

Risk Mitigation Plans

Budgeting, Planning and Forecasting



Risk	Description	Probability	Impact	Potential Mitigation
<i>Project Communication & Decision-Making</i>	If progress, issues, and roadblocks are not communicated quickly (and accurately) to the stakeholders, or if the stakeholders do not make quick decisions, then the project can stall, with the potential for cost and deadline overruns.	L-H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointing an experienced project manager Use Discussion Documents to supplement Weekly Status Reports
<i>Software Suitability</i>	Planning processes rarely conform to the neat boxes that are put around them by software vendors. These gaps will remain risks to the delivery of the project vision until the proposed solutions have been fully tested and accepted by users.	H	L-H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of a Gap Analysis Discussion Document Employing an experienced solution architect who has resolved similar functionality gaps in the past.
<i>Infrastructure</i>	Technology issues are rarely the primary cause of planning project failure, but can easily lead to cost overruns, and may amplify the effect of other issues (particularly those caused by large gaps in package suitability).	H	L-M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the vendor's recommended system requirements Establishing an efficient helpdesk process, routing calls to either the vendor (application-specific), infrastructure or network support teams as appropriate. Undertaking performance testing prior to rollout to replicate the effects of large numbers of concurrent users

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<i>Parallel Projects</i>	<p>There will usually be other high-level projects being conducted in parallel, and inter-dependencies between these projects often occur. Examples of parallel projects that could create inter-dependencies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source system upgrades (eg General Ledger, payroll) • Enhancements to an existing data warehouse • Operational (ie non-financial) reporting projects • Business process rationalisation • Mergers & acquisitions 	L-H	L-H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a regular forum of project managers to discuss inter-dependent task progress and issues • Re-planning projects to reduce overlap, and hence reduce the risk of issue “contagion” from other projects.
<i>Data Integrity</i>	Bad data can cause major delays in user acceptance testing, but such issues can easily be pre-empted by a thorough analysis of the source systems before the project commences	M-H	L-M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking an analysis of the accuracy and consistency of dimensional structures in source systems • Ensuring that the mechanisms for generating and maintaining balance data in the source systems are well understood • Incorporating data reconciliation checks in (or prior to) the user acceptance testing stage

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<i>Business Process Change</i>	Planning processes are dynamic and evolving continually as the nature of the business changes. If the planning system does not reflect the current state of business process then it will be rejected by the user community, but if new requirements are not incorporated in a structured way then the delivery of a stable and integrated system is in jeopardy.	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant policing of project scope to ensure that all deliverables are achievable and thoroughly tested prior to release • Establishing a migration path for new requirements that includes an initial trial period outside the system (eg in Excel) • Preparation of fall-back strategies in the event that there is no alternative to undertaking development work with less time and rigour than should normally be considered
<i>Training</i>	Even with the best will in the world, there will be some users that will not receive sufficient training – either they are committed elsewhere during the training window, or they move into a user role after the initial training has been undertaken.	M	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a user training plan early in the project and communicating the intentions to the user group to allay any apprehension. This plan should also cater for individual training to supplement group training courses where some users have been missed.

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<p><i>User Testing & Acceptance</i></p>	<p>If the user group has not been engaged in the project from the beginning, there is a risk that user acceptance will not be received. This can manifest itself in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users have different expectations of the deliverables to the project team • Users are unsure what it is they are signing off • Users are too busy with their day-jobs to carry out testing • Users do not believe they have enough information for sign-off – without a complete parallel run of the planning process, there is no way to test how it will really work in practice 	L-H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of the users throughout the project • Establishment of high-level acceptance criteria • Practical resource management measures to enable testing to occur • Working with the users to develop a number of different test case scenarios. • Preparing step by step Test Scripts to guide users through the testing process • Examining the risks of changing business processes • Establish a fall-back strategy to deal with unexpected and untested events

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<i>Migration & Process Cut-Over</i>	Developing in a live Production environment is extremely risky, as there is no capacity to test the new work before it is released – developers may also be battling users for the same server resources.	L-H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing Development and Test environments that mirror the Production environment as far as possible. Agreeing a regular process of migration between Development and Test, and Test and Production, with the associated sign-off at each stage Considering an overnight cut-over process from Test to Production
<i>Post-Implementation Support</i>	Without effective and timely internal support, the planning system risks becoming a white elephant as disenfranchised users switch back to Excel.	M-H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early identification and training of key individuals who will support the system after go-live Planning a long project “tail”, where consultants mentor the internal support team whilst they take the reins. Clarifying the difference between support and ongoing development