From Breakdown to Breakthrough:

A Structured ERP Rescue Strategy



SPEAR ERP REBOOT

by

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Reevaluate. Realign. Recover.

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From Breakdown to Breakthrough: A Structured ERP Rescue Strategy

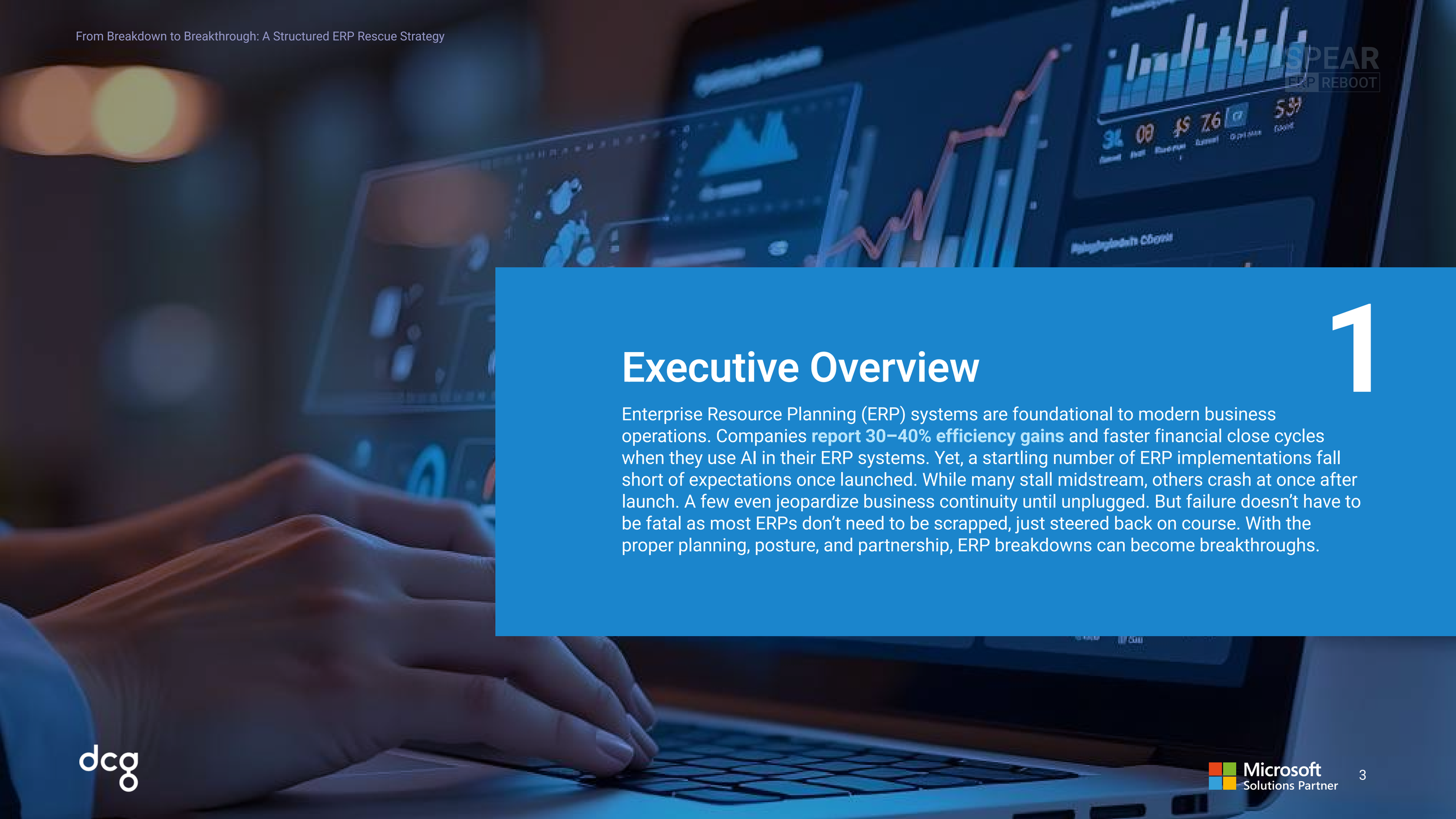
As your trusted ERP rescue partner, DCG knows that post-launch ERP issues don't always signal failure, but they signal a need for strategic realignment. This guide outlines the clear, business-aligned approach behind DCG's SPEAR Framework, built to help organizations regain control, rebuild trust, and recover lost value. Whether your ERP is live and lagging or stuck mid-implementation, our proven experience offers the insights, structure, and clarity to turn complexity into measurable progress.

