As more and more companies understand the strategic business potential of PLM (Product Lifecycle Management) to improve product innovation, development, and competitive advantage, the scope of PLM initiatives has increased dramatically.

Indeed, research from Tech-Clarity and PTC shows that, on average, companies implementing PLM in the last few years typically involve three or more departments across the organization (e.g., manufacturing, supply chain, quality), not just engineering.

As such, the complexity of planning and managing successful initiatives has increased dramatically.

With multi-year, multi-departmental, and multi-million-dollar PLM programs now common, the challenges of minimizing program risk and accelerating time to value have emerged as core priorities for senior corporate management and boards of directors.

Simply put, when you’re betting a chunk of the company’s future on PLM success, you can’t afford to leave any element of that success to chance.

About the Research:
PTC Global Services and Tech Clarity, an analyst firm that specializes in product lifecycle management, interviewed 190 senior business and IT leaders in April 2012 about their experiences with PLM. The goal of the telephone survey was to understand key success factors in planning, implementing, and adopting PLM solutions in complex manufacturing environments.

The survey highlighted four issues: PLM strategy and approach, programmatic challenges, implementation and adoption techniques, and adoption. Survey participants included representatives of a wide range of manufacturing companies across Europe and North America, including automotive, aerospace, industrial, and consumer products.
A recent blog post, Aligning Your Organization for PLM Success, highlighted two keys to aligning your organization for PLM success: detailed implementation roadmaps and business value scorecards. The general idea is to invest the time up front in creating an operational plan that ties the sequencing of solutions implementation to business priorities with practical consideration of organizational constraints, process change, and technology capabilities.

More specifically, there are six steps in particular which companies with complex programs have found to be essential to creating effective plans, roadmaps, and scorecards:

1. **Business Value**: Define and align on concrete measures of business value, such as accelerating time to market, increasing product innovation, reducing product development cost, or improving product quality.

2. **Process Priorities**: Define and align on specific process changes required to achieve business objectives, such as product design collaboration, compliance review, or supply chain management.

3. **Technology**: Define and align on specific technology capabilities required to support process improvements.

4. **Tradeoffs**: Identify critical decisions and tradeoffs for program implementation, including technology deployment, data migration, quality control, and organizational learning and adoption.

5. **Roadmap**: Create detailed deployment roadmap based on program priorities, investment requirements, and resource capacity.

6. **Ratification**: Ratify the roadmap and metrics with key business and IT stakeholders to ensure full alignment on priorities, timeline, responsibilities, and tradeoffs. If this all seems like a lot of work before even beginning any actual deployment, it is. Smart companies take three to six months or even longer to get the roadmap right. But the effort is well worth it. Top performing companies are twice as likely to create this kind of roadmap, and the payoff is five to 10 times the benefit in critical areas such as time to market, product development efficiency, and product cost. Sometimes you really do need to slow down in order to speed up.

If this all seems like a lot of work before even beginning any actual deployment, it is. Smart companies take three to six months or even longer to get the roadmap right. But the effort is well worth it. Top performing companies are twice as likely to create this kind of roadmap, and the payoff is five to 10 times the benefit in critical areas such as time to market, product development efficiency, and product cost. Sometimes you really do need to slow down in order to speed up.