HOW TO REDUCE RISK AND REWORK IN GLOBAL WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT ROLLOUTS

A practical framework for navigating requirements gathering, discovery, complexity, compliance and design for global implementations



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WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT SUCCESS STARTS LONG BEFORE CONFIGURATION

Global workforce management transformations for large enterprises can be among the most complex to undertake. They sit at the intersection of labor law, collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), payroll, HR, operations, compliance and employee experience.

Significant investment in technology cannot by itself ensure success, and many global implementations struggle for reasons that have little to do with the software. Projects stall when requirements are incomplete. Designs become unnecessarily complex when local exceptions are granted without thoughtful consideration. Testing becomes rushed when stakeholders discover late in the process that critical business rules were misunderstood months earlier.

Organizations operating across multiple countries face a unique challenge: balancing global consistency with local compliance. Each country introduces its own regulatory obligations, labor practices, CBAs, payroll dependencies and stakeholder expectations. Without a disciplined approach, complexity can quickly compound into cost, delays and rework.

Early alignment and an intentional design discipline can create value throughout the implementation lifecycle. The strategic advantage lies in resolving ambiguity, identifying gaps early and establishing global consistency while accommodating local requirements. (Reducing unnecessary variation also makes the system easier to maintain over time.) The outcome is a stronger requirements phase that is scalable and globally maintainable.

While there are many paths to a successful global deployment, each with its own advantages and tradeoffs, this guide presents a practical approach that has proven effective in managing complexity across countries and stakeholders.

WHERE GLOBAL ROLLOUTS BECOME COMPLEX



Regulatory fragmentation:

Global organizations operate across different regulatory frameworks and local requirements. Challenges arise when those differences are not addressed early in the global design.



Union and works council landscape:

Late engagement can create significant delays, particularly where consultation or approval requirements are identified after key design decisions have already been made.



Stakeholder alignment:

Global, regional and local stakeholders often bring different priorities, terminology and decision rights.



Legacy system complexity:

Every country brings its own local systems. Integration complexity is often underestimated and can contribute to downstream delays.



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With more than 17 years of ADP® WorkForce Suite implementation experience across complex global environments, Accenture helps organizations realize the full value of workforce management transformation. ADP WorkForce Suite can be configured to support unique pay rules, labor regulations and scheduling requirements while delivering measurable ROI and operational efficiency. Backed by insights gained from large-scale multinational deployments, Accenture applies proven methodologies and best practices to guide organizations through modernization at scale.

Learn more

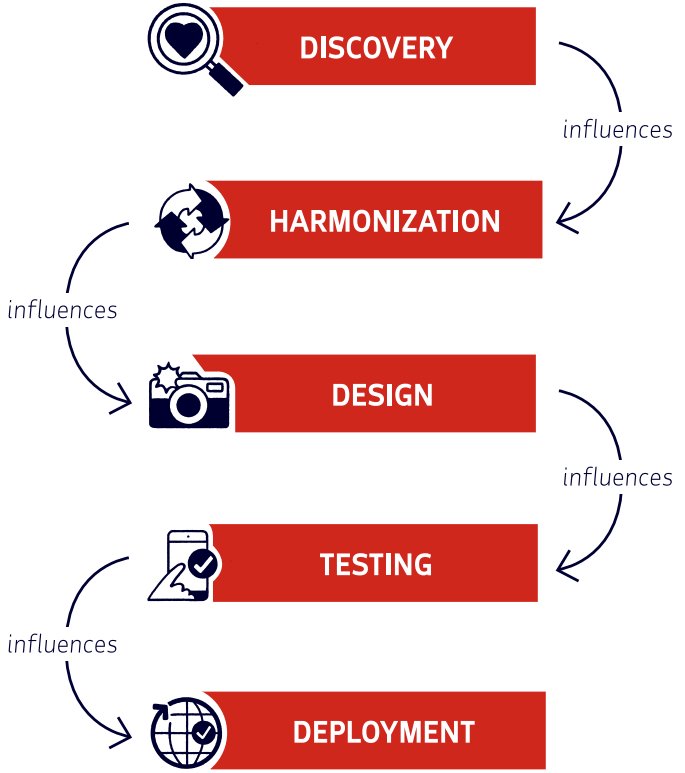


POOR REQUIREMENTS MANAGEMENT WILL COST YOU

Many implementation failures are caused by assumptions. At the beginning of a transformation, stakeholders can be overconfident in their understanding of their current workforce processes.

