

How to Prepare to Implement Acumatica

Construction Edition



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Selecting an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution is one of the most important strategic decisions your construction business will make.

The construction industry continues to grapple with diverse challenges including ongoing inflation, labor shortages, and rising costs of time and materials. Today, it's more crucial than ever for engineering and construction firms and general contractors to build a modern technology foundation to enhance collaboration and efficiency, attract young, tech-savvy talent, and drive profitable growth.

Not all ERPs are created equal. When evaluating a construction ERP solution, it's not just about comparing capabilities and checking off feature tick boxes. It's vital to understand the ERP vendor's implementation methodology and approach, and what a best practice implementation looks like. You will need to have the right tools, team, consulting partner, and plan in place to get your ERP system up and running quickly and smoothly.



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It's Important to Have a Plan

Implementing a construction ERP solution is a complex, time-intensive project that, if poorly executed, can have a negative impact on your operations. An ERP touches all facets of your business—financials, job cost accounting, project management, payroll, inventory, order management, service management, equipment management, route optimization, CRM, mobile, and more. Choosing an experienced ERP consulting partner to help you plan for the transition can go a long way toward making the business transition pain-free.

A well-defined rollout plan is critical to help all stakeholders, including everyone from the CEO and CFO to the software end users understand and prepare for the implementation process before it begins. Your plan should also outline what stakeholders can expect throughout the implementation and how the project will be measured and evaluated once it's completed.

An implementation plan informs team members of the following:

- The goals of the project (which can include creating company-wide visibility and transparency, eliminating process bottlenecks, and uncovering missed opportunities)
- The overall implementation budget
- The project timeframe
- The resources required to complete the project
- The steps needed to meet the end goal
- The potential risks and how to overcome them
- The criteria for measuring success

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The Acumatica ERP Implementation Process

As you evaluate ERP solutions, you may find some of the statistics about ERP implementations alarming. According to Technology Evaluation Centers (TEC), 50% of ERP implementations fail the first time around. TEC also notes that ERP implementations take, on average, 30% longer than planned and cost three-to-four times what's budgeted.

While these numbers may sound daunting, don't panic. Acumatica has studied those statistics too, and they have worked closely with their more than 6,500 customers, as well as with experienced consulting partners like NexTec Group, to develop a **proven nine-step plan for implementation success**:

1. Choose Your Deployment Option
2. Assemble Your Cross-Functional Team
3. Define Your Requirements
4. Develop a Project Plan
5. Migrate Your Data
6. Configure the System
7. Develop a Test Plan
8. Train Your Staff
9. Go Live

Rated highest in customer satisfaction for Cloud Core Financial Suites, Acumatica prides itself on being a different kind of ERP vendor — different

by design. Unlike legacy ERP solutions (the kind that have given ERP a bad reputation), Acumatica's modern Cloud ERP solution is designed to deploy quickly and deliver unmatched time to value. In the following sections, we'll walk through Acumatica's tried-and-true nine-step plan and how it works to streamline the rollout of Acumatica Construction Edition.

50%

Fifty percent of ERP implementations fail the first time around.

Source: Technology Evaluation Centers

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Step 1 Choose Your Deployment Option

Acumatica allows customers the flexibility to deploy its Cloud ERP solution via Acumatica Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) or private cloud. Both options have their advantages and disadvantages. Your specific business needs will determine which option is best for you.

Whichever deployment option you choose, Acumatica understands that fluctuating economic and marketplace conditions may require you to change your deployment option down the road. Acumatica allows deployment changes without penalty.



SaaS Deployment ("True Cloud")

- Amazon Web Services (AWS) as the hosting service for rock-solid reliability.
- Acumatica maintains and regularly updates the computer hardware and software.
- Automatic software updates.
- Enterprise-level security, virus protection, backup/restore, and more provided by AWS.



Private Cloud Deployment

- The client incurs the upfront costs of purchasing hardware and software. Internal IT department is responsible for maintaining and updating the hardware/software.
- Complete control and access to the system.
- Perform new release upgrades with assistance from Acumatica partners.
- The client bears responsibility for network and security procedures and patches.

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Step 2 Assemble Your Team

Select a strong, dedicated cross-functional implementation team to guide the rollout. The team should consist of team members from different departments to ensure that differing roles, skillsets, business requirements, and opinions are represented. With help from your Acumatica partner, you'll assign each person a specific role, and each role will require a certain amount of dedicated time based on their corresponding responsibilities.

