

## **10 steps to selecting a technology solution**

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One of the questions often asked by prospective clients is “How do we know we are getting the best solution and the best price?” When asked in the context of a complex enterprise technology solution, the answer often is “You don’t”. Now, that sounds very disturbing at first but let’s ponder the nature of the exercise involved in selecting a technology solution provider.

Since we have to know the reason why we are looking for a technology solution and what we expect to gain from the solutions (business case), I advise clients to take the following approach in response to the question above:

1. Clearly define the business *objectives* for the initiative
2. Identify the *drivers* of those objectives
3. Research the *enablers* of those drivers
4. Agree on an ROI
5. Evaluate possible solutions and select one that satisfies the above four the best

The logic and viability of this approach lies in the fact that if you start with your business objectives and an acceptable ROI, then any solution that you chose will have to be one that satisfies those objectives at a cost that delivers the ROI. The question of whether you got the best

*price* or the best *features* is irrelevant. The key lies in executing the first four steps outlined above in order.

The things to remember when making your list of solution options are the following:

1. First design your process, then chose your automation solution
2. Does the solution provide the *enablers* of the *drivers*?
3. Does the solution fit within the constraints of the Enterprise Architecture?
4. Does the solution meet end-user requirements, functional and performance?
5. Is the solution scalable and have a roadmap for the future?
6. Is the solution provider financially sound?
7. Don’t get bogged down in feature list comparisons
8. Negotiate service level agreements (SLAs) along with financial penalties in the contract
9. Instead of price alone, look at the total cost of ownership (TCO)
10. Be reasonable. “Squeezing” the vendor too hard during contract negotiations may back-fire on you

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