



## **Successful Technology Implementations**

**Software Solutions For The Title Industry**

# **White Paper**

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### Introduction

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As a business leader you may not yet realize the magnitude of the decision you are making when purchasing software. This document is intended to frame this decision for you – to help you see technology not as a “necessary evil” but as a productive, profitable tool for your operation.

Distinct processes, procedures and methodologies for successful technology implementations have emerged from over 20 years of software implementation. Regardless of the size of your technology purchase – \$1,000 or \$100M – an understanding of these processes, procedures and methodologies can help drive a successful implementation and position your organization to take advantage of everything your new technology has to offer.

There is a great misunderstanding and under utilization of technology in the world today; this leads many companies to question why we even have technology. In this document we discuss the potential pitfalls of a technology implementation, how to overcome them, and how to turn them into great opportunity within your company. We will also discuss and provide perspective about how to “rally” your people around your technology implementation, how to get them excited and ensure that they know, because of this technology, they will have the best tools available to become the best in their respective industry.

Why is this document important? It’s very simple. Technology is an animal that can easily get out of control and, if not managed properly, will become your biggest nightmare. You may have worked with technology companies in the past and may very well perceive them as “technical geeks.” We want to change this perception and show you a better way.

### Technology Statistics and Facts

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Are you unique in your endeavor to change your technology? What does the rest of the world experience in terms of success and failure when implementing technology? The following is widely published information that provides an estimation of projects of all sizes and many different technologies.

- Three out of every 10 technology projects are cancelled

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- Five of 10 technology projects come in substantially over budget
- Only two of 10 technology projects go live on time and on budget
- On average, technology implementations come in 189% over budget

Kind of disheartening isn't it? What these statistics neglect to mention is how many companies are satisfied with and truly achieve successful use of their new technology resulting in competitive advantage and effective use.

RamQuest customers can be confident that they will not be another of these statistics! Our current success rate is 99% on implementations and +/-10% on implementation budgets. Why are RamQuest implementations different? Because we have developed our own custom implementation methodologies that incorporate potential pitfalls and mitigate risk, thereby helping make our customer's technology implementations successful.

**The key to a successful technology implementation is a thorough understanding of the potential pitfalls of that same implementation.**

### **The 8th Deadly Sin of Implementing Technology (And the Seven Sins That Precede)**

The key to a successful technology implementation is a thorough understanding of the potential pitfalls of that same implementation. If you are aware of these pitfalls and their potential causes, you can head them off before they occur and lead your operation to a successful implementation. In a recent article, Implementation Consultant Dolien Nicolassen identified seven deadly sins of software implementation and provided a catalyst for the following discussion. Additionally, there is an eighth deadly sin that merits mention.

#### **Deadly Sin #1 - Set an Unrealistic Budget and Time Frame**

Most projects are doomed from the beginning because of unrealistic expectations about the expense, time frame and resources required for the project. This happens because the planning is typically done by people who have no real understanding of the implementation process. Nor do these planners understand the responsibilities of either the software vendor or the company itself.

The solution is very simple. Ensure that you take the time to understand not only what it takes to implement the software but also the overall impact of the implementation on your business. Know what the time frame is to complete the implementation and understand the responsibilities of everyone involved in the process. Set yourself up to succeed!

**If your organization perceives the implementation as a “necessary evil” or simply a “technical project” there is no reason to even begin the implementation process.**

### Deadly Sin #2 - Treat Implementation as a Low Priority or Technical Project

If your organization perceives the implementation as a “necessary evil” or simply a “technical project” there is no reason to even begin the implementation process. This project cannot be something that gets in the way of business. This technology must be embraced as an integral part of your business now and into the future.

It is critical that you, as a leader in your organization, be public with your thoughts about implementing this technology – that it is a business project and what your business and the individuals in your organization will gain from it. If your people don’t understand this when you are implementing your new technology, issues will turn into complaints that will create doubt, deadlines will be missed, and you will be trying to understand where it all went wrong.

If you are not willing to put your best people on the project, how will the software be appropriately molded to meet the needs of your business? It is the people that understand your business the best, the true leaders of your operation, that need to make the decisions about how the software is to perform for your business. This will result in increased capability for your business and success in the marketplace once the implementation is complete. If management of your business isn’t publicly and actively committed to the project, how will your people know that this implementation is important? How can you expect them to rally around this project with a “can do” attitude if you are not willing to do the same?

Even the smallest and easiest projects run into issues. It is how you and handle the issues that will make the difference in your organization. The reality is that every issue can be an opportunity to prevent, fix or improve something in your business – integrate this thinking into your business philosophy and you set your organization up for success.

**With the best business processes in place, your new software will only strengthen your organization.**

### Deadly Sin #3 - Have No Strategy to Manage Change

The best way to kill enthusiasm and insight a revolt is to announce to your team that a new software product will be implemented soon and they will be told about training in due time! People need to know that there is a purpose behind change. They need to understand why change, in this case your technology implementation, is being made otherwise they feel that they are being prevented from being the best they can be.

