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PART I

The RelationEdge Communication Framework

Through the thousands of Salesforce implementation projects we have worked on at RelationEdge, we've found success in using a strong communication framework that is tied to our **PACED implementation methodology**. The key is seamlessly meshing our communication and implementation strategies.

Our communication framework remains the same for and throughout every implementation project to ensure a reliable support system for our **PACED** strategy.

The steps of this framework are designed to foster communication internally with your stakeholders and externally with your customers and vendors. The RelationEdge Communication Framework is as follows.

-  **Identify the Executive Sponsors**
-  **Define Goals**
-  **Set Expectations**
 - Define a timeline for each phase.
 - Define the team's time commitment and provide helpful resources to support them with their work.
 - Stress what productivity improvements are expected.
-  **Collect Feedback**
 - Provide a simple mechanism for your team to give feedback on the project.
 - Define a data team from IT and beyond that is responsible for data integrity.
 - Use the system itself to track post-implementation issues.
 - Implement dashboards and reports to show who has adopted the system.

PART II

PACED and the Communication Framework

PACED - which stands for **Prepare, Architect, Construct, Evaluate, and Deploy** - is a phase-based implementation approach that effectively operationalizes your teams on the technologies required to achieve your goals.¹ Without clear communication throughout all of the PACED phases, your project may be hindered by productivity bottlenecks, misunderstandings on planned outcomes, or low user adoption.



Communication planning begins in the very first phase of the PACED method: the Prepare phase. In this phase, we work with you to align the timeline and milestones for your Salesforce implementation. It's at this point that we partner with you to plan your communication framework.

Here's our **step-by-step guide** to building a strong communication framework that works with our PACED methodology for a smoother Salesforce implementation process.



¹ <http://relationedge.com/implementing-and-improving-your-salesforce-system-with-paced/>



Identify Executive Sponsors

At RelationEdge, we begin by identifying an Executive Sponsor.² Your Executive Sponsor should be aligned with the achievement of the business outcomes that Salesforce will bring about. It is important that they are not only a strong technology advocate, but that they are familiar with the return on investment to be achieved.

Choose an Executive Sponsor with the right level of top-down positional authority to encourage all your teams that will participate in the project to get on the same page. If multiple interests are being served, you may also consider forming a Stakeholder Committee that has the authority to remove blockers and make a decision. The group should be as small as possible to maintain agility in decision making.



² <http://relationedge.com/six-steps-to-salesforce-adoption/>



Create a Mission Statement and Goals

Before you start, identify goals and a mission statement for the project, and then write it down. These statements and goals will become a touchstone for all the members of your team that participate in the project. As such, you want to keep the language as succinct and crisp as possible.

Use your goals to inform your decisions on which people should be engaged for each component of the project. Ideally, the team members you align to specific goals will benefit from the implementation component that is tied to that goal and should have deep knowledge of the processes required to achieve that goal. In essence, this is the alignment of people to processes and this should be done from the onset. Delaying this selection has the effect of throwing darts at an empty wall and attempting to paint a bullseye around wherever the darts have stuck.

The people-to-process alignment for each target goal should mesh with your overall mission statement. It will also form the skeleton of your communication framework. With a clear mission statement and target goals aligned to people, you will set up the entire implementation process for success.





Set Expectations for Timing and Commitment

PACED is a phased approach, and you should emphasize this in your communication framework with the details of what you're going to do at each phase. You need to plan your Salesforce implementation carefully and in advance. As launch time gets closer, be sure to define specific dates.

It's important to set a timeline for each phase so your staff can be prepared. How much time can they expect to spend on this project? At what points during the PACED strategy will they be involved and to what extent? Your employees need to have a clear understanding of the time commitment that will be required of them. This will help you avoid any surprises — and unnecessary resistance — later down the line.³

In addition to affecting your internal teams, Salesforce implementation can affect your clients, customers, and vendors. All stakeholders should know what progress they can expect, and how that may affect their role. Include any possible impacts in your communication framework, and assign an appropriate team member who will deal with these issues if they arise.

Whether you're communicating to your internal or external teams, be sure to emphasize what you're really expecting to happen as a result of the changes. If you can highlight the benefits that will come from implementing Salesforce, you'll get all your teams excited about the change.



³ <http://relationedge.com/4-ways-salesforce-admins-can-advocate-salesforce-adoption/>



Collect Feedback from the Right People, at the Right Times

It's critical that you provide adequate training as your new technology is being implemented.⁴ Your teams may have issues using the system if it doesn't quite fit with the unique needs of your business, which is why you shouldn't just be open to feedback — you should actively seek it. Critical feedback from the bottom up can help minimize deviation during the implementation process and ensure an end-product that works well for your entire business. That means you should provide a feedback mechanism during the project as a part of the testing process.

