EPM Implementation
Keys to Success

- **Executive support**- The project has to have executive support and commitment. Find a key 'visible' and respected executive who will support you throughout the program.

- **Choose a manageable audience to roll this out to initially**- You may want to do a pilot to better understand how it will work in your environment. We usually suggest this approach since it is considered a best practice.

- **Run your EPM implementation as a project**- ensure you have a strong PM and team to complete the project successfully. Strive for excellence in project management skills within your team so that they will appreciate and understand the benefits of the program.

- **Use the KISS principle**- In other words, keep the initial implementation small on the number of users and amount of functionality. Choose key requirements to be your phase 1 objective. It might be improved team collaboration, or resource management or anything else, but pick one key issue and make sure you address it. Stay within scope for the initial phase no matter how much pressure you feel to expand it. You can and will continue to add functionality and depth to the implementation in subsequent phases as your people adapt and accept the new way of working.

- **People Change Management**- Buy-in is essential. Making sure people understand the value to them and to the organization is key for driving adoption. Many implementations have failed because one user group didn't buy-in or adapt to the cultural changes that an EPM implementation brings. PCM needs to be started very early and needs to continue throughout the EPM life cycle.

- **Give before you get**- Be prepared to give the users functionality they see as valuable before getting information you ultimately desire. For example, you may want to track actual time spent on tasks to better understand resource utilization. But, if users today are not accustomed to providing this level of detail they may fear and reject the increased scrutiny. To offset, you may choose to implement less stringent requirements initially and get them using the system for collaboration and other benefits, introducing the increased reporting requirements later. It's sometimes hard for management to delay the whole reason they want the system but it is often the path of least resistance.

- **Develop 'champions' very early in your program**- those that are supportive of the program idea and objectives even before they participate in it. If you can get them from different functional areas, so much the better, because you can use them as 'change agents' moving forward. They can help instill support at a grass roots level.

- **Remember that the technology implements process and procedure**- Have your project management and business processes and procedures well developed, understood and documented. Then plan your implementation around your processes. Pay as much attention to the organizational environment as you do to the technical environment.

- **Manage user expectations with great care**- Make sure that users do not have the impression that you are over promising and under delivering. User preconceptions may lead some to think that the solution is going to be a 'silver bullet' and quick fix to any existing problems. Ensure appropriate and timely communication so that the right users are well informed at the right time.

- **Get the very best hardware your budget can afford**, especially for the SQL Server Component.

- **Appreciate that an EPM solution makes the work that a project manager performs very visible to the organization**- The skill, or lack of skill, that a Project Manager has will become readily apparent. This may make them apprehensive to warm up to the program, so you need to find ways to address the issue with specific project management fundamentals training or targeted tools training.

- **Do not skimp on different types of user training** in the pilot and for the rollout implementation. It's key.

- **Determine what defines a project that will be included in the environment**- if you have a project methodology, look to build that into the process.

- **Work with a Microsoft Partner with experience implementing MS Project Server**- It is a very complex product and does require considerable planning and configuration. We have seen a lot of implementations struggle, fail or need to be re-done because help was not leveraged initially.