

This paper needs to be used as a flexible guide to fit with any SAP project. The paper is based on my experience within large SAP implementations world-wide throughout the past 15 years, plus experiences coming from non-SAP implementations prior to my SAP era.

Questions often come up such as 'Who is involved and how should they collaborate in an SAP project?' I would like to start with the Critical Success Factors (CSF) for an SAP project. These are shown in the first column of Figure 1.

These CSFs are linked to Key Roles representing Business and IT. Key Roles within IT are divided over Support and Project, as shown in the two columns on the right of Figure 1.

This paper will detail out the above table by showing:

- Breakdown of CSFs
- More details on the Key Roles
- Collaboration: process and dynamics in and between the cells for CSF / Key Roles combinations, as shown in Figure 1

Critical Success Factors for SAP Projects	Key Roles		
	Business	IT Support	IT project
1. Does the Solution fit with business requirements? => FIT FOR PURPOSE	-Key Users -Business Managers	-SAP experts	-SAP experts -Test Manager
2. Is the business capable of using the Solution? => BUSINESS READINESS	-Organizational Change Manager	-Support Manager	-SAP experts -Test Manager
3. Is the Solution implemented 'in time' and within budget constraints? => PROJECT MANAGEMENT	-Business Project Manager		-IT Project Manager
4. Is the IT Support Team able to maintain and support the Solution post go-live? => SUPPORTABILITY		-Support Manager	-SAP experts -QA manager

Figure 1

Critical Success Factors

In this section we go into more detail about the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for SAP Projects. Most of these CSFs will apply in many situations.

Every SAP Project is Unique

It is important to stress that every SAP project is different, and also every organization is different. Hence it is dangerous to treat them all in the same way. Depending on the situation, a specific custom approach is always necessary but it is still possible to provide general guidelines on what makes an SAP project successful. Depending on the situation, the CSFs need to be assessed for every SAP project.

The CSFs are discussed below and relate to three different areas: Business, IT Support and IT Project.

Business

SAP software packages are implemented to support the business, so SAP software should help in achieving business goals in a more efficient way. Hence the importance to make sure SAP is implemented in such a way that it can really do this. The white paper refers to this as 'FIT FOR PURPOSE'.

However, it is not sufficient to have software delivered that in principle matches with business requirements. Additionally, the business needs to make the necessary changes in the business in such a way that the software can really support the business to its full potential. It's possible that business processes need to change first before the software can give the maximum support.

Additionally, it is important to make sure the business people are skilled to use the software, including any possible changes for them made in the business processes. This is what is called in this paper 'BUSINESS READINESS'.

IT Support

A project team is normally set up for a limited period, until the job is done. After go-live, and confirmation of proper functioning in the 'hyper-care' phase, the project team can be dismantled. Post go-live, we want to maintain the level of business support to a high level. Hence the importance of training the Support Team in time, and with the right skills. Despite the IT project team not being there anymore, we still want to achieve a high level of support. This is what is referred to in this white paper as 'SUPPORTABILITY'.

IT Project

Large IT projects require large financial investments and many SAP projects are large IT projects. Hence the importance of making sure the project is delivered within budget constraints. Additionally, timing of the software delivery is important to make sure the business can utilize the software as soon as possible. To achieve both in-time and within-budget delivery, good project management skills are vital. This is referred to in this white paper as 'PROJECT MANAGEMENT'.

Key Roles

The Key Roles come from the same three areas as shown above for the CSFs. Not all Key Roles will be there for your specific situation, as every situation requires a custom approach. The same applies for the described CSFs above, but at least the Key Roles shown here will play an important part in many cases.

Business

Key Users: These people use software to support the day-to-day business operations, and thus they play an important role as they can judge whether the software will work for them. They know the business, and the role that software can play for them within this business.

Business Managers: Since they are responsible for their scope of business, managers are key as well. In the end they need to agree with major milestones like acceptance of Business Blueprint and go-live readiness.

Organizational Change Manager (OCMs): OCMs are responsible for making sure the business is ready on major milestones like Business Blueprint definition, User Acceptance Test execution and go-live. Possible necessary business process changes are an important element for OCMs.

Business Project Manager (BPM's): BPM's are responsible for the timeframe and budget delivery of the project from the business side.

IT Support

Support Manager (SuM): This person is responsible for overall IT support related to a Solution post go-live. All necessary actions need to be done in time to safeguard a very good level of support: a skilled support team, proper tooling and methods in place to provide support etc.

SAP experts: These persons report to the SuM, and have good knowledge of both their SAP area (as a Subject Matter Expert) and the business.

IT Project

IT Project Manager (IPM): IPMs are responsible for the in-time and within-budget delivery of the project from the IT side.

