System selection

BY MICHAEL BURNS

FINDING THE RIGHT SOFTWARE TO FULFILL YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS

Customer survey roundup 2013

It's been seven years since we last asked you to tell us what you really think of your ERP and accounting system. That is far too long, especially given how much technology has changed. So we decided to revive the survey and add some new questions.

The survey was announced in the August 2013 edition of *CAmagazine* and can be viewed at camagazine.com/ERP customer13. Once again, it included questions about functionality as well as generic features. We broke down the responses based on tiers, as shown in the chart below.

Criteria – tiers	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Customer revenue	>$200M	$10M-$200M	<$10M
Customer employees	>500	50-500	<50
Licence fees	>$300K	$50K-$300K	<$50K
Annual fee for software as a service (SaaS)	>$75K	$10K-$75K	<$10K
Implementation fees: licence fees	>2:1	1:1-2:1	<1:1

The response base for Tier 1 and Tier 3 was not large enough to enable us to draw conclusions, but we were able to find some interesting data in the Tier 2 responses. In fact, the data show there have been improvements in every category between 2006 and 2013. In terms of generic features (see chart opposite), the greatest strides have been made in security (up by 32% over 2006), followed by reporting (+21%) and customizability (+18%). The rating for performance (added this year) was solid at 3.5 (out of a possible four). Ratings for workflow were also good, at 3.4. It's still early days for mobile applications, which explains why it was rated the lowest of all the categories at 2.7.

We want to acknowledge that there were a couple of vendors in particular — Multiview Financials and SYSPRO — that contributed to the improvements seen between 2006 and 2013. Multiview attained a near-perfect score of 3.9 for its financial system, while SYSPRO did very well with 3.7 for its distribution and manufacturing systems.

One respondent was especially pleased to have a system with built-in smarts: "From a finance and business intelligence perspective, it has made life so much easier. Data is readily and easily available." Another liked the flexibility of the system chosen as well as the ability to customize and create user-defined reports. Yet another noted that "the system is rock solid and has almost no downtime."

Unfortunately, however, not everyone was happy. Often, that had less to do with technical problems than with people issues. We saw comments such as, "Customer service is by far the worst I have ever dealt with." At the same time, some readers seemed quite pleased with their vendors and implementers. As one wrote, "The customer service is by far the best I have ever seen. They are always there for you." (Don't you wish all vendors were like this?)

As *CAmagazine* publishes its final issue, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my readers as well as the staff at the magazine for their support over the years. You can look for my regular surveys on ERP and other systems in the online version of the new *CPA Magazine*.

Generic feature ratings*	Tier 2		
	2013	2006	Change
Ease of use	3.5	3.1	13%
Flexibility	3.5	3.4	2%
Stability	3.6	3.3	8%
Security	3.6	2.7	32%
Documentation	3.1	2.8	10%
Reporting	3.3	2.7	21%
Customizability	3.5	3.0	18%
Performance	3.5		
Workflow	3.4		
Mobile applications	2.7		

*The possible responses were excellent (4), good (3), fair (2), poor (1) and N/A.

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