The Pitfalls of Selecting Enterprise Software Solutions And How To Avoid Them

Survey Results and Seller's Guide

CRIONA

Unconventional Wisdom

Wise Bytes

Research Highlights

Our research clearly shows that there are shortcomings in the way companies buy and sell enterprise solutions in 2025. In summary, below are the main conclusions from the research, with our recommendations on how to avoid these pitfalls.

Context

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, technology takes centre stage. Whether it's streamlining processes, enhancing decision-making, driving revenue and profit or enabling new products, services and channels to market, software applications form the bedrock of most organizations. From predictive AI to generative AI and deep learning, the quest to harness the power of the cloud knows no bounds.

But amidst this digital revolution, are sellers optimizing their approach to selling software solutions?

The common approach to enterprise software selection has not changed much since the 1990s yet technology has shifted greatly: from perpetual licences installed on-premise, with annual bug fixes provided through an SMS agreement, towards short term (3-5 year) Software as a Service (SaaS) agreements, with constant development and upgrade for cloud-based applications.

60% of buyers reported regret for a software purchase made in the last 18 months, with significant financial impact on the company[1]

Since technology is seen as a significant enabler of business growth, it's vital that buyers get the selection of the correct seller and solution right first time. But with this level of regret, we asked the question: **"What are the main pitfalls of software selection?"** to figure out what's going wrong.

We invited participation from experienced software buyers and sellers from across the supply chain spectrum. Respondents from buyers represented manufacturing, logistics and retail sectors while sellers represented a wide array of supply chain related technologies. Respondents have experience of over 200 software evaluations from both the buyer and seller perspective, with the experience shared equally (there's no bias towards either buyers or sellers in the survey population).

From the results and our 30+ years of experience in selecting, buying, implementing and selling software solutions, we have developed strategies for buyers and sellers to avoid these pitfalls and improve the overall outcome for everyone.

74% of supply chain leaders view technology as key to growth[2]

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[1] Gartner Digital Markets' 2024 Tech Trends Survey "Why Software Buyers Experience Regret"

[2] Descartes 2025 Survey: "What Companies are Doing to Tackle Escalating Global Supply Chain Challenges"

Survey Conclusions

Most buyers fail to prepare sufficiently for change

84% Fail to address change readiness before or during the selection process with **15%** believing this is **Always** the case

80% Have a bias towards the current state and lack a vision for the future state

Evaluations focus on features & functions not outcomes or value

72% Have a bias towards features and functions, not outcomes. **22%** of Sellers see this **Always**

73% Fail to connect the solution capabilities to the value

Buyers don't dig deeply enough into solution capabilities or roadmap

80% Have a bias towards the current state and lack a vision for the future state

64% Fail to deep dive on the vendor capabilities and roadmap with **44%** of Sellers believe this is **Always** the case

The traditional evaluation approach has flaws

84% Believe a function/functions have a bias towards a specific vendor or solution type. **25%** of buyers see this **Always**

64% Fail to dig deep on the vendor capabilities and roadmap with **44%** of Sellers believing this is **Always** the case

52% Conduct evaluations at arm's length with tightly controlled interactions. **22%** of Sellers believe this is **Always** the case

52% Believe there is insufficient time to execute the evaluation

Note: All statistics quoted refer to the percentage of respondents stating "Often", "Mostly" or "Always" unless otherwise stated.

Most buyers fail to prepare sufficiently for change

Survey respondents say change readiness is often overlooked before or during the software selection. With McKinsey finding that 70% of transformations fail to deliver as expected, assessing the readiness for change would seem to be a critical success factor.

Our survey shows there is a tendency to focus on the current state rather than future state, suggesting that it's not just a lack of Change Readiness but also a lack of vision of what to change that is detracting from the success of software-based transformations.

These findings and conclusions were also supported by additional survey comments. It appears that buyers:

- often do not understand well enough, the problem they are trying to solve
- may have missed key steps in defining the objectives and the scope of the project
- have not "joined the dots" in aligning the business goals to transformation
- fail to harmonise the OKRs of each department to ensure functional and commercial alignment.

Criona Observations

Our findings also raise the question: are some buyers entering into software selection predominantly (but perhaps not intentionally) to put out fires rather than make significant step-changes in capability?

84%

Often, mostly or always fail to address **change readiness** prior to or during selection

(15% believe this is Always the case)

80%

Have a **bias towards current state** and **lack a vision** for the future state

Evaluations focus on features & functions not outcomes or value

With a bias towards features and functions, not outcomes, and a failure to connect the solution capabilities to the value, achieving the business case is at risk or left somewhat to chance.

Both buyers and sellers reported that, in a majority of cases, the evaluations they participated in focus more on features and functions of the software rather than business outcomes. There was disparity between sellers and buyers, with 100% of sellers believing that evaluations predominantly focus on features and functions, not outcomes: OFTEN (33.3%), MOSTLY (44.4%) or ALWAYS (22.2%), with 56% of buyers supporting this point of view.

If you consider too that there is a bias towards current process and a lack of vision on future state, it's more likely that evaluations default to the features and functions: this is the users' comfort zone.

According to Matthew Dixon and Ted McKenna in "The Jolt Effect", Outcome Uncertainty is the most intractable and hardest source of customer indecision (for a salesperson) to defeat. When the research shows that 72% of customers are not typically connecting Outcomes and Solution Capability during an evaluation, then it's understandable that Outcome Uncertainty is a real issue.

Avoiding uncertainty is human nature. If nothing else, it slows the pace and efficiency of decision making. Factor in that only 16% of buyers are thinking about Change Readiness prior to or during the evaluation and it's no surprise that the final buying decision drags on or leads to subsequent regrets.

