

5

Dysfunctions of Product Implementation

WRITTEN BY

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About Datta

For the past 18 years, I have configured, deployed, and implemented solutions for a wide range of customers. Throughout my tenure at SmartKarrot, I have led all new client implementations and third-party app integrations.

In this eBook, I'll share 5 common, yet solvable dysfunctions I have seen in product implementation. Feel free to reach out on LinkedIn to share your thoughts!

About SmartKarrot

SmartKarrot is a platform built to help Customer Success & Account Management teams **grow** their portfolio. We focus on enabling growth through Account Mining, Upsell and Cross-sell using our Augmented Intelligence solutions.





Before we get started...

What is Implementation?

Implementation

[im · pluh · men · tay · shn]

Implementation is the process of putting a decision or a plan into execution after a client buys the product, to get it operating appropriately

- To ensure there's maximum usage and value to the client.

This is often the first part of onboarding the client.

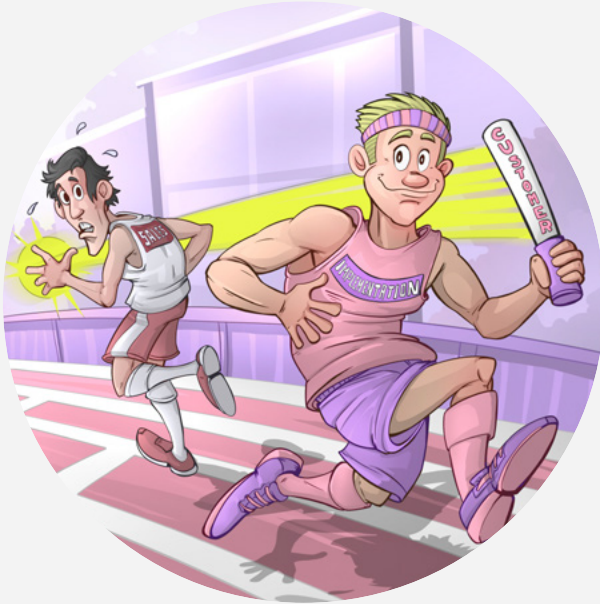
But, more importantly, this is also the part of Client Experience that often decides the tenure of the relationship.

This eBook is our team's attempt to share Implementation best practices, especially for SaaS / Product companies, based on our experimentation & learnings from the last several years.

After several attempts and a few false starts, our team has finally mastered a heavily automated process with systemic checks that has **improved our Implementation timeline by 70% in the last 24 months, especially for larger customers.**

We have also been improving our client satisfaction by a couple of notches. But, we continue to innovate & improve.

With that out of the way, let's get going...



DYSFUNCTION #1

Snatching the Baton

Inappropriate Sales to Implementation Hand-off

This is the first mistake from a team in a rush. And often the biggest one.

Time is not a friend for Product Implementation teams, and they are often in a hurry to get going. And to get to the finish line ASAP. Sometimes they display less than required patience to get a thorough hand-over from the Sales team.

These best practices for a successful handover have been learned and applied by our team.

Bring in the Implementation team towards the closure of Sales cycle

Prep for Kickoff meeting with Internal stakeholders

Get Implementation and Sales on the same page about the client's primary use cases and value outcomes to solve for

Make sure Implementation and Sales are also on the same page regarding any 3rd party integrations or custom requirements



DYSFUNCTION #2

Death by Planning

Analysis Paralysis causes a Non-Starter

Plans often change over time... sometimes for the worse.

All implementation teams intend to plan well and get things right first time to avoid rework. As a result, the planning manuals come out early and heavy discussions begin, often excluding client stakeholders. As time goes on, sometimes the plan mutates into a beast which looks increasingly tougher to tame.

There is no better place to practice Agile Principles and the Lean Methodology than in Product Implementation.

It's a given that this needs to happen after setting appropriate expectations with the client and ensuring as little time as possible is wasted.

But, almost paradoxically, Implementation teams ultimately learn that once the initial planning (the part that adds value) is complete, the rest just holds them back from getting to the final solution.



DYSFUNCTION #3

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Inability to Say No to
"One more need"

This one is a slippery slope.

On one hand every Implementation team wants to take the client through an excellent experience during their first post-sale engagement. On the other hand, they are the ones who have to say No to the 'proverbial' hammer of their clients' expectations, especially for the unrealistic and unwarranted ones.

It is a no-brainer that the team needs to excel at saying "No".

However, the trick is in knowing how to communicate this. It is good to prepare for this conversation, and not try to 'wing it'. It is great to arm yourself with an alternate solution (if possible) that can solve the need with far lesser effort. And of course the best solution is to have one specialist in the team who can handle such conversations with ease and finesse. And then have everyone else watch, and learn.

Not learning to say "No" will cause a poor experience for all stakeholders.



DYSFUNCTION #4

God, the Speed?!

Getting it done fast at any cost.

This one is on the other side of the spectrum from “Analysis Paralysis”.

Some implementation teams get going with barely any specific planning for each client. And then make the mistake of pushing through all steps without appropriate monitors and checkpoints. No wonder they are looking at a leaning tower, when all is said and done.

The world has pretty advanced technology solutions for managing projects like Implementation.

Our [Smart Playbooks](#) allow implementation teams track the set of tasks, touchpoints, and milestones in an appropriate sequence to manage the process well. And also run these Playbooks automatically based on pre-set rules, if required. **Please get your team Implementation team a classy platform that serves them well!**



DYSFUNCTION #5

Too Busy to Improve

Lack of Investment in Kaizen!

Kaizen is the Japanese philosophy of "continuous improvement".

This is based on the idea that small, ongoing positive changes can reap significant improvements. Teams that fail to see the need to constantly find small things to improve upon, and miss opportunities to execute on them, will eventually face larger and insurmountable challenges. Again, causing a poor experience all around, and a poor ROI for the organization.

Invest in the right leader who empowers your team.

Invest in a leader who understands that the only way to stay ahead is to constantly improve. And one who instills this habit within the team by showcasing and implementing improvements (initially)...and then provokes / inspires the team to take over this process.



With that, we come to end of this eBook which was meant to provide a quick preview to all the insights we have on the topic. Hope you enjoyed browsing this as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Reach out to new@smartkarrot.com to learn more.



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