



Key Questions to ask an ERP software vendor

Checking an ERP software vendor can make the difference between success and failure. It provides insights into the vendor's record of accomplishment, the quality of their software and services, and the experiences of their past and current clients. While references are a valuable source of information, they represent individual experiences. It is essential to combine the knowledge gained from references with other research methods to make an informed decision about the ERP software vendor. Below is a systematic approach to checking ERP software vendor references:

- **Request Multiple References:** Ask the vendor for at least three to five references, preferably from companies similar to yours in size, industry, or complexity.
- **Diversify Reference Profiles:** Ensure that the references include a mix of recent clients, long-term clients, and businesses with both successful and less-than-ideal implementations.
- **Prepare Questions in Advance:** Before contacting the references, develop a list of targeted questions. Some potential questions include:
 1. How long have you been using the vendor's ERP system?
 2. What were the primary challenges during the implementation process?
 3. How did the vendor handle issues or challenges that arose?
 4. How has the software met (or not met) your business needs?
 5. What is your experience with the vendor's support and after-sales service?
 6. Would you choose this vendor again if you had to start over?
 7. Are there any hidden costs or unexpected fees that arose?
- **At First, Conduct Phone or Video Interviews:** While email is convenient, real-time conversations can yield more candid feedback and allow for follow-up questions based on the reference's responses.
- **Visit in Person:** It is better to have a software demo from somebody using it to run a business like yours. Go and see and see their software in action. This will provide valuable insights into the software's functionality and usability.
- **Inquire About Customizations:** Every business has unique needs, and it's essential to understand how flexible and adaptable the ERP system is. Ask the reference if they required any customizations, how the vendor handled those, and what the associated costs were.

- **Discuss Post-Implementation Support:** One of the most telling signs of a good vendor is the quality of post-implementation support. Inquire about response times, resolution of issues, and the overall quality of customer service.
- **Ask About Training:** Training is a significant aspect of ERP implementation. Ask about the quality, format (online, in-person, documentation), and comprehensiveness of the training provided by the vendor.
- **Check for Hidden Costs:** Inquire if there were any unexpected costs or fees during or after the implementation, such as additional training costs, customization fees, or support costs.
- **Inquire About Updates and Upgrades:** Ask how the vendor handles software updates and upgrades. Are they smooth? Are there additional costs involved? How often do they occur?
- **Online Reviews and Forums:** Apart from the provided references, check online platforms for reviews, ratings, and feedback about the vendor. Websites like Capterra, G2 Crowd, and Software Advice can be valuable resources.
- **Respect Confidentiality:** Always remember that the reference is doing you a favor by sharing their experiences. Ensure that any information they provide remains confidential and is used solely for your decision-making process.