73%

Often, mostly or always fail to **connect** the solution capabilities to the value

72%

Often, mostly or always have a bias towards features and functions, not **outcomes**

(**22%** of Sellers see this as **Always** the case)

Buyers don't dig deeply enough into solution capabilities or roadmap

Solution Capabilities

Focusing on current state and not delving deeply into seller capabilities or roadmap risks missing opportunities for greater value and enhanced performance.

By not digging deeply into capabilities: not asking both "can you do that?" and "**how** do you do that?", buyers often miss critical points of difference – or worse, specific ways of working that may be essential to your business – or essential to the adoption of the solution by users.

There is disparity between sellers and buyers with 77% of sellers believing it is ALWAYS (44%), MOSTLY (22%) or OFTEN (11%) the case that there is not sufficient examination of solution capabilities or roadmap, while 57% of buyers hold this view (ALWAYS, MOSTLY, OFTEN) and only 13% believing ALWAYS.

Criona Insights

Current state processes evolve based on the capability of the systems and people around them. If you are using Excel, your processes are limited to the capabilities and scale of Excel (and the creativity and spreadsheet skills of your users). Evaluating enterprise software against this benchmark fails to capitalise on the greater capabilities, power and speed of enterprise solutions. But this is not good enough in today's highly turbulent and rapidly changing business world. We need to be taking advantage of all possible performance gains.

Anecdotally, it's not uncommon for detailed software evaluations to conclude that multiple sellers can meet the buyer's needs. This may seem reassuring for the buyer – after all, it derisks the decision, but is it a reality? Probably not. Many software sellers invest multi-millions in R&D to create unique Intellectual Property (IP) - capabilities that they can protect with patents that will then set you apart from competitors. It's important that buyers understand this – and put a value to that difference.

80%

Have a **bias towards current state** and **lack a vision** for the future state

64%

Often, mostly or always fail to **deep dive** on the vendor capabilities and **roadmap**

(**44%** of **Sellers** believe this is Always the case)

Your Vision and the Future Roadmap

Focusing on current state – not a vision of the future state - and not delving deeply into roadmap risks missing opportunities for greater value and enhanced performance.

This also creates the risk of early obsolescence if selecting a seller who's not committed to relevant development for your business and sector.

Criona Insights

As we've already stated, software sellers invest multi-millions in R&D to develop IP that differentiates you from others. You are enabling a future world that is beyond today's capabilities. With composable solutions, SaaS based contracts and Cloud hosting, buyers can gain access to this IP much more readily than in the past. This is their opportunity to stay with or ahead of your competitors.

It's very unlikely that you will offer guarantees around your development roadmaps, but they are a view into your soul: your DNA – what makes you tick. The roadmap is a clear indication of your priorities. It is as close as a buyer will get to a commitment of where you intend to help move them forward. For example, if they are a manufacturer and all your development money is going into retail capabilities for the next 2 years then they'd better be comfortable that your current capabilities will be sufficient for their business for the next 2 to 3 years. But they also need to consider if you are likely to return to investing in their sector and their needs later – or will their sector's needs remain a lower priority than others. It's not just the roadmap, if you are acquisitive, then buyers will want to know if you are acquiring technology that will enhance their business and sector or another?

Where will your Executives' focus be: in their world or another?

If a buyer selects the right vendor for today but the wrong vendor for tomorrow then the value they'll generate from this transformation is limited – and they risk having to go back out to tender to augment capabilities or replace you entirely, if your roadmap is falling short in their sector or against your needs. This creates a risk to renewals at contract end.

80%

Have a **bias towards current state** and **lack a vision** for the future state

64%

Often, mostly or always fail to **deep dive** on the vendor capabilities and **roadmap**

(**44%** of **Sellers** believe this is Always the case)

The traditional evaluation approach has flaws

One or more functions or stakeholders shows a conscious or unconscious bias towards a specific seller or solution type with 84% stating this happens OFTEN, MOSTLY or ALWAYS.

Sellers believe this is a more common problem than buyers, with 100% of sellers stating it happens OFTEN (56%) and MOSTLY (44%) compared to 50% of buyers believing it happens OFTEN or MOSTLY. However, 25% of Buyers believe this ALWAYS happens.

Criona Insights

It's human nature to be comfortable with what you know, or to stick with an incumbent: "better the devil you know". It feels less risky. And in technology terms, there can be the belief that fewer sellers means fewer problems with integration: one vendor = sole responsibility for making systems talk to each other.

But what are the implications for the business? Potentially very significant: bias can drive a decision in favour of a solution that is not best for the business. It can present a huge change management mountain to climb, if the business functions feel a sub-standard solution is forced upon them. It can result in lower Return On Investment (ROI) and constraints on the business longer-term if the solution has some capability gaps, or shortcomings in the roadmap.

84%

Some functions have a **bias towards a specific vendor or solution type**

(25% of buyers believing this is Always the case)

The responses to questions of **control, openness, thoroughness and timeliness** of evaluation processes showed a relatively balanced view - with neither buyers or sellers suggesting these are as frequent pitfalls as those discussed earlier in this report.

- **Evaluations are OFTEN, MOSTLY or ALWAYS arms-length and tightly controlled** on 52% of occasions with **66%** of Sellers seeing it frequently (and buyers, 52%).
- **Not allowing sufficient time to execute a thorough evaluation**: Responses are divided on this with 52% seeing it happen OFTEN, MOSTLY or ALWAYS.

While respondents were divided on whether sufficient time is spent on evaluations, with a higher percentage (64%) believing evaluations don't dig deep enough, this suggests many evaluations prioritise the timeline over the depth of the evaluation, risking making the wrong decision. The time planned for evaluation was not highlighted as a significant concern. This is testimony to both buyers for your management of the process and sellers for your responsiveness to these structured approaches.

