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## Changing ERP Consulting Partners: The Good, The Bad, and What Executives Need to Know

### Executive Brief for Manufacturing, Construction, Aviation, and MRO Leaders

Your ERP system should help leadership make better decisions—not create more operational drag. When performance stalls, projects never fully finish, support becomes reactive, and confidence in reporting declines, many executive teams ask the wrong question:

**“Should we replace the ERP system?”**

Often, the better question is:

**“Should we replace the ERP consulting partner?”**

Changing ERP consulting partners can accelerate results, reduce long-term cost, and realign your system with business objectives—but it also introduces risk, disruption, and transition complexity.

The real issue is not whether you are unhappy.

It is whether your current partner is structurally capable of supporting where your business is going next.

### Why Companies Change ERP Consulting Partners

Over time, many ERP consulting firms drift into a transactional support role instead of functioning as strategic advisors. Instead of improving the business, they simply respond to tickets.

That creates:

- stalled optimization projects
- unresolved reporting issues



- poor integration discipline
- excessive manual workarounds
- weak executive visibility
- rising total cost of ownership (TCO)

This is especially dangerous for organizations in manufacturing, construction, aviation, and MRO where ERP should serve as the operational control center—not just an accounting platform.

## The Strategic Upside (The Good)

### 1. Realignment to Business Objectives

A new consulting partner can help re-anchor the ERP system to operational and financial goals.

This includes:

- challenging outdated workflows
- eliminating unnecessary complexity
- aligning reporting with executive decision-making
- introducing industry-specific best practices

This is especially critical for hybrid manufacturers, specialty contractors, and aviation MRO organizations where generic ERP advice creates expensive mistakes.

#### Executive Impact

ERP moves from being a cost center back to becoming a strategic decision platform.

### 2. Access to Better Expertise

Not all ERP partners are built the same.

Some are:

- strong in implementation but weak in optimization

- generalists instead of industry specialists
- behind on platform evolution such as AI, automation, and UI modernization

A stronger partner can improve:

- architectural decisions
- integration strategy
- workflow design
- scalability planning

This reduces long-term technical debt and prevents bad decisions from compounding.

### 3. Improved Accountability and Governance

A partner change often resets expectations.

This creates:

- defined ownership of outcomes
- clear service expectations
- stronger project governance
- executive reporting discipline
- better SLA performance

**Executive Impact:** Greater predictability in cost, timelines, and outcomes.

### 4. Lower Total Cost of Ownership

Switching partners is not cheap.

But staying with the wrong partner is usually more expensive.

The hidden cost often comes from:

- inefficient customizations

- patchwork fixes
- rework
- manual reconciliation
- broken process design

**Executive Impact:** Lower TCO—not just lower hourly consulting rates.

## The Strategic Risk (The Bad)

### 1. Loss of Institutional Knowledge

Your current partner—good or bad—holds:

- historical decisions
- customization context
- integration dependencies
- tribal knowledge
- undocumented workarounds

Without structured transition planning, you may pay twice for the same knowledge.

*For more on this issue, read [Converting Tribal Knowledge into Institutional Process](#)*

### 2. Short-Term Operational Disruption

Even well-planned transitions create friction.

This includes:

- project delays
- onboarding time
- temporary support slowdowns
- partner learning curves

**Executive Risk:** Business continuity can be impacted during the transition window.

### 3. False Hope of a “Fresh Start”

A new partner does not fix:

- poor internal governance
- weak data discipline
- executive misalignment
- undefined business processes

If those issues exist, the new partner simply inherits them.

**Executive Risk:** You change vendors—but get the same outcomes.

### 4. Transition Cost and Leadership Bandwidth

Switching requires:

- documentation review
- contract termination
- onboarding effort
- knowledge transfer sessions
- leadership time and attention

**Executive Risk:** The transition itself becomes a hidden operational project.

### 5. New Partner Misalignment

Not all “better” partners are better for your company.

- Common failures include:
- over-engineering solutions
- forcing methodology over practicality
- poor communication fit
- lack of industry understanding

**Executive Risk:** You trade one problem for another.

## When a Change Is Justified

A partner change is usually warranted when you see:

- ERP is not improving decision-making
- reporting is unreliable or delayed
- teams rely on manual reconciliations
- projects stall or never finish
- your partner cannot support roadmap priorities like AI, integrations, or UI modernization
- support is reactive instead of proactive
- finance, operations, and IT leadership are increasingly frustrated

If three or more of these are present, you are likely dealing with a structural problem—not a temporary one.

## Executive Guardrails for a Successful Transition

### 1. Define the “Why”

Be explicit:

- What is broken?
- What must improve?
- What does success look like in 12–24 months?

### 2. Conduct a System Assessment First

Before onboarding a new partner:

- document current state
- review integrations and customizations

- identify technical debt
- prioritize business-critical gaps

This prevents the new partner from guessing.

### **3. Control the Transition Window**

Avoid switching during:

- fiscal year-end
- peak production cycles
- major operational events

Phase the transition: Support → Optimization → Transformation

### **4. Establish Governance Immediately**

Assign:

- executive sponsor
- measurable KPIs
- weekly or bi-weekly checkpoints
- accountability for outcomes

### **5. Protect Knowledge Transfer**

Require:

- structured documentation
- recorded handoff sessions
- validation before full cutover

This is non-negotiable.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **When should I change ERP consulting partners?**

When your ERP no longer improves decision-making, projects consistently stall, manual workarounds increase, and your partner lacks proactive strategic guidance.

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### **Is switching ERP consultants expensive?**

Yes—but staying with the wrong partner is often far more expensive due to technical debt, rework, and operational inefficiency.

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### **Will a new ERP partner fix internal process problems?**

No. Weak governance, poor data discipline, and undefined workflows must be addressed internally. A new partner can improve structure—but not replace leadership discipline.

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### **How do I evaluate a new ERP consulting partner?**

Focus on:

- industry expertise
- executive advisory capability
- implementation discipline
- optimization experience
- governance structure
- cultural fit

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