An SME's guide to choosing software

Includes printable templates and checklists

Hello

If you want to grow your business, get more efficient or just spend less time fiddling with spreadsheets, you might need to invest in some new software.

But which kind do you need, how do you justify the cost and where do you start? We created these tips and templates to help you through all those questions and maybe help you scrap a spreadsheet or two. We spent time with more than 80 small and mid-sized business owners who recently decided to invest in a new system or piece of software. They told us why, how they often got their fingers burned, which tools they would've loved and what advice they have for others.

Who is this guide *for*?

If you're a big business with a big budget and a big IT department, this guide is not for you. This guide is for you if you are:

- Juggling more spreadsheets than you can shake a stick at.
- Slightly overwhelmed by the amount of software out there in the marketplace.
- Confused by and suspicious of all the vendors promising you the earth.
- Interested in choosing the right software for the right reasons at the right price.

And if you've already had your fingers (and budget) burned by choosing software that didn't deliver on its promise, this guide is for you too. Because with a little more support and structure, it could be the best choice you ever made.

Who's this guide *from*?

Be the Business is a small, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to boosting productivity among UK businesses.

We're doing it by helping leaders in small and medium-sized firms do what you do best: improve, innovate and inspire. We aren't selling you anything. We're not in cahoots with vendors.

Our content doesn't carry ads or sponsors. There's no catch. We just want to help.

Contents

Step 1

Setting your objective

SMEs say...

I printed this template out and stuck it on my wall. While you're in the middle of the process it's really easy to get knocked off track and forget why you're buying it in the first place!

Why?

The first step of the software-buying journey is to decide what you want it to do. Which problem do you want it to solve? Which goal do you want it to achieve? Answering this will help you narrow down the type of software you need. Having a clear and highly visible objective from the start is one of the critical success factors in making solid software choices.

How?

Print out the Objectives template below (or download the Word version here), make notes on it and refer back to it throughout your software selection process:

- When you're compiling a shortlist of software products, use it to decide which products will meet most of your requirements.
- When you're talking to software salespeople use it to check whether the things they're promising are the things you actually want.
- When you've chosen and installed your new software, use it to see whether it's delivering what you wanted. Did it work? Was it worth it?

What then?

After Step 1 you should have articulated a clear objective/problem you want to solve and you know how it fits into your business strategy.

Objectives template

What's your objective for the new software? This could be increasing sales, fixing a bottleneck, increasing staff retention, managing risk or ensuring compliance.

What's the exact goal? Give yourself a specific measurable target to aim for. If you want new software to help grow sales for example, how much do you want to grow them by?

When do you want it to happen? Give yourself an ambitious deadline for achieving your objective.

1. What do you want to see happen in your business?

Example

We need to get invoices out there faster to speed up cashflow
We need to spend less time on HR admin now we've got more people
We need a better way to share and store project documents
We need to co-ordinate the way we communicate with clients

How does this objective for new software fit with your other objectives?

Have you tried to introduce this kind of software before? If so, how did it go, why did it fail?

Why is this a particular priority, and why is it a priority right now?

What do you need to keep in mind? for example, has high staff turnover been a problem for a long time or is it a new thing? If so, why?

2. What's the broader history and context?

What will 'good' look or feel like for you and your team?

How do you want to introduce new software? What do you want the process to be like?

How should the people in the rest of the business experience the process?

Is there anything you want to avoid as you implement new software?

What would make you look back at the project as having gone well?

3. How will you know the new software has succeeded?

be the business

Objectives template

Which bits of the business are you prepared to change?

Is there anything you don't want to touch?

What constraints are there? What wouldn't you do?

For example, is there a budget limit?

4. What's in scope, and what are your limits?

Who will do the work involved in introducing new software?

Who might be affected by any changes?

Whose help will you need?

Who do you need to make sure is on side if the software is to succeed?

5. Who's involved, and who might be impacted?

What else needs to be taken into account to ensure a good result? For example, are there other changes being made which need to be considered? Will the new software have to integrate with existing systems?

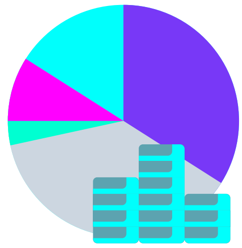
Does making this change rely on anything else happening?

6. What dependencies are there?

be the business

Step 2

Justifying your budget



SMEs say...

Going through all the ROI maths made the buying process feel more tangible and less daunting. Having the numbers down gave me confidence that it all ties back to benefits I want to see in my business.

