



What every  
**kitchen**  
**and bath dealer**  
should know about choosing  
**design software**

# About 20-20

20-20 is the world's leading provider of computer-aided design and sales software for the interior design industry. 20-20's software offers state-of-the-art design, specification, photo-realistic rendering and 3-D visualization for configurable products in the residential and commercial interior design markets. In addition, 20-20 offers proprietary end-to-end solutions, integrating the entire design, sales, supply chain and manufacturing processes of the industry. 20-20's solutions also include an integration platform for enterprise resource planning systems as well as computer-aided engineering and planning software tailored for the industry's manufacturers. 20-20's software is sold in more than 90 countries and used at over 25,000 points-of-sale worldwide.

# Introduction

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Purchasing software can be a daunting task. It is challenging to keep up with all the new technology providers and your changing business needs. How do you choose the software that best suits your business?

Even the best software is ineffective without the right data and support. So, it is crucial to look at the total package from the vendor. You'll want to buy from an established, reputable vendor that will be around to support you in the long-run. And at the end of the day, you want a relationship with the vendor where you are partners.

This booklet is an insider's guide to issues you should consider before buying software.

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# Section

# 1

## Your Needs

### Mapping Out Your Business

Mapping out your business will help identify your needs: Who are you buying software for...and why?

Chart how your business works. Mapping out your business process and resources (i.e. sales, design, etc.) can help identify areas of your business that can be most improved by software.

It may help to break your company into the following major functions:

1. **PRE-SALES** (prospecting, lead generation, etc.)
2. **SALES** (lead qualification, quoting/estimating, product presentations, etc.)
3. **DESIGN** (space, planning, product specification)
4. **CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION** (entering orders, etc.)
5. **PROJECT MANAGEMENT** (scheduling delivery, installation, etc.)
6. **POST-PROJECT** (customer follow-up, reorders, etc.)

Although the complexity of this task may vary depending on the size of your company, it is important to making a sound technological investment.

### Pinpointing Difficult Areas

Review your business sales process once you've mapped it out to identify problem areas. Look

out for areas that take up the most time and resources, that are difficult or which cause bottlenecks and errors.

Analyze each area of difficulty. Try to identify the root of a problem or symptom of a problem and document it. That will help you and potential software providers tailor a solution to your needs.

## Working Through the Affected Processes and People

Now, identify the specific processes and areas directly and indirectly connected to the areas of difficulty. For example, if one of your areas of difficulty is order entry, identify how a change in this process could affect accounting, sales reports or project management. Do these areas or individuals already use software that will need to communicate with a new technology solution? It is not necessarily your responsibility to solve these issues, but be aware of them and explain them to your potential software provider.

It is also important to look at the individual(s) at the core of the area. Personnel knowledge and technical skills vary from person to person and place to place. Before determining whether technology can improve performance, consider general technology acceptance and capability of the individual(s). How knowledgeable and comfortable is the individual(s) with computers, technology and software? Is/are the individual(s) capable and willing to use technology?

If your business is experiencing a particular problem, the solution isn't found merely through software in many cases. Look at your business process and how software can help the process.

Once you've considered the issues facing your business and its processes and people, you can begin your search for technology solutions to improve the way your company works.

# Section

# 2

## Evaluating Software Providers

As you begin your search for a technology solution, it is a good idea to involve everyone that will be affected by the new technology during the selection and decision process. This provides you with more than one point of view and increases the overall acceptance of the technology.

When shopping around for software, you'll quickly discover there are several providers stating that they can serve your business needs. Take your time when interviewing and selecting a software provider. An extra week of research may alleviate more significant issues down the road.

You need to brief the vendor about what features you are interested in seeing. Allow the vendor to demonstrate his solution, but by the end of his presentation you should feel like your specific requirements have been covered and your questions answered.

And as with any other major purchase—whether it be a car, appliances or software—always buy from a reputable vendor that will be around to support you in the long-run. Look at the total package the supplier offers.

