



Your guide to selecting the right ERP

Everything you need to know about Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and how to choose the best system for your business.

VANTAGEPOINT

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If you're reading this, you're probably looking to increase efficiencies within your business using technology and you're likely trying to figure out which enterprise software solution is the best fit for your organisation.

Choosing the right ERP system can be a daunting task, so, where to start?

This guide is focused on assessing your business, its requirements and your internal expertise. We'll talk you through the practical steps required to ensure you are confident in discussing your true requirements with vendors and help you understand where you may need to engage with a partner to guide you through this process.

Our guide will provide you with the foundation to ensure you are well placed to select an ERP system that is right for your business.

Why ERP is more than just software

ERP systems bring all your core business functions into one place, making everything work better together.

Think of it as the backbone of your business operations.

Many ERP systems offer strong out-of-the-box functionality that meets the needs of different types of businesses in a variety of industries, but the sophistication and nuance of each business also mean that the ERP systems must be highly customisable. Significant configuration work may be required on an ERP implementation and the ongoing maintenance can often be the full-time job of a specific person or team within the business.

Though the initial cost of implementing the ERP, the software licence and consultation support can often be jarring, the overall cost is usually offset by time saved through a reduction in manual processes, potential headcount reductions and consolidation of your system landscape.

The business benefits of getting ERP right

An ERP system, when implemented well, consolidates company data into one single source which helps define and standardise global processes.

The overall system landscape can be reduced and processes can be automated, which reduces human or manual errors and eliminates needless inefficiencies. Improved data integrity and full insight across the entire business operation allows businesses to improve their planning and accelerate their financial reporting.

The knock-on effect to the business as a whole includes improvements to customer service, cost and headcount savings over time and greater workplace collaboration as different departments become unified in their systems and processes.

What's more, housing all company data in a single solution adds the benefit of heightened security as it prevents data from crossing digital borders.

Modern cloud-ERP vendors offer a multitude of security features, including encryption, multi-factor authentication and password policies, as well as centralised security systems such as round-the-clock security teams who respond to any threat alerts thrown up by in-house continuous monitoring systems.

THE TOP BENEFITS OF HAVING AN ERP

Data accessibility and reliability

Automation of manual processes

Improved visibility and planning

Standardised business processes

Enhanced data and cloud security

Streamlined compliance

Minimised risk

Improved efficiency and productivity

Improved collaboration

Cost savings

Improved customer service

RISKS OF HAVING NO ERP OR INSUFFICIENT ERP SYSTEMS

Manual data entry takes time and can lead to mistakes

Systems that don't talk to each other create inefficiencies

Without real-time data, you're not making informed decisions

Growing businesses outgrow outdated systems quickly

Keeping records manually can lead to compliance issues

Is ERP right for your organisation?

ERP systems are now used by all types of organisations regardless of sector or size.

They are an integral part of an organisation's enterprise architecture, and their growing capabilities mean that the remit of an ERP system is likely to evolve over time.

There are more niche ERP systems that are industry-specific. These systems have tailored functionality around the common processes associated with that specific industry. Conversely, modular ERP systems can layer industry-specific business processes on top of key functionality to meet any particular need.

Industry-specific systems often deal well with processes that are unique to that industry, but can often fall short when it comes to things like core financials or consolidation.

Though the industry-specific systems can seem attractive, it will often make more sense to choose the modular system as they will complete 90% of the required functionality with greater precision and efficiency and generally scale with the company better as it grows.

Other enterprise systems you might consider

Modern modular ERP systems offer a broad range of functionality, often including most enterprise business processes.

There are some cases where a company would also utilise other specific enterprise systems.

Depending on your industry and business model, the enterprise software systems you may be evaluating could include:

CRM — Customer Relationship Management

SCM — Supply Chain Management

EPM — Enterprise Performance Management

CMMS — Computerised Maintenance Management System

Now that you have a greater understanding of the systems available and the benefits of ERP software, read on for our guidance on ERP selection.

By following the steps outlined below, you should have a clearer idea of which system is the best fit for your business needs. The process will be similar for all the systems mentioned and will help you understand which option to go for.

How to select the right ERP system

STEP ONE: MAP OUT BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

Start by understanding your current processes and what needs to carry over. Interview each department to document how tasks are performed, data flows, manual vs automated steps and frequency. Use tools like Visio or Lucidchart to visualise as-is processes.

This is also a time to challenge inefficiencies - ask which tasks consume the most time and whether they add equivalent value. Identifying what could be automated or removed can unlock long-term gains. From there, assess what each team needs from an ERP and what current tools could be replaced or integrated.

This exercise results in a robust map of functional requirements and a foundation for future-state planning.

It's not just about matching a system to existing processes, but about creating a blueprint that reflects departmental needs and future improvements. This stage sets the tone for the rest of your ERP journey and is crucial in shaping a system that truly supports your business from day one.

