Ignite
TECHNOLOGY

Top 10 tips on how to ensure a successful Clarity implementation

Introduction

Optimising the value of all major initiatives in your organisation means embracing integrated portfolio management. In fact, Gartner reports that "Integrated portfolio management and governance has an important role because well-governed projects result in superior organisation performance and an increased return of 30%."

In other words, when more of your strategic initiatives are completed successfully, your business is not only more productive but also more profitable.

However, while no one's doubting the many benefits of implementing a Strategic Portfolio Management (SPM) system, there doesn't seem to be a lot of focus on how exactly that implementation takes place.

Yet, it's a critical area.

Because let's face it, it doesn't matter how good your SPM solution is, if it's not implemented properly, it's unlikely to live up to the expectations you have for it. This is why it's not an exaggeration to say that the team behind the implementation is just as important, if not more so than the SPM solution itself.

It's also one of the key differentiators when areas such as price and overall functionality are generally similar across competing brands.

Therefore, based on our extensive experience implementing Clarity in organisations of all sizes and complexities around the world, we've compiled a checklist of 10 key considerations to bear in mind to help facilitate a successful implementation.

(Please note: Not in priority order)

1. Avoid customisation. Stay as close to Out Of The Box functionality as possible and avoid customisation in favour of configuration. This helps maximise value, reduce development effort and avoid ongoing maintenance and upgrade concerns.

2. Remember the user journey. Poor usability means poor user adoption. And that means none of the potential value is realised.

3. Take baby steps. Just because you can do everything all at once, straight off the bat, doesn't mean you should. Focus on the "must-have" requirements initially. Clarity is a comprehensive enterprise-level tool built for strategic portfolio management that can add value in a lot of areas, but it's important it starts doing so as soon as possible. Get the basics up and running first – additional ideas and requirements can be delivered as part of a planned roadmap for the future.

4. Nominate Customer Champions. And, critically, make sure they're in place right from the start. Involving them from the kick-off meeting right through to the final "go live" means having consistent input on key decisions in a timely manner. They can also act as the internal subject matter experts post the go-live phase.

5. Use a hybrid implementation methodology. This means implementing a more traditional waterfall design, test and deployment phase, but with the addition of a "Time Boxed" build phase. This allows for a certain amount of inevitable flex in scope and priorities after the design sessions, but without putting the overall go-live date at risk or having to re-open commercial scoping discussions.

6. Implement for current requirements. Don't just implement "because that's the way we do things now," or "that's how they've always been." Your implementation partner should present the OOTB method to meet the requirement, then take the time to consider what the delta is, why it is there, and whether the tool should be configured or the business process adapted.

7. Consider data migration from Day 1. Also ensure adequate time is allocated to validating and, if necessary, improving the quality of existing data prior to loading. If poor data goes in, the quality of any output is reduced.

8. Resist interface overload. Best practice is not to interface Clarity bi-directionally with every other tool in the organisation on Day 1. In each use case, take time to think about "should" we interface not "can" we. Also consider what data is important to users, and how often this data would need to be refreshed. The result is a simplified data model that not only reduces development time but also the user and admin complexity.

9. Prepare for disruption. Choosing the best implementation partner does not mean the tool can be designed, configured and implemented without input from key customer resources. You need to plan for a period of disruption to these resources to accommodate the time needed to make the implementation a success.

10. Test far and wide. The "User Testing" phase should involve a representative spread of roles from the organisation as well as people who have not been involved closely with the project. This ensures a fresh perspective.

Ignite can help mitigate the risks and provide value during the implementation of your Clarity solution and beyond. We don't just set and forget – we are with you before, during and long after implementation.

At the end of the day, simplification is not about reducing the quality of ideas, but about reducing the admin associated with producing them.

About Ignite Technology

Established in 2002, Ignite Technology was founded on a passion for bringing the very best people, experience and innovation together to help businesses work smarter, better and faster.

As a specialist in strategic portfolio management, we bring our technology portfolio and consulting expertise together with your strategy, project and leadership teams to equip you to deliver the transformation your business needs – when it needs it.

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