

What to Know Before Choosing an ERP Solution

By Simon Davis

The implementation of [Enterprise Resource Planning \(ERP\)](#) software within your organization is not an inexpensive proposition, but one well worth it. Like any tool or software, there are many licensing fees and maintenance costs that will factor into the recurring expense of your ERP provider after deployment, but that shouldn't be enough to sway you against leveraging one for your company. ERPs are complicated. They have many moving parts. They're not all created equal. Here are some things you should know before you entangle the future of your business with just any old ERP system.

This article is going to go over a comprehensive list of questions and pre-measures to take into consideration before selecting and implementing an ERP software network for your organization.

How Many Users Can Access the Platform?



It's a question that might have just flown right over your

head – when in fact, it's quite important to know just how many users will be granted access to the software upon purchase and deployment. What is meant by the term “user” can sometimes vary in software contracts. There are a [couple of approaches](#) here, but the most common variants are:

- Named User: A named-user approach entails providing each member, who will ever have access to the software, with a user license.
 - For example: your particular organization requires that three foremen and one overseeing manager have access to the software. Therefore, you will need to purchase four licenses to use the product.
- Concurrent User: This model utilizes an unlimited amount of user access points, but limits how many individuals can access the software at any given time.
 - For example: your organization has a large warehouse staff – up to thirty employees a day will at some point require use of the software. All of these employees have access to the service, yet only six of them can access it at the same time as the others.

The amount of users available and which model the software service uses will affect your overall cost, so it's important to be aware of this factor.

What Implementation Services Are Provided?

It is highly unlikely that you will be able to successfully [implement an ERP application software](#) on your own. It's a complex process that will likely need some hand-holding for a prosperous deployment. Will the service you select offer you any assistance with implementation – for a fee, free, or at all?

It is also recommended that you investigate their support staff, if available. Users will inevitably run into bugs, jams

or other pitfalls – it simply cannot be avoided. But, you need to know that when it happens, that the service you pick will have your back. Here are some things to consider when looking at what constitutes “good support” when selecting your ERP service:

- Time it takes to respond to service requests
- Adequate training methods
- Support contact methods (phone, email, live chat, in person)
- Monitoring
- Support availability (24×7 versus 8×5)
- Support personnel expertise/qualifications
- Maximum number of support incidents

You can find a breakdown of ERP implementation tasks right [here](#).

Will You Own the Rights to the Data?

Another critical software licensing issue that’s relevant to software as a service (SaaS) buyers is the ownership of collected data. A recent survey from [InformationWeek.com](#) found that 31 percent of people who had not yet adopted a SaaS solution were reluctant to do because of data ownership concerns.

It is very likely that, yes, the service will allow for you to export the data for your personal records. It’s also important to notice just *what* type of data will be available for export. You’ll likely be able to scrape information like invoice data, dollar amounts, line items, etc. But what if your particular business agreements are more complicated and require a robust approval process along your [supply chain](#)? It is less likely that these types of complications will be readily available and advertised by the sales department.

In the end, implementing a comprehensive ERP system is no easy feat, but it’ll save time and unwarranted energy in just about

every business process when it's finally up and running. Keep the above things in mind and you'll have no problem finding an ERP provider that aligns with your company's needs.

About the Author: Simon Davis has been a full-time business writer since the last 4 years and has had the privilege of attending some of the most renowned business conclaves held across the world. When not on business he loves spending time with his girlfriend and a bit of adventure sports.