

On The Level

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5 Essentials for Selecting Software

I get a lot of calls and inquiries after the fact from people who chose the wrong software and now wonder about new alternatives and what they could have done better up front. You know, hindsight is 20/20. I tell them that the process for successfully choosing and implementing software is much like that in building a successful construction project:

Jobs that start off right have a better chance of ending successfully.

To start off right, a project needs:

1. A clearly stated project **goal**
2. A clearly defined **scope of work** and success criteria that define/describe that goal
3. A definition of a step-wise **plan** to accomplish the project goals
4. Allocation of **resources** to accomplish the goals (money, manpower, methods, machines, management)
5. A detailed look at the **risks** of initiating the plan prior to starting

*The goal is to
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Buying software is no different. Remember that the goal is not to “buy software”; it is to buy a system (software, hardware, training, tech support, etc.) that meets a set of company and user requirements. If a company implements the “wrong system,” the cost is huge, not only in capital purchase, but in operations, training, inefficient turn-around times, frustration, outside IT fees, special report design, etc.

Organizations can easily spend \$10,000–\$100,000 on new computer systems. Collaborating with someone who can guide you through the process to protect that investment is smart money.