Commercial in Confidence

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OVERVIEW

Today's enterprises increasingly utilise comprehensive software packages to improve employee performance and productivity by integrating business processes and data across the organization. Unfortunately, for many enterprises, deploying these complex software packages is a significant challenge that quickly becomes unmanageable. Voodoo Technology recommends that enterprises use the following guidelines when selecting partner deployment services for their IT environments:

- o Consider utilizing an external provider to deploy enterprise software packages. While many IT departments consider internal deployments to be the least expensive solution, complex software deployments can very quickly lead to delayed schedules and unanticipated cost overruns. An external provider that has extensive experience with the selected software can plan and deploy the solution while utilizing best practices learned from other implementations, especially when configuring software around existing business processes. In addition, external deployment providers can diagnose and resolve critical issues quickly and effectively, leading to smoother implementations that stay on schedule and on budget — and often cost less over the life of the project.

- o Look for deployment providers with programs and processes in place to help reduce the risks inherent in deploying enterprise software. Software implementations typically require planned downtime, and any unforeseen issues can lead to unplanned outages that affect everyday operations. Software deployment providers with established deployment processes and well-defined implementation methodologies can help minimise the potential for schedule disruptions and cost overruns.

- o Make sure the deployment providers can illustrate success with implementation practices that accelerate the move into production more than traditional software deployment. Faster adoption can mean a more immediate impact on business results and can often translate into a quicker return on your investment in the selected technology. In addition, phased deployments can be helpful for enterprises considering large software deployments. Starting to use the software as it becomes available can allow the organization to learn the software quickly, which means a faster payback period for the project as whole.

IN THIS WHITE PAPER

This white paper describes the challenges enterprises can encounter when deploying software packages into their IT environment. It also highlights what enterprises should consider when evaluating software deployment services and how specific deployment services can accelerate software adoption and solution payback. The paper examines a software deployment offering from Voodoo Technology.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

In today's environment of continually evolving market dynamics and increasing global competition, enterprises often look to comprehensive software packages to enable critical business processes. Enterprise software can allow organizations to integrate many aspects of their everyday business tasks and can give employees access to tools and data that can significantly increase performance and productivity. By implementing this software across the enterprise, organizations hope to streamline their business processes and delivery methods to gain key strategic and competitive advantages in today's competitive business climate.

Unfortunately, for many organizations, implementing enterprise software packages becomes a very difficult task that often spirals out of control. This can be the case in almost any circumstance, despite a team's best efforts to design, plan, and execute the implementation as carefully as possible. There are many reasons why enterprise software implementations can fail, but the most common include:

Lack of clear vision or coherent goals for implementation. Organizations often undertake enterprise software implementations without an overarching, comprehensive goal for the project as a whole. As a result, key stakeholders often determine individual goals for the aspect of the project that applies to their area of concern and these individual goals are frequently in conflict, with different requirements and different outcomes and expectations. There is no common discussion about the needs of each stakeholder as they relate to the goal for the project and the enterprise as a whole. Finally, stakeholders often fail to resolve differing requirements and reach a common understanding for the entire implementation as it will affect the enterprise.

No holistic view of the implementation. Implementing a comprehensive software package typically requires participation from a broad range of parties, including top-level executives, line-of-business staff and managers, IT staff and managers, consultants responsible for designing and leading the implementation, and developers and architects for each component of the enterprise software package. Although most implementations include a named project lead overseeing the initiative, the project lead may not have significant experience leading a comprehensive project of this nature and integrating a diverse group of constituents as part of an overall solution. This lack of experience means that the project lead can miss out on critical integration and implementation steps and can unintentionally leave out key stakeholders during critical steps in the process. Then, when the project lead does reach out to the entire team later in the process, it is often too late to incorporate valuable input as part of the overall implementation.

Lack of clarity in business processes. Many organizations have not clearly defined their internal business processes before undertaking a major enterprise software implementation. Because enterprise software is intended to support defined processes across an enterprise, this lack of clarity can lead to significant issues for the duration of the project. This is especially true during the implementation itself because software installation and configuration is often closely dependent upon the processes that will be supported after implementation. As a result, poorly defined business processes can often lead to substantial delays during implementation — or a finalised implementation that does not fully leverage existing business processes.

Minimal planning and attention to detail. Although a single point of contact typically manages an enterprise software deployment, many implementations are plagued by a lack of planning and an inadequate attention to detail. Project leads sometimes oversee these large implementations in addition to their regular responsibilities, leaving them with insufficient resources to manage a large software deployment. In addition, with so many parties participating in the project, project leads often assume that each party is monitoring its piece of the project individually and communicating with all other constituents — which is often not the case

When the issues detailed above arise during software deployment, the enterprise will often face a number of potential setbacks as it tries to move the project toward completion. These setbacks typically include:

Delays during software deployment. These delays can arise at any time during the implementation. From the design phase when the team struggles to reconcile poorly defined business processes with the purchased software to the implementation phase when developers have to implement significant custom code changes to address unforeseen requirements. These delays can pile up over time and often result in go-live dates slipping by weeks and months.