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1 Executive Overview

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems are foundational to modern business operations. Companies **report 30–40% efficiency gains** and faster financial close cycles when they use AI in their ERP systems. Yet, a startling number of ERP implementations fall short of expectations once launched. While many stall midstream, others crash at once after launch. A few even jeopardize business continuity until unplugged. But failure doesn't have to be fatal as most ERPs don't need to be scrapped, just steered back on course. With the proper planning, posture, and partnership, ERP breakdowns can become breakthroughs.

Consider these cautionary examples of large conglomerates that faced costly ERP setbacks before course-correction:

Nike (2000)

- Cost: $100M in lost sales
- Cause: Complex, rushed rollout

Hershey (1999)

- Impact: $100M in missed Halloween sales
- Issue: Parallel go-lives, insufficient testing

National Grid (2012)

- Disaster: $8M overpaid in payroll, 15,000 unpaid invoices
- Lesson: Wrong timing, zero contingency

Mission Produce (2024)

- Recovery Cost: $4M
- Problem: Inadequate business requirement definition

Despite their long-standing financial prowess, these large companies were victim to inefficient ERP planning and rushed deployments. This cost them valuable time and voluminous sums of money. These aren't isolated incidents either; they are industry warnings. ERP failures post-launch isn't as rare as you may think. A 2024 survey by Gartner found that 72% of organizations struggle with change management during ERP projects, resulting in delays, cost overruns, and underutilization of the new system. A parallel survey also concluded that 81% of companies hire ERP experts or consultants for implementation, with 33.3% specifically for organizational change management and 42.9% for business process management. To combine our years of expertise in turning failing ERPs around with strategic insight into the very nature of your business, DCG built the SPEAR framework – restarting stalled systems, reinventing failing processes, and redefining possibilities for productivity.

This white paper presents DCG's SPEAR ERP Rescue framework as a solution to post-launch or mid-implementation ERP breakdowns. Through these pages, our rescue team provides impactful guidance and practical strategies at this mission-critical juncture in ERP operations. Our recovery strategy is structured and business-aligned, designed to help organizations regain control, drive alignment, and extract measurable ROI from troubled ERP projects. Whether you're a project manager drowning in scope creep or a CFO questioning your ERP's value, this guide offers clarity and evidence to take the next step towards recovery.

If ERP failure has taught us anything, it's this: without structure, transformation becomes chaos. SPEAR offers a structured way to rebuild by delivering data-driven clarity and control, while creating processes that truly fit the way your people work.

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Recognizing the Breakdown

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ERP failures aren't subtle; their impact reverberates across operations, finance, and leadership. Here's what the collapse often looks like:

Strategic Roadblocks (Project Managers)

- Reactive firefighting without a roadmap.
- Misaligned implementation partners.
- Unclear success metrics.



Operational Barriers (Directors/VPs)

- Spreadsheets and workarounds dominate.
- Users are disengaged and burnt out.
- The system doesn't reflect the business reality.



Financial Damages (CFOs)

- ROI is nowhere in sight.
- Spiralling costs with no visibility.
- Unexpected expenses keep cropping up.



Leadership Misalignment (Everyone)

- Zero ownership or accountability.
- Competing departmental agendas.
- Morale flatlines.



