

SMB/ICT Infrastructure and Network Acquisition Decision Criteria

This worksheet is designed to help guide you through an ICT infrastructure upgrade, enhancement or replacement and support a safe and sound decision on infrastructure hardware, networks, services, software, applications and a supplier partner. Based on years of ICT sales and acquisition experience, most decision criteria fall into one of these five decision dimensions. Place a number next to each element in the order of priority to you and your decision with "1" being the highest priority. We have placed them in the proper order based on extensive experience but you may have an alternative order. Feel free to add additional decision elements that are unique to your situation and not identified here.

___ Emotional (Subjective) Dimension

Probably the most important element of your decision is to have a clear understanding of the individual benefits, the direct (hard) and indirect (soft) impact and the overall value of the system. Refer to the ICT Alignment Assessment/Evaluation Worksheet on the reverse side for a guide to benefits, impact and value.

___ Financial (Investment) Dimension

The second most important decision dimension is probably the investment or financial element. Because initial cost is not necessarily the most important decision element, it is important to have a realistic perspective of each financial decision criteria.

- ___ Initial ICT investment (ITI)
- ___ Total cost of ownership (TCO) – Operating costs
- ___ Benefit, impact (direct and indirect) impact and value (BIV)
(Refer to reverse side of this worksheet)
- ___ Return on investment (ROI)
- ___ Single (one-time) investment (Purchase/lease/rental)
- ___ Incremental (reoccurring) investment (Subscription/license)

___ Relationship (Support) Dimension

Our experience has been that the next most important criteria is the manufacturer, supplier and provider capabilities, capacities and performance. You can have the most advanced technology available but if it does not work and you cannot get anyone to respond and fix it, it is useless. Seriously evaluate the supplier's credentials, their people, their systems and processes that are supporting your ICT infrastructure decision, the technology installation, benefit implementation and ongoing performance management.

___ Practical (Objective) Dimension

Although many buyers consider the practical dimension focusing on system capabilities, capacities, features, flexibility and performance the most important criteria, experience has proven that the benefits, impact and value are more important. Sure, the system has to perform, but making a decision based only on facts, statistics, specifications and features can often lead to decision mistakes, implementation and performance challenges. If your decision makers are not experienced ICT professionals, look to a supplier that can effectively translate the technology terminology into benefits, impact and value to your business. (Refer to the assessment/evaluation worksheet on reverse side)

___ Risk Dimension

Often forgotten but always present is decision risk factors. The risk factors outlined below are important to consider before the decision and not after when something goes wrong. It is easier to avoid (prevent) decision challenges than it is to "solve" them when they happen. Again, experience has demonstrated that what appears to be the best system and/or supplier may not always offer the lowest risk. If everything else in the decision is the same, select a supplier that supports your decision with resources, time and effort to help you make a safe and sound decision and not just sell you a system.

- ___ Investment risk – acceleration of initial costs
- ___ System operational risk – Infrastructure may not perform as specified or required
- ___ Supplier performance risk – Suppliers and providers may not perform as promised
- ___ Career and personal risk – We have witnessed many bad decisions that have resulted in job loss or other career ramifications