STEP TWO: PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

ERP systems must serve today's business, but also tomorrow's. Consider how your company is evolving and what the future state looks like. What growth, diversification or process shifts do you anticipate? Talk to departments to understand recurring pain points, bottlenecks and inefficiencies.

Use this insight to map out your ideal "to-be" processes — how would you operate in a perfect world? This forward-thinking mindset helps you identify features the new ERP must support and makes your case stronger with internal stakeholders. Document future workflows with the same rigour as current ones. These visual maps demonstrate how the ERP will support your vision and help unlock strategic conversations with leadership.

Beyond process efficiency, it's about enabling scale, cross-functional visibility and better decision-making. Done well, this step gives you a clear line of sight into how your ERP investment supports long-term business success.

STEP THREE: PRIORITISE REQUIREMENTS

By now, you'll have a long list of wants, needs and future ambitions. The next step is to prioritise, split your list into essentials and nice-to-haves. Align these back to your strategy and pain points. Which items will have the biggest business impact? Which issues are costing the most time, money or accuracy?

This process may reveal areas where a phased ERP rollout makes sense, with core needs addressed first and other functionality added later.

Structuring your requirements by priority helps filter out unsuitable systems and gives vendors clear direction.

While many ERPs claim to 'do it all', the right one will excel at solving your top challenges. Stay focused on what matters most to your business now and in the future. This clarity will make vendor conversations more productive and decision-making faster. It's not about picking the system with the most features, but about choosing the one that delivers the right value.

STEP FOUR: SECURE BUY-IN AT EVERY LEVEL

Success depends on company-wide support, not just executive approval. Each function will use the ERP differently, so understanding individual goals and concerns is key. Use the insight from steps one to three to show what's in it for each group, from time savings to better data access.

Tailor communications to the audience, what senior leaders need to see (like ROI projections) differs from what frontline users need (like easier workflows). Bring in IT, finance and departmental heads early and be clear about what's expected of them during implementation.

Share benefits, timelines and how roles may shift post-deployment. This collaborative approach builds trust, reduces resistance and helps avoid delays later.

A well-articulated business case backed by real examples from your internal research will help drive support. ERP isn't just a tech project—it's a business transformation. Bringing people with you on the journey is just as important as selecting the right software.

STEP FIVE: CHOOSE A TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

ERP projects are major undertakings, often beyond the in-house team's capacity or expertise.

A technology partner brings the industry-specific insight and hands-on implementation experience needed to keep things on track. Unlike software vendors, partners look at your business holistically and provide unbiased advice on what's best for your size, goals and complexity.

They help translate your requirements into system configurations, ensure the ERP is rolled out smoothly and often stay on to support optimisation as your needs evolve. While it's an upfront cost, the savings in time, errors and rework usually far outweigh it.

The right partner can help you avoid common pitfalls, meet timelines and stay within budget. If you want long-term ERP success, don't go it alone—lean on a trusted partner who understands both technology and finance transformation.

STEP SIX: SHORTLIST VENDORS

With your priorities defined and a partner by your side, it's time to explore vendors. Use your requirement list to evaluate fit, not just now, but for your future-state too. Look for vendors with experience supporting businesses similar to yours in size, sector and complexity. Read case studies and customer reviews and ask your technology partner for recommendations. A strong vendor should not only support your must-haves but show a track record of implementation success and post-launch support.

Focus on depth of functionality, ease of integration, scalability and user experience. Don't be tempted by flashy features that don't serve your core needs.

This shortlist stage is about eliminating risk, choosing vendors who understand your goals and can prove they've delivered similar results before. It's about finding the best match for your strategy, budget and operating model, not just the best software on paper.

STEP SEVEN: BOOK SOFTWARE DEMOS

Once you've shortlisted vendors, the demo stage is where theory meets reality. Go in prepared with your priority requirements, future plans and key challenges. Set clear expectations, what must the system do, how should it perform and what are your timelines and budget? Use this session to test how well the software maps to your business.

Ask specific, scenario-based questions. A strong vendor should tailor their demo to your business, not deliver a generic tour.

Push for clarity where things seem glossed over and record each session to revisit later. Bring key team members into the room, they'll spot details that may be missed.

This is your opportunity to evaluate usability, flexibility and responsiveness. Choose the system that fits your people, processes and ambitions, not just the one with the slickest interface. Done well, demos are a decision-making accelerator.

Common ERP selection mistakes and how to avoid them

Even well-run selection processes go wrong in predictable ways. Knowing the traps in advance is often the difference between a system that pays for itself and one that becomes a costly regret. These are the ones we see most.

BUYING FOR TODAY, NOT TOMORROW

A system that fits your current headcount, entity structure and transaction volume can become a constraint within two years. A business consolidating three entities today may be running eight after an acquisition, and a system that handled the first number comfortably can buckle at the second. Score every essential requirement against your future state, not just your current one.

