

5 Reasons to Look Beyond the Software



Energy and utilities organizations have been going through a transformation in the last few years. Successful companies need enterprise software that mitigates risk, offers resilience, enables best practice and provides relevance and flexibility.

An ERP selection process often focusses the mind on the software only, and all too often the softer issues are missed. Here are 5 key considerations which are just as important as the software itself, and that if ignored, will in time be a mistake that you'll wish you'd never made.



Roadmap

Are vendors who don't publish a roadmap for the next couple of releases hiding something? Perhaps they don't have a strategy, perhaps they just wait to see what their competitors are doing, perhaps they are waiting for customers to shout load for functionality or perhaps they are hiding the lack of real investment in the product?



Safeguarding

How safe is your implementation when undertaken by a partner, and who will pick up the pieces if it goes wrong? Safeguarding is a vital component for you and your vendor, where the vendor shows their support for the partner with resources and skills, it ensures that the partner delivers and builds an implementation that's designed for success.



Statement of Direction

Looking further than the next couple of releases requires effort and vision. Knowing the strategy of your vendor in terms of technology and functionality allows you to dovetail your strategy with theirs. It stops you developing or purchasing other capabilities, only to find that it gets satisfied as standard in a future release.



Partners

A partner implementation quite often results in cost savings as consultancy rates are often lower, but what is the vendor partner relationship? Are they just a reseller who will customize the product to fill gaps in their knowledge and leave you with a dead-end product that's too costly to upgrade? Does the vendor have formal training and certification for its partners to make sure the project is delivered as if it was themselves providing the services?



Product lifecycle

Are you buying an end-of-life product or a solution from a vendor who has multiple offerings that it has acquired over the years? What is the vendors history, are they one of the businesses that features in the ERP Graveyard or one that has a solid platform, a single solution that they have continuously developed and kept up to date over their history? What will happen when your platform is dropped, will you be forced onto a new one, with different capabilities and loss of functionality?

If you haven't asked these questions, have just sought out a brand, or are going through a selection process without considering these vital components, then think again and start asking questions beyond the software.

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