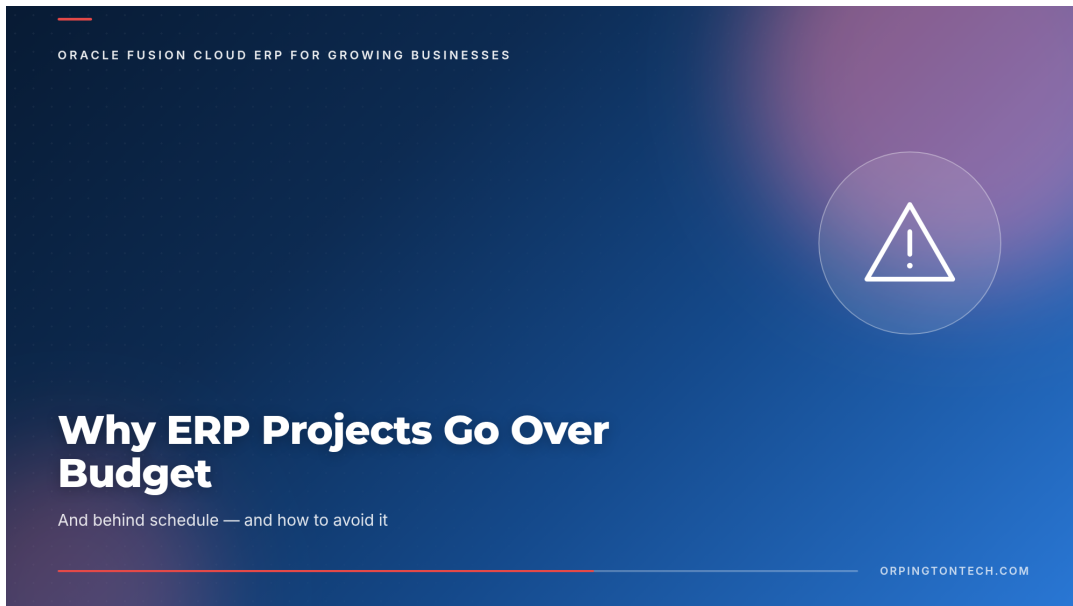




ORACLE FUSION CLOUD ERP FOR GROWING BUSINESSES

Why ERP Projects Go Over Budget and Behind Schedule — and How to Avoid It

The failure patterns are well documented. Most companies still repeat them.

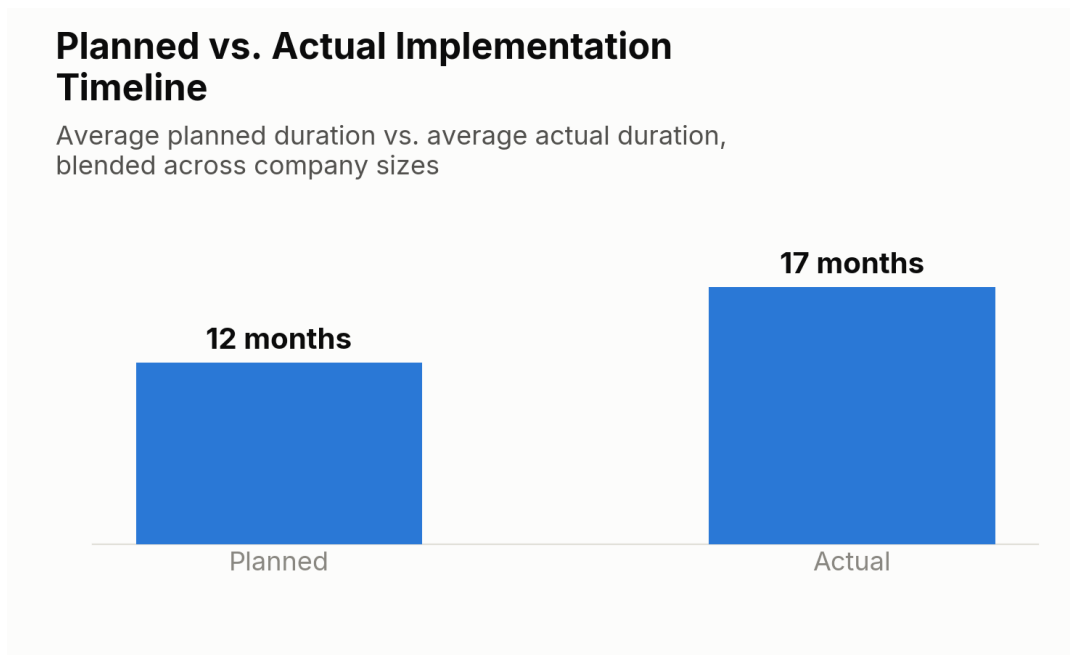
If you strip away the vendor optimism and look purely at the outcome data, ERP implementation has one of the more sobering track records in enterprise software. Sixty-four percent of ERP projects experience budget overruns. Fewer than half — just 49% — go live on the originally planned schedule. And by Panorama Consulting's 2025 research, 68% of projects fail to fully meet their original business objectives, even when they technically go live. These aren't numbers specific to bad vendors or badly run companies. They describe something close to the industry norm, across platforms and company sizes.

