

THE TOP TEN SHAREPOINT® MISTAKES



AN EBOOK FROM



INTRODUCTION

What's the biggest mistake people make when using, or attempting to use, SharePoint®? It's a great question and one that opens up a world of misconceptions, assumptions, strategy-challenged planning dilemmas and awkward missteps. These, in turn, often lead to downward spirals of apathy and frustration. Asking the question, therefore, is the best first step you can take.

But if common SharePoint mistakes appear to be as multi-layered and complex as SharePoint itself, our research demonstrates that a limited number of misjudgments tend to lead businesses in the wrong direction. It also highlights one glaring error as the major stumbling block.

Here, then, is a list specifically designed to help you avoid frustrating false starts and major stumbling blocks and to leverage your SharePoint experience to its extraordinary full potential.

1. BANGING YOUR HEAD AGAINST A WALL YOU BUILT.

Of all the SharePoint mistakes, this is probably the most difficult to witness. People build a wall of misconceptions around what SharePoint is, then bang their heads against it. They then delegate and have whole teams banging their heads. They take breaks as you'd expect, then get back to it. Here is our favorite summary of one aspect of the problem: "SharePoint is BIG. It seems to do everything. So let's invest in it, stick it in front of our teams, and forget all about it."

Perceiving SharePoint as a kind of team-motivating supervisor is an amazing misconception, but it happens all the time. To invest in SharePoint without investing time and thought into what it is, what it can do for your business processes, or how to implement it in a team-friendly way, is a fast track to a long term headache, rather than positive ROI. This list-topping mistake is so widespread and misguided, on so many levels, that various aspects of it will follow in the pages ahead.



2. LETTING OUTSIDERS KNOW THEY'RE NOT WELCOME.

Less common than number one, but equally difficult to comprehend, is the approach of looking into SharePoint, seeing how feature-rich and full of potential it is, then investing in it as if it's the Holy Grail of every need the business will ever come up against. "We have SharePoint, therefore we acknowledge no gaps."

But the gaps are there. No matter how feature-rich and complex something is, it cannot cover the vision of – and practical way forward for – every business need. Bamboo Solutions thrives by providing solutions to enhance the SharePoint experience, allowing businesses to tailor solutions to their needs. The logic is obvious. Here's what Jamie McAllister, Consultant and SharePoint MVP, had to say:

"If [SharePoint] were to meet all those extras on top of the core product, there'd be a ten year release cycle and the product would be obsolete five years before it was even released."

The "no gaps" approach misunderstands the potential of SharePoint: how it can be enhanced to create smoother collaboration, saving time and money and ultimately becoming what you need for maximum efficiency and growth. Therein lies SharePoint's real potential.



3. THE INSIGNIFICANT ISSUE OF TOTAL DISASTER.

Obviously, thousands of businesses do put together a SharePoint plan, then implement and tailor it to suit their needs. On the surface things run smoothly; but often, only for a while.

Here's a list of common operations and maintenance shortcomings, put together by Booz Allen Hamilton's Lead SharePoint Solutions Manager and Architect, Dan Usher, for a SP TechCon presentation:

- Not planning for emergency/unscheduled maintenance time
- Deploying code without testing in a staging environment
- The lack of regression path
- Not having an active disaster recovery plan
- Not taking into account the business continuity of operations

Look at this from an everyday life perspective and the list might include: 'Not bothering to wear a seatbelt, on the basis that nothing bad happened yesterday,' or, 'Not remembering to lock the front door because you were late for work.' Getting caught up in details, prioritizing deadlines and other urgent business demands is perfectly understandable; but if time isn't taken to deal with the fundamentals, the price you may pay down the line is potentially catastrophic.