Considering ROI

Why?

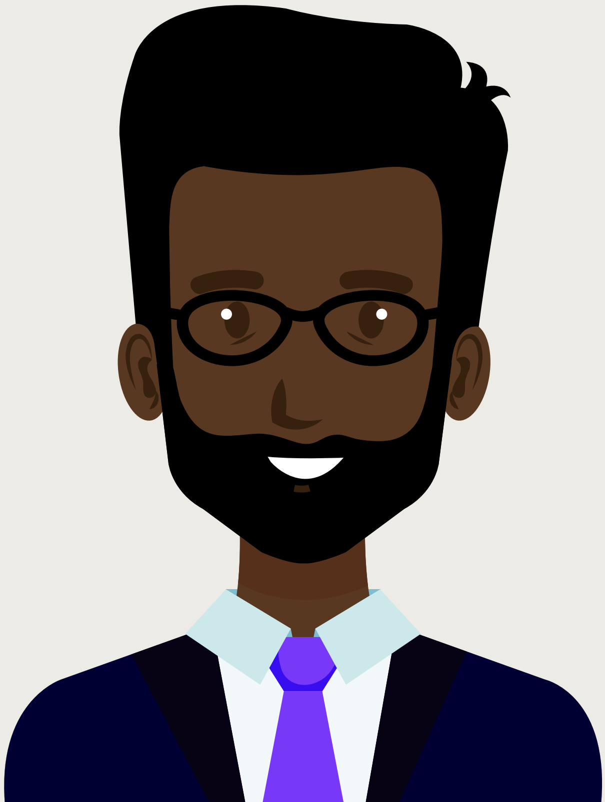
If you're not sure whether to buy new software or not, calculating the likely return on your investment will definitely help you make a decision. Not only will calculating ROI give you more confidence in your decision, you'll know how much you can spend when you start looking at software options.

How?

- You already know how to do an ROI calculation – compare the potential costs with the potential benefits/savings. The calculator below just gives you some specific things to think about with software ROI.
- Try to quantify the benefits you can expect from new software. Some items are easier to quantify than others – approximate numbers are ok.
- Add rough costs of the software. You might not know exact prices yet so just use estimates for now. You can always return to this calculation and tweak it later when you have real quotes.

What then?

When you've completed your business case you can decide whether buying software is the best way to achieve these goal. If so, use your figures to evaluate products and supplier bids.



ROI calculator

BENEFITS/COST SAVINGS

Lower staff costs | Lower headcount | Work fewer hours | Better performance | Free up senior staff

Staff

£

More flexible working | Fewer expenses/travel claims | Lower facilities/infrastructure costs | Lower waste

Facilities

£

Less time checking things | Less time fixing mistakes | Fewer business disruptions | More reliable forecasting

Quality

£

Higher customer satisfaction/retention | Better word of mouth | Improved customer service | Lower customer acquisition cost

Customers

£

Higher sales with the same sales capacity | Improved lead generation/conversion | Faster, more frequent sales

Sales

£

Total benefits/savings £

COSTS

Licence fees | Installation | Training | Compliance (GDPR, health & safety) | Project management | Consultancy/paid-for advice

Initial set-up

£

Software licence renewals/upgrades | Cloud service subscriptions | Hardware leasing | Upgrades | Maintenance

Ongoing

£

Total costs £

Not all the things in this list will be relevant to your business or the software you're considering – just leave them blank.

You might prefer to do this calculation on a spreadsheet (they are still useful for many things!)

be the business

One more thing to check

SMEs say...

Technology can be a great tool but it cannot solve a problem on its own. Sometimes it can even make it worse.

Why?

While you're looking at costs and benefits of software, it's worth taking a moment to check if technology really is the best way to achieve the goal or fix the problem you outlined in Step 1. We spoke to quite a few business owners who had dived into buying new technology but, in retrospect, felt it wasn't the right move. We love the benefits that software can bring, but it's not always the right solution. There might be cheaper, simpler ways of achieving the same objective. For example:

- Do you need to automate, or do you just need to tweak a manual process?
- Do you need new software, or do you just need faster computers?
- Do you need to give people new software, or just help them work a bit more efficiently?

How?

1. Review the goal you think software might help you achieve (or the problem you think it can help you solve).
2. Use the space below to think of any non-software options that might achieve the same thing. Include a 'do nothing' option. It may be that all the potential routes to achieve the objective come with high levels of cost or risk, and you are in fact better keeping things as they are.
3. Choose the option that best addresses your problem/achieves your goal, while being deliverable at a reasonable cost, with a good return.

