

Business Management Systems
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PLM Basics: 10 Things to Know About PLM Implementation



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10 Things to Know About PLM Implementation

1. If You Want the “ROI” You Need to Make the “I”

It’s no secret that one of the primary draws to PLM is the measurable and proven ROI. When implementing PLM, however, it is easy to get caught up fantasizing about the “R” rather than focusing on the “I”. Implementing PLM is an investment like any other, and it requires time and effort as well as financing. Before committing to a PLM project, you should be certain that you have all the resources necessary to execute the implementation.

2. Employees May Be Reluctant to Change

People are creatures of habit—plain and simple. When it comes to implementing PLM, employees may have a “better the devil you know than the devil you don’t” attitude. Even though their daily tasks and routines may actually be making their jobs more difficult, the idea of restructuring how they work—even for the better--can be intimidating. Let your employees feel like they are “in on” the decision to implement PLM. They will

be more open to change if they feel as though it is not being imposed upon them. (See BMS’s white paper entitled “Getting Your Whole Team On Board With Your PLM Project” for more on how to gain employee support for PLM implementation.)

3. Current Processes Should Be Optimized Prior to Implementation

Implementing PLM without first optimizing your existing processes is like putting a bandage on a gaping wound—it may help stop the bleeding but it will leave a nasty scar if not properly tended to. Many PLM providers will also provide consultation services to help you implement best practices at your business before attempting to install a new software system. It will ultimately make your PLM implementation smoother and generate the maximum ROI.

4. All PLM Systems Are *Not* Created Equal

A PLM system cannot be pigeon-holed. Many PLM systems may include features of other systems such as ERP, PDM, or SCM. Before committing to a

system, make sure you are clear on exactly what is being offered and that it meets all of your business's requirements. But don't stress if you can't find everything you need in one system. Keep in mind that...

5. PLM Can Work in Conjunction with Other Programs

Many PLM systems have the capability to interface with other software programs that you are already using or may *want* to use as a complement to your PLM system. If that is important to your company, be sure to ask any potential PLM providers about their product's interfacing capabilities.

6. Is it *Just* PLM? Or is it *Your* PLM?

A PLM solution isn't one-size-fits-all. There may be a PLM system specifically designed for your industry, whether it's apparel, automotive or even food. Having your business's unique needs woven directly into your PLM system can make implementation that much smoother, and while there's no guarantee it will be the best fit for your business, you should strongly consider looking

into any industry-specific PLM systems that may exist for your industry in your search for the right PLM.

7. Choosing the Right PLM People

You will be working closely with your PLM provider during PLM implementation. For the most successful implementation, it will behoove you to choose a PLM provider with whom you feel you can have a good business relationship. A stressful relationship with your provider yields a stressful implementation.

8. Small Business Owners Consider: How Much Are Our Issues Costing Us?

While PLM can save time and money for companies of all types and sizes, there *is* such a thing as being too small for PLM. Not only may small start-ups not be financially ready to invest in PLM, their issues won't be worth as much as a company generating more in sales and accruing greater losses. While the benefits that PLM promises may be tantalizing, remember that you don't want to throw \$100 at a \$5 problem.

9. Do Your Research

Look for your PLM system the way you would a marriage partner—PLM will affect your everyday life similarly.

Research thoroughly, ask for referrals, have a lot of conversations—remember, a PLM provider doesn't want to work with a client that isn't a good fit any more than you want to purchase the wrong PLM system.

10. It's a Proven Technology

One of the most important things to know when implementing PLM is that this technology has been *proven* to save money and resources and speed time to market. It's a simple equation—if you invest the time, money and effort necessary for successful PLM implementation, you *will* reap the benefits.



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