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How Failing ERPs Erode Trust Across the Organization

When ERP initiatives go off track, it affects more than just the budget—it affects belief. Teams lose trust in the system, in the process, and sometimes in the path forward. But with the right reset, that trust can be rebuilt.

Leveraging our data-driven SPEAR framework to realign underperforming ERPs, our consultants have identified and addressed numerous costly failures to pinpoint the root causes. It will always be our job to turn things around for the better. Let's explore problem statements that make up a massive chunk of ERP failures when these warning signs are ignored.

Project Managers are Stuck in the Firefighting Loop

Without a clear roadmap, project managers are often stuck responding to problems rather than preventing them. One day it's a broken integration; the next, a reporting failure. It's a never-ending loop of patches with no progress.

What If?

An ERP project in a mid-sized distribution company stalled because the partner focused on technical delivery, not business alignment. The team never defined what "done" meant, and the scope kept expanding.

Delivery Slows and Operations Are in Disarray

When the system can't support real operational needs, workarounds become the norm. Inventory teams revert to spreadsheets. Sales doesn't trust CRM data. And frontline users have already checked out by the time the ERP goes live.

What If?

In an ERP deployment at a global manufacturing firm, users bypassed core planning tools in favor of Excel because the system couldn't model production realities. Efficiency plummeted, and error rates soared.

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When the ROI is Missing in Action (MIA)

Finance teams often feel the pinch last, but the hardest. Projects often exceed budget, and leaders find themselves in a cycle of trying to justify their investments. Forecasts are off as costs spiral, and nobody knows where the money is going.

What If?

A cloud ERP implementation at a retail chain promised streamlined operations. Instead, it delivered six figures in unanticipated integration costs and poor reporting, making it impossible to calculate ROI.

Before You Know it, Everyone Asks: Where's the Leadership?

When projects stall, ownership becomes unclear, and teams begin to suffer from unreliable data. Department heads blame technology while leadership forces managers into manual workarounds. IT blames vendors, and the overall company morale tanks. Without a shared strategy, even small wins feel meaningless.

What If?

A nonprofit tried to implement its ERP, but without an assigned internal lead. Six months in, competing goals from finance and operations caused gridlock. Eventually, both teams disengaged, and the project limped along for another year before a formal recovery effort began.

With an ERP, pushing a button to go live isn't the finish line; it's the start. And despite post-launch breakdowns, recovery is never far from within reach. What's quintessentially every team member's duty is to surface risks as you spot them. Speak up now or forever hold your peace!

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4 Warning Signs of ERP Failure You Can't Ignore

1. Stalled UAT phases
2. Teams reverting to spreadsheets
3. Constant scope changes with cost overruns
4. KPIs tanking post go-live

The SPEAR Framework is Your ERP Rescue Guide

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SPEAR stands for Surveillance, Performance, Excellence, AI/Automation, and Requirements & Roadmap. It's a mindset shift from reactive troubleshooting to structured recovery through layered requirements and gap analysis, and here's how it works:

 Surveillance	"Do you know how fast you're going?"	• Builds data trust and visibility. • Shifts from lagging financials to live operations.
 Performance	"Are you going too fast or too slow?"	• Installs KPI discipline. • Instills belief in the data through validation.
 Excellence	"Can we go faster, and should we?"	• Defines procedures. • Aligns process ownership.
 AI/Automation	"Can we automate this now?"	• Builds data trust and visibility. • Shifts from lagging financials to live operations.
 Requirements	• Aligns strategy, budget, sequencing, and technology stack.	• Uses L1–L6 model for visibility, priority, and delivery.

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ERP Failures Cost More Than Just Money:
Here's How SPEAR Turns the Tide

When an ERP system goes off track, it's not just a budgeting issue. Teams lose valuable time, users get frustrated, and customers feel the impact. Often, the effort to clean up the mess ends up being more painful and expensive than doing it right the first time. That's where the SPEAR framework comes in. It brings a proven structure, transparency, and alignment to the chaotic unfolding. By finding the root causes and providing a clear path forward, SPEAR helps you regain control, rebuild, and start seeing tangible results.