Increasing project costs. When enterprises are faced with significant delays and changes during a software deployment, they often turn to additional staff and resources to speed deployment in an attempt to meet the original project schedule. These additional resources come at significant cost because extra personnel and overtime hours are often part of the potential solution. Depending on the size of the original deployment, these overruns can be anywhere from several thousand to several hundred thousand dollars.

Faulty implementations. The potential issues described above can result in incomplete and incorrect software implementations because of both incorrect software configurations based on inadequate requirements and incorrect mapping of the software solution to business processes that were not well defined or that were unclear during deployment. Because these issues may not be discovered until after the go- live date, making updates and changes is always at an additional cost to the enterprise — in both time and money.

Slow adoption after deployment. Unfortunately, after organizations spend significant time and money implementing large enterprise software packages, internal adoption can be slow among the different constituents. This can be the result of having to wait for resolution to a faulty implementation, on-going changes and updates that are required to make up for incomplete and inadequate requirements gathering, and the lack of a comprehensive educational program for all concerned parties. Lack of administrative and end-user training tends to result in slow adoption and increased use of help desk support.

Voodoo Technology believes that organizations implementing enterprise software packages must consider how to plan for the issues detailed above as part of the deployment process. These problems can arise at any time during implementation, regardless of who is deploying the software (i.e. internal staff or an outside contractor)

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN EVALUATING SOFTWARE DEPLOYMENT SERVICES

To minimise the potential risks associated with deploying enterprise software packages, organizations should carefully evaluate the methods and practices that will be utilised during implementation. Voodoo Technology utilise a variety of key best practices that can accelerate software implementation and adoption. Organizations planning to deploy enterprise software should consider packages that contain the features outlined below when calculating the business value of deployment services.

DOMAIN EXPERTISE ACROSS ALL SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

A comprehensive knowledge of the technology required as part of the selected software solution is a critical consideration when assembling the deployment team. The personnel involved in implementation should have extensive experience with the entire software solution as well as with the complexities of integrations into the existing IT environment.

A thorough understanding of the selected software solution means the deployment team will realise the complexities that can occur during integration and implementation. In addition, a highly knowledgeable team can anticipate potential issues that could arise based on team members' many years of experience with the software. This means the team will be able to quickly address problems that occur onsite during implementation, reducing the potential for significant delays associated with diagnosing and resolving critical issues that arise during deployment.

STANDARDISED DEPLOYMENTS ACROSS THE SOFTWARE PLATFORM

A standard deployment approach can ensure a consistent experience during implementation for all types of software across the IT environment. This can help both deployment staff and IT staff approach the implementation in a more holistic manner, creating a uniform approach throughout the deployment process. Additional benefits of standardized deployments include the following:

- The ability to leverage the expertise of deployment experiences across various software products and capabilities to incorporate all best practices rather than creating those best practices "on the fly" each time.
- The opportunity to refine the deployment process over time based on real-world experiences because lessons learned from each engagement can be incorporated into improvements for the next engagement
- Enabling providers to streamline the deployment delivery process to increase efficiencies, which can translate into faster deployment times and a reduction in resources required — which can mean a faster payback period

  A highly detailed approach to the entire deployment process, which can create such a clear project road map that flexibility to accommodate unforeseen schedule changes is actually increased

- A smoother and easier transition to post-deployment support, as support teams are very familiar with the configurations and can respond to service requests and potential issues with an understanding of the customer's environment

Nonstandard approaches to software configuration and deployment can lead to significant difficulties when using and supporting the software solution in the customer environment. With these benefits, utilizing a standardized approach for deployment can result in a more effective process during deployment as well as an easier transition to support when the software is put into production.

TARGETED METHODOLOGIES FOR INDIVIDUAL PRODUCT AND MULTI-PRODUCT DEPLOYMENTS

Using defined methodologies for both individual product and multiproduct deployments can also facilitate a smoother software implementation. Applying a strict sequential order to the deployment process from beginning to end can help identify and eliminate potential issues that can arise later in the deployment process. Incorrect assumptions and faulty design early in the process can lead to much larger problems later in the implementation, when costly delays and additional resources might be necessary to fix the problem. Detailed, standardized methodologies can help eliminate that risk by incorporating tested, established processes that focus on deployment, integration, and education throughout the life of the implementation process. The structured process also makes it easy to stop, restart, and restructure the implementation if necessary.

LINKING BUSINESS USE CASES TO TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

A critical aspect of a successful software implementation is ensuring that the technology under deployment is directly tied to the business process that it is supporting. Any misalignment between technology and business processes could lead to significant issues during implementation. In general, it can be important to avoid ad hoc customizations and on-the-fly code changes that might be required to adapt to an existing business process at the customer site. These very specialized customizations can be very expensive to implement and very difficult to support over the life of the product.