What then?

If software emerges as the most viable option, go ahead and create your shopping list in the next section. If software is not the most viable option, you just saved yourself a lot of money. Well done.

Non-software solution to think about...

Non-software solution to think about...

Non-software solution to think about...

be the business

Step 3

Creating your shopping list

SMEs say...

I wish I'd thought a little more about future implications. I bought a CRM system and now I'm buying an HR system, but I would've preferred to buy a single system I could upgrade and add to over time.

Why?

Knowing what features and functionality you're looking for will help you filter out products and suppliers more effectively – and get to a good shortlist more quickly. It also helps to gather your thoughts before you speak to salespeople.

How?

Print the template below. It's a series of questions that can help you identify exactly the right software. You'll see that these questions are not all about technology. They're designed to help you understand your business requirements, so you know exactly how your software will fit in.

What then?

After this stage you should have clearly defined the requirements of your solution and have potentially narrowed down a solution(s) and/or supplier(s).

Features checklist

Functionality

What do you need the software to do?

What should the new system help you make happen?

What existing process will it improve or enhance?

How many people will use it and how often?

How does your business operate?

Do you operate in multiple locations and do you need software to support this?

Do you need the software to work across multiple languages, currencies, tax regimes or regulatory environments?

Will you need helpdesk support for the software in all the geographies relevant to you?

How flexible are your requirements?

Are there any requirements you absolutely cannot budge on?

Are there particular features that might make you raise your budget?

be the business

Features checklist

Specialisation

Are you happy with off-the-shelf software which is likely to be cheaper, but may require you to change some processes?

Or would you prefer to pay more for software which is tailored to your business? Would you be willing to spend time and money maintaining and upgrading a custom-built software

Are you willing to tie yourself to a single supplier?

Have you considered whether you want off-the-shelf, customised or bespoke software?

Do you have in-house specialists who can develop and maintain custom-built software for you? and sustain it for the long term, What would you do if your in-house specialists leave?

Is it more worthwhile focusing your in-house specialists on something else?

Can you develop an in-house solution?

What is truly special about your sector or your business, which might mean standard software cannot work for you?

Do other businesses in your industry use specific software?

Are there any special circumstances in which your staff will use the software? For example, do you need it to support voice integration for hands-free use?

Is there any reason why standard software might not work for you?

Features checklist

Compliance & security

Do your security needs go beyond those of a 'standard' business?

Do any of your clients require advanced security, or for data to be handled in a certain way? For example, do you do any work in the defence sector, or the care sector?

What security needs do you and your clients have?

Do you need to choose software which is approved by a regulatory body, or complies with particular standards?

Are there industry or sector-specific regulations you need to be compliant with?

Integration

Will you be adding other software or systems in the near future you might want to integrate with?

What will this software need to integrate with?

Is there anything you can learn from your experiences with the previous software?

Do you need to transfer data from an old system to the new system? How will this work?

Is this new software replacing old software?

be the business

Features checklist

Infrastructure

Will the new software work with your Macs, PCs, Android phones or iPhones?

If you're choosing cloud-based software, do you have a reliable enough Internet connection?

If your new software requires new technical expertise, do you have this in-house or will you have to bring this in?

What infrastructure do you already have in place?

Would you be happy to add new infrastructure if it adds additional capabilities to any system?

Does the software you're considering create any new requirements?

People & stakeholders

How might the software impact day-to-day roles?

What help will users need to transition to new ways of working?

Will any users have specific requirements you'll need to consider?

Will you involve users in the selection of software?

What impact, if any, might the new software have on the culture of your organisation?

What software would be most appropriate for your staff?

How might new software change their experience of working with you?

Do they have particular needs to consider?

What software would be most appropriate for your clients or partners?

Features checklist

Support & implementation

Do you want a supplier to offer support themselves, or are you happy to work with a partner?

What help will you need to set up and implement the software?

Would you want a partner to deliver training? Or would you want to arrange it yourself?

What training will your people need?

Do you have the capability and capacity to support the software internally?

If you need external support, what level of service do you need? How critical is the system and how much downtime is acceptable?

How do you want to support the software?

be the business

Features checklist

Future needs

Are increases in usage likely? For example, will you need more licences, or more volume? Can the software support this? Can the provider?

