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How To Select The Best ERP System

This Is Too Big Of A Business Decision To Make Without Proper Planning, Analyzing & Comparing

An ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system can be the lifeline of a company, integrating internal and external management information across the entire organization, embracing finance/accounting, manufacturing, sales and service, CRM, and more.

As such, the selection of the best ERP integrated software package to implement is just as important -- if not more so.

With the correct ERP system (and there are an overwhelming amount to choose from), a seamless flow of information is created between all business functions inside the boundaries of the organization, along with connections to outside stakeholders.

But where to begin?

"Organizations come to us looking for help simply because selecting an ERP system, and making sure they get it right, can be a daunting task," said Hariprasad Kalagara of Athena Doyens, a respected technical and management consultancy services firm with operations in Voorhees, N.J., as well as India and Australia. "Our job is to analyze their unique situation, then present the best options to them."

Due diligence is required in "getting it right." This can be broken down into four steps.

First, interview ERP consultants. Attend industry conferences to access potential candidates. Find the consultant that not only knows how to select and implement ERP systems, but those that do it within your specific industry. An ERP system for a manufacturer is far different from an ERP for a retailer, for example. Ask these candidates about their expertise in ERP deployment design, the ability to choose the system that has the best return on investment for your specific needs, and knowledge of ERP vendors. These are all crucial questions to ask.

About Athena Doyens

Athena Doyens is a world-class technical and management consultancy firm with a presence on three continents (USA, India and Australia), and specializing in technical, process and management consulting, IT staff augmentation, corporate training and legal outsource processing.

With its U.S. operation based in Voorhees, N.J., Athena Doyens prides itself on its vast experience and expertise in a variety of verticals and fields in order to assist its clients looking for outsourcing solutions in finding optimal options to meet the challenges of today's marketplace.

For more information, visit www.AthenaDoyens.com, e-mail info@athenadoyens.com, or call (856) 528-3105.



A critical point when searching for the right consultant is to know the difference between an ERP consultant and an ERP technical consultant. Make sure you ask this question during the interview process! You want to work with an ERP consultant, as this is a business consultant who has the knowledge on all ERP tools that can be used specific to your industry, whereas an ERP technical consultant specializes in a specific ERP tool only.

Second, once your consultant is selected, evaluate your ERP system needs together. Clear expectations for the ERP system based on your company's existing and projected business needs is an absolute must. Clearly outline your needs and goals with this system.

Third, as you narrow down your choices, ask those bidders for customer references. All the slick sales and marketing pieces don't mean a hill of beans unless you get quality feedback from customers. For each bidder, compare their features and implementation strategies. Determine your need for features specific to your operation (this is something your consultant will help you to identify), then discover whether or not those ERP systems you're considering have this potential.

Fourth and lastly, evaluate costs in such areas as training, integration and database conversion for each of your ERP options. Estimate the projected return on investment for each area (again, this is where your consultant will provide an invaluable service in helping you to identify and realize cost-to-benefit ratios you may never have considered on your own).

It's now time to make your selection -- purchasing the ERP system that best accommodates your cost constraints, and is the best fit for your business needs.

Remember, you want to "get it right" in selecting the best ERP system specific to your organization's needs. Following these four simple steps will ensure this.