SAP Experts: these persons report to the IPM, possibly via a team lead. They have good knowledge of both their SAP area (as a Subject Matter Expert) and preferably good knowledge of implementing SAP for similar businesses.

Test Manager: This person is responsible for the overall test processes throughout the project, making sure the quality of the Solution going live is acceptable (per business and Support acceptance criteria).

QA Manager: This person is responsible for overall quality of project deliverables, which relates to documentation like Business Blueprint, Design and Configuration etc.

Collaboration

Once again we show the below table, but now we add dynamics into the cells. Horizontal and vertical arrows show the collaboration needed within SAP projects.

Critical Success Factors for SAP Projects	Key Roles		
	Business	IT Support	IT project
1. Does the Solution fit with business requirements? => FIT FOR PURPOSE	-Key Users -Bus. Managers	-SAP experts	-SAP experts -Test Manager
2. Is the business capable in using the Solution? => BUSINESS READINESS	-Organizational Change Manager	-Support Manager	-SAP experts -Test Manager
3. Is the Solution implemented 'in time' and within budget constraints? => PROJECT MANAGEMENT	-Business Project Manager		-IT Project Manager
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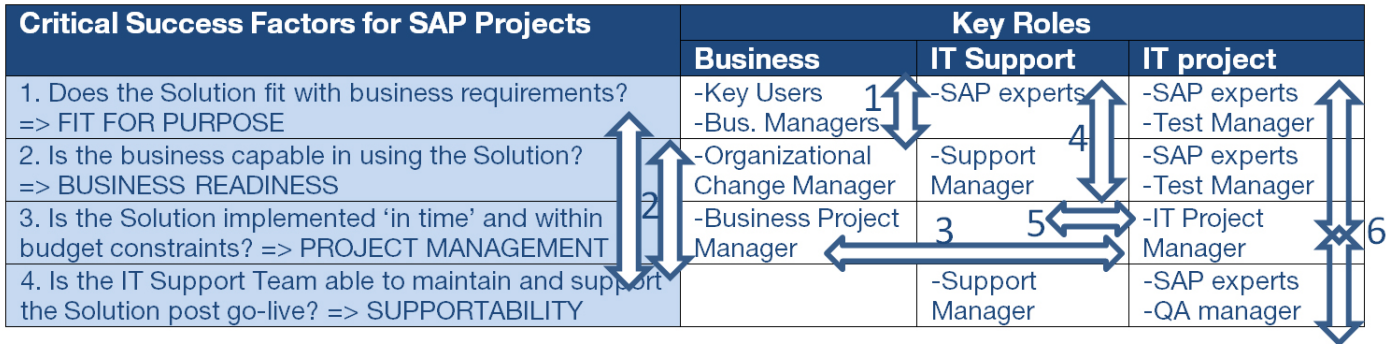

Figure 2

Below is more detail on the arrows shown in Figure 2 the numbers in the arrows relate to the numbers below:

1) Key users need to report to their managers to make sure the managers have the necessary information to make the correct decisions. Example: when the software does not support a critical business process the manager needs to be made aware of this.

2) Business Managers and OCMs need to report to BPM to make sure the BPM has the necessary information to make the correct decisions. Example: in case the implementation of important new legislation becomes clear, this might result in the business not being able to be ready in time due to additional business process changes needed.

3) The BPM should collaborate with the IT Project Manager to ensure a good fit between business and IT. Example: politics is always an important factor in (large) projects, and any resistance from the business should be addressed quickly to make the project a success.

4) SAP experts need to report to the SuM to make sure the latter has the necessary information to make the correct decisions. Example: next to the SAP software itself, SAP experts often know the business very well. They might detect possible impact on the business which has important consequences.

5) The SuM should collaborate with the IT Project Manager to ensure good hand-over from project into support mode. Example: I have seen situations where the hand-over to the Support team was planned very late, and the decision was made to have the support initially done by the project team members. They needed to stay on the project anyway to implement the software for other countries.

6) Project participants need to report to IPM (possibly via a team lead), to make sure the IPM has the necessary information to make the correct decisions. Example: if people do not have time to participate in the Business Blueprint definitions then the project could be in danger in the early phases as requirements gathering is poor.

Conclusions

Every SAP project is different and unique. We can state that more or less the same Critical Success Factors (CSFs) apply for every SAP project:

- The SAP solution should support the business
- The project needs to be implemented within budget and time limits
- Post go-live, the solution can be supported well

Also the Key Roles and Stakeholders are more or less the same in every SAP project. An overview of these is shown in this article. Very good collaboration between parties involved is key to achieve the above CSFs.

Orbus Software
3rd Floor
111 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 0SR
United Kingdom

+44 (0) 870 991 1851
enquiries@orbussoftware.com
www.orbussoftware.com