What changes in requirements are likely as you grow? For example, additional functionality, new geographies, improved customer service.

What are your future growth ambitions, and how will the software you're considering accommodate this?

Are your required service levels likely to change? Will a provider be able to deliver this?

How might your plans impact the ongoing support you might need?

Type of supplier

Do you want to purchase a product, or do you want to undergo a consultative process where a provider helps you implement and optimise?

What values and behaviours are you looking for in a provider?

What kind of suppliers are you looking for?

What level of customer service are you looking for?

Are you prepared to accept less intimate customer service in return for an established product which may have better support, or would you rather accept the risk of a smaller provider who you may end up tied to?

Would you prefer a large provider where you are a relatively small customer, or a smaller provider where you may be a large customer?

be the business

Features checklist

How much can you spend up front?

If you're paying a supplier to custom-build your software, will you be paying them for their time or for a final workable deliverable?

How much can you spend on ongoing support such as ongoing training, updates and maintenance?

Budget

What's your budget?

Do you have a buffer in your budget for unforeseen expenses?

How much benefit will the software have to deliver to cover its costs, how soon do you need to see these benefits and what's your exit strategy if it does not deliver?

What's your contingency plan?

Now you've defined the things you're looking for from new software, you're ready to start researching products.

Quick guide to researching software

Why?

Successful software shopping starts with research. It's worth investing time in this phase to arm yourself against the hard sales pitches you'll get from vendors. Not all sources of information are objective and unbiased. It's a crowded marketplace and all the vendors are making lots of noise about their 'innovative, unique, turnkey solutions'.

How?

So brace yourself, dive in and take with you these top 10 do's and don'ts from our SMEs...

A word about software comparison sites

Software comparison sites appear to be independent but sometimes aren't. They're created by profit-making enterprises and this inevitably influences the information they provide.

Companies may pay in order for their products to appear higher in listings and the site may receive commission from providers for when users click on the links. Content may even have been written by or on behalf of providers. And often user reviews have been submitted in return for incentives.

By all means use comparison sites but keep your cynical head on. We like the ones that include simple technology explainers and allow you to compare products by cost, support, features and compatibility. Try these three to get you started: ***www.g2.com***, ***www.getapp.com*** and ***www.capterra.com***.

Don't be afraid of asking ALL the questions
Your research will throw up a few things you'll need vendors to clarify. The best salespeople will be able to explain things clearly. And if they can't, would you buy from them?

Don't choose the one your friends went with
Lots of firms have told us that they bought something based on a brand name which turned out not to be right for them. Unfortunately, there's no failsafe way to shortcut research.

Don't just go for the brand name you know
Small and mid-sized businesses come in every shape and size, and have drastically different needs. A system which works really well for one company would be inappropriate for another.

Don't forget to leave yourself room to move
Your business is constantly changing and so is the software market. Blink and there's something new to think about. A lot of products are sold on a subscription model, to allow for updates.

Don't do it alone
Who in your business will be relying most on this software? Talk to them and find out about current processes, bottlenecks and pain points to help you narrow down the field.

Do double-check the facts
Be suspicious until you've verified information. We have spoken to a number of SMEs who found that products did not actually have the features that were listed on comparison sites.

Do read online publications with reviews
Check whether the information is coming from a truly independent source or whether it's sponsored advertorial content written on behalf of a provider.

Do use a range of sources for your research
The more the better. Look at supplier websites and third party sources, such as trade magazines, IT publications and professional bodies.

Do get your hands on a demo
A good place to see software in action is to go along to expos and exhibitions. Vendors will give you the hard sell but at least you'll get a feel for what their product is like to use.

Do ask other businesses about what they use
Ask trusted peers, partners and colleagues about their experience of the kind of software you're interested in. Ask what worked well and what didn't. Networking events are good for this too.

be the business

Step 4

Buying with confidence

SMEs say...

> Let's face it, they probably aren't going to tell you what it doesn't do!

Why?

So by this stage you should have a shortlist of suppliers that you think might meet your requirements, based upon the research you've done so far. If not, go back and look at the previous steps so you go into the purchase phase fully prepared.

How?

As a business leader you already have experience choosing between proposals from suppliers, so we won't cover too much of the basic stuff (like making sure they're solvent and getting references). But there are some technology-specific considerations.

What then?

By the end of this stage you should have identified a preferred supplier that offers a solution to answer your requirements and is priced in a way you understand.