How do you determine what makes a good total package? Here are some questions you should ask:

## General Software Provider Information

### ***Is the provider dedicated to the kitchen and bath industry?***

You don't want wiz-bang features that are useless to you. Companies with existing relationships and experience in the industry might have a better insight into industry anomalies than outside generic software providers. Thus, their features will be better suited to meet your needs. Ask the provider to explain their history and experience in the kitchen and bath industry. Are the software solutions being reviewed? Is the provider dedicated to the residential market? Or are they selling a generic solution that is used in several industries?

### ***Is the provider a well-established and stable company?***

How many years has the company been in business? How many offices does the company have? Are they located in your area?

### ***What is the company's reputation in the industry?***

Ask the provider to produce references that you can contact regarding their service and support. Contact other industry professionals and ask about the provider. Listen to their opinions. Though they're just opinions, many may be based on experiences with the provider.

### ***How large is the provider's current installed user-base for the product?***

A widely-used or industry-standard software package ensures that you will be able to use the platform as a long-term technology solution. And availability of training and support is much easier.

### ***What is the company's product pricing model?***

Consider the total cost of investment for the technology. Do not be discouraged at a higher first year price for a technology solution. Subsequent years may cost much less. Does the pricing model require you to renew your license annually? Does it require a one-time fee? Does the provider offer a leasing option? Does the provider offer an on-demand pricing option? Does the provider charge for software updates and upgrades? If so, ask how much the updates cost and often they occur.

Also factor in the cost you will incur upgrading your hardware to meet the software requirements.

As with any significant investment, always look at the over all value of the investment and payback as well as its impact on your company when comparing prices.

### ***What other software is available from the company?***

Even if you are currently only concentrating on design software, does the provider offer other software to handle sales management or order entry? Knowing this answer will allow you to expand your business in the future and integrate other applications and business process to an existing, familiar platform.

## **Training & Educational Support**

### ***Does the provider offer professional training on their products?***

Ask the vendor what training services they provide. Be cautious of a company that does not offer a formal training program on the products they develop, or which provides training via the programming staff. Programmers make very good developers but are often not the best instructors. Look out for software that doesn't require training. Most quality technology requires some form of training. See **Section 3: Software Selection Guidelines** for more details.

## **Customer & Technical Support**

### ***Does the provider offer both customer AND technical support?***

Access to helpful customer and technical support adds to the success of your software and implementation. A good customer support department can keep track of your account information, monitor your needs and suggest solutions for you and your business as you grow or scale back. Additionally, quick access to technical support will ultimately affect the total return on investment on your software purchase. The longer

your users wait for an answer to a question, the more money is lost. Ask the vendor to explain both of these areas of their business in detail. Follow-up questions are provided in **Section 3: Software Selection Guidelines**.

## Data

### *How complete is the provider's data offering?*

Ask the provider for a detailed list of all the manufacturers they support and for which provide catalog data. Many providers may offer highly-customized solutions for only a few specific manufacturers, while others will offer a wider variety of data from more manufacturers. As your company grows, do you plan to expand your product line offering? If so, you will need access to additional manufacturer data. Can the company provide you with that data?

# Section

# 3

## Software Selection Guidelines

The Internet is a great resource for finding information about software you are interested in. Downloading and reviewing product literature will provide you with enough information to build an evaluation guide to help you through the rest of your selection process. When building an evaluation guide consider the following:

### General Software Information

#### ***1. Is the software solution scalable?***

Software that is scalable means that it can grow with your business at a minimal cost. No one wants to invest time and money in software only to discover down the road that the business has outgrown the software.

#### ***2. How long is the installation process?***

Depending on the number of licenses you purchase and the time required to install the software, the installation process may take your business offline for some time. Ask for usual installation times and whether the vendor has best practices available for managing the installation and updating process of software and data.

#### ***3. Is the installation process easy to follow?***

The software installation must be easy to follow with clear instructions, especially if the

installation is the user's responsibility. Ask the vendor to perform a simple installation in front of you. Judge for yourself whether the process is easy.