ERP failures aren't rare, and they're often catastrophic. Highlighted here are six common risks of ERP misalignment and how SPEAR addresses them.

Types of ERP Failures & Risks

Root Cause	Resulting Risk
• Inadequate Scoping	Misaligned systems and wasted development
• Rushed Go-Live	Broken workflows and missed deadlines
• Incomplete Testing	System crashes and data inaccuracies
• Lack of Stakeholder Buy-In	Disengaged users and low adoption
• Scope Creep	Budget overruns and delayed delivery
• Shadow IT & Workarounds	Data silos and audit risks

4 Ways ERP Issues Compound as Business Risks

1. **Lost Productivity – Teams waste hours fixing avoidable errors**
2. **Damaged Reputation – Missed orders, unhappy customers**
3. **Legal & Financial Penalties – Compliance failures, lawsuits**
4. **Staff Attrition – Frustrated users leave or disengage**

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The SPEAR Path to Resolution

Stage	Focus	Key Outcome
Surveillance	Real-time insight	Trusted data foundation
Performance	Measurement & KPIs	Believable metrics
Excellence	Process maturity	Repeatable operations
AI/Automation	Scaling capacity	Efficient systems
Requirements & Roadmap		

From strategy-to-execution

- Robust planning
- Aligned teams
- Scoped budget

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DCG Helps Save Organizations By...

- Replacing reactive troubleshooting with phased planning
- Turning data chaos into decision clarity
- Creating one language across IT, finance, ops, and leadership
- Delivering ROI with visible milestones and agile alignment
- Making problems easier to surface and solve

Turn Failing Processes into an ERP Rebound using SPEAR

Go from		to
Missed Orders	»	On-time Fulfillment
Data Silos	»	Shared Live Dashboards
Budget Unknowns	»	Transparent Spending Maps

De-risking Recovery with the L1–L5 Discovery Process

L1	Strategic Foundation
L2	Objectives + Capabilities
L3	Functional Process Requirements + Gaps
L4	Strategic Foundation
L5	Detailed Functional Requirements
L6	Technical Plan

Why it works:

- Enables modular buy-in
- Exposes misalignments early
- Prevents UAT surprises
- Clearly defines goals and scope

How L1–L6 Connects Business to Build

Strategy › Capabilities › Software › Customization › Build

Result: A stakeholder who is in total control of their project, and not just a passenger along for the ride.

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Measuring Success Through KPIs That Matter

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It’s not enough to launch; your ERP must perform.

The real test of success begins after go-live, when the system must deliver on its promise. This includes making better decisions, achieving smoother operations, and generating measurable returns. That’s where KPIs, guided by the structure of our SPEAR approach, help define what success looks like in ERP operations. These aren’t just numbers on a dashboard, but the signals that tell you whether your ERP is helping or hurting.