Buyers guide

1 Speak to your shortlisted suppliers

Confirm which product can meet your needs, confirm the details you found in your research and get a feel for the kind of supplier you want to work with.

Tell them everything
Give enough information to help them make a good proposal. Talk them through your list of requirements and don't skimp on the details. How well they listen or absorb your specific needs is a good indicator of the kind of relationship you can expect post-purchase.

Are they all smoke and mirrors?
Every time the salesperson tells you about some new bell or whistle that their product has, ask yourself if it's actually something you need. Otherwise you might end up paying for lots of gizmos that bring you no value.

Are they communicating clearly?
If they can't use straightforward language to explain how their product will meet your needs they're probably not worth bothering with. Jargon means someone is hiding something or they're not sure about the detail of how something works. Either way, steer clear.

Does it sound too perfect?
No tool is ever perfect, there's always a bit of compromise involved, so beware of salespeople who make it sound too easy. You're looking for a mature conversation where they take you through what their system can do for you, what it can't, and where there might be ways of adapting it to serve your purposes.

Are they talking about business needs?
The right supplier will understand your business both on a strategic and a process level. They will appreciate your priorities and have a good level of understanding of how your business or your industry works.

Is the software still in development?
If a salesperson says that a feature is in development/will be added soon, alarm bells should be ringing. Software companies, particularly those with less well-established products, are always touting new features. There is no guarantee they will be available soon, or ever.

Buyers guide

2 Get quotes and zoom in on pricing models

Once you've found suppliers you think you can work with, get a detailed proposal from each of them, even if you're buying off the shelf. Pricing structures are often deliberately confusing so take special care to understand what you're paying for.

Subscriptions:
Most software is now sold on a subscription basis, or Software as a Service (SaaS) where you buy a monthly or annual licence. Paying close attention to the pricing of these subscriptions is crucial as they will be your ongoing costs.

Licences:
You generally buy a certain number of licences to cover your needs. The cost of each licence may go down the more of them you buy, but make sure you don't pay for licences you don't need.

Fee per user:
A licence fee per user is probably the most common model, you may also see other structures such as 'per server' or 'per web application' for certain kinds of software.

Annual or monthly:
Annual subscriptions often work out cheaper, but don't tie yourself into a year-long contract if you're only trying the software out for size.

Lock-in:
Are there any switching costs or charges if you change your mind. Do you have an initial grace period where you can easily get out of your agreement?

Package deals:
Discounted bundles of licences encourage you to buy at the top end of what you need. They might also include support packages and extra features. Make sure you read the fine print and only pay for what you really need.

Introductory offers:
A discount on the first few months can be appealing but you might end up using this software for several years so consider the full lifetime costs before you jump in. When you roll off your low rate, the costs can mount up.

"Most popular":
Software vendors often highlight some deals as 'recommended' or 'most popular'. Don't let this lead you astray, these are often just the versions that make the supplier the most margin.

Basic vs premium:
Basic versions obviously have fewer features or options for customisation, but premium versions can be pricey. If you go for a more advanced model make sure you're getting all the benefits.

Support and maintenance:
Licences may include standard support so make sure this meets your needs. It can be frustrating if you need support outside office hours and then discover that this isn't included. Ask about response time and availability guarantees.

What else is included?
Find out if you'll get any of these things: installation/configuration; integration with other software or systems; a warranty; upgrades; documentation; user workshops or training materials; testing?

Buyers guide

3 *Trial product*

Once you've identified a preferred product and supplier, you should trial the product or at least see a demo. It's very difficult to get a real impression of what a system will be like within your organisation before you use it. It's not always possible, but do it if you can.

Short-term licence:
Some providers will offer a free trial as standard. For those that don't, see if you can buy a single short-term licence so you can at least give the system a go at minimal cost. Watch out for auto-renewals and cancellation fees attached to a short-term licence.

Dummy data:
Ideally you want to test the system in a way that mimics as closely as possible how it would really be used possible. Try using it with some dummy data which closely resembles your company's real information. Involve those staff who will use be using the software post-purchase in the testing.

Trial the right product:
We spoke to a number of SMEs who had been speaking to a provider about buying the 'basic' version of a piece of software, but were given a free trial of the 'premium' version with functionality that would not be available to them.

be the business

Step 5

Making it work for the team

SMEs say...

"The hardest part of buying new software – by a mile – was getting everyone to use it. Implementing new software created a lot of discomfort and even fear among my employees.

Why?