#### ***4. Can the software be installed from or distributed via a network?***

This feature can save time depending on the number of licenses you own and how many times you are required to install software, data, patches, etc. Ask the vendor how an installation is performed. Simply putting the catalog data on a network to access is not a network installation. Ask if the software can be loaded onto a network and then funneled through to all the necessary computers. The goal is to avoid walking from computer to computer performing installations.

#### ***5. What are the compatible network platforms?***

With what network platforms does the vendor's technology operate? If you are planning to use a network installation, make sure the technology is compatible with your network configuration.

#### ***6. Does the vendor maintain backwards compatibility policies?***

Each time the vendor updates its software, does it ensure that the previous versions of the software are still compatible with the new release? If no attention is paid to backwards compatibility, issues and problems with archived information may come up.

#### ***7. What are the hardware requirements of the software being reviewed?***

Ask the vendor for a detailed list of hardware requirements for the product being reviewed. Do the hardware requirements match your existing computer setup?

## **Software & Data Distribution**

#### ***1. How often does the vendor distribute updated software, data, patches, etc.?***

Does the vendor have a regular distribution cycle or does the distribution pattern vary? Regular updates assure you are using the latest features and tools.

## ***2. How does the vendor distribute its software?***

Today, many software providers distribute their software via the Internet or email. If the vendor offers an Internet download of their software, ask them about the size of the information you are required to download. Do you have a high-speed Internet connection capable of downloading the required software in a reasonable amount of time? If you are unsure, contact your Internet provider and review the requirements with them to discover your options.

## **Training**

### ***1. What type of training is available for the software?***

Training is important to ensure the proper use of the software and the efficiency of its users. Training may be available directly from the software company, an authorized third-party educator, local vocational schools or colleges. Course formats may be live, online, regional, customized or self-paced. Training from the software vendor is often superior and more thorough due to the trainer's advanced knowledge of the software and their access to the development staff.

### ***2. How readily available is training?***

Find out how often and where training is conducted. How long will users have to wait after purchasing the software to receive training?

### ***3. What is the learning style of your employees?***

Discuss the various training options with the individual(s) that will be operating the software. The learning styles of people vary widely. For example, the learning style of a sales person could be very different from a designer or administrator. Do not push for a particular style of training.

### ***4. What is your budget for training?***

Your training options depend on the budget you allocate to it. If you plan to receive

training from the software provider at their site or via a regional site, ensure that you properly budget for travel expenses. Also keep in mind whether you'll follow training once or will you require ongoing training for you and your staff.

**5. Does the software price include training?**

Does the initial price of the software include any introductory training or will training be at an additional cost?

**6. How much training will you need to become productive?**

How many days of training are necessary to learn the basics of the product? The amount of training needed will depend on the knowledge and experience of the student combined with the complexity and breadth of the software.

**7. Are advanced training courses available?**

After receiving initial training on the software, are specialized courses offered to further your knowledge of the software product?

**8. What is the reputation of the vendor's training services?**

Are the vendor's training services considered highly-valuable and recognized in the industry? Ask the vendor for a list of satisfied students that have successfully completed training courses through the vendor's program.

**9. Does the vendor offer any special expertise in its training services?**

Often, receiving training from the vendor that develops the software will provide a higher level of knowledge, current developments and access to students. Ask the vendor if the training services are specialized or if they consider themselves experts in any specific areas of the software or industry.

## Customer Support

**1. How is technical support handled?**

The vendor should offer in-house technical support through an on-staff technical support

team. How many technical support professionals does the vendor have on staff?

## ***2. How can technical support be contacted?***

How do you want to be supported? Verify the ways which you can contact support for help. Reputable vendors offer a phone service. There are some vendors that offer email or online technical support as well.

## ***3. What are the hours of availability?***

If you can't get help when you need it, your only option may be to take the system down until you can get assistance. How available is technical support? What are the days and times of availability? Consider what time zone you are in. Make sure that the vendor can cover the entire time your employees will be working. For instance, technical support teams that shut down at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time may not work for West Coast companies.

## ***4. Does the vendor track performance? Are metrics available on service?***

Ask the vendor if their technical support staff tracks performance such as "first call resolution" call pickup, average callback time, average time of issue resolution, etc. Can the vendor provide you with reports of this performance and what specific metrics the vendor tracks?

