

## IT Manager: Evaluating 3rd Party Solutions

3rd party solutions are always an option to take/recommend if:

1. The company needs the solution right away.
2. Developing it in-house would take time.
3. The cost to develop such solution will be higher than buying one.

Below are several factors to consider in evaluating 3rd party solutions:

1. **Fit** - always do a gap analysis between what the process needs versus what the solution can do. How customizable is the solution to adjust to some business specific requirements?
2. **Cost** - consider the overall cost of the solution. From the consultants, servers, technical and user trainings, and the solution itself. Check with the higher management if they are willing to sacrifice short term returns for long term gains.
3. **Support** - maintenance and support is always the key for a solution to work well. After-sales and implementation support has to be included and evaluated well before buying.
4. **Compatibility** - consider how compatible is the technology used by the 3rd party solution to the current technology you have? How long does it take learn it? Always take into account this compatibility factors since it can create additional cost and technical problems in the future if it's not handled well.