Criona Insights

Experience shows that sellers will always want unrestricted access to buyers, and buyers (particularly) will usually want a well-managed evaluation process – where it's not "open season" on Executive access. For the sellers who feel "preferred", they will usually be comfortable with a well-managed and controlled process. However, if a seller feels they are not leading the pack, then their desire will be for a more fluid and flexible engagement: so they can drive the conversation in their favour.

Buyers often experience internal and external pressure to move quicker than is feasible or desired for the correct outcomes. Internal pressure can come due to the resources tied up in the evaluation, or to start seeing improved business results sooner, not later. External pressure will come from sellers wishing to close the deal as early as possible to avoid the possibility of derailment.

Structured RFI/RFP processes (and a predefined timetable) are the norm. Combine this with a focus on features & functions rather than a more open and collaborative approach, and the result is that time can be managed more easily. This could explain why time may not be called out as a significant pitfall. That said, tight time constraints may have the unintended consequence of selecting a less suitable vendor.

52%

Conduct an arm's length evaluation **with tightly controlled interactions**

(**22%** of Sellers believe this is **Always** the case)

52%

Insufficient time to execute the evaluation

64%

Often, mostly or always fail to **dig deep** on the vendor capabilities and **roadmap**

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Unconventional Wisdom

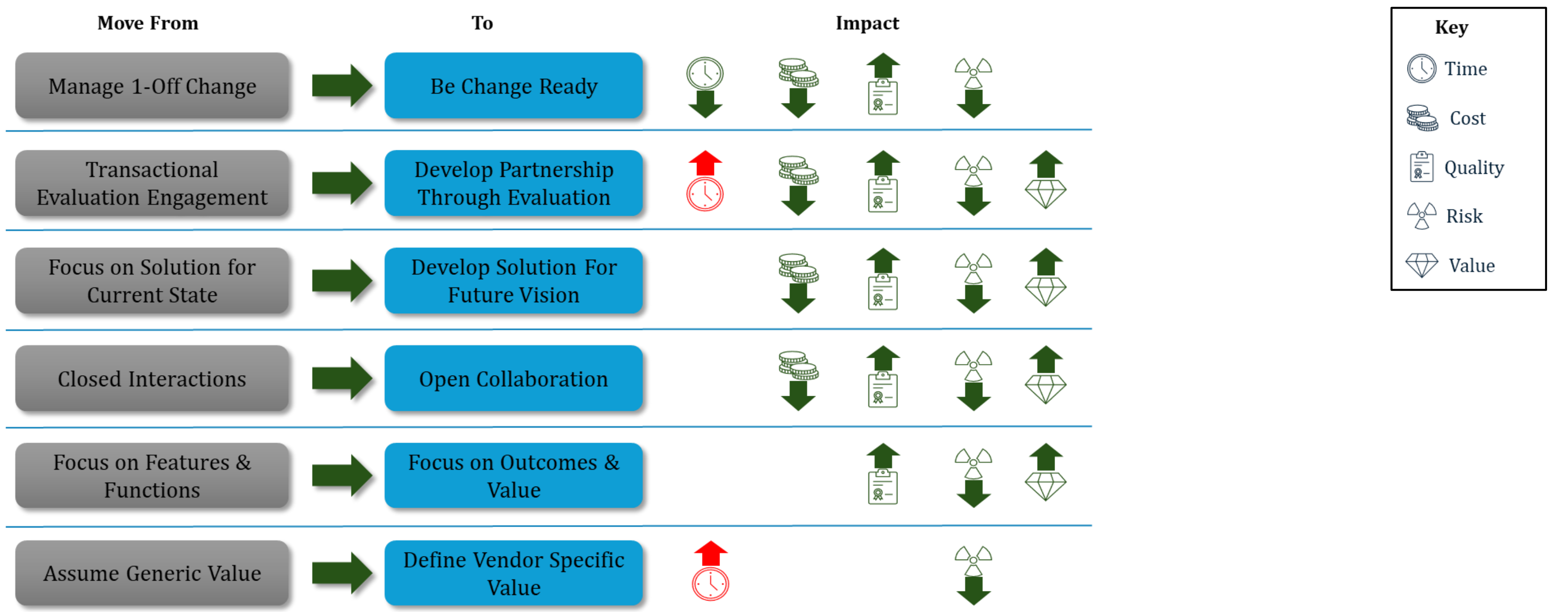
A New Way

Six Best Practice Principles

The survey results point to significant and prevalent pitfalls both in the preparation for and the execution of selection processes. The apparent high failure rate of transformations (McKinsey research) indicates that these investments carry risk. Our survey results, experience and the high levels of buyer regret (Gartner research) indicate that the traditional selection process is no longer adequate.

So, what can we take away from the survey that helps us avoid these pitfalls and increase the success rate of digital transformations? There's got to be a better way.

Based on our decades of experience and the specific survey insights, looking at the process from the perspective of the buyer, here we highlight 6 principles to underpin a better way of evaluating enterprise solutions, and the impact they have on the **time** taken to select a partner, the overall **cost**, the **quality** of the solution, the **risk** associated with the project and the resultant business **value**. As software sellers you should aim to support the buyer in following these 6 principles.



