10 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN SEARCHING FOR CMMS SOFTWARE

1. Flexibility and Customization

No two organizations manage maintenance activities in the exact same way. Similarly, the way maintenance is managed today will likely look very different a year from now. When reviewing maintenance software, it is important to think about both your short-term and long-term maintenance needs. The system should have the ability to be customized to fit the way your team works right now, but must also be adaptable to any future changes.

2. Scalability

A software program's scalability is its ability to expand (or shrink) to meet your maintenance needs. A scalable CMMS will remain efficient and practical when extra demands are put on the system, such as expanding its use to a larger number of users or storing a larger set of information in the database. When thinking about scalability, you must also consider the costs related to increased usage of the system. For example, additional licenses must be purchased to accommodate an increasing number of users; extra hardware is required to provide users with access from multiple locations, and more server space is needed for the database and file storage.

3. Deployment Options

Most software vendors offer multiple deployment options for their software to fit different circumstances. Deployment generally fits into three categories: on-premise, Software as a Service, or cloud-hosted. On-premise maintenance software is installed and run on your company's local computers and servers. It allows you to maintain total control of the software, fully control your processes, and create custom, company-specific solutions. With a Software as a Service (SaaS) deployment, software is hosted in the cloud and licenses are tied to a monthly or annual subscription. While SaaS subscriptions are low-cost, they will eventually exceed the cost of buying licenses outright, if used indefinitely. Cloud-hosted deployments allow you to own software licenses and have the software hosted on a vendor's cloud server. This option requires less of a hardware investment, but usually requires additional hosting fees.

4. License Pricing Model

There are a number of different software license pricing models that vendors use. In general, the price of software licenses will be based on the total number of users. This is most evident in a pay-per-named user model, where the total license price is determined by the number of unique users that will be using the software. There is also a pay-per-concurrent user model where the price depends on how many users need access at the same time. Some vendors allow for an unlimited number of users to access the system and calculate price based off of other factors such as the number of work orders processed, the square footage of your facility, or the number of assets that are being maintained.

5. Data Importation

Nothing is as crucial to the success of maintenance management software as the availability of your maintenance data. Vendors should provide you with the means to import existing data into the system, whether that data is currently stored in spreadsheets, databases, or in another CMMS system. Equally as important, there should also be a reliable way to extract data from the system in the event that it is replaced somewhere down the line.

6. Training

Proper training is key to a successful CMMS implementation. While vendors do their best to make their software easy to use, computer skill levels vary from person to person, so training is a must. Each vendor offers different forms of training, so you must be careful to select a vendor whose training matches up with how your team learns best. For example, video tutorials can be viewed at any time of day, but do not allow viewers to ask questions. On the other hand, live webinars are a great opportunity to get questions answered, but may be difficult for technicians to attend, especially if they work late or overnight hours. For more comprehensive training, some vendors offer classroom-based learning sessions at their headquarters or can send a trainer to your facility. On-site consultation may also be an option for organizations who desire more custom, company-specific training.

7. Technical Support

Technical support is one of the most valuable services a vendor offers, so it is important to fully understand the details of how support is delivered and if any fees are involved. Technical support plans generally include phone and email support, as well as access to other self-help resources such as videos, product documentation, and a knowledge base. Some vendors also offer live chat, a product "university" for more comprehensive learning, and user community forums. While all these support options are great, they can sometimes come at a cost. There are some vendors that will require you to purchase a support plan in order to receive support. Other CMMS vendors may include technical support services free of charge, but will assess response times based on the severity of the issue. Whatever the case, before you make your final decision, make sure to consider how support services will affect your team and your budget.

8. Vendor Experience

CMMS implementation is not just about finding the right product - it is also about investing with the right provider. Buyers must be sure that the vendor is reputable, trustworthy, and has the experience necessary to address any problem that may arise. Information such as number of years in business, product portfolio, and ratings on review sites can all be indicators of a worthy vendor.

9. Software Updates

Frequent software updates help to future-proof your CMMS investment. Not only do they add features and functionality to the system, updates can fix bugs and defects and improve overall performance. These enhancements make your software more powerful, your team more efficient, and provide you with a better return on investment (ROI). When discussing your needs with vendors, it is a good idea to ask about how often the software is updated. Their answer can help you determine whether or not they are truly committed to developing the product.

10. Customer Ratings & Reviews

Review websites are powerful tools for CMMS software buyers. Sites like Software Advice or Capterra let customers share their experience with potential buyers by posting reviews and ratings. For example, reviewers on Software Advice can rate vendors in different categories such as ease-of-use, functionality, product quality, customer support, and value for money. Using these ratings, you can get a quick overview of the product and compare vendors more directly.

FTMaintenance

www.ftmaintenance.com

FTMaintenance is a feature-rich, easy-to-use CMMS solution that automates maintenance tasks and connects you with the powerful data for smarter maintenance management. Available as an affordable Software as a Service (SaaS) subscription, a convenient cloud-based purchase, or a traditional locally hosted solution, FTMaintenance is designed to work in any environment and fit any budget.

FasTrak
SoftWorks, Inc.

www.fast-soft.com

FasTrak SoftWorks, Inc., provider of FTMaintenance, is a diversified supplier of industrial automation and computerized maintenance management software (CMMS). For over 30 years, FasTrak has focused on solving the challenges unique to manufacturers and other industrial organizations, and has helped over 20,000 businesses worldwide better serve their communities and markets. Our software solutions have empowered industrial plants to go to production faster and avoid costly downtime. Headquartered just north of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, FasTrak provides solutions for companies of all sizes, from small businesses to corporate enterprises, at the local, state, and global level.

FasTrak is committed to the long-term development, service, and support of our industrial automation and maintenance management software products. We have built a sterling reputation by providing unmatched support with an experienced training staff, responsive technical support, and knowledgeable product experts. We deliver individualized customer service, build personal relationships, and give our customers the special attention needed to protect critical capital investments.