LETTING FEATURES DRIVE THE DECISION

Long feature lists are persuasive in a demo and rarely decisive in practice. The system with the most functionality is not the same as the system that solves your top three problems. A vendor that excels at the handful of things costing you the most time, money and accuracy will serve you better than one that does everything adequately and nothing brilliantly.

UNDERESTIMATING THE INTERNAL EFFORT

The licence is not the cost. Configuration, data migration, testing, training and the ongoing maintenance that often becomes a full-time role are where budgets and timelines slip. Teams that treat ERP as a software purchase rather than a business change are the ones caught out. Build internal capacity, or a partner's, into the plan from the start.

SKIPPING THE MESSY DATA CONVERSATION

An ERP is only as good as the data flowing into it. Years of inconsistent records, duplicate suppliers and manual workarounds do not fix themselves on migration. Left unaddressed, they surface after go-live, when they are far harder to unpick. Understand the state of your data early, and factor the clean-up in.

CONFUSING A GOOD DEMO WITH A GOOD FIT

A polished demo tells you a vendor can present well. It does not tell you the system fits your people and processes. Generic tours that avoid your specific scenarios are a warning sign. Insist demos are built around your requirements, and involve the people who will use the system daily, not only those approving the budget.

TREATING IT AS A FINANCE PROJECT

ERP touches procurement, operations, HR and leadership, yet selection is often run from finance alone. When other functions are brought in late, their requirements arrive after the shortlist is set, forcing compromises or costly change requests. Involve every affected function from the first step.

Avoiding these does not require perfection. It requires clear priorities, honest conversations about your current state and the discipline to keep the decision anchored to business value rather than the most impressive pitch.

What ERP implementation really involves

Selecting the right system is half the journey. How you implement it determines whether the value you mapped out is ever realised. Understanding what lies ahead helps you plan realistically and choose a system, and a partner, that can carry you through it.

IMPLEMENTATION MODELS

Most rollouts follow one of two paths. A phased approach introduces the system in stages, by function, entity or geography, addressing core needs first and layering in the rest over time. It reduces risk and lets teams adjust, though it takes longer overall. A single go-live, sometimes called big bang, switches everything on at once. It is faster and avoids running old and new systems in parallel, but it concentrates risk into a single moment. The right choice depends on your complexity, appetite for risk and internal capacity. A business with several entities and limited internal resource will usually favour a phased rollout.

THE STAGES YOU CAN EXPECT

A typical implementation moves through discovery and design, where your requirements are translated into system configuration; data migration, where existing records are cleaned and moved across; configuration and testing, where the system is built and validated against real scenarios; training, where teams learn to work in the new environment; and go-live and stabilisation, where the system runs live and early issues are resolved. Each stage depends on the one before it. Rushing discovery, or skimping on testing, tends to surface later as expensive rework.

WHAT TENDS TO SLIP

Timelines rarely slip because the software fails. They slip because data was messier than expected, because a function's requirements were missed early and had to be retrofitted, or because the internal team was already at capacity and could not give the project the time it needed. Building in contingency, and being honest about your team's bandwidth, protects both the timeline and the budget.

REALISING THE VALUE

Go-live is a milestone, not the finish line. The savings in manual effort, the improvements to reporting and the better decision-making you built the business case around are realised in the months that follow, as adoption deepens and processes settle. Plan for a period of optimisation after launch, and treat the system as something that evolves with the business rather than a project that ends on go-live day.

Implementation is where an ERP investment either delivers or disappoints. Approaching it with a clear-eyed view of the effort involved, and the right expertise alongside you, is what turns a well-chosen system into a genuine transformation.

In summary

Choosing the right ERP system is a high-stakes decision that impacts your entire organisation.

Selecting an ERP system is a complex process. At VantagePoint, we bring decades of ERP implementation experience and deep finance expertise to support businesses through every stage of the journey. Our team includes technology leaders and qualified finance specialists from top-tier firms, making us ideally placed to guide fast-growing organisations.

As software-agnostic CFO consultants, we provide impartial advice based on real experience, helping you choose and implement the right system with confidence.

For more information on our services and how we can help you select the right ERP system, visit our [ERP implementation services page](#).

Have further questions? Book a call.



About VantagePoint

VantagePoint is a finance transformation consultancy built by practitioners. We work with CFOs and their leadership teams to redesign how they operate, then implement the technology to support it: process first, tech second. As certified partners for CCH Tagetik, Workiva, Pigment, Sage Intacct, FloQast, Kyriba, and NetSuite, we stay embedded through go-live and beyond.

Founded in 2019, we've delivered 400+ transformations across 30 countries, with 120+ employees in London, New York, Singapore, and Sydney.