



ACCOUNTABILITY INSIGHTS

ERP Implementation Checklist for Private Equity-Backed Portfolio Companies

A phase-by-phase framework for planning, executing, and optimizing your ERP implementation

PREPARED BY ACCOUNTABILITY • ERP IMPLEMENTATION SPECIALISTS

Why This Guide Matters

ERP implementations inside private equity-backed portfolio companies carry a different kind of pressure than a typical software rollout: compressed timelines, board-level visibility, and a direct line to the value-creation plan. This guide walks through five phases, from strategic alignment through post-go-live optimization that keeps an implementation tied to business outcomes rather than software features.

THE FIVE PHASES AT A GLANCE

1

Align ERP with the Investment Thesis

Before any vendor conversation happens, the ERP initiative needs to be anchored to why the business was acquired in the first place.

2

Standardize Portfolio Operations

With the strategy set, the organization needs to be prepared.

3

Implementation Planning

This phase turns strategy and readiness into an executable plan - the scope, budget, timeline, and partner that will carry the project through.

4

Execute a Controlled Go-Live

Go-live is where planning meets reality.

5

Post Go-Live Optimization

Go-live is the beginning of value creation, not the end of the project.

PHASE 1

Align ERP with the Investment Thesis

Before any vendor conversation happens, the ERP initiative needs to be anchored to why the business was acquired in the first place. This phase establishes the business strategy the system must serve.

KEY ACTIONS

- ☐ Clarify the investment thesis and value-creation plan (buy and build, roll-up, margin expansion, exit prep)
- ☐ Define the ERP's role in the 100-day plan
- ☐ Identify reporting requirements for the PE sponsor and board
- ☐ Establish success criteria tied to EBITDA and valuation drivers
- ☐ Secure executive sponsorship from the CEO, CFO, and deal team

✓ EXECUTIVE TIP

An ERP strategy that isn't tied to the investment thesis becomes a cost center instead of a value driver. Anchor every decision to how it supports the hold-period plan.

PHASE 2

Standardize Portfolio Operations

With the strategy set the organization needs to be prepared. This phase is about creating the operational consistency an ERP requires to function well across the business.

KEY ACTIONS

- ☐ Document current-state processes across the company (and any add-ons)
- ☐ Identify process variation across locations or entities that need standardizing
- ☐ Establish a single chart of accounts and reporting structure
- ☐ Assess data quality and cleanup requirements
- ☐ Build a cross-functional implementation team with clear roles

✓ EXECUTIVE TIP

Standardizing processes before implementation prevents the ERP from simply digitizing existing inefficiencies.

PHASE 3

Implementation Planning

This phase turns strategy and readiness into an executable plan the scope, budget, timeline, and partner that will carry the project through.

KEY ACTIONS

- ☐ Finalize project scope, budget, and timeline
- ☐ Select and contract with the implementation partner
- ☐ Build a detailed project plan with milestones and owners
- ☐ Define the data migration strategy and cutover approach
- ☐ Establish a change management and communication plan

✓ EXECUTIVE TIP

The discovery and planning phase is where most implementation risk is either eliminated or created. Invest the time here.

PHASE 4

Execute a Controlled Go-Live

Go-live is where planning meets reality. A controlled go-live means the business can keep operating even while the system underneath it changes.

KEY ACTIONS

- ☐ Complete configuration and integration testing
- ☐ Run structured user acceptance testing (UAT) with real business scenarios
- ☐ Migrate and validate final data
- ☐ Train end users by role, not just by department
- ☐ Execute a phased or parallel go-live with a defined rollback plan

✓ EXECUTIVE TIP

A controlled go-live is not about eliminating disruption entirely — it is about ensuring the business can operate through it.

PHASE 5

Post Go-Live Optimization

Go-live is the beginning of value creation, not the end of the project. This phase is where the ERP investment starts paying off.

KEY ACTIONS

- ☐ Establish a hyper-care support period with rapid issue resolution
- ☐ Monitor adoption and usage by role
- ☐ Review and refine reports and dashboards against original KPIs
- ☐ Identify quick-win automation opportunities
- ☐ Schedule a 90-day post-go-live business review

✓ EXECUTIVE TIP

The real ROI of an ERP is captured in the 6-12 months after go-live. Treat post-go-live optimization as its own project phase, not an afterthought.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Most failed or disappointing ERP implementations trace back to a handful of avoidable mistakes. Watch for these across every phase of the project.

1**Treating ERP as an IT project instead of a business transformation**

Ownership sits with finance and operations leadership, not just IT — the system should be shaped around business outcomes.

2**Failing to secure executive sponsorship**

Without visible sponsorship from the CEO and CFO, the project loses priority the moment it gets difficult.

3**Migrating poor-quality data**

A clean system built on dirty data simply produces inaccurate reporting faster.

4**Underestimating employee training**

Adoption, not go-live, is what determines whether the ERP delivers value.

5**Customizing too much, too early**

Heavy customization before the business understands the standard workflow adds cost, risk, and future upgrade pain.

6**Measuring project completion instead of business outcomes**

Going live on schedule means little if close cycles, reporting accuracy, and margins have not actually improved.

Success Metrics to Monitor

Go-live is a milestone, not a finish line. Track these metrics for at least the first two quarters post-implementation to confirm the ERP is translating into real business results.

Month-End Close Speed

Days required to close the books each month; a shrinking cycle signals ERP adoption is taking hold.

User Adoption

Share of licensed users actively working in the system versus falling back to spreadsheets.

Inventory Accuracy

Variance between system-recorded inventory and physical counts.

Customer Service Response Time

Time to resolve order, billing, or service inquiries using ERP-driven data.

Financial Reporting Accuracy

Frequency of manual corrections or reconciling entries needed after reports are issued.

Process Automation Rate

Share of repetitive tasks - PO approvals, invoice matching — now automated in the ERP.

Project / Job Profitability

Real-time margin visibility by project, job, or customer versus post-close analysis.

Executive Dashboard Utilization

How often leadership and the PE sponsor actually use live dashboards versus requesting static reports.

Implementation Readiness Scorecard

Rate your organization from 1 (not ready) to 5 (fully ready) on each criterion below. Circle a score for each row, then total the results.

Readiness Criteria	Score (1–5)				
Executive sponsorship and alignment on ERP goals	1	2	3	4	5
Investment thesis clearly tied to ERP objectives	1	2	3	4	5
Data quality and system landscape understood	1	2	3	4	5
Dedicated internal project team identified	1	2	3	4	5
Budget and timeline approved	1	2	3	4	5
Change management and training plan in place	1	2	3	4	5

YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____ / 30

26–30 — Highly Ready: proceed to vendor selection

18–25 — Moderately Ready: close key gaps before kickoff

Below 18 — Not Yet Ready: revisit Phase 1 and Phase 2 planning

Final Thoughts

A successful ERP implementation inside a private equity-backed portfolio company is never just a technology project. It is a business transformation with a compressed timeline, board-level visibility, and a direct line to the value-creation plan. The organizations that get it right treat each of the five phases in this guide as a discipline not a formality and they measure success in business outcomes not go-live dates.

If you are planning an ERP implementation or your current project has drifted off track our team is glad to help you assess where you stand.

Complimentary ERP Implementation Strategy Session

Whether you're preparing for your first ERP implementation or optimizing an existing system, our team can help.

Schedule a complimentary ERP Implementation Strategy Session with ERP for Private Equity powered by AccountAbility.

We'll review your implementation roadmap, identify potential risks, and share practical recommendations to help your project stay on time, on budget, and aligned with your business objectives.

Schedule Yours at erpforprivateequity.com or call Randy Roper 210-219-7744