Advice from the Experts:
Asset Management for Cities & Counties

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Once you know where all of your asset data is located, it is time to think about all the departments in your organization who will be using this new application.

What are these groups using now?

Are they using home grown access databases, paper files, a different work management software, disparate work order and asset management software or just subject matter experts in each department?

Whatever the current process is now, streamlining each department to a single new system can be extremely difficult. Understanding what their current system does as well as what type of information is needed from that system, such as reports and maintenance logs, can help in deciding the size of the system you need to support the entire organization. Many departments also have employees that are technologically adverse, meaning they do not want to use a computer. This means that change management will be a large part of the process.

The decision matrix on the next page can let you know what to think about when choosing a software vendor:

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Problem	Considerations	Possible Solution
Problem #1: You have several departments in your organization that would be moving to the new software. They are all currently paper-based and do not want to use computers.	The first thing to identify is your product champion(s). This is a process of finding the one or two people in each department that want to move to a new program and provide their feedback on the options. Realizing that the change will happen even if no one wants it is integral to success. Identifying those that could make the transition easier can save a ton of headaches once the product launches.	Look for a software program that is robust but offers organizations a slimmed-down mobile version of their application for those employees that may be overwhelmed by a web-based workflow. Keep in mind the impact that switching from paper to computer might have. It might behoove you to set up basic computer skills classes before rolling out the software to everyone.
Problem #2: You have several departments in your organization that would be moving to the new software. They are all currently paper based and half of them have limited computer skills.	As stated in the problem mentioned above, you may have a few more champions to choose from. It can be beneficial to have a wide range of stakeholders across the organization to provide input on the selected product. It can be more beneficial to have a representative from each to provide input into the selected product. This produces buy-in from the end user and can have an impact on the organizational loyalty of your work groups.	Finding a software program that supports both technically savvy and non-technical users is helpful in bridging this divide. Be sure that your product champions and experts are properly trained so that users can refer to them for internal assistance.
Problem #3: You have several departments in your organization that would be moving to the new software. They are all currently using disparate homegrown tools and do not want to transition to a new software.	In situations like this, each group has a system that gives them exactly what they want. The problem is that reporting that data is often hard or non –existent, or the receiver of that data has to merge it all together from the different systems to get a big picture view. While change issure to present a challenge, articulating the reason why a new system is needed is key to getting through.	Selecting an EAM system that supports multiple work flows, is configurable for the different groups and can be easily used by the organization is key. If you have a fleet department that has no need for maps, and a water department that works solely from a map, the system should support both. The system should also allow a process to upload asset information and historical work records to maintain the assets' total costs.
Problem #4: You have several departments in your organization that would be moving to the new software. They are all currently using disparate access databases and they all have moderate computer skills.	Generally, users that have moderate computer skills easily transition from one software to another. In this case, the only thing standing in your way is that they like what they currently have. Articulating the needs of the organization at this point would probably help leadership to understand the need for change.	The possible solution to Problem # 3 is applicable here, as well. One additional thing organizations can do is ask their groups for input. What about your current system is working, what isn't? What functionality would your department require of any new system being implemented? This will help narrow down your software options or identify gaps that need to be filled.
Problem #5: You have several departmentsin your organization that would be moving to the new software. The organization is using an EAM software that is not working out as they expected. Many of the departments want to go to a different software program but are Moderate Computer users.	When leaving one software vendor for another, it can get tricky. When leaving one software vendor for another, it can get tricky. Depending on the information captured with the other system, your organization may be more prepared for another implementation, or your users may be upset at losing a system they enjoyed. While that may present a hurdle to overcome, this could still be a more manageable transition, as your organization has been through the process before and the employees know what to expect.	Choose a software that supports all the good things from the other system but also provides functional areas where the other program was lacking. Preventive maintenance forecasting and robust maintenance schedules tend to be two of the deficiency areas in most software platforms, as well as robust inventory capabilities.

Now that you know what assets you have and what your employees expect, it is time to look at what the organization needs. Organizations are required by mandate, law or statute to track certain information concerning the state or condition of their assets.

- What level of information does your organization have to give to other entities, be them state, federal or local?
- Do you have a requirement to separate capital improvements from routine maintenance or repair work?
- Do you have to track multiple accounts that pay for certain types of work?
- How do you track that information now?
- What enterprise-level applications like ERP or GIS do you have and will need to have integrated with the new software?

Question	Yes	Requirements	No	Requirements
What level of information does your organization have to give to other entities, be them state, federal or local?	**Yes** – Information on condition and asset maintenance is required by mandate to be tracked and reported on to state and federal entities as well as quarterly reports to local government.	You need an EAM system that has robust reporting capabilities and in-depth life-cycle tracking. Depending on the type of assets you need to report on, it is best if the system is not asset specific (such as a waste water system to track all assets).	**No** – Our organization does not have to report to outside entities on the status of our assets. All reports are internal.	In this case, you can opt for a system that does not have a robust reporting capability.
Do you have a requirement to separate capital improvements from routine maintenance or repair work?	**Yes** – Our organization tracks capital projects separately from regular work. Accounts are separate and costs need to be integrated.	In this case, it is probably important to have an integrated Capital Projects functionality. An EAM software program that can help create capital projects and associate the estimated and actual costs is extremely helpful in tracking timelines and overall costs.	**No** – we do not separate capital from regular work actions.	No need for an integrated Capital Project functionality.
Do you have to track multiple accounts that pay for certain types of work?	**Yes** – We track FEMA accounts for emergency work, capital accounts and regular preventive accounts, among others.	In this case, it would be imperative to have a system that supports unlimited accounts and can separate accurately.	**No** – We do not track accounts separately or need a billing type function.	No need to purchase a program that supports robust accounting functions.
Do you have enterprise-level applications like ERP or GIS that you will need to have integrated with the new software? Which ones?	Yes – We have multiple enterprise applications that we will need to interface with for timesheets, accounting and personnel management.	Be sure to select a software program that has a robust integration management process and verifies those integrations throughout the upgrade processes. You do not want to pay for an integration then have it break in your first upgrade of the product, or have to pay more to rebuild it for the new version.	**No** – We do not have a need to integration with any existing 3rd party systems.	If you do not plan to integrate with any 3rd party systems, be sure to look into the future to ensure you do not select a software that will not support your future state projections.

Now that you know the breadth of the needs for your organization, it would be a good time to look at your software options. Though you can use your favorite search engine to identify the options available in the Enterprise Asset Management market, **assetworks.com/eam is a great place to start your search. With readily available access to information as well as a quick and easy way to schedule a demo of the software, you can visualize your options in no time.** Fortunately, AssetWorks EAM software covers the above scenarios – so, if you answered "yes" to any of them, be sure to check out AssetWorks..

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