



Firm foundations

We will often receive calls from prospects who are shopping for the perfect asset management solution. Their requirements include the latest auto ID technology, data base architecture, integration specs, security profiles, hardware compatibility and so on. These are undoubtedly important considerations and should be optimized in any purchase.

However, during these conversations, we make a point to ask if they have considered the process to be employed in creating and maintaining the asset data base. The number of prospects who either have not, or only casually, considered these issues is both remarkable and disappointing. Unfortunately, this oversight can easily doom the best intended product search.

It is not altogether surprising that administrative controls are overlooked. Today, most business processes have been automated for some time. Consequently, analysis focuses on differences in application software and technology when evaluating alternate solutions, assuming that the best technical solution is the right choice. While it is axiomatic that one should always purchase the best software, it is equally evident that the best software will fail without an adequate procedural foundation. Indeed the most common failure in implementing asset management systems is minimizing or ignoring administrative controls.

While we can't provide a comprehensive statement on conducting the analysis, we can share some observations gleaned over hundreds of implementations of asset management.

1. Get the right players involved early and get their buy-in.
2. Understand how the original data base will be created and make certain it is accurate. (Often this becomes the project's greatest cost.)
3. Make certain management will hold individuals accountable for the system's success.
4. Provide sufficient training.
5. Pick quality vendors who have domain expertise and who will work with you through implementation. They have been there before and should willingly share their experiences with you.

These are simply the highlights -- there are many others considerations. The point here can be summed up in one thought: Carefully analyzing your asset management process can't guarantee your project's success but not doing so will likely guarantee its failure.

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Tales from the Front is a periodic publication of Asset Systems, Inc. that is designed to provide users and prospective implementers' insight and perspective on current trends and issues in asset management.