Regional leaders believe their requirements are documented. Implementation teams think they can uncover remaining details during workshops. Executives expect the hardest work to begin during configuration. **Yet the most expensive mistakes often occur well before configuration.**

When requirements are incomplete, unclear or misinterpreted, the impact ripples throughout the transformation life cycle. A small misunderstanding in discovery can become a major program issue by the time user acceptance testing (UAT) begins.



"The challenge becomes exponentially large in global programs. Multiple countries can interpret similar business concepts in different ways. Overtime, premium pay, leave accruals, break policies and schedule rules may appear similar on paper while operating very differently in practice."

— Inna Bolotina, Senior Manager, WorkForce Software Practice, Accenture

Requirements management is more than documentation; it becomes a governance discipline. Organizations that treat requirements as a strategic workstream consistently experience:

- Faster decision-making
- Fewer design revisions
- Reduced testing defects
- Improved stakeholder alignment
- More predictable deliveries

The organizations that struggle typically discover too late that requirements gaps can't be fixed through configuration alone.

The difference between a smooth go-live and a delayed one is how requirements and design are handled.





THE FIVE-STAGE FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBAL SUCCESS

Accenture has developed a proven life cycle that successful global implementations follow, with a repeatable process that transforms complexity into manageable decisions.

Rather than approaching each country independently, **leading organizations adopt a structured process that progressively moves from understanding to alignment to execution.**

Stage 1: Pre-discovery

The objective of pre-discovery is preparation, to set up the rest of the transformation for success. This stage assesses the entire landscape upfront, so workshop time is spent on decisions, not backtracking to understand the basics.

Before a single workshop begins, organizations should collect policies, labor agreements, payroll dependencies, regulatory requirements and system inventories. This foundational work prevents valuable workshop time from being spent gathering information.

The quality of preparation in pre-discovery directly influences implementation outcomes.

Stage 2: Discovery

A thorough discovery uncovers how work is performed today and how the organization intends to operate in the future. Workshops should focus on decision-making, process optimization and business outcomes rather than documenting every detail of existing processes.

The goal is clarity that comes with data collection.

Stage 3: Analysis and harmonization

Proper harmonization helps determine which requirements truly require localization, and which can be standardized globally. This is where organizations might discover that a significant percentage of perceived country-specific requirements are preferences rather than regulatory necessities.

Proper harmonization dramatically reduces complexity.

Stage 4: Design

Design converts approved requirements into a scalable operating model. A successful design framework includes global standards, approved local variations, governance controls and documented business rationale.

