

Selecting a computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) guide

5 questions to ask of your new CMMS



There comes a time in an operations manager's career when they know it's time to stop running their operations on a system that wasn't built for them. If you've reached the point where you're tired of sifting through piles of printed work orders, bills and other systems or documents you need in order to manage your facility, then you might be ready to implement a CMMS. Or maybe you have a CMMS that's difficult to use, hard to learn and virtually collecting dust.

In order to make the best selection for your organization, you need to ask yourself these crucial questions as you explore your options:

- What's the real cost?
- What does implementation look like?
- What kind of support are you getting?
- What capabilities does the CMMS have?
- How credible is the company?

Harnessing the power of a CMMS that's a fit for your organization can really help you and your team start working more proactively and productively.

What's the real cost?

Not all CMMSs are created equal, and certain service providers tack on additional fees for necessary features and support. It's important to identify the hidden expenses tied to each option, as these can tally up over time.

Some systems require you to store all your facility information on on-site servers. These so-called "desktop" solutions come with unpredictable expenses. First, you have to shell out funds to buy the necessary servers and devices.

Additionally, you will encounter costs to power and maintain essential hardware. This means you have to tackle IT updates, upgrades, repairs and replacements all on your own, which can pile on unforeseen expenses.

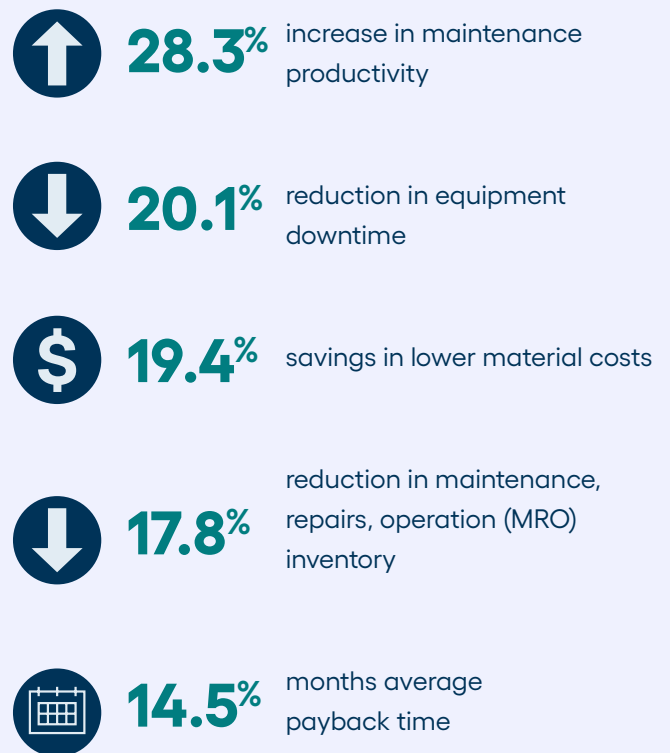


Infographic

Learn more about how cloud-based vs. server-based systems compare

[See more](#)

Organizations that use a CMMS reported an average of:*



Source: 8 ROI Stats on the Benefits of a CMMS

Keeping this in mind, cloud-based solutions can be an excellent choice. **They eliminate the need for on-site servers and prevent you from spending money on IT support and maintenance.**

Some CMMSs have even more add-on costs that facility managers have to take into account. Service providers often charge you based on the number of users of the software. This means you will need to calculate how many users – both current and future – your organization will have to give yourself an educated estimate of these costs.

Even though your staff may not be responsible for making updates and fixes to your systems, software companies may charge you for support. In some cases, service providers could be banking on your facility incurring these expenses to make a profit, so you should look for a company that includes instant updates and offers support as part of the package.

If you consider all of these factors, you can make a well-informed investment in a CMMS to maximize your long-term savings with a reliable vendor.

What does implementation look like?

Once a team decides to adopt a CMMS, they must tackle the implementation process. While desktop software systems can often be a hassle to get up and running, **cloud-based systems can be substantially easier and less time-consuming to implement.**

Consider the steps you need to take when setting up on-site (or on-premise) system:

- You have to either wait for the vendor to mail you CDs or download the installation files from their website.
- You need to verify that the software is compatible with your computer, operating system and network.
- You may need the assistance of your IT staff.
- If your computer gets updated, you may no longer be compatible with the software.

- Access to the software is limited to that specific computer.
- If the CMMS vendor makes an update, you have to perform upgrades yourself – which leads right back to the original chores. You are rarely on the latest version, and it's difficult to manually keep up.

On the other hand, with software delivered from the cloud:

- All you need is internet access and a browser.
- You should never need assistance from your IT department.
- You are always on the latest version.
- You have access from anywhere and typically any device.

With a cloud-based provider, you want to make sure they have a solid implementation plan.

You may want to ask:

- How long does a typical implementation take?
- How many clients have they successfully implemented?
- Do they have a documented process for implementation?

Knowing this upfront can help you feel secure in your vendor's ability to prioritize your success and ensure you have a smooth implementation.

At Brightly, we use a 3-step implementation process that includes:



Planning

Orientation calls to define roles, identify critical business goals and map out your implementation process.



Onboarding

Implementation begins with interactive classes, online help content, 1:1 consultative sessions and support as you need it to build your account (and even soft launch it).



