Implementing Metaphorix

Introducing our unique approach to successful projects

Why do so many computer projects go wrong? Why do relationships between the software vendor and the buying organisation become strained? Why do many clients feel they don't get value for money?

We know the answer and it's really simple – expectations. Where the client has one expectation and the vendor another, the chances of the project being a success are slim. Find out how we approach projects to make sure everyone comes out of them satisfied with the outcome and the relationship between client and vendor remains strong throughout.

Your Project

There are four elements in every project that must be controlled, four areas that should form the basis for choosing your solution provider.

• Cost

• Risk

• Disruption

• Functional fit

Each of these components is important and managing them to make sure every one of them meets your expectations is the key to a successful project.

The aim must be to maximise the functional fit available to you whilst minimising the cost, risk and disruption involved. The optimum position is that shown in figure 1 (overleaf). Your 'selection oval' should cover most of the function and just a small piece of each of the three other quadrants.

In order to understand how to make the best decision, and to ensure a successful project, let's take a look at each of these criteria and, at the same time, consider how Metaphorix will work with you to deliver exactly what you need at the right price.

Cost

The obvious approach with this element of the project is to get value for money.

The aim is to keep cost to a minimum whilst getting the solution that exactly meets your needs.

But there is a potential pitfall in terms of cost when buying any system.

The problem with choosing the lowest price is that the expectation you have of the delivery may well be higher than that of the vendor.

The result of this approach is that costs will start to escalate the moment you ask the vendor to bridge the gap between your expectation and theirs.

The answer? Get a good deal, but make sure it is linked to the clearly stated expectation of what is to be delivered.

This should be an expectation that you and the vendor both share.

This is exactly what our approach to projects offers you – we set a fair price to a known deliverable and then we lock it into the project as an absolutely fixed price.

Risk

The elements of risk in a project are many and various. During the evaluation process you mitigate many of them through questioning and demanding proof of delivery.

For example, the financial stability of a vendor can be checked through D & B or by getting copies of their accounts. The risk that the vendor is able to successfully deliver the project management needed can be assuaged by taking up reference visits.

But there is one risk that it's very hard to eliminate – the risk that the project will not be delivered in line with your expectation and, in order to have your expectations met, you need to pay much more than you had agreed to and for which you had budgeted.

Worse still, the cost of the implementation could escalate so much that the whole project is placed at risk.

The answer? Pay a fixed price for your project that's been clearly set against the content you demand.

Our approach does exactly this by fixing the price, removing this risk to the project.

Disruption

To minimise disruption to normal working, you should ask some important questions.

• Will the software look and act in a way that is familiar to your users, so that it will be easily accepted by them?

Dynamics NAV looks like your desktop and works the way you do, making it very familiar to users and easy to accept.

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- Will the implementation offer you a simple data migration path from your current solution to the new?

  The SQL database and the integration offered with other products that Dynamics NAV delivers makes migration easy.

- How much will the vendor provide in terms of support during the install process and how much will you have to provide to complete the picture?

  It is this last one that is likely to cause you the most difficulty.

Your chosen vendor may agree to provide a set number of days as part of the project but what if more days get used on one stage than had been envisaged? What happens to those stages in the project that follow on later?

Do you cut back the time spent and risk an unsatisfactory outcome?

Do you break your budget and spend more?

The answer? Fix the price so that irrespective of the time taken you pay no more than you budgeted.

Metaphorix agrees the scope with you to make sure we both share a common expectation of the deliverable, then we fix the price of the project.

Functional Fit

The final area you need to ensure meets your expectation is the fit of the solution to your particular needs.

Throughout the demonstration phase you will be able to assess the main function offered by each solution, but here the devil is often in the detail.

When you start the project you will have clearly defined some aspects of the function to be delivered. However, there are some functions that you will assume will meet your needs.

What happens when you find a series of small, but crucial, pieces of function are missing as the project progresses?

Traditional thinking has it that you either compromise on the function to be delivered or you break your budget and spend more.

The answer? Scope the function to be delivered with us and then we'll fix the price.

Our approach means that you are guaranteed that the function you require is going to be delivered and that you will not be asked to pay a penny more for any of it.

Our Fixed Price Approach

The way we work with you has three key stages – evaluation, scoping and delivery.

Evaluation

This stage starts by us finding out more about you through our 'discovery' day. This involves a visit to your site or sites to meet key personnel and discuss the business processes important to your operation.

It's only by understanding in detail how you work that we can set up our system to reflect your business processes. It's only by seeing your business processes working within our solution that you can be confident that Dynamics NAV will meet your needs.

Once we have the detail, we set up your demonstration. We use the flexibility built into Dynamics NAV to tailor the processes to work the way you do. We use your data to run those processes and we show your business running inside our software as part of a 'day in the life of your company' presentation.

During our demonstrations and workshops we make sure that every one of your questions is answered, that every part of your business is discussed and mapped into the solution and that we prove the capability of Dynamics NAV to deliver the function you require.

Scoping

Following the evaluation, should you decide that the function offered by our solution is right for you, we move to the scoping stage.

Scoping is a much more detailed look at the functions you use on a day-to-day basis. We analyse the processes that your users rely on to support each area of the business. It takes a few days but at the end of it you have a detailed blueprint for the project. This is the first phase of the implementation proper.

The scoping report we produce is not only used to guide us through the project but allows us to produce a price for the project that will be fixed for the entire delivery phase.

It may be true that the scope will uncover a few areas that we didn't know needed a fix, and that might inflate the cost. However, it is equally likely that we will find things that can be done in a simpler way and that will reduce the cost involved.

In most implementations our scoping exercise comes out with a fixed price that is plus or minus 10% of the original quote.
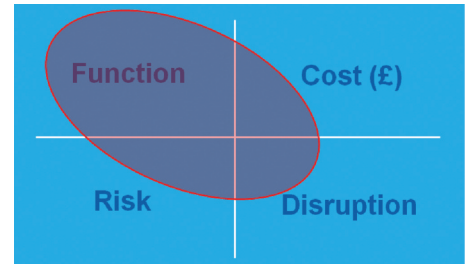

Figure 1: Your selection oval

Delivery

Using our proven and Microsoft approved project methodology, Sure Step, we deliver a quality project implementation every time.

Sure Step provides an implementation methodology and project management discipline that uses field-tested best practices.

Sure Step provides a consistent approach and standard set of tools and templates which help ensure projects are completed efficiently, driving business value right away, while helping reduce risk and deliver high customer satisfaction.

The Benefits of Our Approach

Our unique approach delivers the certainty that all implementations need to succeed.

We are so confident that we can deliver your solution to budget that we are prepared to totally commit to a fixed price installation.

This should say something very important to you as someone about to embark on a major systems project.

- Our approach gives you tremendous certainty that your budgets will not be exceeded and your promises to your board will be met.

- It removes the focus on cost from the project and allows us both to concentrate on delivering the solution.

- It allows us to keep a professional and friendly relationship as there is now a framework for managing changes to the project that will allow us both to recognise new things as they are introduced.

If you want to know more about us and our approach to projects, please contact us and we'll be happy to discuss how it would apply to your particular implementation.

For more information about our products and services, please call: **01675 432400,** email us at: **sales@metaphorix.co.uk** or visit our website: **www.metaphorix.co.uk**

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