How to Select the Right ERP for You

Discover what to consider when choosing an enterprise resource planning system for your organization.

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9 Questions to Ask ERP Vendors

Each organization has unique needs, but there are universal considerations and questions to ask:

System costs: How does the vendor charge for the product we want now and for the capabilities we'll need in the future? How are upgrades, new releases and bug fixes handled?

Implementation: What's the expected cost for implementation? How could that cost increase once the project is underway, and how can we prevent scope creep?

Configurability: Does the vendor understand our specific needs and processes, and is the system flexible enough to support them? How are customizations handled by the vendor's implementation team?

User-friendliness: How easy is the system to learn and use? Does it have an intuitive UI that will encourage wide adoption?

Timeline: How long will the implementation take, and will it disrupt our operations? How has implementation gone for similar customers? What resources will our company be expected to provide?

Project management: Will the vendor help create milestones for success relevant to our business so that everyone sees progress?

Updates: How does the vendor deliver updates, and do new features come at an extra cost? Do updates require expert assistance to install?

Data migration: How will the vendor move data from old business systems to the new ERP? Does the provider have experience with our existing systems?

Add-ons: Does the vendor offer a variety of modules we can add as we need them? Is there an extensive network of partners offering prebuilt integrations and niche functionality? How simple is it to add users or new functionality?

Key ERP Capabilities

What functionality do you need? Consider these popular options.

Accounting. Automate AP and AR, automatically update general ledger and subledgers with transactions as they happen.

Financial planning and analysis. Forecast future sales, expenses and headcount needs, project base, best- and worst-case outcomes.

Inventory management. Track the movement of products across the supply chain, monitor current inventory levels.
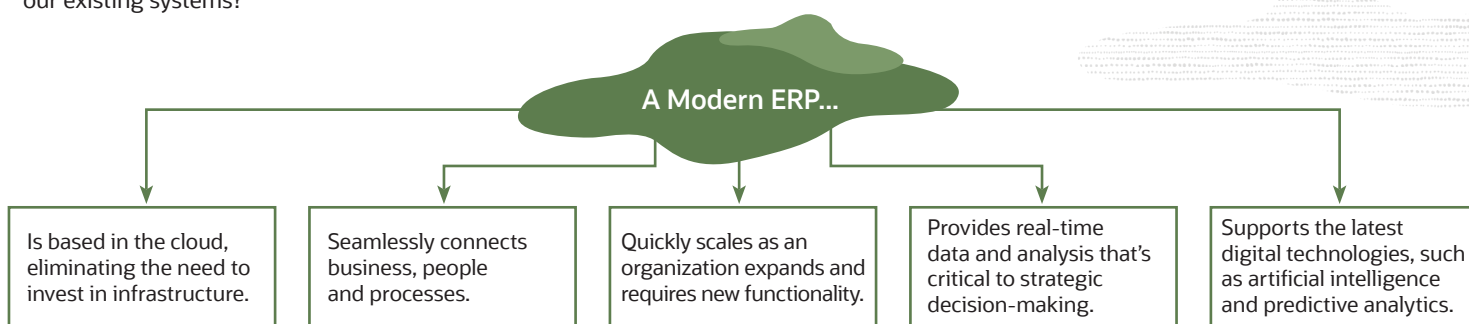
Order management. Route orders to the best fulfillment location, track orders from receipt through delivery.

Professional Services Automation. Monitor project progress, manage project billing and expenses.

Manufacturing. Create production schedules, coordinate all necessary resources to meet the production plan.

CRM. Record all communication with customers and prospects, manage sales leads and basic marketing campaigns.

ERP systems are modular, so you can start with core finance functionality and add modules for other aspects of the business as you need them.

A Modern ERP...

| Is based in the cloud, eliminating the need to invest in infrastructure. | Seamlessly connects business, people and processes. | Quickly scales as an organization expands and requires new functionality. | Provides real-time data and analysis that's critical to strategic decision-making. | Supports the latest digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence and predictive analytics. |

Main characteristics of a modern ERP.

3 Keys to Convincing Internal Skeptics

Highlight specific pain points and how an ERP system resolves them. Lay out the full costs, including implementation and training. Lean on vendor references to ease concerns and drive home the value.

Use Your Original 'Make the Case' Metrics

Identify the why: Labor-intensive and/or error prone processes; staff manually transferring data between applications. Inadequate tools don't offer visibility into business operations. Stale, inaccurate or incomplete business data.

Re-evaluate ERP options: List the modules needed to deliver benefits now, and a few years out. For new implementations, cloud-based ERP is the natural choice given its security, scalability and cost-effectiveness.

Confirm your strategy: Rolling out an ERP in stages is less risky than a "big bang" all-at-once deployment but may result in a slower payback. Running legacy systems in parallel for a length of time may be worthwhile.

Click here to learn even more about ERP.