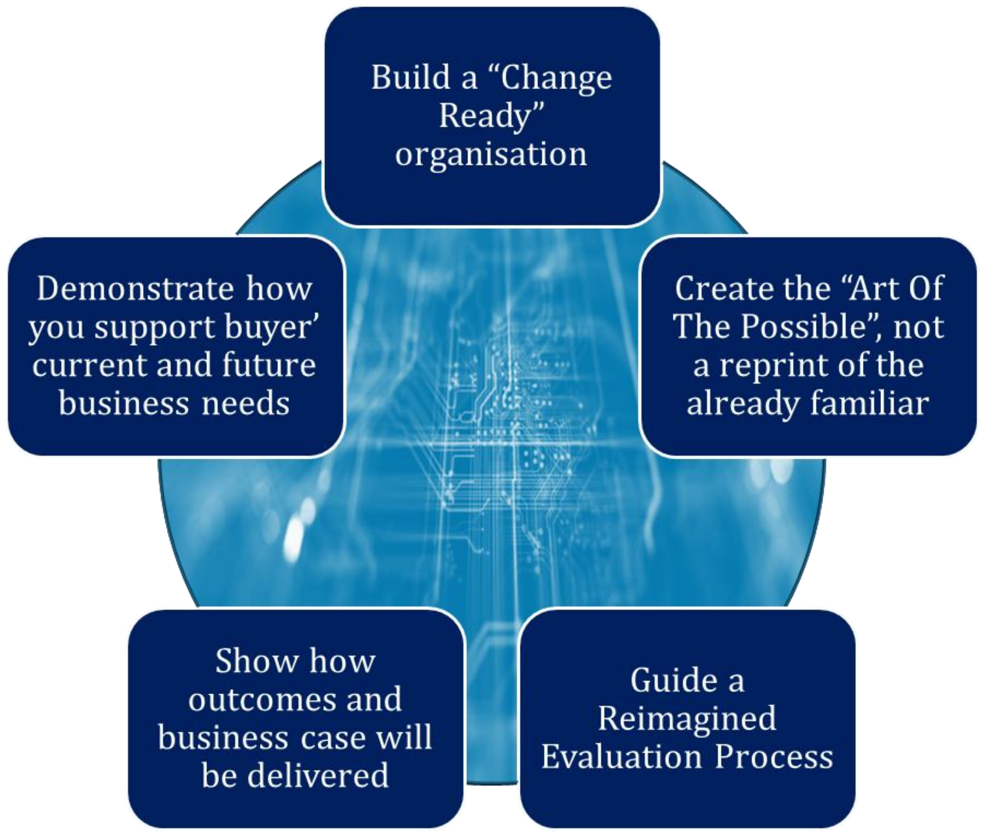
While most of the impact is positive, there are a couple of principles that could result in a slight increase in the time required to conduct evaluations in this way. We think this small downside is worth the significant upside in cost saving, risk reduction, improved quality and increased value and it's likely that the **overall deployment time would also be reduced as a result of this approach**.

Strategies for Sellers to manage or avoid the common pitfalls

These 6 principles are embedded within our 5 recommendations that will ensure the buyer's business is better prepared for change and the chosen solution partner is one where their contribution to the business outcomes and business case are understood; that they are a solution partner for now and the long-term. Following these 5 recommendations will also ensure that you, the solution provider, is chosen based on knowing your contribution to the buyer's business outcomes and business case; that you are a solution partner for the short and long term.

Benefits

- **Higher Win Rate**: Through building stronger relationship with customer from day 1
- **Higher Return On Investment:** Through identifying and deploying the unique and differentiated value-adding capabilities
- **Lower Risk:** By understanding the unique programme risks and mitigating specifically for them. By ensuring the transformation is a success through being *"Change Ready"*
- **Faster Implementation:** Through greater alignment on delivery needs and capabilities
- **Lower Total Cost of Ownership:** Favourable contracting and price negotiation through alignment of capabilities, while considering the long-term needs of the customer and how they can be met



Checklist for Sellers

Use this handy checklist to ensure your sales engagement gets off on the right track and stays on course throughout and beyond the contracting phase.

To Do		✓
1.	Support your prospect in preparing for change throughout the software evaluation and deployment	
2.	Design a future state vision – hand in hand with buyers	
3.	Connect business outcomes to solution capabilities	
4.	Demonstrate how your solution achieves buyer's needs & core capabilities (not features & functions)	
5.	Demonstrate your abilities to meet the buyer's current and future needs	
6.	Connect capabilities (current and future) to the value delivered	
7.	Demonstrate your long-term commitment to innovate and invest in the buyer's sector	
8.	Understand internal and external bias, and address the logic behind rational bias	
9.	Define how much value you will contribute to the business case	
10.	Execute an open and collaborative evaluation and selection process to maximise the value add you make as a seller	

Why do it differently?

1. Increase the chances of successful transformation by helping buyer be better prepared for change
2. Strengthen partnership and commitment with agreed contribution to the business outcomes
3. Strengthen negotiating position with confidence in your contribution to the ROI
4. Create a partnership for the long term by delivering results with lower risk and faster time to value

1. Build a Change Ready organization

Change Management is often thought of as "difficult". Leaders who want to drive change expect a level of resistance, or perhaps ambivalence from some, support and engagement from others. The traditional approach is to treat change as a discrete event, linked to a transformation, but in today's turbulent world, most businesses need to be agile and resilient, where Business As Usual means Change Is Usual. This, of course means you need agile and resilient individuals and teams with the resourcefulness to be able to see opportunities, and feel enabled to act on them.

Equip individuals and teams with the confidence, belief, and agency to act

This is **Change Ready:** equipping everyone with the confidence, belief, and agency to thrive through change; to get into action in the right way that drives the right outcomes – **before** a transformation is started. It's the foundation of teams who will use flexible technology and adaptive processes to enable an agile and resilient business.

This way we reduce the risk of messing up, we stay engaged and productive, we even grow productivity and engagement when we announce a change because now that change is seen as positive.