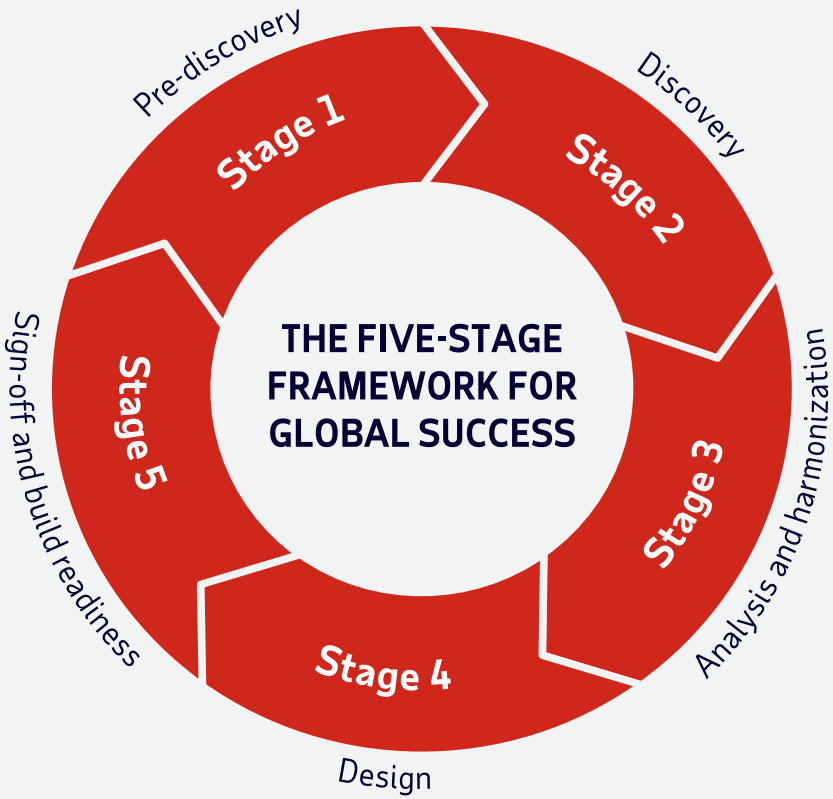
A global template with documented variants should be designed before configuration begins.

Stage 5: Sign-off and build readiness

The final stage establishes confidence. Every requirement must be traceable, every design decision documented and every stakeholder aligned before build activities begin.

This creates the foundation for predictable testing and improves odds of deployment success.

A structured approach helps organizations simplify global complexity, align stakeholders and drive successful implementation outcomes.





DISCOVERY DONE RIGHT

Don't treat discovery as merely an administrative activity — it's the best chance to catch costly requirement mistakes before UAT.

The purpose of discovery is to uncover the decisions that will shape the future operating model. Organizations that conduct discovery effectively focus on four critical principles**.**

Principle 1: Create a structured intake process.

The most productive workshops begin before participants enter the room. Foundational information should be collected in advance, including policies, CBAs, payroll requirements, reporting structures and compliance obligations.

This allows workshops to focus on decisions rather than fact-finding.

Principle 2: Use tiered workshops.

Not all topics need to be discussed at the country level. Global processes should be discussed globally. Shared regional practices should be discussed regionally. Only truly unique requirements should require country-specific deep dives.

This approach significantly reduces effort while improving consistency.

Principle 3: The right subject matter experts (SMEs) matter.
Subject matter expertise is often underestimated. The single biggest risk in discovery is including the wrong SMEs. Projects frequently assign participants based on availability rather than expertise. The result is incomplete requirements, delayed decisions and subsequent rework.

The cost of having the wrong stakeholder in discovery can persist throughout the life of the program.

Principle 4: Consider future-state during current-state.
Current-state documentation doesn't automatically translate to transformation. Organizations must identify manual workarounds, unnecessary customizations, fragmented processes and operational pain points.

Otherwise, they risk recreating existing problems within a new technology platform.

The right preparation, stakeholders and future-state focus during the discovery phase will help prevent costly mistakes later in the project.

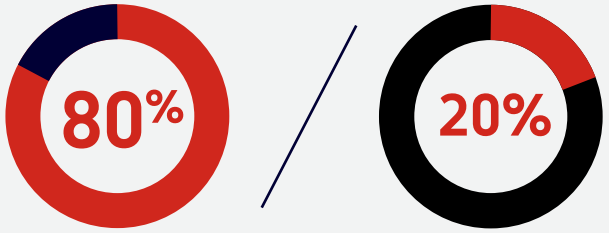


HARMONIZATION WITHOUT COMPROMISING COMPLIANCE

Harmonization is about balancing global consistency with local requirements.

Some stakeholders may assume harmonization means forcing every country or region to operate identically. **Effective harmonization can determine where consistency creates value and where localization is genuinely required.**

For example:



~80% of business processes can be standardized

~20% of business processes require local variants

The goal is finding that line and defending it.

