SOFTWARE CONVERSION PANEL

To ERP or Not to ERP

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NAVIGATING THE PATH

Presented by Janet Jennings

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Consider the Options:
List the Advantages and Disadvantages

- Option 1 - Upgrade Current Software

  - Advantages

    - More knowns than unknowns (i.e., quality of technical support, ongoing maintenance costs, etc.)
    - Shorter implementation timeframe
    - Less costly
    - If it's not broke . . .

  - Disadvantages (unique for each organization)

Consider the Options:
List the Advantages and Disadvantages (*Continued*)

- Option 2 - New Software
  - Advantages
  - Disadvantages
  - Consultant or No Consultant?
  - Role of the Consultant
    - o Guide the Procurement Process from beginning to end
    - o Direct the documentation of internal processes (flowcharts)
    - o Direct the selection of subject matter experts in each area (AP, PR, etc.)
    - o Develop the RFP with input from staff
    - o Assist with providing references not identified in proposals
    - o Coordinate schedule for presentations and demos
    - o Hold software provider and implementer accountable for initial delivery
    - o Monitor the timeline
    - o The consultant will NOT recommend an implementer or software provider
- Make the Sale to Management – Finance Department most heavily impacted by decision

The GFOA Consulting Model

- Governance - How?
  - Goals, Roles, Decisions
- Business Process
  - Mapping – Flowcharts
  - Process Improvement
  - Change Management
- Vendor Selection
  - RFP
  - Implementation by Developer or by Outside Implementer?
  - Procurement – Proposals, Demos, Interviews
  - Decision
- Finalize Contract

The Sales Pitch

- Must distinguish fact from fiction
- Due diligence is critical
- Software presented as doing everything
- Overpromise/underdeliver
- What you see is not necessarily what you get
  - Demos conducted with sample data in a highly controlled environment
- You MUST ask ALL the right questions
- Take detailed notes
- Get answers verified in WRITING

Asking the Right Questions

- Allow Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to pose questions on functionality
- How much data will be converted; how much data will need to be input by Staff?
- Who is responsible for data validation? (SURPRISE)
- Are the features in the demo currently available or are they in process (i.e., OCR for Accounts Payable invoices)?
- How extensive is the implementer's experience with local government; specifically, with public safety schedules and other special situations?   GET REFERENCES
- Will training be onsite or virtual? Onsite is highly recommended!
- Will implementer be onsite during implementation? Onsite critical!

Asking the Right Questions (*Continued*)

- Is implementation team based in US or abroad? Effective communication is mandatory to achieve a successful implementation.

- Where is post-implementation technical support team based? Communication and time zone differences will impact ongoing support.

- How long will the implementation team be accessible by phone (voice or text) post-implementation? If the implementer utilizes a work order system for support, when will that commence?

Other Things to Consider

- The implementer will likely NOT know governmental accounting; it is imperative to include someone on the implementation team who can articulate the financial requirements from a non-clerical point-of-view; it is up to you to preserve your system of internal controls.

- Reports and features will NOT be identical to old system. Ensure that data is available that meets governmental accounting requirements, etc. Help clerical staff see the big picture.

- An aggressive timeframe is not worth the cost savings. You will pay more overall to correct problems created from an accelerated implementation.

- You will lose some features and gain some features; weigh gains and losses during vendor selection to ensure an overall gain.

Critical Points

- Ask ALL the RIGHT questions
- Relevant references
- Extensive experience with local government implementation; specific attention on special situations (i.e., public safety payrolls, etc.)
- Onsite training
- Onsite implementation; remain onsite until everything is working properly.
- Everything in WRITING (payroll rules, etc.)

LESSONS LEARNED IN AN ERP IMPLEMENTATION

Presented by Sandi Allen

Functional Consultant

Lessons Learned: ERP RFP, Implementation, and Selection

- When planning to go out for an RFP, commit your most knowledgeable Resources.
- Have demonstrations on multiple software packages to determine what is available:
  - You can't go from a Legacy System or old software and expect the new software to be the same.
  - Will you be able to do everything from the software or will you need additional software packages…i.e., Financial Statements, Budgets, etc.
- The Software Consultant is critical to the process. Make sure they not only know the software, but are familiar with your business/processes.

What I Learned in an ERP Implementation-RFP and Selection (Contd.)

- If you send out an RFP and ultimately only get one bidder---RED FLAG---why?

- Require References and Check them. Ask if you can meet personally or by Zoom and walk through some of their deliverables.

