

# Ten Tips for Selecting an SAP® Support Provider



Once you've made the decision to use a specialist SAP® support provider, either to complement your in-house team or to provide you with fully outsourced SAP support, you need to make sure you select the right partner first time so that you have the peace of mind that comes from knowing your SAP system is in safe hands.

There are many attributes that you should look for and questions that you should ask when choosing your SAP partner to ensure that you are partnering with a provider that has a proven track record of providing high quality SAP support services.

Here are Ten Tips to help you make the right choice.

## 1. Fit with requirements:

It is vital that your SAP partner has the correct set up to provide the type and level of support that you require.

### Key questions to consider are:

Does the SAP provider's business culture and size fit yours?

If you are looking for a partner to provide all your back office support requirements, does it have the bandwidth to do this?

Are you happy to be one cog in a big machine or would you rather partner with a smaller company who will be more attentive and responsive to your needs?

Does the partner take a proactive or reactive approach and does this fit with your requirements?

## 2. Expertise

Regardless of its SAP expertise, find out if the SAP provider understands your business processes. How long has it been working with SAP? Does it have the in-depth SAP expertise that comes from specialising in SAP or is SAP just one product in its portfolio?

You need access to a wide range of skills - typically both technical SAP expertise and process understanding across several functions - so an SAP partner should not just have strong SAP skills, but also know how to apply them to your business processes.

## 3. Flexibility

How flexible is the service provided by the SAP provider? Does it offer a choice of different levels of service, depending on the skills and size of your in-house team and your immediate or longer term needs? Finding an SAP provider that offers this level of flexibility means that you only pay for what you need.



#### 4. SAP certification

You can ensure the competence of an SAP provider by checking that the provider's SAP consultants are certified in their specialist SAP modules.

An SAP provider should be dedicated to maintaining its consultants' skills and knowledge so it's wise to ask about its commitment to staff training – how much does it invest in staff training (SAP and consulting skills) per annum to keep consultants' skills up to date?

A company that commits to its staff can often sustain low staff turnover which you can take advantage of by forming relationships with its consultants who grow to know and support your business year on year.

#### 5. Service level agreements (SLAs)

It's important to ensure that the support and maintenance of your SAP system is delivered to an agreed set of measures. An SAP provider should be able to share what SLAs it offers for its support services and what its track record is for meeting them.

#### 6. ISO accreditation

Another measure of a reliable partner is its commitment to meeting industry standards for the requirements relating to quality, information security and IT service management systems applicable to ISO 27001 and ISO 20000 certificates.

These standards ensure that your partner delivers value to you by facilitating the results that you want to achieve. This means that the SAP provider directs and controls its activities and resources to design, transition, deliver and improve their services. A partner must also have measures in place to protect your data and information at all times.

#### 7. SAP Partner Centre of Expertise

Is the SAP support provider's services accredited to SAP's Centre of Expertise standard? If so, it has demonstrated to SAP that its support service has met SAP's rigorous requirements giving you assurance that the provider is dedicated and committed to its SAP support services.

#### 8. Meet the team

The SAP provider's individual consultants that are involved in supporting your organisation are fundamental to the success of your SAP support function. Before you appoint a partner, it's important to meet the individuals who will be providing support to your organisation. It's vital that you feel you can work closely with them. You should ask about their skills and experience and be comfortable that they understand your business, business objectives and the support service you expect from them.

#### 9. Dedicated team versus outsourcing

It's important to find out if the SAP provider outsources or offshores any of its support services or if it has its own dedicated team.

An SAP provider with its own team will have a deeper understanding of your system and its history as well as your organisation.

#### 10. Integrated SAP Support

Whilst you want to find a partner that has specialist skills and expertise in your industry you may also enquire about some of the other services that it provides to its other customers that you may want to take advantage of. Examples of other services that may be of interest include managed SAP NetWeaver® services, and technical services such as hardware migrations, enhancement package application and upgrades.

Whilst this is by no means an exhaustive list of considerations, hopefully it will give you some food for thought, whether you are evaluating the fit of your current support service provider or you are going to the market to identify potential suppliers.

**For more information on SAP support services by Absoft, please call us on +44 (0)1224 707088 or email [info@absoft.co.uk](mailto:info@absoft.co.uk)**