INSIDE-ERP

Midmarket ERP Solutions Checklist

What to ask before you buy Enterprise Resource Planning software.

Before you commit to any ERP system, you should first answer several questions about what your organization needs and wants to accomplish with its ERP strategy. The answers will help you determine which applications and what kind of functionality your organization requires from its ERP solution, as well as go a long way toward easing the implementation process.

☐ **Do your organization's business leaders support the ERP implementation project?** Are they involved in deciding which business processes are included in the ERP package, how to phase in the rollout and how to measure success with the implementation? For ERP to succeed, executives throughout the organization — especially those heading up the various departments that will use the ERP applications — must be a part of the rollout.

☐ **Who are the line-of-business professionals that can be responsible for measuring the business benefits relevant to their department's ERP modules?** Employees beyond the IT department need to own the success of the ERP deployment.

☐ **Who will be the ERP project manager?** One person — an outside consultant or a current employee — should be in charge of managing the process to choose an ERP solution; coordinating demos and consultations with vendors; leading a team of representative from each area of the company, including finance, sales, human resources and manufacturing; and coordinating meetings between with key users of the new system.

☐ **What are the specific business problems you need to solve with ERP?** For instance, do you need to shorten product lead times or improve communications with your suppliers? Are there industry regulations to which your company must adhere?

☐ **What are the goals and metrics that you will use to measure the business benefits of your organization's new ERP solution?** A good starting point for these metrics are the KPIs — such as inventory accuracy, cost reductions and month-end closing processes — that your company is already tracking.

☐ **What features and functions do you need from a new ERP solution that will help increase users' productivity and provide access to the business data users most need?**

- **Are there best practices you need to adopt with the ERP implementation?**

- **If your organization operates around the world, are there foreign currencies and languages that your ERP solution must support?**

- **With which modules will you begin rolling out your ERP package?** Midmarket ERP systems are modular enough to allow you to implement them in phases, first rolling out the features that will meet your organization's most dire needs. Taking the implementation in prioritized steps gives IT managers and ERP users a chance to learn new processes.

- **Is the prospective ERP solution built with SOA capabilities?** Called by many the next big thing in enterprise technology, SOA allows for a more agile and flexible IT environment, connecting systems and automating manual business processes — which is exactly what you want your ERP system to do.

- **Which users across your organization will need to be trained on the new system?** As with any new system, the success of your ERP implementation will largely depend on end-users' ability — and willingness — to adopt it.

- **Will the ERP package be able to adapt to changes in your business as your company grows?**