It's typical for software sellers to talk about a transformation being about People – Process – Technology. Invariably this will come up in the sales cycle at some point. It's here, at the superficial level, that most sellers will stop: with the acknowledgement of a need to look at the 3 aspects of transformation. Your average seller will then expect the buyer to do this for themselves or hire a business consultant to do this for them. But our experience is that business consultants focus on the transactional aspects of change: change management.

Sellers Should

- Engage your buyer in a meaningful conversation about the difference between Change Management and Change Readiness. (See: *Criona Model For Empowering Change*)
- Maintain focus on change management and change readiness when demonstrating your solutions technical abilities.
- When planning implementation with the buyer, ensure there is a solid Change Management structure in place and a budget for Change Readiness.

Benefits

- Buyer's team much more actively engaged / ready to move forward and participate in all phases
- Increases chance of successful deployment, on time and budget

2. Create the Art of the Possible, not a Reprint of the Already Familiar

Workshop the "art of the possible" with each vendor

Software sellers, help your buyers by pulling the conversation back from features and functions to understand expected business outcomes and capabilities (not forgetting core business or industry must-haves). Your buyers should help you to understand their operations, priorities and constraints. Workshop the "art of the possible" with them, where you can show how their business outcomes and processes could be achieved and supported by your solutions. But don't do this at the end of the selection process, do it at the beginning. Be aware that the buyer will be doing this with several sellers and there may be cross-contamination of their "needs" coming from other sellers' capabilities.

It's valid for buyers to ask the question: "should we define our 'requirements' around the solution capabilities or lead with our aspirations and see where the technology can take us?" If they have clear aspirations, then show buyers how you meet those aspirations. But don't be limited by this: present another way if you believe that's appropriate. Their aspirations may be great – and could advance their business considerably - but they may also not encompass what's possible. Show buyers how things could be and, from this, and help them to refine their transformation aspirations accordingly.

It's important to fully understand the value that the capabilities from the "art of the possible" will bring to the buyer's business. This will be addressed in the next section.

Sellers Should

- Understand the desired business outcomes and business priorities
- Workshop the "art of the possible", to define how the buyer's business outcomes and processes could be supported by your solutions
- Understand that the buyer's needs may iterate as they learn from each vendor
- Demonstrate how your solutions will meet their desired business outcomes. Be bold and show them how things could be, if you think there are alternatives to their approach.

Benefits

- Improves the solution fit to business needs
- Lowers risk of early obsolescence and therefore replacement: increasing the probability of contract renewal
- Begins building a lasting partnership early

3. Show how outcomes and business case will be delivered

Criona differentiates between Outcomes and Value

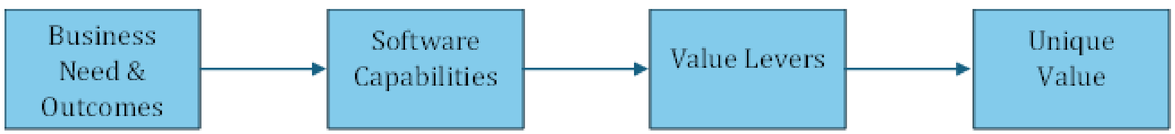
Outcomes are the business needs or business capabilities (not software features) that should be fulfilled by the chosen solution. The technical capability to deliver outcomes is enabled by the software features & functions.

Value is the quantification of the impact of solution capabilities (where solution is a process enabled by people and technology)

Features and functions enable the outcomes but beware too much emphasis on features & functions during the evaluation. Outcomes may be achieved in many ways and a feature and function focus can cloud that. Ask sellers to demonstrate how your outcomes will be realised. This may be complex and require a Proof of Concept (POC). This should be an investment that sellers are willing to make but be aware they may ask you to make a financial contribution to the POC effort. They could simply be testing your commitment to them so be prepared to resist this request.

Value is potentially different for each seller – demonstrate your contribution to the business case

Where each seller's capabilities seemingly match but the underlying technology and approach is different, then the value realized could differ from seller to seller. This is why it's important that you, as a seller, focus on capabilities to meet the buyer's needs/outcomes and then calculate the value that your specific capabilities will deliver.



Build the connection between business needs and outcomes, software capabilities and the value levers. Define how you will deliver value, especially where there is unique value – based on current capabilities and potentially from your roadmap. Clearly state the interdependencies and prerequisites of modular capabilities.

Sellers should:

- Demonstrate how your solutions help deliver business outcomes
- Connect business needs and outcomes, software capabilities and the value levers
- Specify how you will deliver value, especially where there is unique value
- Ensure all stakeholders understand the interdependencies and prerequisites of modular capabilities

Benefits

- Greater confidence in realizing the outcome and a more accurate ROI – happier buyer
- Greater understanding of the your unique offer, more informed decisions, less risk of regret

4. Determine how you support buyer’s current & future business needs

Selecting enterprise software is a decision that will almost certainly not be reassessed at the end of a 3-to-5-year SaaS contract – if the decision and the implementation are a success! Enterprise software solutions often require considerable change effort around process and people as well as significant effort to configure and deploy. The ROI could be 2-3 years after deployment so it’s not feasible to change the technology frequently.

Demonstrate your experience in and committed to investing in buyer’s sector

Thus, it’s important to think beyond today, and even beyond the 3-year horizon of the contract; to consider what the buyer’s business needs could be in 4 to 5 years and maybe beyond.

The buyer doesn’t need a watertight 10-year business strategy, let alone functional strategy. So how can you as a seller anticipate the buyer’s future technology needs? If you are already dedicated to that buyer’s sector then you are already predicting the technologies or the capabilities they will need in 5 years or more – it’s in your roadmap or your research and development team’s sightlines or it should be. Alternatively, it could be part of your acquisition strategy. Whilst you can’t reveal too much information about future development plans or acquisition targets, you can demonstrate a commitment to their industry sector.