Executive Sponsor or Champion

This is a critical role within the implementation team and should be held by someone who can lead the team, set expectations, determine resources, and answer questions. He or she often comes from the executive team and can be relied upon to help fix any problems or challenges that arise along the way.

Project Lead or Project Manager

As the name suggests, the Project Lead will lead the team in the practical application of the plan, from coordinating resources and schedules to assessing progress, holding regular meetings, and identifying issues. The Project Lead also acts as the go-between for the team, communicating how well the project is going to the Executive Sponsor and to the other team members.

"Some organizations are still on older systems that don't have support anymore and haven't been updated in years."

– Kurt Bendykowski
Professional Services Manager, **NexTec**

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Step 2 Assemble Your Team...

Technical Lead

This person is responsible for all customization, report and integration documentation based on documentation standards and best practices, while also supporting data migration and security needs. This role is critical to ensure that any errors or gaps in data are not migrated to the new ERP system.

Subject Matter Experts

These are the most knowledgeable individuals in their given area of the business. They should be considered the authorities when it comes to defining requirements and thoroughly testing the system. Financial SMEs, for example, will be called upon to document accounting processes, define user access roles and privileges, and establish audit requirements. Field SMEs including on-site project managers or job supervisors will advise on requirements and defining workflows, processes, and use cases, such as managing subcontractors, change orders, and compliance documents.

"I can't stress enough the importance of choosing your subject matter experts wisely. When I've seen construction firms struggle in implementing an ERP system, it has usually come down to a misaligned implementation team where key individuals and their hands-on experience were missing. Industry best practices are one thing, but every business is unique. Your SMEs are the ones with detailed knowledge about how you do things. This granular level of detail is invaluable when implementing a construction ERP system."

– Penny Tingle, Senior Consultant
NexTec



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Step 3

Define Your Requirements

Once your implementation team is established, your next step is to define your requirements for the Acumatica ERP solution. Each SME will be asked to document current workflows, business processes, and use cases, from the simplest tasks to the most complex scenarios. In this stage, your team will decide which processes can be improved and make a dream list of functions for the new ERP system based on levels of importance, as noted below:

1. Essential
2. Desirable
3. Not an immediate need
4. Nice to have

Step 4

Develop Project Plan

The project plan requires the assistance and know-how of your implementation team. You and your team will work closely with your Acumatica partner to plan the adoption process, design a system configuration, and prepare for the data migration. The plan will help keep the project on time and on budget.

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Step 5 Migrate Your Data

Step five involves meticulously moving your data from your existing system (or systems) into Acumatica's single, centralized database. It's not an easy or quick task, but Acumatica has a thorough checklist that simplifies the process:

- Ensure all existing customer contact information is accurate and up to date
- Remove incorrect or redundant data (e.g. discontinued suppliers, subcontractors, or employees no longer with the company)
- Remove incorrect or out-of-date company data
- Set up your Acumatica database
- Map your legacy ERP data to the new Acumatica database fields
- Transfer the data to the new system
- Test the new system to verify all legacy data has been moved and is accessible
- Verify new data can be added to the system (e.g. new project and customer information)

Again, your SMEs will be essential in ensuring a successful data migration. They know where the existing data being utilized is derived, the reporting requirements involved, and can help verify that the data being migrated reconciles with migrated balances. This will save you headaches down the road, as it's all too common for companies to discover months later that the data doesn't reconcile.

"Learning a new system in general is a challenge. When migrating to a cloud-based ERP, gaining user buy-in is crucial to eliminate existing processes that, although familiar to workers, are costly, inefficient and a barrier to growth."

– Kurt Bendykowski
Professional Services Manager, **NexTec**

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Step 6 System Configuration

In this step, your Acumatica consulting partner or Value-Added Reseller (VAR) will work with you to take the requirements you defined in step 3 and transform your ERP solution into a business-specific system that is personalized for your company's unique needs. Because most ERPs come equipped with hundreds of features and modules, your consultant or VAR will "turn on" the usage controls and features you need, install specific modules, define workflows, and customize processes for each of your departments or business function.



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Step 7 Develop a Test Plan

As with any new process, it's best to be cautious and test the system before pushing it live. Each requirement you defined in Step 3 should undergo its own test to ensure each function meets its goal. Your subject matter experts will be required to thoroughly test the system to ensure it performs as expected. Each test should have an objective, test data, expected results, a pass/fail determination, and a place for SMEs and other team members to provide comments.