A useful framework classifies requirements into three categories.

Global standards

Global processes are intended to operate consistently worldwide, including things like approval workflows, governance models, reporting hierarchies and common administrative processes. Consistency creates efficiency and simplifies ongoing support.

Global frameworks with local parameters

These processes share common structures but require country-specific values. Examples include leave accrual calculations, overtime thresholds and premium rules. The framework remains global while inputs remain local.

Locally unique

Local requirements are regulatory or contractual obligations that can't be standardized broadly, such as work council requirements, statutory labor regulations or specialized collective bargaining agreements.

The most successful organizations actively challenge whether a local requirement is truly unique before granting an exception. Remember, every unnecessary exception increases long-term costs.

Additional configuration elements require design review, testing, support, documentation, governance and maintenance for years after go-live.





The framework is the easy part. The hard part is the conversations that get you there. Accenture facilitates the hardest conversations in your project and turns disagreement into design decisions.

Neutral facilitation

A neutral facilitator is essential. Local needs are heard and evaluated against global standards, helping teams reach decisions that keep the program moving.

Decision log

Every harmonization decision is documented, what was decided, why, who approved it and what the impact is. This becomes one of your most important governance artifacts.

Executive sponsorship alignment

A defined design authority is critical. Without it, harmonization stalls. With it, decisions move quickly and consistently.

Having Accenture lead this work across your organization, dealing with different geographies, unions and regulatory environments, helps distinguish true local requirements from "how we've always done it."



MANAGING UNION AND CBA COMPLEXITY

In heavily unionized environments, the CBA becomes your foundational requirements source.

Unlike internal policies, CBAs establish contractual obligations between employers and workers. Overtime calculations, shift premiums, break entitlements, scheduling practices and attendance rules may all be defined within negotiated agreements.

✓ Early engagement is critical

In many jurisdictions, worker representatives and work councils hold rights related to workforce systems and scheduling technologies. Engaging these stakeholders late can significantly delay implementation progress.

✓ Interpretation is often more difficult than collection

Understanding the agreements is considerably more challenging than collecting them. Many agreements contain language that's evolved through years of operational interpretation. A successful implementation means translating legal and contractual language into precise system logic.

✓ Multi-agreement environments demand discipline

Global organizations frequently manage multiple agreements across business units, geographies and workforce populations. Without disciplined governance, these differences can create excessive customization and operational complexity. Effective design balances contractual compliance with sustainable platform architecture.



CBAs introduce unique complexity and therefore are foundational to your requirements.



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN REQUIREMENTS AND DESIGN

Many projects successfully complete discovery only to encounter challenges during design. The reason is simple: gathering requirements and translating them into functional solutions are fundamentally different disciplines.

The transition between requirements and design is where projects can accelerate or begin to fail. Four things keep it on track:

1. Full traceability
2. Early prototyping in sandbox environments
3. Integration-aware design
4. Scenario-based design validation

What this approach helps you avoid are the patterns that derail projects: scope creep that gets relabeled as "missed requirements," over-engineering for edge cases and late-stage surprises during UAT and integration.

Establish end-to-end traceability

Every design decision should connect directly to an approved business requirement. This traceability provides clarity, supports governance and reduces the risk of scope disagreements. When issues emerge during testing, teams can quickly identify the underlying requirement and design rationale.

Validate early through prototyping

Stakeholders rarely evaluate designs effectively through documentation alone. Prototypes create understanding. By experiencing workflows inside a sandbox environment, stakeholders can identify issues earlier and provide more meaningful feedback.

Consider integrations from day one

Workforce management systems don't operate in isolation. Payroll, HRIS, scheduling platforms, identity management solutions and analytics systems all influence design decisions. Integration awareness prevents downstream surprises and protects the integrity of the broader technology ecosystem.

Test real scenarios

Scenario-based validation reveals issues that traditional reviews often miss. Successful organizations validate designs against actual workforce situations, including:

- Overtime eligibility
- Leave requests
- Shift swaps
- Schedule changes
- Payroll impacts

A requirement explains what the business needs. A design explains how the solution will deliver it.





