The twin sister of simplicity is speed. They go hand-in-hand. Complex solutions take too long to develop, are too expensive, and can either drag a program down or at least be a drag on time to value. A phased approach to the implementation of capability is the key to delivering value with speed.

PLM design and deployment cycles should be no more than six to nine months in duration. In even the most complex environments, programs should aim to deliver something of value in less than a year. This forces rapid decision making and the commitment of resources to the program to enable speed. Taking a phased approach and keeping cycles relatively short shortens time to value and enables a pay-as-you-go approach to the achievement of benefits.

The duration of PLM solution design and development activities is defined by the speed at which decisions are made, not how long it takes to configure the solution. I suggest taking an agile-like approach to solution development by scheduling multiple iterations of conference room pilots in short cycles. This removes the abstraction of “design” and makes development a real-time affair by showing users the actual tool they will be using.

As I mentioned in my last post, these programs are expensive undertakings with a significant commitment of resources. It is incumbent on leadership to recognize the obligation to quickly deliver value and take a “pay a little, get a little” approach to program execution. Perfection is the enemy of progress. Speed and simplicity are the best friends a PLM program leader can have.

More Reading

PLM Power - Critical Success Factors
PLM Power #1 - Solution Simplicity
PLM Power #2 – Speed of Execution
PLM Power #3 – Program Management
PLM Power #4 – Business Sponsorship
PLM Power #5 – Engaged Governance
PLM Power #6 – Value Orientation
PLM Power #7 – Transformation Leadership
About the Author

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For the past 30 years, Bill has helped executives in technology-driven industries transform their competencies to deliver results. He is a highly regarded consultant, speaker, and writer on the topics of innovation strategy, product development, portfolio management, technology commercialization, and the software systems that enable innovation. Keep up with Bill's latest research and thoughts on innovation and the rising role of the Chief Innovation Officer at www.TheChiefInnovationOfficer.com.