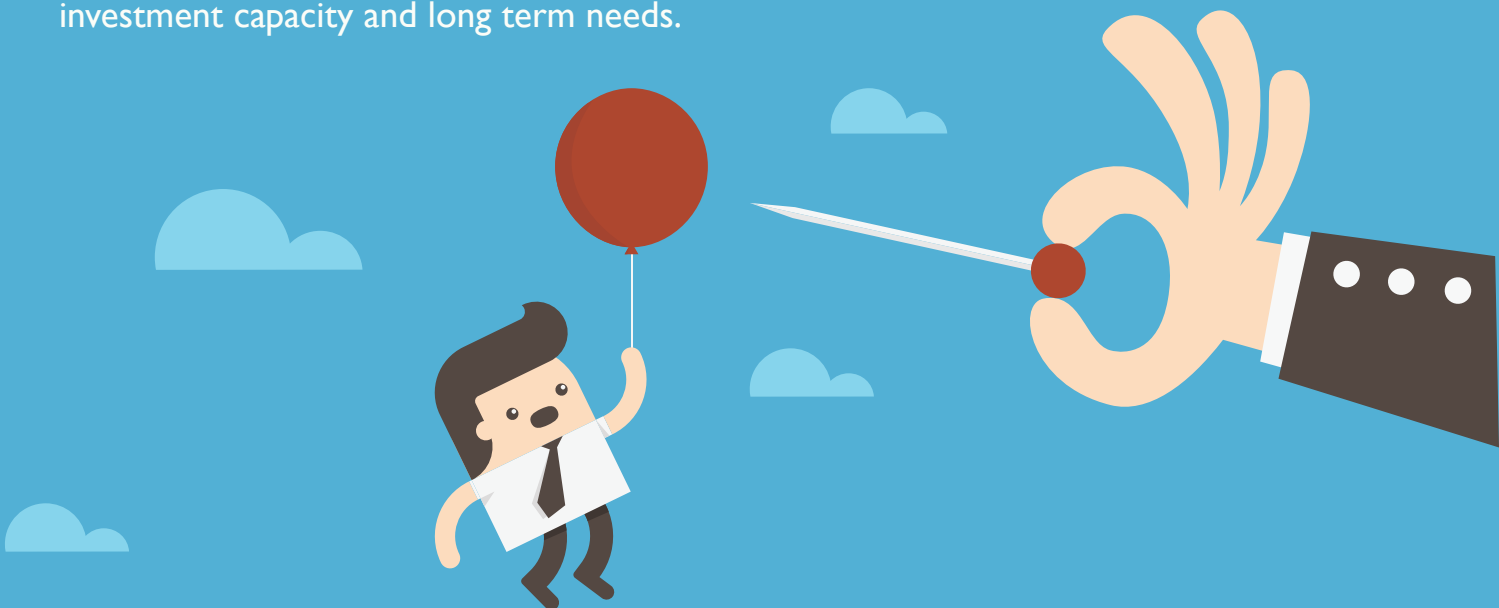


4. SHOULD YOU KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND WHILE REACHING FOR THE CLOUD?

This entry is about mistakes that could be made rather than ones that have. Many presume that everything is heading to the cloud. Despite this, some see the cloud's silver lining as a security alert. According to the AIIM report: "Connecting and Implementing SharePoint," 62 percent of survey respondents called security a priority issue, followed by information governance at 51 percent, ability to manage hybrid allocations at 46 percent, integration with on-premises systems at 45 percent, ability to migrate content at 43 percent, and geographical location of servers at 43 percent.

Happily, Microsoft considers cloud security a priority, with its layered defense mechanisms – third party audited security control, security and compliance certifications and so on – building confidence. Microsoft Expert Rand Morimoto advises encrypting content, with your business being the holder of the key.

The cloud's advantages include hugely reduced spending on technology infrastructure and other capital costs. On-prem keeps you in control of data and security, with everything handled internally; and hybrid offers the best of both worlds. Ultimately, it's about what works for your organization in terms of investment capacity and long term needs.



5. THE BLAME GAME, ACCORDING TO AIIM.

Most businesses are run by realists. When mistakes are made they're not interested in playing the blame game, only in fixing problems.

According to an AIIM report, one-third of organizations feel their SharePoint project has failed to meet expectations, with 26 percent concluding that progress has stalled. Despite this, only eight percent claim to be considering replacement, with a mere one percent having done so. Why?

The survey indicates that most businesses unhappy with their SharePoint performance point the finger at themselves: lack of management support, planning and user training, user resistance, lack of investment and expertise. According to Doug Miles, head of the AIIM Marketing Division and author of the report:

“For most there is a strong commitment to making SharePoint work for them as a core platform, embedded in and connected to the enterprise.”

The survey and report stand as a credit to those businesses. Here are people determined to stay focused. They are playing a game with a much better ROI than the blame game and will reap the ROI rewards because of it.



6. MISTAKING SMALL DETAILS FOR THE BIG PICTURE.

Confused perceptions of what SharePoint does are at the core of this list, but that issue doesn't always stop at the initial stages. Once up and running, many make judgements on SharePoint based on a single experience.

In one business, somebody discovers that a minor change – as he perceives it – will take a long time to implement: custom code has to be considered along with a number of other factors. He is dismayed. SharePoint is bad.

In another business, somebody discovers that a complex functionality – for which she has penciled in down time – can be implemented in a matter of minutes. She is delighted. SharePoint is good.

SharePoint is complex, as are your ideas about what works best for your business. Once you've factored in the importance of a solution and how it tailors SharePoint to your needs, the real work is over. The rest is either a case of hitting the ground running, or a few awkward first steps. Either way, you're moving in the right direction.