Change is difficult for anyone. The best way to instill a positive attitude and have everyone welcome change is to include them in the process. Give your people a voice and encourage them to be involved by reviewing business processes and procedures. Let them know about potential changes in your company or their positions. Help them see benefits of the new software and how it will impact the future of your business. Encourage them to take ownership in the initial stages of the project and you will elicit their ownership for the technology project's ultimate success.

### Deadly Sin # 4 - Give No Priority to Business Process Change

Your new software will support any process you currently have in place – good or bad. If you have bad business processes in your organization today, you must fix them. Fail to fix them and your new software is only going to make those bad processes more apparent and make them operate faster! The true measure of your business is how well you operate as a business. Take the time to understand how you operate today. Look for ways to improve your operation through your business processes. Make these changes to your business before you begin using the software; plan for it during the implementation. With the best business processes in place, your new software will only strengthen your organization.

### Deadly Sin #5 - Neglect to Test the Software

You cannot expect any software vendor to understand “how” you perform your business. Nor can you expect them to know the expectations and the business requirements that you have for the software. Once your

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business solution is defined and architected, it is imperative that you test, test and test some more. It is likely that once you perform the initial architecture and set-up of the software, you will discover that a series of bad assumptions have been made. You must test the software and be prepared to change the original configuration before going live. Ask yourself and your team if the solution that has been configured will support and enhance your business. If you can't hear the answer from your people because they know it from having tested the software, then you are feeling your way in the dark and this technology is very likely to implement a devastating blow to your company's performance!

### **Deadly Sin #6 - No Provision for Support and Continued Business Process Change**

The “Go Live” portion of your implementation is not the end of the process; in fact, it is only the beginning of continued business improvement. It is almost guaranteed that 30 to 90 days into any implementation you will experience issues, have suggestions about how something could have been better implemented, or see a need for simple tweaks in the software configuration. Your software implementation is a business lifestyle change – not a one-time event. The day you stop considering change or assume that change isn't going to happen is the beginning of your slow but eventual downfall. Rather, look forward to and embrace the opportunity that change brings for your business.

With a RamQuest software implementation, we recommend three 30-day business reviews with all of your people. This is an opportunity to understand how the system is working for your operation and how both the process and the software supporting that process could be better. We recommend continuing these business reviews periodically to ensure fresh ideas and constant positive change in your business. Another key element in ongoing communication is the assignment of the RamQuest Business Process Change Administrator. This person becomes a “go-to” for ensuring, gathering and executing business changes.

### **Deadly Sin # 7 - Have No Relationship with Your Software Vendor**

It is easy to blame software for everything. It is just as easy to make that software vendor the scapegoat for everything. This is completely

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counter-productive and will not only sabotage your success but also result in adversarial relationships with a valuable business resource. Your software is the enabler of your business; your software vendor is your lifeline and is very likely to have answers to questions and possible solutions for business issues that might arise.

With this technology, you are making a long-term investment. You should view the relationship with your technology vendor in the same way. As it is likely to last many years, the ability to rely on your software vendor is critical to your long-term success. At RamQuest our customers are our business partners. Our goal is to have long-lasting relationships with our customers and partner with them on issue resolution, custom software projects, networking and product development. When the going gets tough, you will need the help of your software vendor to get you through and get you back on track. RamQuest will be there.

Additionally, we encourage you to develop and maintain a strong relationship with your RamQuest sales representative and support personnel; they will be your active, engaged partners in this business relationship. We also recommend participation in the RamQuest User Group ([www.rqug.org](http://www.rqug.org)); members of our User Group have access to an invaluable network of other RamQuest users and a voice in strategic direction and product development of their business software.

### Deadly Sin # 8 – Modify Software Too Much

We understand that many companies have unique requirements that may require modification of business software solutions. However, it is imperative that you have a full understanding of these modifications – what modifications are acceptable and how they will impact your upgrade path in the future. Your software vendor is likely to understand what is risky and what may cause problems.

At RamQuest, our applications are designed to have maximum flexibility and allow a certain level of customization. But it is critical if you venture down the customization path that you check with your software vendor before you begin to ensure you are not causing a problem in other parts of the program and, ultimately, “coding yourself into a box”. If you do venture too far into modification, your vendor might not be able to support your software because the product will have been modified beyond the understanding of support personnel. If you have a need for

customization or modification, we suggest that you talk to your vendor first.

### Implementation Perspectives

A key element in determining success or failure is the ability to measure specific objectives throughout the company. In over 20 years of implementing software, we have seen many companies neglect to set objectives, at all levels of corporate structure, and then track them for success.