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Step 8 Train Your Staff

Acumatica implementation experts suggest dividing training into two components: one for SMEs and the other for hands-on software users. The SME Training is for your IT and financial departments that administer the system, which includes superusers, system administrators, and database administrators. These knowledgeable SMEs are responsible for teaching the User Training. The User Training will be for all users to learn their respective roles and any new procedures introduced with the new system. Don't underestimate the time and effort required for effective knowledge transfer from your SMEs to the end users of the system. These users are ultimately responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the new ERP.

Step 9 Go Live

Finally, it's time to take your new system live. You'll first schedule the go live (many choose to do so over a weekend to create the least impact) and then you'll choose one of the two go-live approaches:



Big Bang

All at once, the old system is deactivated, and the new system is put into place.



Phased Approach

The new system is implemented in phases; phases can be categorized by module, geographical area or business unit.

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Troubleshooting Implementation Issues & Avoiding Delays

In a perfect world, your ERP implementation process will be flawless from day one. In reality, a perfect implementation isn't always attainable right out of the gate, which is why it's critical to understand why an implementation delay or problem may occur and how to counteract these issues when they arise.

Avoid Common Pitfalls that Cause Delays

In a recent article, Acumatica highlights five of the most common reasons for delayed implementations:	To avoid these all-too-common problems, implementation teams need to employ a few commonsense measures:
Unrealistic expectations , which can be stoked by an inexperienced or unqualified ERP vendor or implementation partner.	Manage expectations and ensure your ERP vendor is clear about implementation timelines and costs.
Misaligned leadership and team , often created by a lack of communication and clarity around goals and timelines.	Communicate with your team members and the entire organization to keep everyone on the same page and let them know what's happening when
Tentative decision making , which creates uncertainty and delays.	Create a command team that can act quickly and decisively to address any issues, bottlenecks, or delays
An overwhelmed implementation team that is struggling to perform their everyday responsibilities running the business in tandem with implementing the new ERP.	Reduce team members' workloads and reallocate resources to allow key stakeholders and staff to focus on their implementation duties
Misunderstanding of implementation ownership and a lack of responsibility on the part of the customer.	Share the responsibility for implementation success between your internal team and your Acumatica consulting partner



“Managing expectations is key. It’s not a straight path; it’s a curvy road, and you have to make sure everyone understands that the process will be better in the end. But it’s still not going to be a single mouse click to get their job done.”

– Kurt Bendykowski
Professional Services Manager, **NexTec**

– Todd Kuhns VP Services, **Acumatica**

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Choosing the Right Acumatica Partner

When it comes to implementing a core ERP system, expertise matters. As a construction industry professional, you may only be involved in a handful of large-scale technology implementations in your entire career.

NexTec Group is a gold-certified Acumatica implementation partner with nearly three decades of experience in the consulting industry. Our consultants do this day in and day out for hundreds of clients. Their experience and wisdom are invaluable in avoiding common pitfalls and ensuring a smooth implementation.

That's why leading engineering and construction firms and general contractors like Allison Resources, Freeland Contracting and Wildstone trust NexTec to help them get the most out of their technology investments, both in the back office and out in the field. Winner of the 2024 Acumatica Construction Excellence Award, NexTec is one of North America's largest and most experienced Acumatica consulting teams, bringing deep implementation and construction industry expertise. Our over 90% customer retention rate is a testament to the lasting, impactful relationships we build with our clients.



Contact us to learn more about Construction ERP Software.

Schedule a Demo



“Companies disagree about what the ‘right’ ERP software looks like, but there are some universal requirements for the ‘right’ ERP vendor. Your ERP vendor must have a reputation for delivering successful ERP implementations and for establishing the strong, collaborative relationships that are so necessary for overcoming challenges during the ERP implementation journey.”

– Todd Kuhns, VP of Services
Acumatica



Connect with NexTec expert to explore how a modern ERP can improve your business.

Let's Talk

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NexTec Group is one of North America's largest and most experienced technology consulting firms, specializing in industry-specific solutions for mid-sized organizations. For thirty years, NexTec has been a trusted partner to businesses, delivering, implementing, and supporting the core Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Business Intelligence (BI) solutions they need to scale and grow. With seasoned consultants from coast to coast, and a premium portfolio of innovative business management solutions including Acumatica and Sage X3, we help you get the most out of your technology investments.