

DON'T GET BURNED: HOW TO CHOOSE AN ERP/CRM PARTNER YOU CAN TRUST



A BC Consulting Group



Created in Partnership with
ERP/CRM SoftwareBlogs

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
Why It's Important to Choose a Good ERP/CRM Partner	2
TOP CHALLENGES BUSINESSES FACE WHEN SELECTING A PARTNER	3
How a Poor Choice of Partner Affects Your Business	4
Red Flags to Look Out For	5
IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A PARTNER	6
How to Choose a Partner You Can Trust	8
Green Flags to Look Out For	9
Top Questions You Should Ask a Potential Partner ...	10
✓ Checklist	11
FINAL WORDS	12
About Our Company	13
ERP/CRM Software Blogs	14



INTRODUCTION

The right technology partner can be the difference between thriving and merely surviving. As businesses increasingly rely on systems like ERP and CRM to streamline operations, improve customer experience, and drive growth, the choice of implementation partner becomes just as important as the technology itself. A good partner will not only deliver the technical expertise needed to get you up and running but will also take the time to understand your business, align your goals, and provide ongoing support that evolves with your needs.

In this eBook, we've compiled expert advice from ERP and CRM partners to help you choose the right partner for your business. It is designed to help you navigate the complex decision-making process with confidence.

You'll:

- Gain insights into common pitfalls
- Learn what warning signs to watch for
- Discover the qualities that define a trustworthy partner

With practical tips, key questions, and a handy checklist, this guide equips you to make a well-informed, future-focused choice.

Why It's Important to Choose a Good ERP/CRM Partner

The right partner should act like a guide for your business. They should understand your business, goals, risks, and how to lead your company through a successful transition.

Choosing the right ERP or CRM partner goes beyond just product fit. It's about working with a team that understands your business, adapts to your goals, supports you well beyond go-live, and can advise you across all your business software needs. The most successful implementations come from partners who combine senior expertise with industry-specific knowledge and can adapt to your goals and needs.

The bottom line is that every partner will say they have the best team to work with, and every partner will claim they have a proven methodology or the most industry experience. What's important is discovering what truly works for you and your business. Just because one partner is the "best of the best" doesn't mean they're a good fit for you.



Top Challenges Businesses Face When Selecting a Partner

The biggest challenge businesses face when choosing an ERP or CRM partner is cutting through the noise. Many partners look similar on paper, making it hard to tell who truly understands your business versus who just knows the software.

Challenge #1

Underestimating the Importance of Industry Experience

Without deep industry knowledge, a partner may fail to understand your business needs, miss key process improvements, and recommend solutions that aren't an ideal fit for your business. It's ideal to work with a company that understands your industry.

Challenge #3

Rushing the Decision

Pressure to implement quickly because of timeline, discounts, etc., can result in skipping steps during evaluation. A hasty decision often leads to selecting a partner that's not truly aligned, causing long-term headaches.

Challenge #2

Failure to Vet the Partner Thoroughly

Software may check all the boxes, but the partner's execution determines success. Vet their team, ask detailed questions about support and post-launch service, and speak with real customers.

Challenge #4

Not Digging Beneath the Surface

Look beyond the sales pitch. Speak with existing customers to understand their satisfaction and the vendor's ability to support real-world implementations. Can they handle your project, complexity, data, and goals? Validate their claims and ensure they align with your definition of success.

How a Poor Choice of Partner Affects Your Business

Technology projects don't usually fail overnight. They fail slowly and expensively when the wrong partner steers you off course. Choosing the wrong ERP or CRM partner can significantly harm your business in several ways. These systems are important to your day-to-day operations, and a poor implementation or ongoing support failure can cause operational disruptions, increase costs, harm user adoption, and even damage customer and vendor relationships.

Bad ERP or CRM partners don't just hurt your project, they hurt morale, trust, and long-term potential.





Red Flags to Look Out For

When evaluating technology partners, spotting red flags early can save you from major issues down the road. Here's a list of key red flags to watch out for!



They have little industry experience and/or can't provide relevant case studies.



Delays in replies, unclear answers, or inconsistent contact during the sales process.



They make bold guarantees about timelines, budgets, or functionality but can't clearly explain how they'll achieve them.