VOODOO TECHNOLOGY SOFTWARE DEPLOYMENT SERVICES

In response to the many challenges facing enterprises deploying large software packages, Voodoo Technology has introduced the Voodoo Technology Services Deployment Methodology as part of our Services offerings. The Services Deployment Methodology incorporates aspects of the best practices described in the preceding section with capabilities and processes that are specifically targeted to improve software implementations and speed time to deployment.

PRE-SALES PLANNING

Voodoo Technology includes significant up-front design and planning for the overall solution architecture from the beginning of the sales process. In early talks with potential customers, the team will focus on questions regarding key business drivers, functional requirements for the solution, and key quality attributes to measure outcome and potential success.

As a result of these discussions, the sales team creates a high-level design of the potential solution as part of the sales process. Incorporating information regarding business drivers and requirements at this stage in the process can help eliminate the potential disconnect between design and implementation leading to a smoother deployment when the software is actually implemented.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT and GOVERNANCE

The Voodoo Technology Services Deployment team includes a project management and project governance component to guide the overall implementation process and cover all phases of the project. All lead project managers are certified by the Project Management Institute and act as the single point of contact to facilitate communication between the Voodoo Technology Services team and the customer throughout the project.

Our project managers are also fully trained in all aspects of the Services Deployment Methodology, including the nine-stage implementation process details outlined below. Our project managers have lead responsibility for all customer deliverables and work closely with the entire Voodoo Technology Services team to facilitate all aspects of the software deployment.

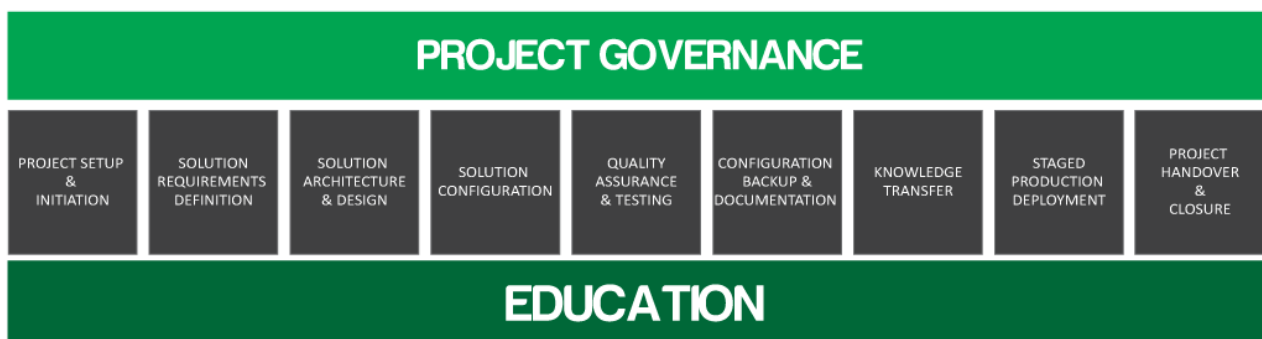## NINE STAGE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Services Deployment Methodology features a fully comprehensive nine-stage implementation process, with detailed steps required to complete each phase during deployment at the customer site (see Figure 1). The process includes an extensive checklist of both questions for the customer and detailed steps that need to be taken to implement the solution in the customer environment in a comprehensive manner.

The Services Deployment Methodology is intended for use exclusively by trained Voodoo Technology staff or partners who have extensive experience with our software and solutions. All deployment staff are trained in all aspects of the methodology and the corresponding material. In addition, the Services Deployment Methodology can apply to both rapid implementations and solution implementations. These approaches vary only by how the scope of work is determined; other than that, the elements of the program are identical.

All Voodoo Technology architects are trained through an extensive set of courses and have many years of experience delivering projects on budget and within specific timescales.

For all Voodoo Technology software deployments, each phase features an extensive set of documents and templates that are used to facilitate the process. The documents include presentations regarding elements of each phase; requirements documents to ensure that the customer has a comprehensive understanding of its environment and how the solution will map to its environment; test plans, run books, and questionnaires that facilitate gathering all the necessary data from the customer to enable deployment; and step-by-step instructions for the deployment process that ensures a standard approach across all software and solutions.

Fig.1
Voodoo Technology "Nine stages of Project Governance"

PROJECT GOVERNANCE

| PROJECT SETUP & INITIATION | SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS DEFINITION | SOLUTION ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN | SOLUTION CONFIGURATION | QUALITY ASSURANCE & TESTING | CONFIGURATION BACKUP & DOCUMENTATION | KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER | STAGED PRODUCTION DEPLOYMENT | PROJECT HANDOVER & CLOSURE |

EDUCATION

ONGOING PROCESS IMPROVEMENT & OPTIMISATION

The Voodoo Technology team has developed an internal knowledge base that is used to store and update all aspects of the Services Deployment Methodology, including the detailed presentations, and templates that are required at each step in the process. Voodoo Technology has defined a process for maintaining and updating the documents and has staff dedicated to incorporating staff and client feedback into the components of the program on an on-going basis. Voodoo Technology continually monitors project success to identify opportunities to improve the program, and feedback from customers and the field staff is an integral part of incorporating any updates or revisions.