Sellers should:

- Discuss what you can offer long-term as well as immediately, through the right partnership.
- Present your strategy, roadmap and M&A plans (as much as is possible)
- Demonstrate the realism and relevance of your vision and route to that vision
- Consider inviting the buyer to be part of your advisory board provided they fit the correct profile

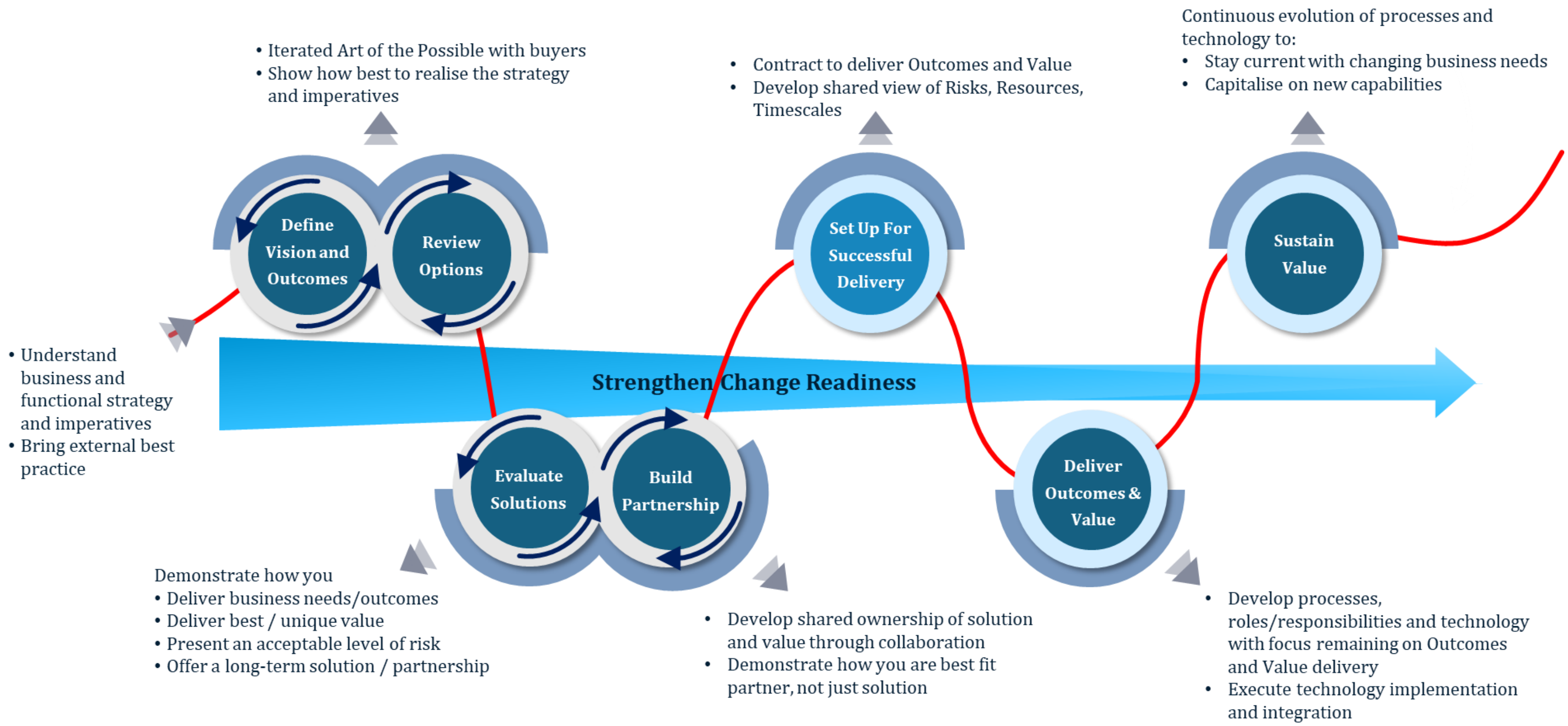
Benefits

- Delivers greater ROI and reduces Total Cost of Ownership in the long run which ensures longevity of the relationship
- Enhances the solution with input from industry leading customers

5. Reimagine the Evaluation Process

No evaluation will be without risk. But there are some fundamental things that can be done differently to improve on the traditional approach that's been flagged in this survey as still predominant.

Here is our 5-step process for successful evaluation and transition into value realisation. It encompasses the 4 key recommendations above and embodies the principles set out at the beginning of this section of the report. This process also addresses the underlying approach to an evaluation: moving from transactional and arms-length to a partnership building.



1. Collaborate Openly To Build A Partnership

Openly collaborate with buyers from the beginning

Start as you want to continue: set up an open, and collaborative engagement where both parties can find common ground and common purpose. Don't wait to build that relationship after the contract is signed and you move into the deployment phase. That time will be frenetic enough and imagine how much more constructive the contract negotiation and the project planning will if you've already spent the last 3 to 6 months (or longer) building a sense of shared responsibility, a collective view of realistic outcomes, a joint position on risk.

Don't be concerned about ceding ground in the contract negotiations: this is a partnership for the long term and both parties will thrive where they both feel equally invested in the outcome.

2. Manage Internal Bias

25% of Buyers believe there is ALWAYS inherent bias in the evaluation and decision-making process. And behavioural economics suggests they are correct. No one is immune from the biases that can lead to poor decision-making.

So, what can you do to counter bias?