- Does the Software keep up with current Accounting and Governmental reporting requirements?

- When signing the Contract, utilize Legal Resources and protect yourselves by requiring the proper Bonding. It can save you on the Backside.

- Can you afford the Post-Implementation Annual Fees?

What I Learned in an ERP Implementation-Implementation

- Train on the software prior to trying to Implement it!
- Create a detailed implementation plan and know that you will need to adjust it.
- Scope Control-if you are implementing multiple modules, scope and time can get out of control quickly and there will be a LOSER that doesn't forget.
- Include those doing the work in the design. Buy-in is extremely important.
- Where is your reporting coming from? Are there canned reports that meet your requirements or do you need custom reports? Is the data easy to extract in an Excel or database?
- A technical Developer is your best FRIEND!

What I Learned in an ERP Implementation-Go-Live-Pain or Gain?

- Keep your core Implementation Team together for a period of time.
- Don't let the Software Consultant off the hook for what is not working correctly. Once they leave, you are either on your own or will be paying them more to correct the problems.
- Back to the Scope discussion-prioritize those items that did not get implemented and that the Users still need!
- Upgrades-if you have customized any part of your implementation, take particular care in testing prior to going live with an Upgrade. Test, test, test!
- Lastly, keep your Pain Medicine and Retirees' phone numbers close!
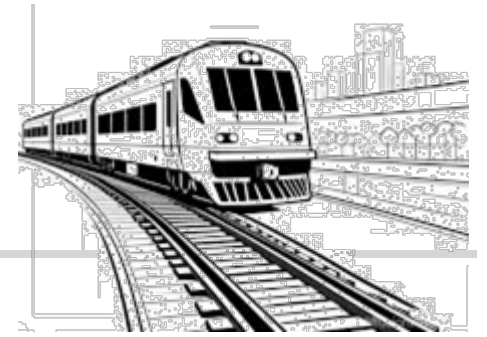
THE BEST INTENTIONS ... BUT THE WRONG RESULT

Presented by Valesa Wells

Finance Director, Town of Collierville

ALL ABOARD…The Journey Begins
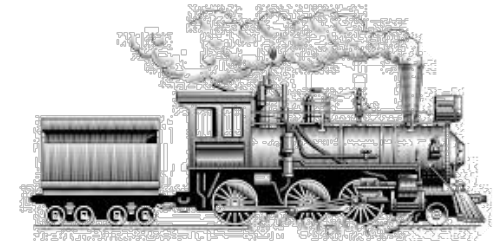
- Elected Officials
  - The Necessity of the Investment
  - Think like a Citizen (*who isn't an Elected Official*)
- Executive Leadership
  - The Risks & The Rewards
  - Legacy or Aftermath
- Heads of Departments
  - Consider Impacts to Service Delivery
  - The Next News Headline or the Social Media Tagline
- Those in the Trenches
  - Work Life made Simpler
  - Voice and Thoughts are Essential to the Process

The Journey Halted…

- The Best Intentions
  - Determination to Maintain the Integrity
    - The Evaluation Process
    - The Procurement Process

- The Wrong Results
  - Proposal Submissions…..CRICKETS….
    - Potential Proposers Left at the Station
    - The Train is off the Tracks…Now What

The Journey Re-Routed
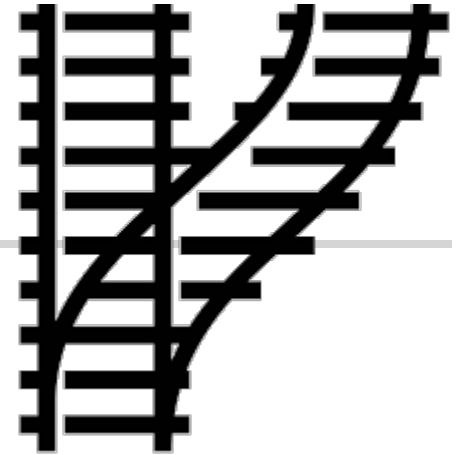
- The Experienced Conductor
  - Collierville Regrouped and Hired a Consultant
  - Independent and Impartial Regarding Vendors
  - Client First Approach!

- ALL ABOARD…again
  - Ensuring We've Not Lost Steam
  - Reaffirming ALL are integral to the process

The Journey Continues

- Seeing What We Didn't See
  - Current State Discovery
  - Process Mapping

- Milestones to Come
  - Needs Assessment
  - Future State Development
  - RFP Development
  - Evaluation and Selection
  - Implementation and Deployment

QUESTIONS?