## ***5. Does the technical support staff use the Internet?***

Most software companies today offer update patches, maintenance releases and new data updates via their Web site.

## ***6. Does the vendor publish regular newsletters and product announcements?***

How does the company communicate product notices, alerts and other information to its customers? Customer newsletters can provide technical tips and information about the software that can increase performance.

## ***7. Is technical documentation readily available?***

Does the vendor offer thorough user manuals and training/how-to guides? Ask to see examples for the specific product you are discussing. Does the vendor offer the same information online in case you are away from your materials?

## Data

Data, such as electronic catalogs, may be required to operate your application, especially for CAD based designing. Please note: how the data or manufacturer catalogs are delivered by a software vendor is affected to a large extent by the furniture manufacturer. As you discuss the issue of data, key questions to consider are:

### ***1. How readily available is design, specification and other data?***

How do you get access to data or additional data? Do you have to request data from the vendor each time you want to add a manufacturer? Are there additional costs for each manufacturer catalog? Is the data password protected? Access to additional data should be a simple, fast process.

### ***2. How accurate is the data?***

Ask the vendor detailed questions regarding the accuracy of their data. What QA processes do they have in place to ensure the highest possible accuracy? Mistakes in data can be costly to your business and the accuracy of data is of crucial importance.

### ***3. Is the data delivered in a timely fashion?***

Ask the vendor to explain the distribution process of their data and if they can assure timely and regular delivery of data.

### ***4. How advanced is the data?***

Data development and information progresses rapidly. Ask the vendor to explain their data and what it is composed of. Does the data contain 2D and 3D space planning symbols? Are the symbols "smart", that is do they hold additional information such as part numbers or available options?

### ***5. What data or manufacturers are available?***

What kind of catalogs are available? Who are the vendor's supporting manufacturers?

## Design Functionality

Issues related specifically to design software include:

### ***1. Is the user interface easy to understand and intuitive?***

Does the software look complicated at first glance? Are the functions organized so that novice users can find what they need easily? Can the interface be customized to fit a user's individual needs?

### ***2. Does the software allow designs to be shown in different views through multiple windows?***

Can floor plans and elevations be scaled to a user-defined scale? For convenience, you also want to be able to place any viewable item, list, floor plan and image in any available window in a multiple view.

### ***3. Does the software offer complete 2D drawing tools?***

A full set of 2D drawing tools can help designers enhance a floor plan or elevation with lines, running lines, squares, triangles, rectangles, arcs, circles, ellipses and more.

### ***4. Does the software contain design automation tools?***

Automating detailed, repetitive design tasks is essential to profitable design. Additionally, this is the most error-prone part of the design and specification process. Does the software include design automation tools?

### ***5. Does the software contain error-checking capabilities during both the design and specification process?***

Once a design is complete, it must be checked and rechecked before being handed over for order entry or installation. Does the software contain error-checking functionality?

Please note that most software providers do not guarantee their error checking utilities.

They should only be expected to detect common errors made when planning and cannot be expected to catch every error in a drawing. It is still recommended that each drawing be checked by human hand before the order is completed.

## Specification Functionality

Issues related specifically to specification software include:

### ***1. Does the software allow for pricing & discounting?***

The ability to accurately and quickly price and discount items is essential. Does the software allow for the quick and accurate discounting and pricing of furniture? Ask the vendor to demonstrate the discounting capabilities of the software. Can the software save discount setups for re-use at a later time?

### ***2. What types of reporting does the software create?***

Providing detailed, clear and easy-to-read reports to customers is critical to a project's success. Does the software provide reports for customers, installers and in-house archives?

## Sales/Quoting/Estimating Functionality

### ***1. Does the software offer quick pricing for quoting?***

Customers often want to know how much their projects will cost them. Does the software provide a quick pricing list to estimate these costs for easy quoting?

### ***2. Does the package offer a pricing section for both cost and sale prices?***

Throughout the sales and design process, it is important to keep track of list prices, cost prices and sales prices because it affects profit. Does the software include a cost/sale functionality that allows you to compare prices across the board?