You might think the implementation is the easy bit but it's actually the part of the software process where most businesses face challenges. New workplace technology can drive unexpected responses. It can create fear and resentment. People feel they're being forced to change a process they think is fine, they can fear that technology is leading to redundancies, or that new transparency will expose them in some way.

How?

Go through the questions and tips below to make sure you've anticipated as many human roadblocks as possible. Print it out and make notes, or run through it with your team to plan implementation together.

What then?

By the end of this step you will have built and executed a successful implementation plan along with a fully resourced and empowered implementation team.

Team & tech tipsheet

List the individuals and teams that will be affected by the new software. Think about how the change will affect them. What will it mean for their day-to-day work?

Are there any particular teams or individuals who are likely to be particularly challenging? Will anyone require significant training, or support changing their mindset?

Are there any particular teams or individuals who are likely to be particularly keen on the change? How can they help bring others on board?

Is there anyone outside the business who you'll need to engage? Perhaps suppliers or customers directly affected by a new system or related problems, such as downtime.

1. Understand your users

How will you sell the new software to people? Some people won't change unless you give them a compelling reason to do so.

Think about what's in it for them and frame it that way. Will their tasks be faster? Will boring tasks be removed? Will they have a new option to work from home?

It's never too early to start warming people up to the idea of new software. Launch day should not be the first they hear of it! Put together a quick comms schedule.

Many people have been through difficult technology projects before. Lay out the potential implementation challenges and how you plan to deal with them.

2. Prepare your message

be the business

Team & tech tipsheet

Who will need to be trained on the new system? Will different teams need different levels of expertise? Will you have super-users training the rest of the team?

What kind of training will work best with your users? Is it best delivered in person? Remotely? As an online package? Is it best delivered by an external specialist or someone internal?

How long will training take? Will it be ongoing or one-off? Factor this time investment into people's schedules and performance targets.

3. Schedule the training

Do you need to introduce incentives to encourage people to use the new system? For example, reward vouchers for those who input all their data fully in the first few weeks.

What repercussions will there be for not using the new system? You could present this as a risk, for example that uncompleted timesheets may lead to someone being underpaid.

Will you go as far as hard consequences? Such as withholding commission payments from salespeople if they haven't entered a sale in the system.

4. Encourage uptake

Team & tech tipsheet

Have a clear plan for how you'll move data from one system to the other, and how you'll check whether it's worked properly.

Have a plan for how the new software will be integrated with your other systems. This should be carefully tested, and the risk of downtime on the old system should be built into planning.

If you're delegating implementation to someone else, make sure you've given them enough time and resources to do it well, cope with problems and make decisions as they go.

Test it thoroughly before you roll it out to everyone. If possible establish a small user group using real data. Make sure it's compliant and secure before you go live.

5. Make sure it works

Set a transition/launch date when it won't matter so much if there's a lot of disruption, for example, over a weekend or during a period when the business is quiet.

Account for the fact that business as usual might take longer than usual for a while. Build contingency into your client deadlines and delivery promises.

Account for a period of dual running as a backup if the transition is not successful or the new software doesn't quite work properly.

Make sure your support resources – vendor helpline or internal helpdesk – are in place and accessible by those who are most likely to need them.

6. Go live

With your implementation, testing and training planned out, you're all set. The next step is to see how the new software has bedded in and to make sure you're getting your money's worth.

be the business

Step 6

Getting your money's worth

SMEs say...

Two months after implementing digital accounts software, it turned out our finance manager was still doing things the old manual way because she didn't trust the system.

Why?

Now your new software is in place it's time to really make sure it's doing the job it's supposed to do. Even if you have a general sense it's ok it's still a good idea to go through a proper review process – it doesn't have to take long.