Identify key knowledge holders who really know and understand the data that will be used — not only members of your IT department but stakeholders from across the business who can offer critical insight into your new technology. Reach out to these knowledge holders and try to engage them as a “Data Team” by offering them a way to give you critical feedback on your Salesforce implementation.

You can also collect more data-oriented feedback on the implementation process by tracking post-implementation activity and issues. Within Salesforce, you can implement dashboards and reports to show who has adopted the system and address any challenges that come up during training and implementation.

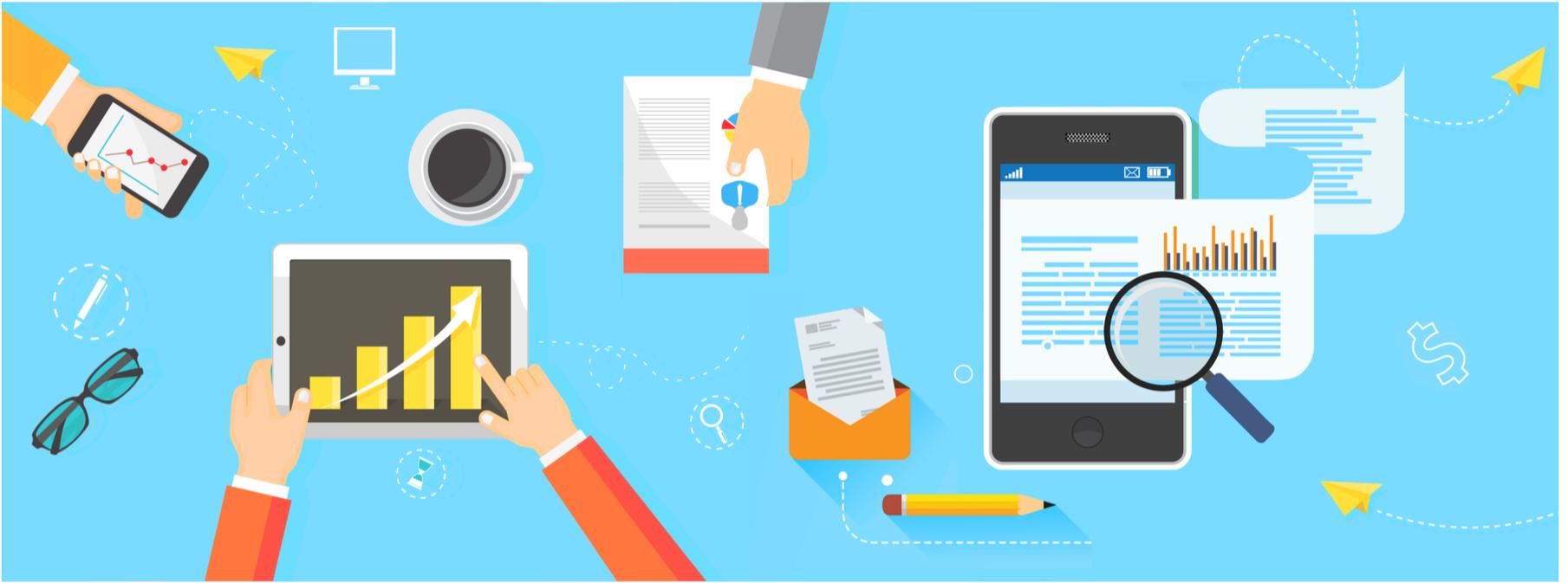


⁴ <http://relationedge.com/how-training-drives-adoption/>

Let Us Help Transform Your Business

RelationEdge has successfully used its PACED methodology combined with a tailored communication framework for more than 2,000 Salesforce and technology implementation projects at businesses of varying sizes.

Visit www.relationedge.com to see how we can help you take ownership of your Salesforce implementation.



This e-book is brought to you by RelationEdge, a Rackspace company. RelationEdge is a full-service Salesforce Platinum Consulting Partner and digital agency that combines a Process First. Technology Second.® approach with creativity to provide transformative business value.

Resources:

<http://relationedge.com/implementing-and-improving-your-salesforce-system-with-paced/>

<http://relationedge.com/six-steps-to-salesforce-adoption/>

<https://blog.purelyhr.com/implementing-new-technology/>

<https://www.interact-intranet.com/blog/5-strategies-to-help-employees-adopt-new-technology/>

