

# Five important tips for choosing the right technology provider

Evaluating, selecting and implementing new technology for your business or organization can be overwhelming. Whether you're considering a new accounting or business management solution, there is a lot to take into consideration, especially when it comes to selecting the right technology provider to do the job. Selecting the right provider should carry as much weight as the software or hardware you choose. Much like hiring a contractor for your home, you need to be prepared to ask the right questions and be knowledgeable about their qualifications and experience. Otherwise, you may run into issues or delays.

Here are five areas to consider when evaluating and selecting a technology provider:

## KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

First and foremost, you need to evaluate the type of knowledge and expertise the



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technology provider possesses. In addition to having the knowledge to do the job, you'll also want the provider to have the experience on how to put that knowledge to work for you. Working with a provider that can put themselves in your shoes is essential. Be sure to ask what types of projects have they worked on in the past, as well as the last time they had someone working on a project similar to yours.

There are some industries that have their idiosyncrasies, and if your organization falls into that category, you'll want to make sure that the provider has specific experience working on projects within your industry. As with any evaluation process, make sure to ask for outside references from clients within your particular industry.

## PRODUCT EXPERTISE AND PROCESSES

Beyond solid references, the provider needs to supply and emphasize the understanding of the products they are implementing, as well as the processes that are followed to ensure success. It's also key that the provider is current on any product cer-

tifications and has a defined project implementation methodology.

## COMMUNICATION

In any relationship, communication is critical to success, and a technology partnership is no different. The level of communication can make or break a project's success. Having an understanding of how well team members will interact can have a huge effect on the project's outcome. It's a good idea to make sure that you meet, and possibly interview, the team lead so you are sure everyone will be able to successfully work together.

The initial conversations and communication between the companies can be a strong indication of how well you can work together. Follow your instincts and don't try to make things work for the sake of making it work.

## TIMELINE AND DELIVERY

Make sure the vendor provides you with realistic deadlines and goals. Be sure you understand their capacity to deliver the solution within the timeframe specified. Be sensible and make sure that their resources

aren't working on a timeline that may affect the outcome or quality of the project. Rely on your instincts and ask more questions. If their answers cannot satisfy you, then it is probably not the right company for you.

## ONGOING SUPPORT

The relationship with your solution provider should not end at the completion of the project. Any good provider will want to be there to provide ongoing training and support, if needed, and serve as a resource to your organization as new needs arise.

Selecting the right technology provider is critical to any successful software or hardware implementation. By following these simple – yet critical – tips, and taking the time to research and communicate with potential providers, you will be able to find the right fit for your organization and eliminate any surprises or disappointments.

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