## Presentation/Visualization Functionality

### ***1. Can the software create 3D renderings and presentations?***

Building custom presentations for customers may be important to closing a sale. Does the software allow you to create custom 3D renderings and presentations that can be presented to the customer?

## ***2. What level of technical ability is required?***

Building quality 3D visualizations and renderings can often require a significant amount of knowledge about 3D rendering. How easy is it for someone to build a 3D visualization in the software? Ask the vendor to produce a 3D visualization for you in-person.

## ***3. Are there any additional hardware requirements for rendering?***

Often, building 3D visualizations and renderings requires the purchase of upgrade video and other computer hardware. What requirements does the software provider have for additional hardware?

## ***4. How realistic do the visualizations need to be?***

The quality of a 3D rendering or visualization can vary greatly. How realistic do you need the output to be? Does the visualization need to have actual countertop and cabinet material detailing? Or is just the color enough? Are realistic lighting, shadowing and reflection important? The answer to these questions will affect the requirements you have for visualization and possibly the overall cost of the technology.

## **Integration Functionality**

### ***1. Does the software integrate with other software applications?***

You most likely have other software technology already implemented in your company. Many of the software providers in the industry can integrate with existing software such as Microsoft Office™, email systems, or accounting systems like QuickBooks. Ask the vendor to outline what software packages their technology can integrate with (i.e. import and export capabilities). Integrating with existing packages like these will allow you to get the most out of your total technology investment.

# Section

# 4

## Hardware Selection Guidelines

Your choice of computer hardware makes a difference in the overall productivity of your software and your employees. Before choosing a computer, ask about the **minimum as well as the recommended hardware configurations** for the software product you are buying and for upcoming releases. The requirements may increase as the software is enhanced over time.

Minimum requirements mean the software will run but will most likely not perform to your satisfaction or the satisfaction of your users. Additionally, you run the risk of having to replace or upgrade after a short time. Recommended requirements may be more expensive, but the improved performance will be worth the extra cost.

You will want to know the minimum and recommended requirements for the following computer components:

- Processor type
- Processor speed
- Amount of system memory
- Type of graphics card
- Hard disk size
- Minimum required screen resolution
- Operating system and version
- Additional hardware, such as modem or CD-ROM
- Ports such as a USB or parallel port for security device
- Internet connection speed
- Network connection

## Choosing a Computer

It is recommended you buy a reputable, brand-name computer with a good warranty. Why? Often, low-price or for-home computers are built with lower performing or slower components that might not meet the needs of your business applications.

Additionally, it is not recommended that you purchase refurbished computers unless they have been certified by the original manufacturer. The life cycle of a computer is shortening with increased advancements in computer technology. Refurbished computers are generally already 1-3 years-old at the time you will be purchasing them. Thus they are not as cost effective as you might think.

If you buy mail-order or over the Web, it is recommended that you contact the vendor and provide them with the hardware requirements you've gathered from potential software providers. This way the computer vendor can recommend the best configuration for your needs.

If you buy from a local company, they should be knowledgeable enough to solve hardware or configuration requests. Again, it is recommended that you bring in the computer specifications you have gathered from potential software providers to the local company. From the requirements, the company will be able to point you to the best configuration that fits your specific needs.

## Buying a Used Computer

Be sure to get specific information about the used computer before making a decision. See the list shown in the previous **Hardware Selection Guidelines** section. If the computer does not meet the recommended hardware requirements for the software product(s) you are currently reviewing, find out how much it will cost to upgrade it. It could cost more to buy and upgrade a second hand computer than to buy a brand-new computer. Make sure the software that comes with a computer can be transferred to a new owner. For many software packages, this is a violation of their software license agreement and you may end up paying much more than you ever intended to pay. Also, used computers may have been customized to meet the previous owner's needs. Those customizations may conflict with your needs for the computer.

# Section

# 5

## Implementing & Maintaining Your Software

To reap the maximum value from your technology investments, plan to dedicate a significant amount of time and resources (including you) to the areas of implementation, training, support and maintenance. Assuming a plug-and-run plan in which you simply purchase, install and begin using the software will likely lead to frustration, lost efficiency and lost profits.

