



12 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SELECTING AN IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER

Selecting an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution to empower your business' digital transformation is one of the most important decisions you'll make. However, flashy new business software doesn't come to life on its own. It's important that you select a technology partner who can help you successfully implement the solution, too.

Here's a checklist to help ensure that the partner you choose to implement the ERP solution is right for you.

- 1. Scalable Services** - Does the software implementation partner offer services that can scale with you? Depending on your individual requirements, you may need a minimal, moderate or maximal level of service (based on your experience, how busy you are as a company, the business issues you are trying to improve, etc.). The implementation partner should have the flexibility to deliver as little or as much support you may need.
- 2. Practical Experience** – Is there a track record of success that proves the software implementation partner's competencies? Does it include businesses like yours or businesses in your industry? You don't want to be the test subject in an experiment gone wrong, and having someone learn on your dime.
- 3. Strategic Services** – Does the implementation partner know how to do more than simply configure the technology solution? Are strategic-level consultants available to engineer your system in a way that helps your company minimize costs and maximizes profits? The digital transformation is an opportunity to gain competitive advantage. Make sure your implementation partner is not just along for the ride, but is fully capable of empowering your journey. You deserve nothing less!
- 4. Proven ability to promote Organizational Change** - Does the implementation partner promote organizational change? The software sale and software training are the goal and expertise of most implementation partners. However, this may be a difficult transition for your staff where processes may be changing quite a bit to support your current business goals. However, change can be difficult and it is helpful, sometimes imperative, to have a partner with experience helping companies of your size with Change Management. In some cases, it can be the difference between a successful project and a project that fails or flounders. This is often a skill/ offering that is missing from many ERP partners as they focus on software and technology training v. people, process, and organizational change.

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5. An Experienced Project Management Function - Does the implementation partner have a strong project management team? A deep understanding of the software toolset is a very different knowledge base and skill set than project management. Just like building a house you need someone that knows how to manage a project to success. Project planning, risk mitigation, balancing conflicting needs of your ERP team, and understanding of how to handle business challenges is often times a skill more important than training and software knowledge.

6. Product and Technology Neutral - Does the implementation partner recommend the best product and technology to meet your specific needs? There is not a single ERP that fits every company. Whereas most implementation partners specialize in one single product, you want someone that can be unbiased not only in the sales process, but when implementing and can recommend best in class ERP extensions. After the original implementation is finished, it is often the case that your business may change (new products, new profit center, new goals, etc.) you will want a partner that is constantly looking to service their customers with best in class products (from an ERP vendor or 3rd party) to meet your changing needs.

7. Online and Onsite Presence – Do you have access to services whenever and wherever you need them? There may be instances when it's more convenient for you to get answers online. In other cases, onsite assistance may be more effective (for example when teaching users how to use the software). The technology partner should be structured to support you the way that you want to be supported – not the other way around.

8. User Groups – Do the implementation partner's customers support a network of local, active user groups where insights and best practices are shared? Does the implementation partner facilitate an open, transparent platform for dialogue and exchange? Be wary of implementation partners who tightly control their user groups for fear of their being exposed by unhappy end users.

9. Implementation Partner Status – What is the status of the implementation partner's relationship with the software developer? Has the implementation partner been recognized for its competencies in selling and/or supporting the software? How long has the implementation partner represented the software? You'll have greater peace of mind knowing that your implementation partner is trusted by the software developer.

10. Financial Stability – Is the implementation partner on financially solid ground? Is the implementation partner vulnerable due to an over-reliance on a single source of revenue (such as a sole software supplier)? Does the implementation partner benefit from a diversified revenue stream from multiple products and services? You want to stay away from partners where a high level of risk is indicated. The implementation partner's failure would be very disruptive to your technology project.

11. Longevity – How long has the implementation partner been in business? Does the implementation partner employ people who are at least familiar with the legacy applications might be migrated into the new solution? People who understand where you've been can help you get to where you're going.

12. Well-Rounded Technical Services – Does the implementation partner offer technical experts who can solve issues all-around your hardware & software and any other technical need?

Contact us to learn more about our Implementation Services