



The Software Demo Given By The Vendor

It is very tempting but don't waste your time

In a world where the allure of magic shows in Vegas competes with the dazzle of ERP software demos, seeing is not always believing. A captivating demo might just mean they are great at presentations... and serving delicious sandwiches with drinks.

Sure, most top-tier ERP packages will do the job. Different platforms, functionalities, and user experiences might be on the table, but their core offerings are similar.

So, the real question is: How do you choose?

Remember this golden rule of IT: Seeing is not Believing, using is Believing. Dig into the experiences of the vendor's customers in industries like yours. See the software working in its natural habitat, and do not be afraid to ask provocative and searching questions, especially when it comes to the software vendor's commitment to customer service, going the extra mile and adaptability.

Follow this plan: Choosing the best software vendor for your project is probably the most important project decisions you will make. Pick no more than 3 vendors (preferably 2). For each vendor, visit and investigate three of their customers at various stages of implementation:

1. A new customer, about 6 months into the project.
2. A customer who has been working with the vendor for just over a year.
3. A customer who has finished his project and is no longer using the vendor on a regular basis.

Spend as much time as you need to be satisfied with the answers to the questions listed below. If an answer is not clear, go back and ask again to make sure you understand. When choosing, consider these crucial questions to their customers (among others, of course):

1. How long have you been in the ERP software business?
2. Tell us about your software license agreement.
3. What is your long-term vision?
4. How did you identify and fix implementations that are going off track?
5. Do you have a proven implementation methodology, if so, what is it?

6. What operational metrics do you consider to be important?
7. Are you a reliable partner for implementation and support?
8. Tell us about your customer support.
9. How do you ensure that any challenges faced can be addressed promptly and efficiently?
10. Tell me about your customer training and education programs.
11. How do you measure your customer service, do you understand what it is?
12. How do you, as an ERP vendor, stay updated with the latest trends, best practices, and technological advancements in the manufacturing industry?
13. Show us the key metrics used that determined project success for 3 of your customers in a similar industry to ours. Informed choices stem from probing questions. Dive deep, ask away, and let your experience guide you.