And the better your understanding of SharePoint, the easier it is to move forward.



7. GAINING THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM, THEN WRECKING THE PLACE.

One end user, who works for a growing company using SharePoint, stated bluntly that effective tracking and communication of data was quickly getting out of control. For him, the problem was simple: As the company grows, more people are promoted to managerial positions. Once in position, they start asking for various permissions in the system. Once they have them, they start doing things in a way that suits themselves rather than the way it was set up – and chaos ensues.

There is also the question of security. As far back as 2011, security vendor Cryptzone conducted a survey of one hundred SharePoint users in which 45 percent admitted regularly copying sensitive or confidential data to either their own hard-drive, a USB, or to use in an email for collaboration purposes. It set alarms ringing with regard to the question of policies on how information should be shared, if certain information should be shared, and how to govern access and enforce compliance.

Serious consideration should be given to these issues.



8. ALLOWING OLD HABITS TO LEAD NEW METHODS ASTRAY.

User adoption is a sticking point. Old habits die hard. Put new methods in front of people and you'll probably come back to find them still using the old ones.

What to do?

When Microsoft introduced SharePoint, what mattered wasn't how ambitious and innovative it was, but whether organizations would recognize the potential. Technology is for the people who use it. If your end users are left to their own devices (no pun intended), they will revert to what they know, so the benefit of investing time into end user training needs to be taken seriously.

Identifying key players within the organization and involving them in a drive to promote SharePoint to end users is a good start.

On the floor, announcements should be made, workshops set up and training given. Understanding the difficulty of user adoption is important. Always encourage feedback.

Smart planning and investment in team training is crucial. And once the team is used to SharePoint, they will see for themselves how it simplifies processes, enhances collaboration and makes their projects easier to manage. The potential ROI for your business is enormous.



9. ENTERING A MAZE TO FIND THAT SIMPLE SOLUTION.

Because the above issue is so important, we should take a look at how some businesses do implement SharePoint along with end user training, then proceed to turn a powerful collaborative tool into a metadata maze. Why?

Once again, it's about planning. On one side, we have an administrator busy serving various projects required by various teams at various levels. This highly efficient person manages solutions and ensures all elements are covered and properly connected.

On the other side, we have the end user who is interested only in having his or her workload made simpler, but discovers that, for example, accessing or editing a document may take any number of clicks and metadata field updates.

The solution is to factor in the end user. Consider how the solution to be implemented will work from an end user view point. Ask if buying a solution pre-designed with that factor as a priority is the most efficient way to go, then maintain that balance going forward. Your good habits help create and maintain their good habits. Keep it simple.



10. I COULD HAVE SWORN SOMEONE SAID IT WAS GOING TO BE EASY.

While some see SharePoint as a one-issue problem solver, others see it as a miraculous fix-all. The truth lies somewhere in the middle.

So, is it wrong to invest in SharePoint to deal with one issue? Yes and no. Let's say you've heard SharePoint is the best CMS tool for managing a business site. Ok. But now you need to take a hard look at everything else SharePoint is.

Once you invest in SharePoint, you should know how you plan to develop with it. You've identified one issue and found the solution, but you've invested in something that covers a lot of ground. Identify other issues and look at SharePoint's potential to provide any number of solutions or enhancements.

If you saw SharePoint as a miraculous fix-all, you need to take a hard look at what SharePoint offers comparative to your needs. If there is a gap, look to those who provide software solutions and services designed to help tailor SharePoint to specific needs.

SharePoint may not be as easy as you thought, but that's only because the potential is so huge. Stick with it.



THAT'S ALL GREAT, NOW WHICH BUTTON DO I CLICK TO FIX IT ALL?

The conclusion to be drawn is that planning, or lack of it, stands out as the glaring error mentioned in the introduction. Many have invested in SharePoint based on its success, only to find that taking advantage of its potential seems impossible. From there, SharePoint appears to end up partly used, partly abused, and almost wholly misunderstood.

Here, then, is our SharePoint To-Do List, based on that one all-powerful mistake: lack of planning.

- Invest time to learn the full potential of SharePoint
- Consider your immediate needs and perceived future needs as you grow
- Ask yourself how SharePoint could be implemented to deal with those needs
- Take into account the services and solutions that exist to help tailor SharePoint
- Train your teams, create workshops and give encouragement
- Don't overlook the question of permissions and security, or emergency backup
- Practice vigilance over your processes and keep everything updated
- Ensure that solutions are built or bought with end user experience in mind
- Measure the results of solutions in terms of enhanced efficiency and collaboration
- Consider all developments carefully and always have a plan for going forward

And ENJOY!



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