BOARDROOM GLOSSARY · FOR CFOS, CIOS & COOS

18 terms to know before you sign off on go-live.

The governance vocabulary that separates a defensible pre-go-live conversation from a guess. Plain English, no vendor jargon — written for the people who carry the decision, not the people who build the system.

ISSUED BY **ORPINGTON ADVISORY** READING TIME **6 MINUTES** **VENDOR-NEUTRAL**

01 Readiness & Testing

TERMS 01–09

01 Executive sponsor

The named, accountable executive backing the programme — distinct from a steering-committee member in title only.

Why it matters: No sponsor named in the room means no one owns the go/no-go call.

02 Change management

The formal plan for preparing end users — training, communication, adoption — ahead of go-live.

Why it matters: Weak change management is a leading predictor of post-go-live productivity collapse.

03 UAT (User Acceptance Testing)

Testing performed by actual end users against real business scenarios, not IT staff checking that screens load.

Why it matters: "UAT complete" means little if it only covered the happy path.

04 Edge case

A transaction outside the routine — large orders, period-end close, manual overrides.

Why it matters: Most go-live failures surface at edge cases, not everyday transactions.

05 Data reconciliation

Confirming migrated data matches the legacy system exactly, not approximately.

Why it matters: Partial reconciliation is still financial exposure at go-live.

06 Master data

Core reference data — customers, vendors, chart of accounts, item masters — that every transaction depends on.

Why it matters: Errors in master data propagate into every transaction built on top of it.

07 Cutover

The defined window in which the business switches from the legacy system to the new ERP.

Why it matters: An undefined or informally-planned cutover window is a governance red flag.

08 Rollback plan

The documented criteria and procedure for reverting to the legacy system if go-live fails.

Why it matters: If it isn't written down, it doesn't exist — no matter what was discussed verbally.

09 Stabilization (hypercare)

The window immediately after go-live with elevated support to catch and fix issues fast.

Why it matters: No stabilization plan means day-one issues compete with business-as-usual.

How to use this in the room — these nine terms cover what gets *tested* and *migrated*. When a status update uses one of them, ask which definition on this page the speaker means. Terms 10–18 overleaf cover what gets *governed* — accountability, risk, and the evidence standard a board decision rests on.

02 Risk, Accountability & Governance

TERMS 10–18

10 Severity-one defect

A production issue that stops the business operating — payroll, invoicing, shipping — not a cosmetic bug.

Why it matters: Boards should be told how many Sev-1s are open at go-live, not a total defect count.

11 Integration testing

Testing that connected systems (WMS, CRM, payroll, banking) exchange data correctly under real conditions.

Why it matters: "Connectivity confirmed" is not the same as integration tested under load.

12 System integrator (SI)

The firm engaged to configure and implement the ERP — distinct from the software vendor itself.

Why it matters: An SI grading its own readiness has a structural conflict of interest.

13 Scope creep

Uncontrolled expansion of requirements beyond what was originally approved and budgeted.

Why it matters: Unmanaged scope creep is among the most common causes of ERP budget overruns.

14 Go-live readiness score

A quantified, evidence-based assessment of preparedness — as opposed to a subjective status label.

Why it matters: A number can be defended to a board; a status colour usually can't.

15 Evidence-based diagnostic

An assessment that verifies self-reported answers against underlying documentation, rather than accepting status labels at face value.

Why it matters: This is what separates a defensible pre-go-live report from a status update.

16 Board-defensible

Documentation sturdy enough to stand up to scrutiny if a go-live decision is later questioned.

Why it matters: The bar to aim for with any pre-go-live report you sign your name to.

17 Trial balance reconciliation

Confirming the migrated general ledger trial balance matches the legacy system to the cent.

Why it matters: One of the clearest yes/no evidence checks available before go-live.

18 Fixed fee vs. day rate

Two billing structures — fixed fee caps cost, day rate scales with time spent.

Why it matters: Incentive structure matters: a day-rate SI is not incentivised to finish fast.

> *"A number can be defended to a board. A status colour usually can't."*
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> TERM 14 — GO-LIVE READINESS SCORE

Fluent in the vocabulary. Still need the evidence.

Knowing the terms tells you what to ask for. It doesn't tell you whether your own programme's answers hold up. The free Confidence Score walks all six scored variables using this exact vocabulary.

SCORE YOUR PROGRAMME
orpingtontech.com/free-diagnostic