1. Accept that there is likely to be bias: rational or irrational, intended or unintentional. It could be in your favour
2. Understand what that bias is and what's driving it
3. Address the logic around rational bias. Unfortunately there's little that can be done about irrational bias without calling it out, and that's risky in some circumstances. Get to know the politics of the buyer's company and act accordingly

3. Take advantage of any specialist advisor in software selection

Embrace the specialist selection partner

There are clear advantages for the buyer using an independent partner to assist with the evaluation. They should come with a proven methodology and a knowledge of the market. This can help counter the internal bias and ensure there's fair and reasonable process. They can become a strong advocate for sellers who, acting in good faith, what to participate in a more open and collaborative approach. They may even be able to assist with Change Readiness, examining **Needs**, **Value**, **Risk** and **Longevity**. See: *Criona Model For Empowering Sellers Of Enterprise Software*

4. Beyond the perceived leaders

Consider a diverse range of potential technology partners

The number of sellers that a buyer evaluate should depend on the number of players in the market, the maturity of solutions, the rate of innovation, the resources they have available and the urgency of the program. In our 2024 research "The Magic Quaderatics", (https://youtu.be/7upkQZaLvdA) we looked for year-on-year trends in sellers' positions in the Gartner Magic Quadrants (MQs), We found that some sellers do move between the quadrants quite considerably, year to year. Their position is just a snapshot in time: there's no obvious trend to their movements, in the MQs we examined. As a seller, be prepared to explain this movement.

As a minimum we recommend that buyers work with at least 2 or 3 *Leaders* and perhaps 1 or 2 *Challengers* (using Gartner's Magic Quadrant terminology). For this aspect of the evaluation the ability to execute is as important as completeness of vision. Often, the magic quadrant position – and any conversations with Gartner about who to engage with – are simply the door opener. Thereafter, the MQ position should not carry much weight, yet the opinions of Gartner Analysts probably will carry great weight. Be aware of what Gartner may be saying to your prospects and be prepared to address any potential negatives or risks they may raise – even if the buyer doesn't articulate those directly.

Sellers should:

- Carefully understand the buyer's expectations and process and be prepared to suggest a better way if it follows the traditional approach. Use this research to back up your suggestions.
- If the buyer is using an independent external advisor to help the buyer become change ready then get on board with that and show how you can support it. If not then recommend they do.
- Be aware of bias and treat it as objections to be handled.
- Be prepared to collaborate openly even if there are multiple sellers. In most cases that openness will be appreciated, and viewed as showing positive intent
- Be aware of the advice that may be given by market experts and be proactive in addressing any issues or risks that they may raise

Benefits

- Be better prepared for change = higher chance of success
- Greater understanding of cultural fit with buyers – partnering for the long term
- Higher quality, more achievable outcome & vision, with lower risk = happier customer
- Enables an environment of shared commitment to deliver outcomes and value = lower risk
- Clarity on your contribution to the outcomes and ROI
- Greater understanding of the unique value and differences you offer = better decision

Challenges to address in the New Way

We don't kid ourselves that this *New Way* is easy: we're challenging decades of traditional thinking and common practice but it's clear from the various survey results that there is a need for improvement. Here are some of those challenges you could face:

Asking buyers to do something different

Building confidence in openness and collaboration

Challenging the fear of giving away negotiating position

Making it okay to not share everything with every seller

Asking sellers to do something different

Contributing to buyer's vision

Collaborating while bidding

Demonstrating their contribution to outcomes - not features & functions

Calculating their unique value

Linking value and capabilities to outcomes

Cofidence in sharing strategy and roadmaps

Learning to communicate differently

Openness and building trust from Day 1

Workshopping rather than scripted demos

Achieving consensus on value, the contribution of capabilities and their prerequisites

An experienced independent partner can guide you through the different aspects of this *New Way* and help address the challenges that you may face.

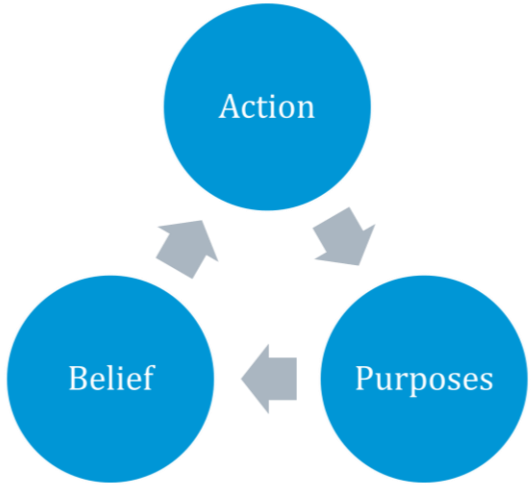
Additional Material

Criona Model For Empowering Change

So much of successful business transformation is about people: the leaders and their teams. It all starts with a vision, but that vision is worthless if it can't be delivered, if nobody believes in it or believes it's achievable.

At Criona we believe in 5 fundamental principles:

1. Change starts **before** a Digital Transformation is even conceived
2. Change doesn't start with learning new ways; it starts with the **BELIEF** that you can learn new ways
3. Individual, team, and business **PURPOSES** might not always align. Accept this and draw Purposes together, as closely as possible
4. Maximise agency to take **ACTION**
5. **BELIEF** in self, team and leaders with acceptance of multiple **PURPOSES** and agency for **ACTION** is a virtuous cycle



Successful Change is all about Belief, Purpose and Action

We are on a mission to help our clients achieve business outcomes that are **beyond usual**, through digital technology.