The useful thing about failure patterns this well documented is that they're also well understood. The projects that go sideways tend to go sideways in a small number of recognizable ways.

The planning-to-reality gap is bigger than anyone budgets for

The average ERP implementation, blended across company sizes, takes about 17 months to complete against an original plan of around 12 — a five-month gap that isn't a rounding error, it's nearly half again as long as the original estimate. Every month of extension carries real cost: additional consulting fees, extended internal staff time pulled away from their regular jobs, and —

often overlooked — the ongoing cost of running old and new systems in parallel for longer than planned.



The gap between planned and actual implementation timelines is large enough to be the expected case rather than a worst-case scenario. Source: KreativeCoreTech, 2026.

68%

of ERP projects fail to fully meet their original business objectives, according to Panorama Consulting's 2025 research — even though a majority of these projects do eventually go live.

Source: Panorama Consulting, 2025, via KreativeCoreTech

The patterns behind the numbers

A handful of root causes show up again and again in post-mortems of troubled ERP projects, and none of them are exotic or unpredictable.

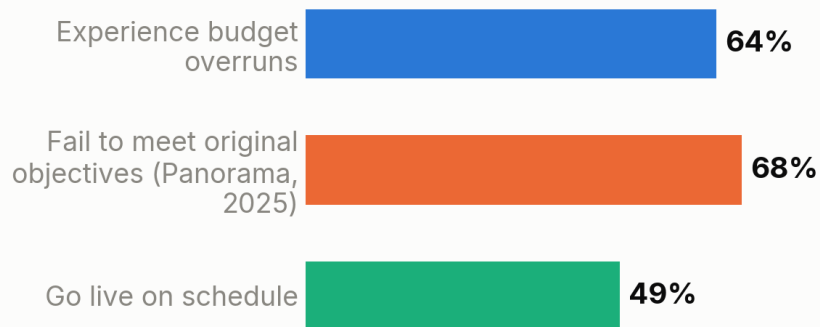
Scope creep is probably the most common. A project that starts with a clear, disciplined scope gradually accumulates "just one more" customization request as users discover the standard configuration doesn't perfectly match their existing process — and each individually reasonable request adds time and cost that rarely gets weighed against the original timeline commitment.

Data migration is a close second, and one of the more consistently underestimated pieces of any implementation. Companies routinely discover, midway through a project, that historical data is far messier than assumed — duplicate customer records, inconsistent product codes, years of manual adjustments baked into balances nobody previously had reason to scrutinize closely. Cleaning that up takes real time that often wasn't built into the original schedule at all.

Testing compression is the third recurring pattern, and arguably the most dangerous because it's usually invisible until after go-live. When earlier phases run long, testing is frequently the phase that gets cut to protect the go-live date — which means problems that testing would have caught instead surface in production, in front of customers and employees, which is a far more expensive place to discover them.

How Often ERP Projects Stay on Track

Share of ERP projects experiencing each outcome



Budget overruns and schedule slippage are common enough to be the norm rather than the exception across ERP implementations. Source: KreativeCoreTech / Anchor Group Technology, 2026.

Underlying most of these patterns is a more fundamental issue: unclear ownership of decisions. When it isn't obvious who has the authority to say no to a scope change, or who's accountable for signing off that data migration is genuinely complete, small ambiguities compound into large delays, because nobody feels empowered to make the call that keeps the project on track.

What separates the projects that stay on schedule

The data on this is fairly consistent: projects supported by experienced implementation consultants report an 85% success rate, meaningfully higher than the broader average, and leadership support is cited by 77% of respondents as a critical success factor — not a nice-to-have, but something project outcomes actually depend on. The common thread across the projects that do stay on track isn't luck; it's specific, deliberate practices: a scope that's genuinely locked down before work begins, with a formal change-control process for anything added later; a realistic, and often uncomfortably long, budget for data cleansing built into the plan from day one rather than discovered midway through; and testing phases protected from compression even when other phases run long.

Why independent readiness checks have become more common

Given how predictable these failure patterns are, and how expensive they become once they're baked into a signed contract and an in-flight project, a growing number of CFOs and boards now commission an independent risk assessment before a project starts, and sometimes again at key milestones during implementation — rather than relying solely on status updates from the systems integrator actually doing the work, who has an obvious incentive to describe progress more favorably than an outside party might. This is exactly the gap firms like Orpington Technologies are built to fill: a structured, evidence-based readiness score across the variables that actually predict outcomes — governance, change management, testing discipline, data migration readiness, integration readiness, and go-live strategy — giving a board a defensible, independent number rather than a reassuring one from whoever benefits from the project continuing as planned.

What comes next

Budget and timeline problems get most of the executive attention, but a project can hit every deadline and still fail if the people who are supposed to actually use the new system never really adopt it. That's the subject of the next article: change management, and why the software side of an ERP project is often the easier half of the job.

Sources

1. 58 Must-Know ERP Statistics for 2026, KreativeCoreTech — <https://kreativecoretech.com/erp-statistics/>
2. Cloud ERP Statistics for 2026 & Beyond, Anchor Group Technology — <https://www.anchorgroup.tech/blog/cloud-based-erp-statistics>