Did you realize that software replacement should make or save money, not just perform tasks or create reports? But for this to happen, you first have to accomplish a successful implementation. It is imperative that, in preparation for a successful implementation of any software or new business process, the following 3-tiered level of perspectives and objectives be carefully considered:

#### Tier 1: Executive

The Executive tends to have a purely financial perspective. At the executive level each implementation is likely to have financial objectives associated with it. You will need to define those objectives prior to beginning the project and measure them afterward to determine the success. In many cases the objectives are fairly simple and are related to financial reporting and the ability to measure the performance of your company and the changes you will be making.

#### Tier 2: Middle Management

This is where the rubber meets the road. Each of these individuals typically has a two-fold perspective, financial and operational. The key here is to understand not only what they need financially but also operational metrics or specific operational functionality that is needed. If you fail to understand these items or leave them to "status quo", the project will be perceived as a failure.

#### Tier 3: Worker

Each individual in this category typically only understands their world. They will be most worried about how the implementation will affect their day-to-day. If you fail to capture their ideas or give them a voice in determining what will work the best, you are likely to have a revolution on

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**The leaders of the company must explain why they are implementing new technology and what they hope to achieve in order to gain acceptance of the project.**

your hands and the project will fail.

In almost every unsuccessful implementation the revolution starts at this level and compounds as it moves upward. The complaints about change, and there will be some, begin here and then are perceived as issues and roadblocks by the leaders in your organization. The leaders become uneasy and feel they have made a mistake with this software decision when, in fact, these occurrences are very normal and should be expected.

This is easily countered early in the project. The leaders of the company must explain why they are doing the project and what they hope to achieve. Communicate that the train is leaving – you can get on or it will leave without you. The focus at this level needs to be on encouraging your people and allowing them to get involved. Even when you do this understand that there will be issues – the key is to have a method and plan for resolution of these issues.

## Implementation Responsibilities and Methodology

A common misconception that we run into is that a RamQuest implementation is simply another technical implementation. The impression is that with RamQuest you are buying a “box of software” – put the CD in the slot, it runs and you are ready to go! Unfortunately many software vendors in the Title Industry perpetuate this misconception because many of the available products are static applications and not business tools; therefore, you conform to how they do it and there is no responsibility on either side. The difference between a static application and a business tool is as follows:

### Static Applications

A static application is similar to a spoon, it's a spoon and all it is going to do is scoop. It won't cut anything, you can't change a tire with it, and you can't use it to hammer a nail. The application does the Title process from A to Z. If business changes you have three choices: (1) buy new software; (2) wait for the software vendor to develop what is needed; or (3) conform to a “work around.”

### Business Tools

RamQuest applications are business tools, which in this example

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would be more like the ultimate Boy Scout multi-tool. It has every kind of blade, screwdriver and any other tool you might need for the job. In the software sense, our product allows you to adapt the software to your business, through configuration, giving you “every tool” you need. If the business process changes tomorrow, you simply change the configuration.

During any implementation we each have responsibilities that we must understand and execute to or we will not be successful. We must combine our expertise and functional knowledge of the software with your expertise and knowledge of your business. Simply put, we must both contribute our respective expertise for your implementation to be successful.

### Methodology

It is imperative that each implementation have a unique and specific plan. We recommend the following process:

#### 1. Planning

Without appropriate planning for the implementation, team building, scope definition, hardware analysis and requirement definition, the target will not be set. If the target is not set, it cannot possibly be hit.

#### 2. Architecting

The architecting phase includes further defines scope, business requirements and objectives so that we can understand the product we are configuring and whether the task is a “bread-box” or “semi”.

#### 3. Realization

Now that we have set a target we need to build to the target. All of the requirements defined in the Architecting Phase are now configured or executed.

#### 4. Preparation

Once we have built our way to the target, it is time to train our people. This phase is dedicated to getting ready to “go live” with the product and processes.

### 5. Go Live

This is it! Everyone begins using the product. As long as the target was set and the steps to build to it were put in place properly, this is where you hit your mark and see success!

## Conclusion

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Although some of this information paints a bleak outlook of technology implementations, they can be and are successful. It's interesting to think that when you are up late on Christmas Eve putting together that new toy for your son or daughter, you will rely on the instructions to make sure you that you get it right. However, few take the same disciplined approach to something as critical as implementing software for their companies.

With good planning, good leadership and involvement from your entire team you will find that it is not that difficult at all. Once you make this way of thinking a part of your business culture, you and your company will be positioned for any challenge and will likely be light years ahead of your competition.

**With good planning, good leadership and involvement from your entire team during your technology implementation, you and your company will be positioned for any challenge and will likely be light years ahead of your competition.**

## **About RamQuest Software, Inc.**

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RamQuest has created one of the most powerful software solutions for the Land Title Industry with the direct intent of helping companies increase revenue and profitability. Our fully integrated Land Title Closing, Escrow Accounting, Imaging, and Digital Marketplace software solutions continue to set new standards for what title companies should expect from their software partner.

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