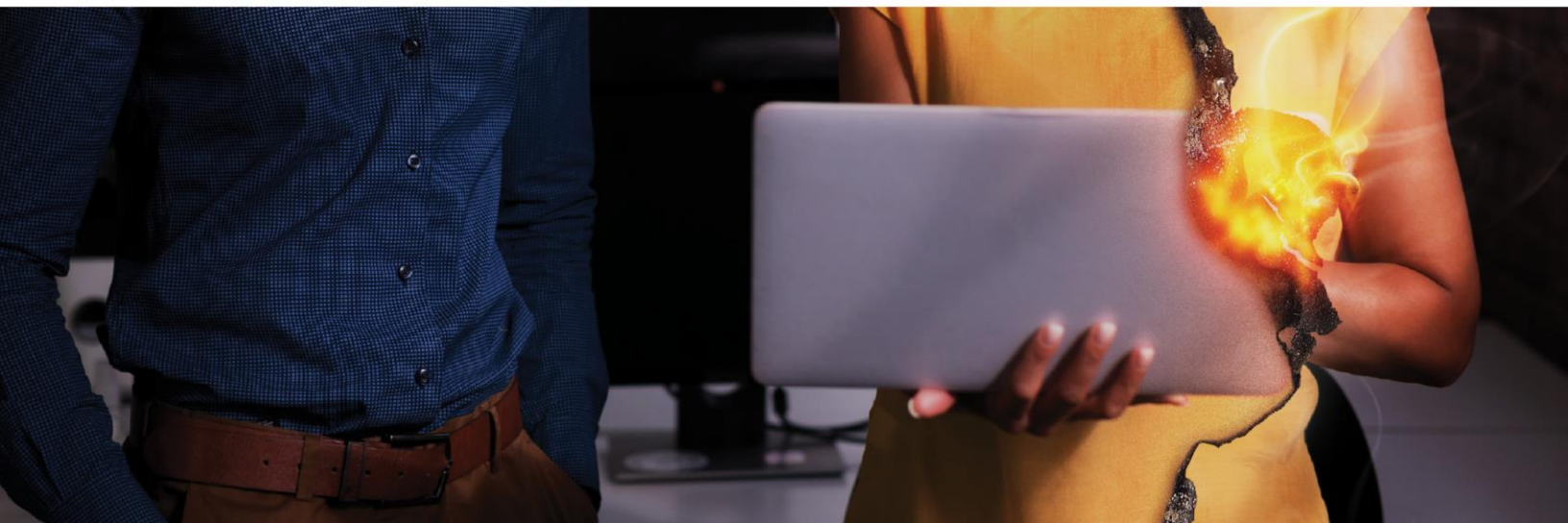
They pressure you to sign quickly or offer "limited-time discounts" without giving you time to assess properly.



Their proposal lacks detail or is filled with boilerplate language, showing little understanding of your unique needs.



They can't provide client references or give only outdated or irrelevant ones.





Important Factors to Consider When Choosing a Partner

Choosing the right technology partner is a critical decision that can significantly influence the success of your digital transformation efforts. A strong partner delivers technical expertise and aligns with your business goals, culture, and long-term vision. Below are the key factors to consider to ensure you make a purposeful and sustainable choice.



Industry Expertise

Select a partner with a proven track record in your specific industry. They'll bring an understanding of your unique regulatory environment, operational workflows, and market pressures. This expertise helps avoid generic solutions and delivers tailored recommendations that lead to faster implementation, reduced risk, and better long-term value.



Product Fit

The ERP or CRM system should be purpose-built to handle the complexity of your business, not just today but as you grow. The ideal partner should be able to help you evaluate how well the solution maps to your operational workflows, whether it integrates seamlessly with your existing ecosystem, and provide solutions where there may be gaps in functionality.



Implementation Methodology

A successful ERP/CRM deployment isn't just about the software, it's about the process. Look for partners with a structured, transparent, and well-documented implementation approach that includes clear timelines and responsibilities, in-depth training and onboarding, strong change management practices, risk mitigation strategies, and testing protocols.



Support & Service

Long after go-live, your partner's responsiveness will continue to impact your success. Consider whether they have an online portal or training library of resources to access as you learn your new solution. Better yet, do they provide one-to-one product support, and how easy is it to contact the support team to get the answers you need?