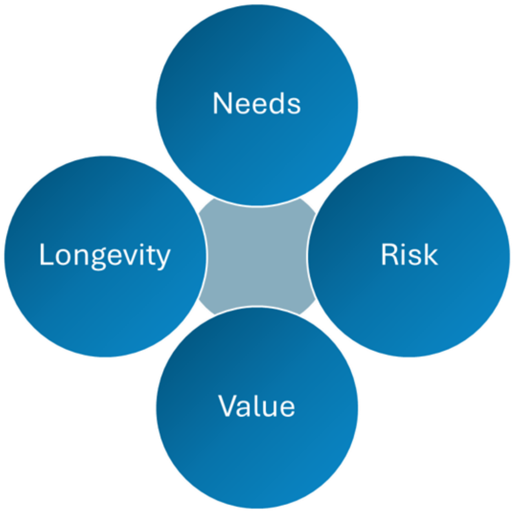
How? By incorporating **Change Readiness** into both the buyer and the seller side of the partnership.

A **Change Ready** organisation consists agile and resilient individuals and teams with the resourcefulness to be able to see opportunities and feel enabled and empowered to act on them. They turn BELIEF into ACTION.

What does that entail? Equipping everyone with the confidence, belief, and agency to thrive in a turbulent environment, to get into action in the right way that drives the right outcomes.

How do we do it? By building core capability to engage with the future business competently, confidently, and productively. By emphasising actions on change over reflections on change.

Criona Model For Empowering Sellers Of Enterprise Software



Criona empowers sellers through our Customer Centric Proposition Framework, presenting the 4 Key Dimensions particularly suited to today's rapid innovation cycles, cloud-based applications and SaaS contracts.

NEEDS: The business objectives & outcomes that you enable - not just the features and functions

VALUE: How you uniquely deliver value to help customers achieve their ROI targets and associated business KPIs

RISK: Addressing the specific risks the customer may perceive of both you and the transformation

LONGEVITY: Demonstrating how you support the customer's business in the future, as their objectives evolve and needs develop

How is this different to traditional approaches?

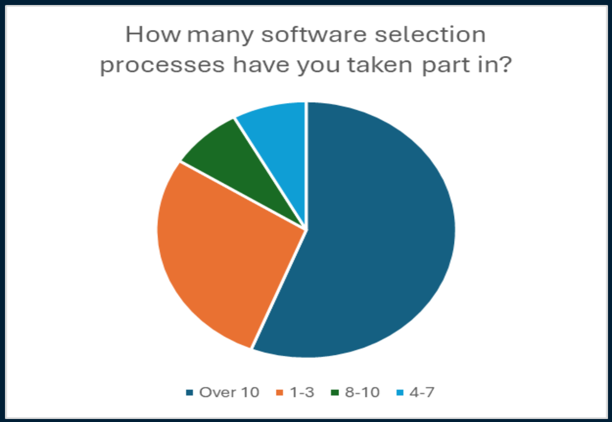
- Showing the customer how you are different - in ways they need to be considering
- Stronger focus on value and needs - elevating the conversation above features and functions
- Emphasises difference - avoids the perception that all sellers are the same
- Builds partnership from day 1, sharing goals and outcomes

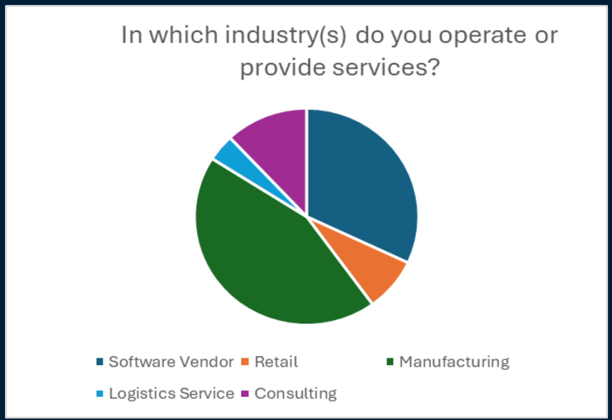
The results are clear:

- **Higher Return On Investment:** Through identifying and deploying the unique and differentiated value-adding capabilities.
- **Lower Risk:** By understanding the unique programme risks and mitigating specifically for them.
- **Faster Implementation:** Through greater alignment on delivery needs and capabilities.
- **Lower Total Cost of Ownership:** Favourable contracting and price negotiation through alignment of capabilities, while considering the long term needs of the customer and how they can be met over the longer term.

Criona's 2024 Pitfalls Survey was designed to understand the process and organizational challenges relating to selecting the right enterprise solutions particularly supporting the supply chain.

The survey was conducted online From October to December 2024 among 25 respondents representing over 200 software evaluations, from the U.K, US and Europe with businesses across multiple manufacturing, retail and logistics supply chains sectors, mostly operating globally. Buyers represented companies with revenues from \$300m to over \$2b. Sellers represented companies with revenues from \$300m-\$2b.





About Criona

From the Gaelic word "Crionna", meaning “wise”

At Criona, we apply **unconventional wisdom** in everything we do.

We don't follow the road most travelled; we challenge the accepted norm, bringing results that are beyond usual.

Our Mission is to help our clients achieve business outcomes that are **beyond usual**, through digital technology.

Whether you are buying and deploying digital capabilities or selling and delivering those technologies, our unrelenting client focus brings you value beyond **usual**, built on sustainable outcomes.

Our Team are industry experts, experienced in transformation: buying, selling and implementing enterprise software solutions. We’ve lived the process from all perspectives: we have been in your shoes – successfully delivering complex software purchases, sales and business transformations, enabled by digital technology.

We are committed manufacturing and supply chain and technology specialists with broad industry sector and best practice knowledge built over 30+ years.

CRIONA
Unconventional Wisdom

Wise Bytes is Criona’s platform for our points of view.

Stay up to date with the latest research and insights from Criona through our podcasts, blogs, publications and webinars on our website and LinkedIn

www.criona.co.uk

Contact us at: info@criona.co.uk