

PREPARING FOR THE SYSTEMS INTEGRATION EXPERIENCE

Risk management & Responsibilities

What is a Systems Integrator?

A systems integrator is a unique animal that finds pleasure in connecting unlike systems to produce a system or solution of superior functionality. Often multi-disciplined, an Integrator should demonstrate superior expertise in particular chosen technologies and often employ carefully developed processes and approaches to implementation and design. It is the approach and capability that often differentiates an Integrator from product suppliers and consultants.

The Inputs include the Outputs

Good design starts with the end in mind. The end result should also be built upon clearly defined objectives; objectives, which should have been cost justified and explained in a business case or design brief. To empower a service provider to become a part of the solution, they need to be a part of the review process. The review process should be founded on regular checks of the key indicators built on the client objectives. The objectives are more important to the success of any integration exercise than the project specification itself and they should influence decisions made throughout the entire project life cycle.

What does a Systems Integrator Expect?

Systems Integrators survive by performing certain processes efficiently over and over. Those processes may be business processes that ultimately manage an engineering task. What occurs by performing according to the well established process is predictability for all parties involved.

When projects are scoped and costed, unless otherwise specified, it is normal practice to only expect to perform a task once. This means Systems Integrators will expect the following:

- Fast Decisions
- No decision reversals
- Quotation for additional supply based on all the information not ideas that require review and consultation
- Timely provision of Information
- Timely supply of equipment and access to site
- Feedback on Design Submissions

What you can do to be prepared

- Understand your system how it is and how it will become.
- Know your own people well and isolate the Systems Integrator from the internal organisational culture, unless of course they need to be a part of it to provide the intended services.
- Work with the Integrator to form a partnering team.
- Anticipate information and data requirements and be sure to supply it as required.
- Request workshops and additional training to overcome technology and process learning curves.
- Allow the Integrator to become a part of the change management process towards the end of the project life cycle