Formula Box

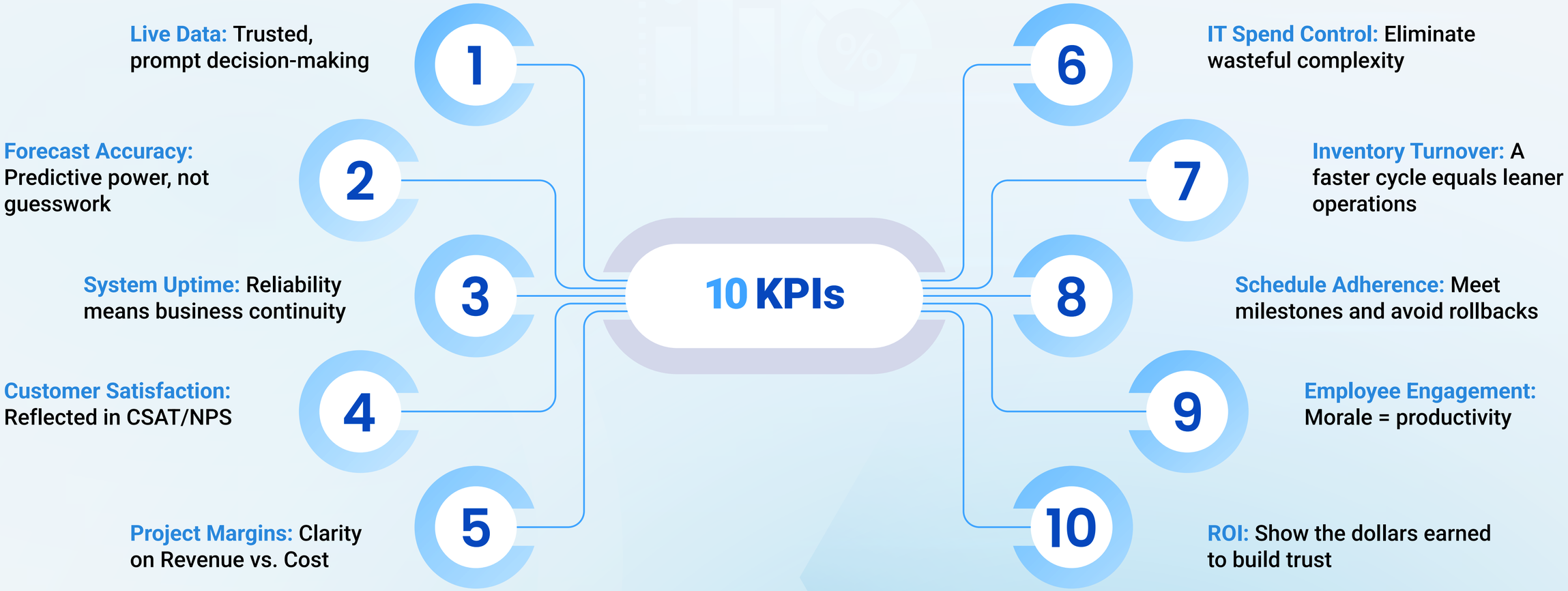
- **ROI =** (Benefits - Investment) / Investment
- **TCO =** Purchase + Implementation + Operating Costs
- **Payback Period =** Net Investment / Annual Cash Flow

From real-time data accuracy to ROI and employee engagement, tracking the right metrics gives you the visibility to adjust, improve, and lead with confidence. When these KPIs are clearly defined, measured, and acted on, they become the engine behind the very outcomes your ERP was meant to achieve.

We have seen repeatedly that what you measure is what you manage, and what you manage is what you can improve. Listed are the ten KPIs every ERP recovery effort needs to keep in focus.

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10 KPIs to Monitor for ERP Recovery



Live Data: Trusted, prompt decision-making

Forecast Accuracy: Predictive power, not guesswork

System Uptime: Reliability means business continuity

Customer Satisfaction: Reflected in CSAT/NPS

Project Margins: Clarity on Revenue vs. Cost

IT Spend Control: Eliminate wasteful complexity

Inventory Turnover: A faster cycle equals leaner operations

Schedule Adherence: Meet milestones and avoid rollbacks

Employee Engagement: Morale = productivity

ROI: Show the dollars earned to build trust

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When Is It Time for SPEAR?

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DCG's SPEAR framework provides leaders with a straightforward way to regroup, realign, and regain control, regardless of how far off course the ERP has deviated. Whether you're in post-launch chaos or in the middle of a stalled rollout, DCG breaks recovery into focused, manageable steps that shape complexity into clarity. Our proven success is that, with the proper structure even failing ERPs can make a full recovery.

But, before you fix it, benchmark it.

- Diagnose project drift
- Find readiness gaps
- Score your team with SPEED

Decoding the SPEAR Framework: DCG's SPEED Scorecard

- Strategy: ROI, sequencing, resourcing
- Education: Gap awareness, market trends
- Posture: Team roles, leadership alignment
- Enthusiasm: Energy, buy-in, budget support
- Deployment: Journey readiness, cost control

Key Signal: If SPEED is low and pain points are rising, SPEAR is the next step. Do you want to assess your current ERP status?

