How to Get Your TMS Up and Running in Just Two Months

TMS Technology has come a long way.

Gone are the days when set-up costs ruled out all but the Fortune 500. When you had to splash out on pricey in-house infrastructure to make it work. When you'd be waiting around for years before you started to see results.

Today, a TMS can be implemented at incredible speed – and that's crucial. Because when you bring your plans to the table, the question you're guaranteed to hear is: how long will this take to get off the ground?

It's easy to see why.

We've all been there: someone has a bright idea to save you a ton of time and money. A new system to unify your processes, streamline your workload and fix inefficiency woes.

Everyone's excited.

But then you start rolling out the project – and things unravel.

There's a technical issue. Things get stalled. A meeting gets pushed back. A year goes by with minimal progress. By the time the new system is finally up and running, the sheen has worn off. No one's motivated to learn the ropes, so they stick to the clunky old system. The grand idea to revolutionise your workplace is now a great big white elephant.

Sound familiar?

The problem with systems that take an age to implement is that project fatigue sets in.

To get the most value out of your TMS – to start seeing ROI fast – you need to keep energy high. You need a watertight plan to get it up and running in a matter of months.

This is totally feasible… if you have a roadmap for success.

If you laid the groundwork right during procurement, your CFO/CEO will already understand how the TMS aligns with their business goals, and your team will appreciate what you're trying to achieve and how it facilitates their day-to-day tasks.

The project will not come as a surprise to stakeholders, so you can jump straight in.

First, appoint a project leader who will be responsible for keeping everything on track.

This person should create a Project Gantt sheet that sets your target completion date, outlines each milestone along the way and assigns responsibility for tasks – on your side and the vendor's. They should schedule regular progress meetings, too.

Start training people to use the system.

Your TMS vendor should work with you to design an effective training programme, complete with comprehensive user guides. Ideally, these guides will be tailored to your unique needs, and can be adapted and added to, forming an ongoing learning resource for employees and new recruits.

Once this is ready, sit down with individuals or small teams and walk them through the elements of the TMS that are relevant to them. Run demos, take screenshots and record video demos using tools like Snagit so that they can refer to later on.

Next, migrate your data.

Your TMS is your "single version of truth". It needs to contain all the information and documentation you need to do your job, including financial and client information. Take the time to organise this properly, making it easy for your team to navigate.

Outline your usage scenario.

Write up a detailed account of how the TMS will be used by each department or for each task. Consider trialling the TMS with more tech-savvy teams first, collating their feedback and ironing out any niggles before you roll it out across

the board.

Once you do go live, remind everyone that the faster things are up and running, the faster everyone will benefit. Make sure they know who to contact when they need support.

By now your TMS is fully operational – but your task isn't over.

Set up a clear review process, including a log for queries, issues or suggestions for improvement that colleagues encounter during the early stages.

This should form the basis of your post-implementation evaluations, helping you to highlight problem areas and optimise the way the TMS is used.

As your team gets to grips with the technology, it's important morale stays high.

Re-emphasise the need to put everything through the TMS and avoid slipping back into old habits. Keep thanking your team for their efforts, congratulating them on progress and highlighting benefits as soon as they materialise.

Lastly, remember that this is a long term investment that will evolve with the needs of your organisation. Your TMS provider is not just a vendor, they are a partner – don't be shy about discussing upgrades or seeking out ongoing training and support. You can get things off the ground in just two months, but you'll need to maintain momentum to keep things flying high.

Looking for more detailed advice and handy resources to plan your project rollout? Click here for your FREE eBook, How to Choose a TMS that Will Supercharge Your Growth.