AI'S ROLE IN WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT DESIGN

Artificial intelligence (AI) is beginning to reshape how organizations approach requirements management and solution design.

While human expertise and judgment remain essential, **AI offers significant opportunities to accelerate analysis, improve consistency and uncover insights hidden within large volumes of documentation.**

Accelerating discovery

AI can analyze policies, labor agreements, regulations and historical requirements to generate draft business rules, reducing work that once took weeks to days.

Confirming requirements

Enabling AI can help better structure requirements, quickly identify gaps or conflicts and generate focused clarification questions.

Improving harmonization

AI can compare rules and identify patterns across implementations, highlighting areas where standardization opportunities may exist and helping teams make more informed design decisions.

Creating better design and validation

AI can connect requirements to design decisions, maintain traceability and generate draft validation scenarios.

Retaining human judgment is essential

AI augments delivery, but decisions still require human judgement. Technology shouldn't replace stakeholder relationships, governance or regulatory interpretation.



The future of implementation excellence combines AI with experienced practitioners who can align business objectives, compliance requirements, operational realities and human behavior.

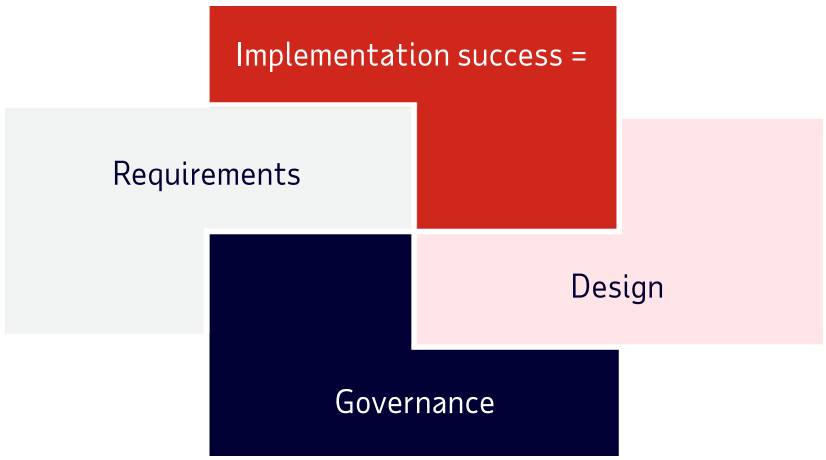
KEY TAKEAWAYS

Global workforce management transformations succeed when organizations recognize a simple truth: **Implementation includes requirements, governance and design.**

Organizations that invest in disciplined discovery, structured harmonization, stakeholder alignment, traceable design and early validation consistently reduce risk and improve outcomes.

The path from discovery to design is where success is determined. Get that journey right, and implementation becomes significantly easier. Get it wrong, and even the best technology platform may struggle to deliver the value your organization expects.

In summary: Gathering facts before discovery helps stakeholders focus on decisions; connecting your requirements to the design phase helps maintain traceability and validation; and using AI can accelerate the work but can't replace human expertise. Together, these practices maximize global consistency while preserving local requirements.



AI accelerates analysis and harmonization.
Human expertise drives decisions.



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"ADP WorkForce Suite supports complex countries and integrates with our HR systems."

— Principal System Analyst, Boehringer Ingelheim

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Combining ADP's market-leading global payroll and workforce management platform with Accenture's transformation and delivery expertise helps organizations drive greater efficiency and reliability across complex, multicountry environments.

Together, our joint managed services model enables continuous improvement, accelerates time to value and creates a future-ready vision for workforce innovation that turns complexity into sustained business advantage.



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- Joint frameworks and governance that accelerate your time to value
- Shared innovation in technology, services and solutions that help ensure your sustained business advantage



Transform workforce complexity into a sustained business advantage.

Learn how ADP and Accenture can accelerate your time to value today.

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