



Technology Solutions Evaluation Checklist

Selecting the best technology solutions for your business can be complicated and costly. It's essential to understand what to focus on when evaluating technology tools.

1. Define the need and the goal

Understanding the business problem and clearly defining goals will help you select the right technology and establish the foundation for your evaluation. Answer this question: What is the problem we need to solve, and what do we want our results to be? Be precise.

2. Audit of your current technology

Because technology changes so fast, it can be challenging even for the more organized IT professionals to know all the different technologies the company uses and the connections between them. This variety of technology may require additional considerations like security. Answer these questions: What are the technical requirements that will be most important? What system connections and integrations will be needed?

3. Identify risks and security gaps

With security being a huge concern for businesses of all sizes, understanding risks and all necessary security requirements will help you easily shorten your list of options. It's critical that you know who will need access, how access is provided, and what security features are built-in. Answer these questions: Will my data be safe with this technology? Will I need to make any additional investments to secure data?

4. Assess future growth

As your company grows, the technology you adopt will need to handle more data, integrate with more systems, accommodate more access points, and grow as the company grows. Answer this question: Where will the company be in 3-5 years, and will the technology adapt, or are there limitations?

5. Review reporting capabilities

To make the best decisions for your business, you need solid, reliable reporting. Reporting capabilities should be a determining factor in your tech solution decisions. If the technology you choose has bells and whistles but lacks reporting capabilities, it's likely not be the right technology to support your business. Answer these questions: What are the reporting features? What reporting features will the business need in 5 years?

6. Estimate return on investment

There are many costs to consider with any new tech so be sure to get detailed quotes up front. However, investing in new technology can increase production, improve the customer experience, improve productivity, and even reduce internal costs over time or possibly unforeseen monetary losses. Answer the following questions: Once the technology is implemented, what part of the business will be affected most and for how long? When will we begin to see a return on the investment?

7. Request "try-and-buy"

During the evaluation process, you'll want to try out the technology. When running a test or trial on the new technology, you'll be able to discover if there are any integration issues with existing technologies, limitations with feature sets, or the ability to meet unique business requirements. Answer the following question: Is the technology available for a "try-and-buy," and is there support to help with setup and integration?

8. Determine necessary resources

Bringing in new technology means auditing your resources as well. It's critical to determine if the tech will be managed in-house or be outsourced or a hybrid of those two options. Consider what happens when issues need to be troubleshot or systems need to be monitored. Ask these questions: Do you have the personnel required to do this, or will you need to add additional resources? In what areas will I need assistance with technology, ongoing support and security?