Ongoing Support

Start using your product to reach your goals, while we ensure all key milestones have been executed and continue to offer ongoing support. You and your team will have continual access to unlimited interactive online classes, as well as a project collaboration tool for implementation management.

What kind of support are you getting?

When you're depending on a certain software system to store all of your facility's data and daily work, you need reliable, knowledgeable professionals providing you support. If something were to go awry or you just need to learn something new, you want to know that you can reach your CMMS service provider for backup as soon as possible to ensure minimal downtime.

It is very important to assess the support services offered by each software company you are investigating. **Given that a new CMMS is uncharted territory for your staff, you should look for a CMMS service provider that will train your team, guaranteeing that your facility has a handle on all of the functions available through your new system.**

Each CMMS service provider offers a different way of getting support – some have online tutorials (which can be useful, but limit the ability of your staff to ask questions and cannot present multiple ways to learn a task), others send representatives to your facilities to walk you through these tools in person (highly effective but time-consuming).



We offer unlimited support to every client, including a help site, training videos, virtual classroom trainings and support via phone, email, or chat.

[Learn more](#)

Implementation Checklist

- How long should we expect implementation to take?
- Do they have a documented process for implementation?
- Do they have a good track record of successful implementations?
- Are there options for on-site vs. remote implementation?
- How much support will we have or need during implementation?

A good option can be online interactive training, as these sessions can be slotted in to a free hour instead of monopolizing an entire workday.

After you've learned the ropes of your CMMS, you may still run into bumps down the road. If you have problems or questions, you should be able to contact your service provider in a convenient manner – whether that be by phone, through email or via chat.

Ongoing Support

Brightly is beside you with personal service that's got your back no matter what:



Phone calls answered within 3 rings



Support emails answered within 1 hour



97% client satisfaction rate



Always speak to a human

We handled

100K

support cases
last year with a

99%

client support
satisfaction rate

What capabilities does the CMMS have?

There are a number of different CMMS softwares and providers out there, but they can vary wildly in their capabilities.

You want to look for a CMMS that your team, department and organization can grow with.

An all-in-one solution is always better than a one-off one.

Ask your provider if the CMMS has functionality around not just maintenance management but also:

- Enterprise asset management
- Inventory tracking
- Compliance and safety documentation and protocols

- Extensive analytics and reporting
- Energy management
- Event management

If you find a system that can expand as your business and efficiencies do, then you will benefit from having one system of record and intelligence to guide your operations. This also makes the learning curve much easier for your team when you can just add to your current system.

CMMS capabilities checklist

- Does the system offer more than just basic maintenance functionality?
- What do the reporting, analytics and insights look like?
- Do we have the availability to easily add functionality on to the platform?
- What's the full scope of solutions that they offer?



For the lifetime of your products we will support, train and help you. We are always just a call, chat or email away.

What integrations are available?

A CMMS that integrates with other operations management software is an ROI no-brainer. Connecting your essential operations and managing them in one centralized place greatly helps to streamline workflows, provide more thorough and accurate reporting, improve communication between departments and simplify capital planning.

Imagine gaining the visibility into how your maintenance, energy, events and capital planning operations work together. You would be more able to see true cost and time investments when operations overlap, as well as have the organization to provide better service. With operations connected, when an event or energy manager needs support from your maintenance team, they can easily create a work order that automates a maintenance work request in your CMMS. Both parties can see what work is needed and stay in the loop about what work has been completed.

And as for capital planning, wouldn't it be nice to have a capital plan that reflects your maintenance work, and maintenance work that reflects your capital plan?

A CMMS that integrates with these other operations systems allows for that kind of clean workflow, cohesion and visibility.

How credible is the company?

You also need to evaluate each software provider to make sure they are a safe bet. When you're looking to put your workflow and operations data into the hands of a third party, you want to be sure that company is trustworthy and dependable.

You should look for a company that is:

- Established and knowledgeable in the industry with a long-standing market presence
- Innovative and always improving their products

→ Trustworthy with many good reviews and client success stories

→ Focused on your organization's success

Lastly, the company you choose for your CMMS needs to prioritize data security. The benefits of the cloud are abundant – as long as the system is protected. Service providers should make regular updates to their software and incorporate new features that will keep your facility's information safe, in addition to backing up your data so nothing disappears. By pairing with a provider that stays on top of data security, you can adopt a CMMS that is both effective and safe.

[Learn more about our data security practices.](#)

Company checklist

- How long has the company been in business?
- How many clients do they support?
- Do they have client success stories or references?
- What are their data security practices?

Your Turn

We're passing the baton over to you and letting you run forward in your search for the best CMMS.

We hope our list of questions and checklists can help guide you to finding software that fits your goals and pushes your organization to the next level of operational excellence.

We're cheering you on!

About Brightly Software

Brightly, the global leader in intelligent asset management solutions, enables organizations to transform the performance of their assets. Brightly's sophisticated cloud-based platform leverages more than 20 years of data to deliver predictive insights that help users through the key phases of the entire asset lifecycle. More than 12,000 clients of every size worldwide depend on Brightly's complete suite of intuitive software – including CMMS, EAM, Strategic Asset Management, IoT Remote Monitoring, Sustainability and Community Engagement. Paired with award-winning training, support and consulting services, Brightly helps light the way to a bright future with smarter assets and sustainable communities. For more information, visit brightlysoftware.com