Take Your ERP Health Check

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How Does SPEAR's Structure Eliminate Rushed Decisions?

Here's what you need to realize if you're trying to resurrect a failing ERP. Trust is the most expensive thing to lose and the hardest thing to rebuild. That's why structure and leadership alignment are built into the SPEAR framework from day one. Our rescue and recovery roadmap emphasizes that clear metrics matter just as much as the software itself. Our goal is to transform a failing ERP into a plan for best operational yield.

DCG doesn't just solve your technology problems but also prevents them from compounding.

Without Structure

- Team Chaos
- Scope Creep
- UAT Blowups
- Conflicting Priorities

With SPEAR

- Visual Roadmap
- Phased Sign-offs
- Agile-Ready Docs
- Cost-Aware Execution

Without SPEAR	With SPEAR	How SPEAR Solves It
Shadow IT	Integrated Tools	The roadmap aligns tools with the process, eliminating silos.
Escalation Fatigue	Structured Risk Calls	KPIs surface issues early with clear escalation paths.
Delayed ROI	Forecasted Returns	ROI modeling links outcomes to the business case from Day 1.
Misaligned Teams	Executive-Operator Sync	L1 scoping unites leadership vision with operational needs.
Workarounds Everywhere	Defined Processes & Ownership	The excellence stage improves the quality of the work that needs to be done.
Finger-Pointing	Clear Role & Responsibility Map	Posture defines who owns what across every workstream
Conflicting Priorities	Unified Strategic Roadmap	SPEAR aligns competing needs into a shared delivery path.
Budget Guesswork	Transparent Spend & Value Map	L4 planning visualizes value vs. effort for each feature.
Poor UAT Outcomes	Iterative Testing Confidence	L5 specifications ensure features are testable and valuable.
Burnout & Resistance	Energized, Trained Teams	SPEED measures morale and readiness before go-live.

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The Breakthrough Starts with the Right Partner.

You don’t need to scrap your system, especially if early signs of misalignment creep in after launch. What you need is a results-based approach to move forward with clarity and confidence. Every struggling ERP holds the potential for a turnaround; it just takes the proper structure to unlock it. With DCG’s experience and a tailored roadmap, what looks like ERP failure today can become a strategic breakthrough tomorrow.

Let’s Take the Next Step—Together.

The truth is that most ERP breakdowns aren’t the end, and it’s not fair to blame one another. They’re just a signal it’s time to change course. SPEAR gives you the map.

Schedule Your SPEAR Evaluation

Where Is Your ERP in the Rescue Spectrum?

Breakdown › Drifting › Rebuilding › Breakthrough

About DCG

DCG is a global, full-stack Microsoft Solutions Partner helping organizations transform with clarity, control, and measurable impact. Founded in 2012 and headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, DCG delivers end-to-end Microsoft solutions across Dynamics 365, ERP, and CRM, Azure cloud modernization, M365, Power Platform, project recovery, change management, and advanced support.Anchored in our proprietary SPEAR Framework, we align strategy, process, and technology to reduce risk, accelerate ROI, and ensure sustainable growth. With over 700 successful implementations, an average 43% client ROI in year one, global delivery across seven offices, and 1M+ users empowered worldwide, DCG turns ERP challenges into industry-defining opportunities.

Through DCG Enterprise Support, our high-touch alternative to Microsoft Unified Support, we resolve complex challenges at the source, ensuring performance, resilience, and long-term value.

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Will Donovan is an Operations Strategy and ERP Consultant with DCG. He is a former Supply Chain/Logistics Product Director for global logistics and operations systems deployed by the US Marine Corps, US Navy, US Air Force, and Shell Oil. Will has deep experience in analytics, ERP, WMS, TMS, and digital strategy for US Military, oil & gas, retail distribution, and manufacturing in Asia, Europe, Middle East, and America.

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