

9 Things to Consider When Evaluating a New ERP Solution

Synesis has been helping businesses replace their outdated systems for quarter of a century. Implementing a new ERP system like SAP Business One is a decision that should not be taken lightly. It's important to look at all options and take many things into consideration prior to deciding that a new ERP system is right for your business.

We suggest taking these nine considerations when evaluating a new **ERP** solution for your business.

1. Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). The costs involved with a software purchase can be hidden and confusing. Costs can include: software, implementation, maintenance, customization, training, support, hardware, updates, etc. You need to consider all of that to determine a 5-year TCO projection of those costs.

2. Server and Operating System. Are you married to your server and/or current desktop operating system? Is it a requirement that the new solution work on that platform? Or are you open to alternatives? Does the solution need to be in-house and installed on an internal server? Or are you open to a web-based solution that you access via the web?

3. Proximity. Should you choose a company based on its location? There is no universal right answer to this question. Some are adamant that purchasing from a local company is best, while others are equally convinced that location should be irrelevant. Ultimately, it's up to your company to determine how your needs will be best fulfilled. Travel time, technical support, relationship building, legal recourse, local tax laws, reference checking, and price should all be taken into consideration.

4. Features and Usability. Software isn't a good investment if it's not leveraged to its fullest extent. It's vital that your employees understand the capabilities of your new system. It's important that you can use the ERP program effectively. We've seen case after case where a company purchases a new ERP solution but can't effectively use the program. Your employees' ability to interact with the system will largely determine your path to ERP satisfaction. How do you like the look and feel of the program? Is it easy to navigate? Are there too many bells and whistles that you don't envision using? Does the solution seem to be geared towards your industry and business processes?

5. Implementation. What level of implementation, support and training will you need with a new solution? An ERP implementation takes time and experience. Will the vendor be dedicated to your company and implementation? And does the vendor have the proper resources to implement the proposed solution on your agenda? Who will be assigned to your ERP project, and is your company a priority?

6. Support. Support can come directly from the vendor, it may come from the vendor's developer, or potentially a 3rd party. Support can be provided onsite or online. It's important to identify how your ERP support will be delivered, and if it makes sense for you and your staff.

7. Training. Training can be onsite, online, or could be provided as a class/course that your employees will have to attend. Once again, your employees' ability to interact with the system will determine your path to ERP success. How many users will need training? Consider turnover and new employees, and the easiest way for your team to "get up to speed". And don't forget to consider the added cost for the desired method of training. Perhaps the cost benefit of doing that online trumps hands on help. And we've found that decision usually comes down to preference, cost, and convenience.

8. Industry Experience. It's important that you determine the importance and relevance of industry experience. Perhaps you just need software functionality that revolves around accounting, and you don't need an industry expert. On the other hand, perhaps, the majority of your software requirements are unique to your industry and requires an industry expert.

9. Vendor Capabilities. Two vendors providing the same solution can have a very different range of experience and ability. How experienced are they? How many employees do they have? How long have they represented the proposed ERP software? That history can provide you a great deal of insight on a particular firm.

To learn more about ERP, visit
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About Synesis

Synesis is a consulting and systems integration firm connecting people, business and technology since 1994.

Our implementations cover manufacturing, distribution, financials, customer service and the supply chain. Our technology expertise encompasses an extensive range of programming languages, web development tools, operating systems, databases, business-reporting tools, networking and thin client services.