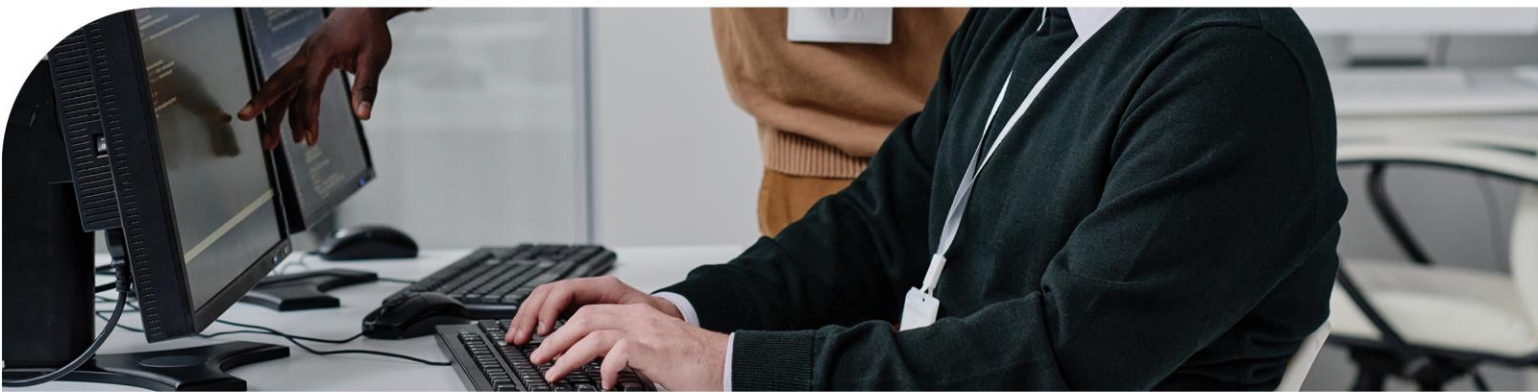
User Adoption

Even the best ERP or CRM system will fail without proper change management in place. A good partner should prioritize user experience and intuitive interfaces, work with your teams to provide role-based training and resources and help design processes that support how your team works, not just generic processes.



References & Reputation

Don't just take their word for it. Ask for references and case studies from businesses similar to yours. Pay attention to success stories in your industry, client longevity and satisfaction, and transparent discussions of past challenges and how they were resolved.



How To Choose a Partner You Can Trust

To choose an ERP/CRM partner you can trust, look for a provider with a proven track record in your industry, a transparent and structured implementation process, and strong client references. Prioritize partners who take time to understand your business, ask insightful questions, and offer tailored solutions rather than one-size-fits-all approaches. A trustworthy partner communicates openly, sets realistic expectations, provides comprehensive training and support, and demonstrates long-term commitment through post-implementation services and continuous improvement. Most importantly, trust your instincts; if the relationship feels collaborative and professional from the start, it's a strong indicator of future success.





Green Flags to Look Out For

When choosing an ERP and/or CRM partner, it's just as important to look for green flags: positive signs that the partner is reliable, experienced, and aligned with your business goals. These indicators can give you confidence that the relationship will be successful both during implementation and in the long term.



The partner has successful implementations in your industry and can speak to your specific challenges.



They provide strong references from similar-sized businesses or industries and have documented case studies.



Their proposals are clear, customized to your business, and include realistic timelines, milestones, and costs.



Their company values, work culture, and ethics align with yours, and it shows in how they treat their team and yours.



They are transparent about the people working on your project. The same team that sold you the product should be the ones implementing your solution.



They are certified or have a formal partnership with the ERP/CRM platform they implement (e.g., Microsoft Dynamics, Salesforce, SAP, NetSuite).



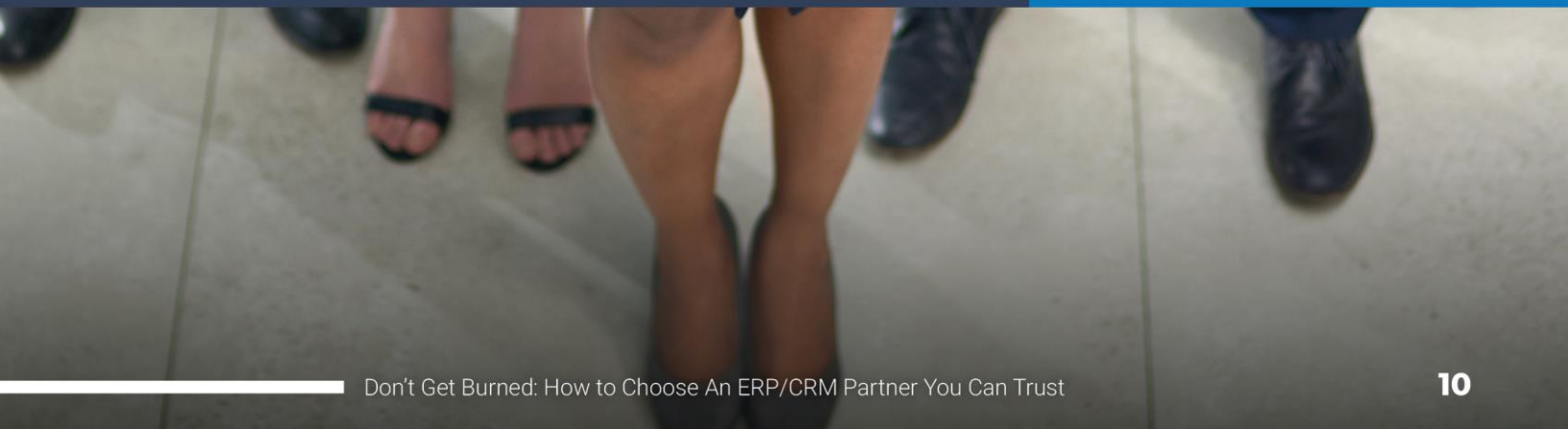
"Clients seem to have a hard time finding a partner where the personnel who sell the product and do the discovery are the same team that is working on their project. We encourage clients to ask their potential partners questions like: Who will be part of my project team once I sign off on the project? Will the same team that does design and discovery be the team that does my implementation?"

