



How to align your technology strategy with your business strategy

As your business evolves, does your technology keep up?
Use this guide to carry out a health check and understand if your
current business technology is aligned to your goals and ambitions.

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What problems does your business face?

Aligning your technology strategy with your business strategy and having the right business systems in place to support it can unlock a wealth of productivity, efficiency and process improvement. But how do you get there?

Across any business there will be elements that are great and elements of weakness and if your current ERP or business system is not fit for purpose, this could be an area that is holding you back from achieving your strategic goals. Process inefficiencies, silos of data, multiple systems that don't join up and legacy ways of working are often found to be slowing businesses down and the out of date technology can be at the heart of the problem.

This guide will help you to understand where you are at today and how you can move to a better technology strategy to meet your needs now and as your business evolves. The first point is to look at where your business is today, what challenges you are facing and if your current technology is holding you back. From there, considering a single technology strategy with a core enterprise resource planning (ERP) system that removes duplication, brings every area of your business together and flexes as your business progresses could bring the technology strategy to reach your goals. It's then about selecting the solution that is right for you.

Six signs that your current systems are holding you back

1 Do you rely on manual intervention?

Business solutions should integrate seamlessly, with data flowing freely between systems to ensure they remain consistent and current. If you rely on manual intervention to bridge the gaps between solutions, this can result in inaccurate information, and risk damaging customer relationships and sales opportunities.

2 Is your current solution supported?

A business solution is not frozen in time. It needs to be updated regularly to avoid bugs and security risks and to comply with legislation changes. If your solution is no longer supported by its provider, you may be risking the integrity of your data and miss compliance obligations.

3 Does your solution work on today's hardware?

If your software doesn't work on the latest operating systems and computers, you're missing an opportunity to benefit from performance improvements in newer technology. Additionally, you might be saddled with the cost and inconvenience of trying to maintain outdated hardware.

4 Is it mobile friendly?

To be effective today, teams need to access and update their information, wherever they are, using whatever device they have to hand. If your sales team, for example, is bringing information back to the office to key it in, that's a sign that the technology doesn't work where they need it to.

5 Do users complain about the systems?

Are your systems getting slower? Are users struggling to do their work effectively? Are there any incidents of data loss, or downtime? If you're logging a lot of support calls or users feel frustrated it's a sign that something's wrong.

6 Does it support your business needs?

As your business evolves, can your software keep up? Some solutions will not perform well during business growth or provide the additional functionality you may need or benefit from. Your solution should be an enabler - not a restrictive force in today's competitive markets.

Making the change to a new technology strategy

If you've established that your business technology is part of the problem and holding you back, the starting point is your business strategy. At the start of your research or system selection process, you need to understand where you are at today, and where your business is heading so you know what to look for in a new ERP solution.

Begin with a discovery process to establish your requirements, seeking input from those inside and outside the business. Any niggles that you identified can be a starting point, but your vision should not be to just fix the current problems. Instead, aim to establish a new platform that can enable the business to fulfil its potential.

INTERNAL RESEARCH



OBSERVE BUSINESS PROCESSES

Study how work is done in your company. How can processes be improved?



SUPPLY CHAIN

How can you work more closely with suppliers and partners?



EMPLOYEES

What ideas do they have for improving your systems?

EXTERNAL RESEARCH



CUSTOMERS

How can you make it easier for them to buy from you?



INDUSTRY BODIES

What can people in other companies tell you about their success? What lessons can you learn?



FUTURE TRENDS

Are you prepared for what's coming next for your industry? How can you be prepared for future growth?

Identifying potential products

Once you have identified your requirements, you can look for a solution that meets them.

Online research will be your first step, which you can use to draw up a list of options. While industry-specific solutions may be seductive, you might have more flexibility if you adopt a more generalist solution that you can tailor or enhance with industry-specific functionality. Use exhibitions and webinars as an opportunity to learn more about solutions, directly from the companies that provide and support them.

Contact vendors or resellers with your questions if your requirements are not specifically addressed.

At this stage, your aim is to draw up a list of credible options, not to make a final decision.





Choosing a business partner to help you achieve your goals

Business solutions are often sold through resellers, who bring the experience of many previous deployments. They have specialist expertise in translating your business requirements into a working solution.

The choice of a reseller is as important as the choice of solution you will use. Pick a partner that you feel confident can understand your business, and that you can work closely with. Share your long-term plans with the reseller, so they can help ensure the solution will meet your needs into the foreseeable future. Before you choose a solution, a reseller can work with you on a prototype. Using some of your real data, they can demonstrate how the new solution might work.

Making a success of your business solution upgrade

There are several potential pitfalls when implementing a new business solution.

Using these tips, you can avoid common mistakes:

1 Misplaced loyalty
There is comfort in using a supplier you're familiar with, but it may be a mistake to just upgrade to the latest platform from your current supplier. Make sure you're deploying the solution that best meets your needs today, with the right reseller.

2 Too much research
It is important to see a solution working before you make a decision, but if you're evaluating more than three solutions in-depth, you're spreading yourself too thin.

3 Lack of participation
Your people will make the solution a success. Involve them from the outset, whether they are in a department that will use it, or in the IT team that will support it. Their insight will be valuable, and their buy-in will be essential.

4 A leadership vacuum
You'll need a project leader who can drive the project forward, with the backing of an executive sponsor who can sweep away barriers and make things happen.

5 No engagement
The reseller can't do all the work for you. Nobody knows your business like you do, so continuous engagement is essential.

6 No safety check
Before signing a contract, speak to other customers of the reseller to check that they deliver on their projects.

7 In-depth testing
Aim to bring any problems or queries to the surface early. Work with your reseller to test that the solution meets your requirements before switch-on.

Business technology to empower your future

At Datel we believe business technology should not be complicated. Whether you are evaluating a full business system or looking to improve one specific area, such as insight and reporting, our team is here to help.

Datel is here to empower your business aspirations through the innovative use of technology. We have been helping businesses to realise their ambitions for over 30 years. In that time we have seen a lot of change, technology has evolved and we've witnessed our customers grow and succeed through embracing solutions that change the way they work.

Speak to our team today. Call 0800 0775 888 or visit www.datel.info.



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