



Questions to ask potential ERP partners

You're already well on your way to choosing an ERP. The next step is the introductory meetings with potential ERP vendors. This will help you to find out which supplier best understands your manufacturing company and its challenges, and which solution is the best fit.

This involves not only software and hardware, but also a good working relationship after you have purchased the system.

Schedule the meeting after short-listing the vendors who meet your needs on paper.

Why is this step so important?

As a manufacturing company, the introductory meeting gives you a clear picture of the potential ERP supplier. For the supplier, the meeting offers the opportunity to gain insight into your company's structure, goals, and bottlenecks.

This gives you the best chance of choosing an ERP solution that meets your needs, as well as starting a potentially fruitful long-term collaboration.

A productive introductory meeting requires thorough preparation and a willingness among participants to listen actively and collaborate.

This guide helps you prepare for and conduct such a meeting.

Preparing for an introductory meeting

- 1. Appoint an internal ERP manager:** Choose a colleague with extensive and in-depth knowledge of daily business operations across all departments of your company.
- 2. Conduct thorough research:** Use an ERP selection and implementation toolkit with a checklist and questionnaire for this purpose.
- 3. Secure management support:** Emphasize that purchasing an ERP system is a major strategic investment that will move the company forward.
- 4. Identify the needs within the company:** Have representatives from all departments identify core needs. Consider improvements in quality, inventory management, and personnel management.
- 5. Identify the bottlenecks:** Map out which problems and challenges within the company an ERP system needs to help solve.
- 6. Request information:** Compare the services and features of the various suppliers to help select your eventual discussion partners.
- 7. Pre-selection:** Conduct brief initial calls with multiple suppliers to narrow the field down to a shortlist of two to four for extensive introductory meetings.

Conducting the introductory meeting

1. Share your company story

Tell the vendor about your unique working methods, competitive position, strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

2. Establish selection criteria

Translate your company's needs and goals into clear selection criteria for an ERP system.

3. Set priorities

Indicate which functions of an ERP system are the most important for your company.

4. Define what success is

Clearly state your KPIs, expectations about ROI, and timelines for success.

5. Understand the proposal

Ask the supplier to explain the unique benefits of their ERP system in concrete terms. Also, have the supplier explain how their solution distinguishes itself from other ERP systems.

6. Ask for proof

Ask the supplier to substantiate their claims regarding the features and benefits of their system.

7. Ask for references

References from similar companies already using the ERP system help you gain insight into what is involved in the implementation and what it can yield.

8. Set the budget

Make clear what is and is not possible in terms of budget.

9. Discuss transition challenges

Ask how suppliers will handle challenges such as data migration and transitioning to the new system.

10. Evaluate the supplier

Assess whether the supplier's team is committed to long-term cooperation and providing excellent service.

Conclusion

An ERP system integrates, manages, and automates all your business processes. It optimises production based on scalability and flexibility, while also giving you integration capabilities, support for mobile and IoT solutions, and advanced data analysis and insights. Successful ERP implementation depends on an evidence-based selection process, and introductory meetings with potential suppliers are critical.

**Do you have any questions about the issues covered in this guide?
Get in touch with us today.**

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