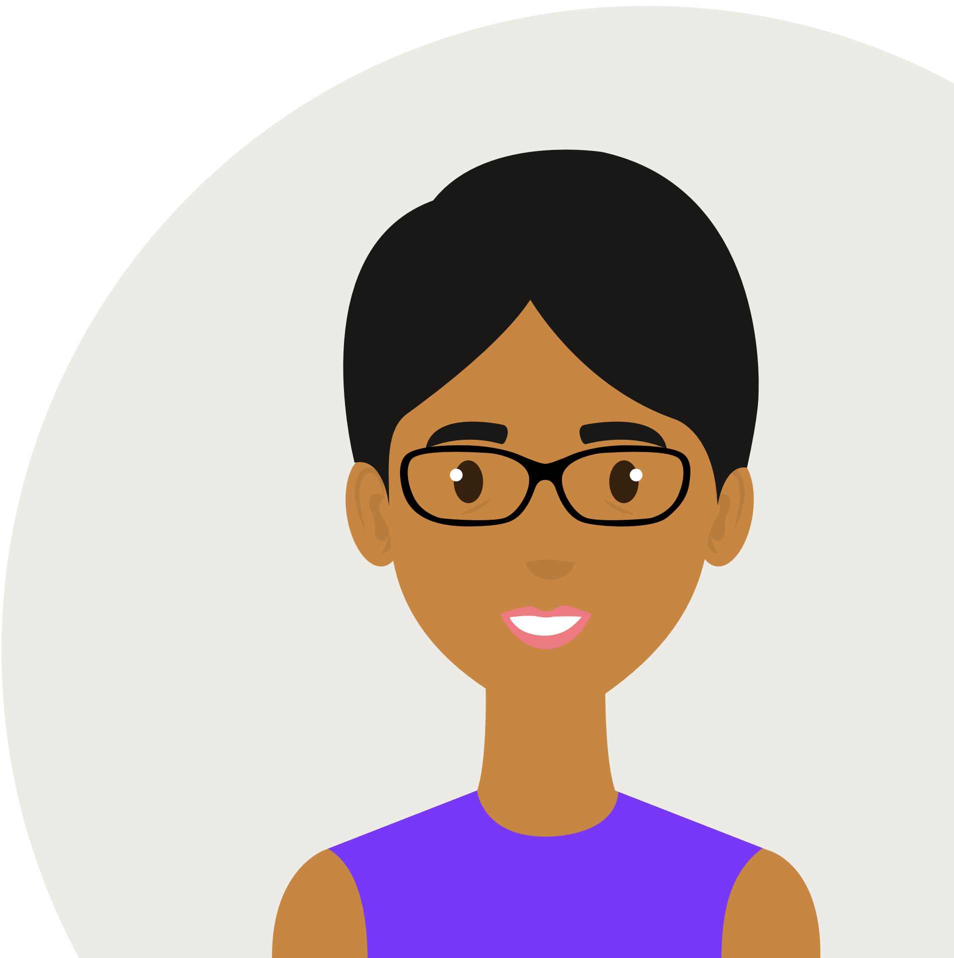
How?

Follow the steps below to:

1. Do an ROI check
2. Run a 'Lessons Learned' workshop
3. Decide what to do next.

What then?

As you get used to your new software, keep looking for ways to maximise what it can do, and stay on top of additional features, updates and upgraded functionality as it emerges.



Review calendar

Step 1: Do an ROI check

When? Monthly or quarterly for the first 6 months

How long? Allow an hour

Who? You

This involves going back to your business case and ROI projections (from Step 2) and comparing it to the actual benefits the software has brought you. You can do it quarterly if you prefer.

Step 2: Run a 'Lessons Learned' workshop

When? Around 2 months in

How long? Allow 2 hours

Who? You, managers, users (or user representatives)

This is a good way to get a broader view on how the new software is doing, giving all users a chance to express their views, share knowledge and see if more training or support is required. It's also a good time to review the purchase and implementation process too: what could have gone better? Here's a rough agenda you could use:

- Are people using the new system? All of them or just some?
- Are they using it the way you intended?
- Did the implementation period ever really end, does the new software feel embedded?
- Are people still leaning on old ways of working?
- How successful are your support resources? Do you need more?
- What impact has the new solution had on staff? Has anyone's role changed significantly as a result?
- Have there been any unintended consequences, positive or negative?
- Have new issues become apparent, e.g., skills shortages have been revealed which you may not have been aware of?