– Shannon Mullins, Microsoft MVP, CEO, *A BC Consulting Group*



Top Questions You Should Ask a Potential Partner

If you're in the process of evaluating new technology and partners, you're likely to receive a lot of information all at once. The next page contains a checklist of questions you should ask the team you meet with to ensure long-term success with your ERP/CRM system and your partner.



Checklist



Top Questions You Should Ask a Potential Partner

INDUSTRY EXPERTISE & BUSINESS UNDERSTANDING	
✓	1. Do you have experience working with companies in our industry?
✓	2. Can you provide references or case studies from businesses like ours?
✓	3. How will your system support our specific processes and future goals?
TECHNOLOGY & PRODUCT CAPABILITIES	
✓	4. Is your solution cloud-based, on-premises, or hybrid? What do you recommend for us?
✓	5. How does your system integrate with our existing tools and third-party applications?
✓	6. How efficient is the system, and how long does it take to complete key processes?
IMPLEMENTATION & SUPPORT	
✓	8. What is your typical implementation timeline, and who manages each phase?
✓	9. What training do you offer, and how do you support change management?
✓	10. What does your post-implementation support look like?
✓	11. What training materials do you offer, and how often are they updated??
PEOPLE & TEAM ROLES	
✓	12. Who will be part of my project team once I sign off on the project?
✓	13. Will the same team that does my design and discovery be the team that does my implementation?
✓	14. Do you have experienced project managers running the projects?
COST, ROI & RISK	
✓	15. What is the total cost of ownership over the next 3–5 years?
✓	16. How do you measure success and track ROI after go-live?
✓	17. What challenges do you foresee in our project, and how will you mitigate them?



Final Words

Choosing the right ERP or CRM partner is not just a technical decision, it's an intentional one that will shape the way your business operates, scales, and competes. A strong technology partner brings more than just software expertise; they offer insight, guidance, and long-term collaboration that ensures your systems truly support your goals. Conversely, the wrong partner can introduce costly delays, inefficiencies, and risks that set your business back.

By understanding the challenges, recognizing red and green flags, and asking the right questions, you position yourself to make a decision rooted in clarity and confidence. Use the insights and checklist in this eBook as your guide throughout the evaluation process. With the right partner, you'll be better equipped to turn your technology investment into a powerful driver of growth, innovation, and long-term success.



A BC Consulting Group

About

At ABC Consulting Group, we combine deep technology and accounting expertise to deliver exceptional Dynamics 365 and Power Platform solutions. Founded by Microsoft MVP Shannon Mullins, we're proud to be a Microsoft Solutions Partner for Business Applications - meeting the highest standards for capability, performance, and customer satisfaction.

We see Dynamics 365 as more than software - it's a platform that transforms operations, streamlines processes, and drives growth. Our team goes beyond implementation, optimizing and supporting solutions for businesses of all sizes. As recognized leaders in the Dynamics 365 community, we're passionate about pushing boundaries and helping clients unlock their full potential.



629-224-1365



sales@abccgroup.com



abccgroup.com



About

Microsoft Dynamics Partners providing comparisons and opinions for the Dynamics ERP software selection process.

The [ERP Software Blog](#) and [CRM Software Blog](#) are the largest and longest-running group blog sites dedicated to Microsoft Dynamics. With thousands of expert articles, case studies, videos, and more, this platform empowers software buyers and current users alike.

Over 160 Microsoft Dynamics Partners contribute content to deliver comparisons, opinions, and guidance for selecting and optimizing Microsoft Dynamics software.

Whether you're exploring your options or seeking to maximize your investment these sites are your go-to resource for trusted, expert-driven education.



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