



MARKETING SOFTWARE: 10 QUESTIONS FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROVIDER

April 1, 2019

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HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PROVIDER?



The range of software on offer is diverse. But how do you find the right software solution for your goals? Ask yourself these 10 basic questions before you start searching for software.

In an article on this topic, Kushau Rogers, CEO of Websmiths Group, summarized the 10 most important selection criteria for business software. So, before you work out feature lists for your software solution, ask yourself a few basic questions:

First the questions, then the features





10 QUESTIONS FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROVIDER

1. What is the purpose of the software?

Investment in software should always be associated with a concrete economic need. Example of a requirements profile: Marketing and sales require a central tool to organize and manage processes and costs.

2. What are the main priorities?

To evaluate the performance of various software offerings, one's own priorities must first be defined and weighted. Important: The focus should always be on solving the most important problem, other features remain a welcome addition. Stay specific to the feature list, e.g.: Unrestricted access to the central tool even for employees in the field.

3. Is the application mission / business critical?

How serious would the impact of a malfunction or failure of the software be for the company? A mission-critical software is indispensable to maintain the company itself (e.g. shop software in the online retail sector). Business-critical software, on the other hand, assists employees in carrying out their activities.

4. How credible and experienced is the provider?

Sounds obvious, but is an important indicator of the quality of the software: How long is the software provider already on the market and how satisfied are its customers?

5. How reliable is the software?

How often is the software unavailable or offline for technical reasons? How quickly are technical problems solved on average?

6. How can integration into the existing system succeed?

Does the software replace manual processes? Who will use them how and where? The more specific the user numbers and the integration plan, the easier it is to compare the different software solutions and their services.

7. How sustainable is the support model?

How does the provider deal with technical problems? What technical support channels are provided? By phone or just by email? How long are the average response times? Are enough documentation and self-help manuals available? Is additional support subject to a charge?

8. How expandable is the system?

Can the software grow with the company? What additional costs can be expected if the system is expanded? To avoid expensive surprises, you should clarify these questions with the provider in advance.

9. What is the pricing?



Here, much depends on the importance of the software to the company. If it supports business or even mission critical processes, you'd better not rely on a start-up product – even if it may be free of charge. Here, the investment in a solid, reliable and expandable product is definitely worthwhile.

10. How can the ROI be measured?

Before you sign a long-term contract, be sure to define what benefit (measurable in numbers!) the new system is expected to bring. Whether it is lower operating costs, a long-term improved quality of your products or marketing processes – the success of a software must be measurable and comparable.

You can read in the following practical example how a structured selection process can lead to the right provider:



Case study – PIAS



The best independent music in the world – marketed with spending control

PIAS started their selection process for a new global software solution with a structured selection process and involved all responsible people in marketing from all countries right from the start. At the outset, the focus was on the specific definition as the biggest challenge. This quickly made it clear that the solution must be process-controlled and that it should become a platform solution with access from all countries. The goal: Save time and money by improving the transparency and control of marketing.

The challenge

- PIAS needed upfront control of spend without surprises for marketing and overhead costs
- Tracking of costs and approval was time consuming due to verbal approvals and different tools for tracking budgets and spending
- It needed to be easily digestible for creative non-financial people
- See on a glance spend on a project across all territories as one project can run in several different regions with different currencies and budgets

The solution

- Implementation and roll-out of MARMIND as ready to use SaaS solution with individual customizing
- Every spend needs a purchase order number and therefore approval
- Workflows are implemented for budgets and POs
- Specific reports are available for marketing and finance
- Whole UK business is using MARMIND and have rolled out to US

The benefits

- Up to date and accurate forecast of marketing spend per project and division
- Insight on committed costs and remaining budgets
- Saving time and cost by improved transparency and control of marketing spending
- Easy to use web based solution where new employees are trained in 20 minutes



Quote

The guys at Upper Network were and remain a joy to work with. From initial project planning, through build set up & go live everything was explained and easily understood, with live demonstrations via phone and screen. Post release any problems are dealt with extremely quickly and nothing is too much trouble. The solution has been exactly what we are looking for and if all projects were this painless then I would be extremely happy.

KEITH TAYLOR, FINANCE DIRECTOR UK GROUP, PIAS UK LTD

Through a detailed analysis phase, the most important challenges were identified and the project was finally implemented very successfully.

Conclusion

If you are looking for a software solution for your marketing, then ask yourself the principle questions of Kushau Rogers beforehand and include the 10 selection criteria for business software described above in your selection catalogue. It will be worth it.

Unbelievable but true: 79% of companies still plan and organize marketing and sales through spreadsheet programs such as Excel (Aberdeen Group, January 2017) How this way of working compares to professional software, you can find out in another white paper by MARMIND (BUSINESS SOFTWARE VS. EXCEL: 6 VALID POINTS, available on request at <https://www.marmind.com/en>)



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