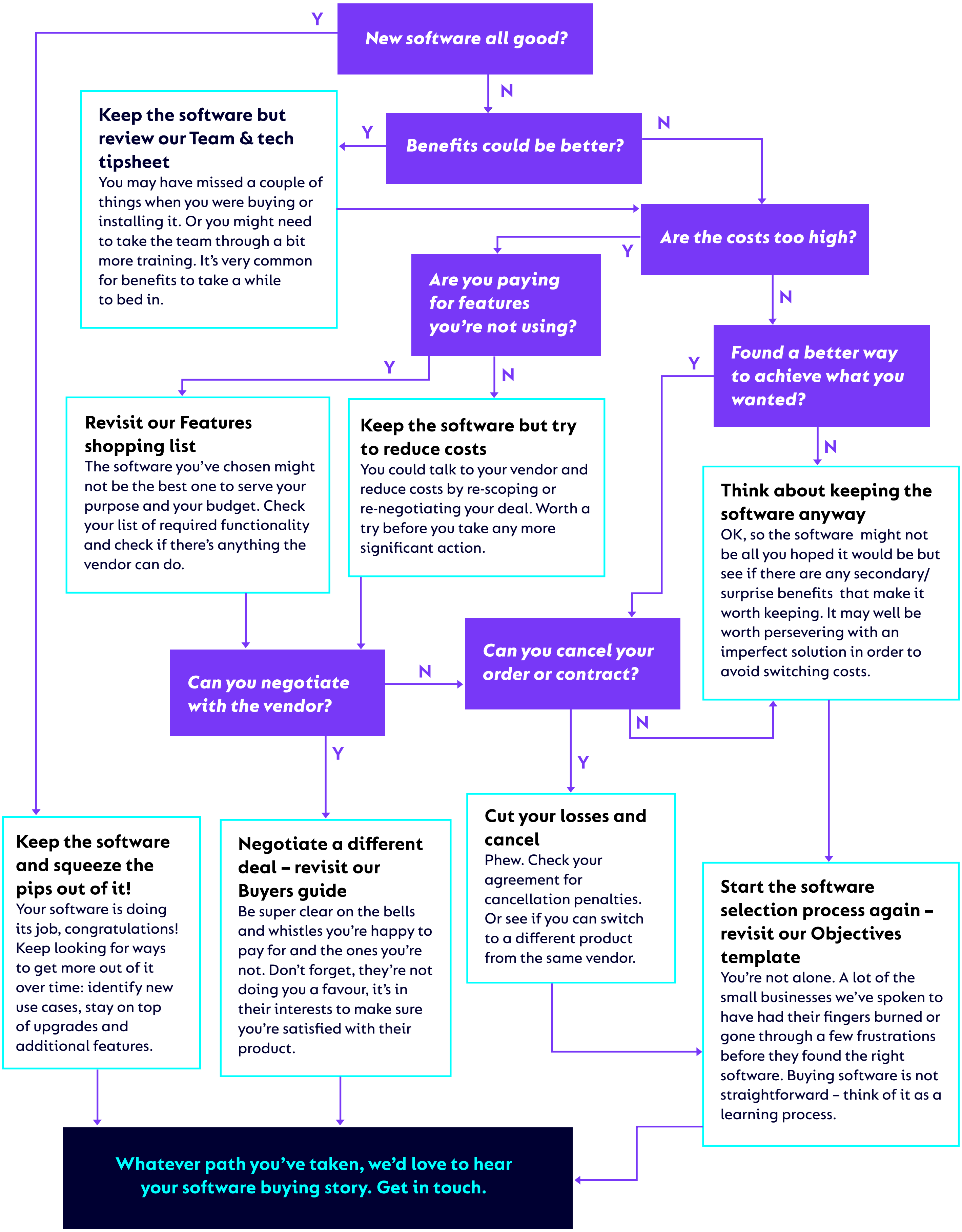
Step 3: Decide what to do next

When? 6 months in

How long? Allow 2 hours

Who? You, senior managers, finance team

After your ROI check and workshop, you'll have a good idea of how successful – or otherwise – your software purchase has been. That brings you to our software decision tree.



be the business

Follow us

Be the Business is a small, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to boosting productivity among UK businesses.

We're doing it by helping leaders of small to mid-sized firms do what you do best: improve, innovate and inspire.

Businesses like yours don't have deep pockets or layers of management to throw at productivity. And quite frankly you're doing a superb job all on your own. Be the Business is just here to support you with relevant programmes and useful content that might help you nudge productivity in the right direction.

We believe that inside every business there's at least one Change Maker who's looking for tips and tools they can use. You might be the owner, you might be leading a marketing, HR or ops team – or you might be doing it all at the same time. Either way, you're pretty amazing at many things, but you could be facing challenges in areas like scaling up, efficiency, tech, staff retention, customer service, innovation or strategic planning.

Our content aims to support you on all these topics, helping you develop your ability to run your business, lead your team, make decisions, and get the best out of the resources you have.

*Subscribe to our monthly newsletter **five small things** and you'll be sure to get all our content first, including more guides like this one.*

www.bethebusiness.com/five-small-things