

Buyer's Checklist for Cloud Distribution ERP Software—Five Things Not to Miss



Congratulations! You have decided to embark on the journey of transforming your company.

There are likely thousands of buyer's checklists and request for proposal (RFP) templates you can download. There are likely hundreds of knowledgeable salespeople willing to walk you through a needs analysis. And, there is likely to be a handful of advisors ready and able to guide you to your distribution ERP destination.

In addition to these resources, you should consider five commonly omitted perspectives prior to signing the contract.

You have five-stakeholder groups for whom you need to answer the question all of us instantly ask when there is a change in the works, "what's in it for me?"

Use this checklist to ensure all stakeholders' interests are taken into consideration.

1 Employees

Embracing new ways of working for anywhere productivity is key when investing in the future. You will find having technology that elevates the work of humans will help with both retaining and attracting employees. This is true in the accounting department as well as on the production floor.

Providing solutions to help your employees do their jobs more efficiently while collaborating with others and being able to contribute will help them stay engaged and see the value in their work and how it contributes to and aligns with company objectives.

Key questions to ask yourself:

- **Ease of use. Does the process automation make sense and reduce friction? Can you tailor it to your needs?**
- **Does it make collaboration effortless? Is everyone on the same page, using a single source of data?**
- **Can employees create their own dashboards, run reports, and easily access help videos and files?**
- **Is it true cloud, with everyone on the same version for a better community experience?**

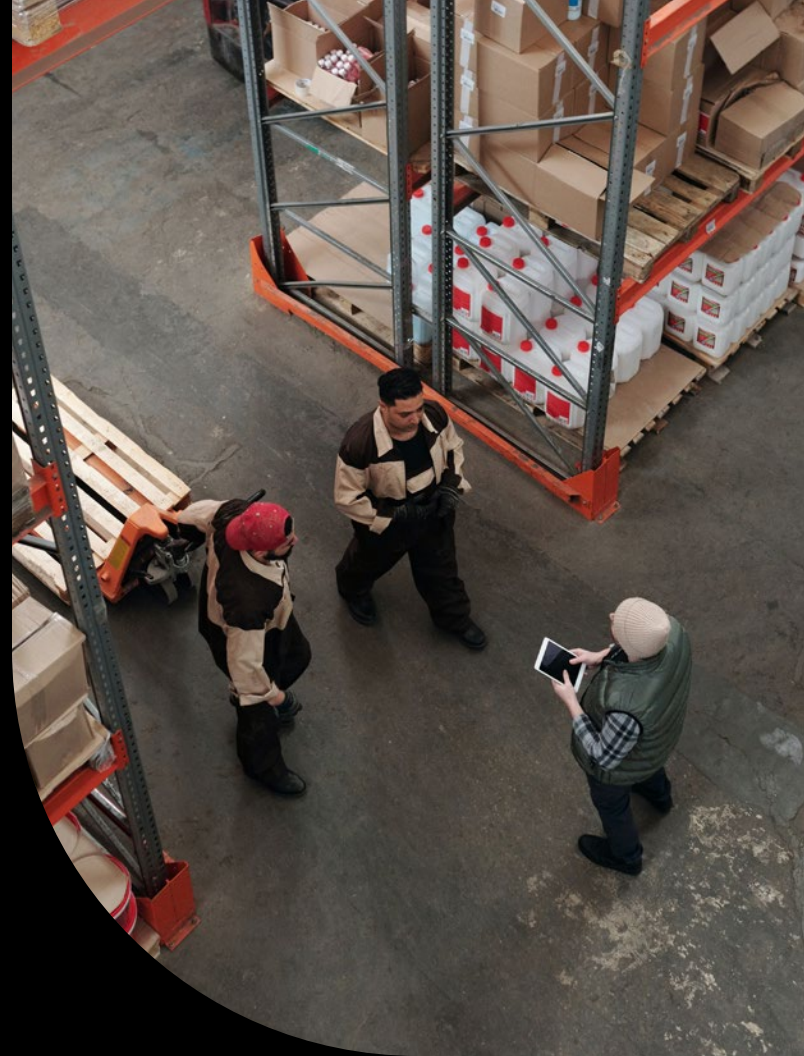
2 Customers

Your customers trust you. They rely on your quality, consistency, and ability to meet their needs. They may not know it - this is seldom enough. They need a strategic partner. One who has an eye on the future. One who has a growth mindset and uses data to make and help them make data-based decisions.

While it is important you solve their needs today, you need to be able to focus not only on what may be urgent, you need to have the time and be able to focus on what is important.

Key questions to ask yourself:

- **How does the new ERP help you cost-effectively improve the value you deliver to your customers?**
- **How does the new ERP help you anticipate customer needs and market demands?**
- **How does the new ERP help you accelerate cycle times and improve accuracy and quality?**



3 Investors

Local financial institutions, you, your family or venture capitalists (VC) may have a vested interest in the success of your distribution company. Unless you are interested in selling your company, your investors know maximizing profits is seldom sustainable and it can easily lead your company away from its founding principles.

Key questions to ask yourself:

- **Are you able to close the books in a reasonable amount of time for company leaders to be able to confidently make timely strategic decisions?**
- **Can you drill into data which may be entirely unique to your company and its processes?**
- **Are you able to see across your business and confidently share current financials (to include inventory values) with banks, VC's or others?**

4 Partners

It's a fact, your supply chain becomes resilient when you have strategic as opposed to transactional relationships with your suppliers. When you partner and collaborate on innovation and product rather than haggle over price, you both win.

Key questions to ask yourself:

- **How does the new ERP help you shift from primarily having transactional suppliers to having relationship-based suppliers? Are you able to perform the necessary vendor analyses?**
- **Does the ERP help make it easier for customers and suppliers to do business with you? Are purchase and other workflows automated for consistency, accuracy, and speed?**
- **Does the ERP vendor demonstrate similar values to your company's values? Are they providing value beyond a transactional level and more at a strategic level, anticipating what you will need from an ERP as your company grows?**

5 Community

Your distribution company has a lot of people relying on it. Whether it is the paycheck you provide, the services they provide, or the taxes they collect, you have a community that depends on you to make sound business decisions. They trust you to have a long term positive impact on local and perhaps even surrounding communities.

From an inside out perspective, your ERP vendor should have a community of users, implementers, and a best-in-class application network from which you can strategically build your ERP tech stack to empower the success of your users and your business as it evolves to continuously deliver value.

Key questions to ask yourself:

- **As Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting begins to shift from an if to a when, does your ERP have the means for you track your company's carbon footprint?**
- **Does your ERP vendor utilize artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to accelerate time to value and to help your business work smarter?**



Next steps:

Step 1 – Review your current checklist and assess whether you've covered these five areas

Step 2 – Determine the importance of these areas for your organization

Step 3 – Define the criteria you will use to measure a system against for these areas

When you keep all of your stakeholders in mind, your ERP buying decision is sure to benefit your entire ecosystem.

See how Sage Distribution and Manufacturing Operations helps you make your move to the cloud and start your digital transformation.



swktech.com

