

Installation versus Implementation

The Key to Achieving Project ROI

IMA (Implementation Management Associates) places a strong emphasis on the **application** of the **Accelerating Implementation Methodology (AIM)** to improve implementation success across all industries. Part of that process is our own continuous learning and application as we work in a variety of client systems. Awareness of themes and patterns across industries becomes a rich source of learning and improvement for us.

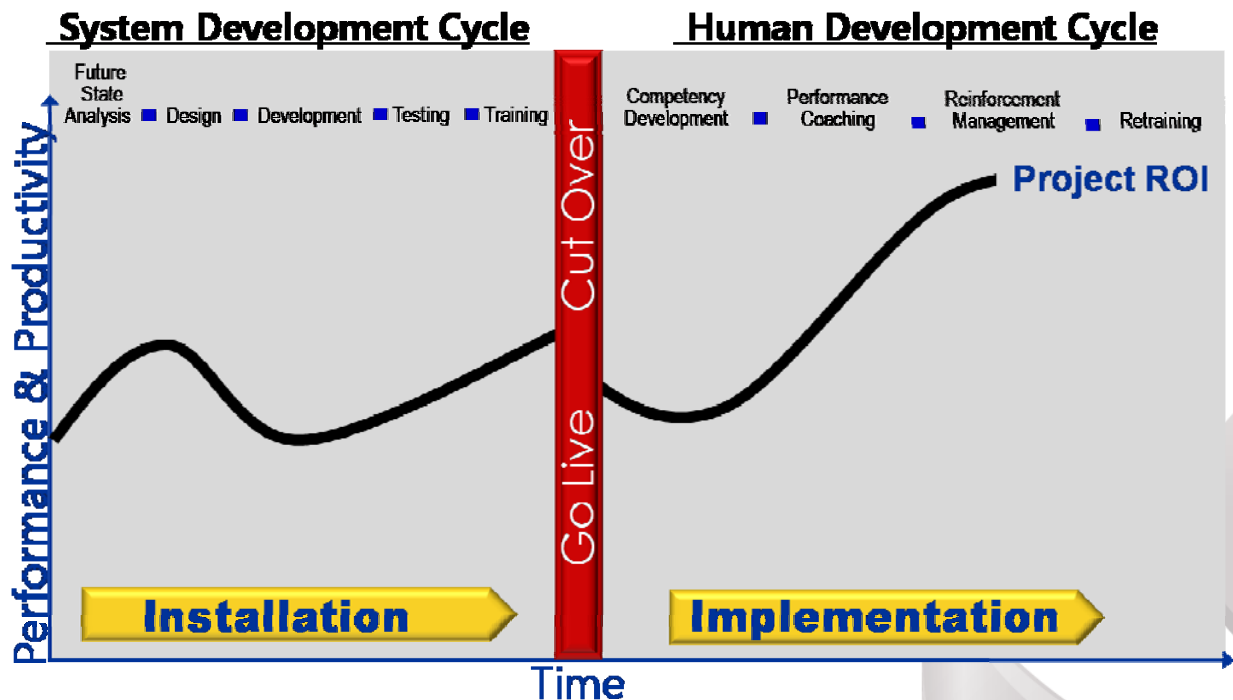
One such pattern we have detected in the past couple of years relates to a specific barrier to implementation success.

Very simply, we have identified a basic confusion in many, if not most, of our client systems between **installation** and **implementation**. This confusion leads to a reduced or hampered ROI for many projects. Specifically, the reduced ROI is linked to a dynamic of *premature completion* – simply stated, many projects are being treated as “finished” significantly before the real ROI is achieved. We

believe this is due to the confusion that exists in the definition of **installation** versus **implementation**. When we analyze project successes *and* failures we see that the two are very different. A fundamental shift in the orientation is required to avoid this pitfall.

As you can see from this graphic, a typical system development cycle ends with “GO LIVE” or “CUTOVER”. We call this the **installation phase** of a given effort. While it is a critically important phase of any project, it alone will not provide the full ROI.

In spite of this conclusion, many organizations are assuming completion at the “cutover” point – **installation**. Notice that the change curve dynamics are similar – the first curve in the installation phase usually affects only a small group of people – the project or program team. The second curve characterizes the impact to the larger organization and if not managed carefully will inhibit true, full return on project investment – **implementation**.



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The solution to this dilemma lies in three basic actions:

- 1) Framing or re-framing our definition of implementation and realizing it is not the same as installation. In so doing we prepare ourselves and the organization for a different set and sequence of activities to get to the financial return quickly.
- 2) We must avoid disassembling the project/program infrastructure prematurely.
- 3) We must more clearly define the human objectives of any project and rigorously plan the implementation deliverables into our project planning approach to ensure full implementation and ROI.

The following graphic demonstrate how the **AIM** process encompasses both the System Development Cycle and the Human Development Cycle and drives specific activity from **Installation** to **Implementation**.

Organizations who focus on true “implementation” rather than being content with installation will greatly enhance the likelihood of achieving Project ROI. By following the **AIM** process, organizations will:

- Accelerate implementation speed
- Avoid the business disruption that often follows installation and is left unmanaged
- Achieve all business, technical, and human objectives set for the initiative