### Implementation

Before the purchase of your software is complete, you should work with the software provider to develop an implementation plan that will best fit the specific needs of your business. Ideally, a full implementation plan should cover setup, installation, training and maintenance. However, to begin, you can outline only the setup and installation plan.

#### Setup

Before you begin installing the new software product, it is recommended that you ensure that all the computers, resources and support are prepared. Make sure additional computers, hardware or software purchased to operate with this product have arrived and are ready to be implemented. This could save a significant amount of time in having to repeat the same setup many times as hardware and software arrive.

Outline an implementation schedule. Estimate how long it will take to setup and install each

hardware or software component. This will help you determine an overall setup and installation time that will assist you in scheduling. Review your overall business schedule and determine the best time to implement the new product and any additional hardware or software involved. For example, if your business normally has an end-of-month rush for additional sales and order entry, do not schedule the setup and installation at that time. Instead, focus on a quieter period.

## **Installation**

It is important to take some time to develop an installation punch list to follow. Building this punch list will ensure that all systems are configured identically and that nothing will be missed during installation. Include not only a list of software to install, but also hardware and any special configurations required for the software or hardware.

Also, determine where and how you will be installing the new software product. Will you install the software separately on each individual computer? Will you install the software to the network and push it down to each computer? Will you be installing the software on computers with different configurations? Will you be installing the software all at once or on different computers over an extended period of time? All of these questions will help you begin to outline a solid installation plan and punch list.

If you find yourself with more questions than an installation plan, do not hesitate to contact your software vendor. They should be able to help you through the process and answer any questions you might have.

## **Training**

The best software in the industry is useless if users cannot work with it. Knowledgeable and professional training is one of the major factors in the success or failure of a software implementation. Installing and providing software to employees can help productivity, but there is a significant difference between understanding how a software application works and being a proficient user.

It is best to purchase and schedule training for your users at the time you purchase the software product. Due to the vendor's or your scheduling conflicts, training may not be immediately available. However, this is not always a bad thing. Having a week or two between the time the software is installed and training begins will allow individual(s) time to open the software and become familiar with the interface and how it reacts. When the users attend training, they will learn more about the software because it is already familiar.

### **Transitioning From Another System**

Transitioning from one software package to another can be difficult for users. The individual may quickly become frustrated with the new processes and commands. However, it is important to continue using the software as it was created to be used. To help ease this transition time, the software provider may offer a specific course on transitioning from your particular system to the new system.

### **Ongoing Training**

It is also important to remember that training is not a one-time event. Software and technology in general advance rapidly. Receiving training once on the basics of the software will not result in an expert user. Ongoing training in advanced topics, enhanced features and new benefits is crucial to the successful development of a software user.

## **Support**

During the software selection process, you asked several questions regarding technical and customer support for your product. Quality technical and customer support will be the confidence backbone of your users. If the software ever behaves unexpectedly or you cannot resolve an issue using the provided documentation, do not hesitate to contact technical support. A knowledgeable technical support professional can often help you resolve the problem on your first call. Since so many software products integrate with each other, it may be difficult for you to determine the cause of the problem. A technical support specialist can help you pinpoint the root of your problem. In fact, some of the leading software providers in the industry may provide support on those integrated products as well.

## Maintenance & Staying Up To Date

To get the maximum return on your investment, it is extremely important to remain up-to-date in several areas including data and technology. Consider how you plan to keep your software and data up-to-date.

### **Software**

Quality software is constantly being improved and enhanced to better meet the needs of the industry and your business. As these updates are made available, it is extremely important that you install them and remain on the latest version of the software. Many times technical support is contacted with a question or problem that is easily solved through the installation of an upgrade. Make sure you are receiving a customer newsletter if the company offers one and check their Web site frequently for updated information.

### **Data**

Manufacturers often change their catalog data on a regular basis. Changes to pricing, options and complete product additions are included in data updates critical to your users. Forgetting to update this information on a regular basis is risky for your software and your business. Based on the release schedule of your software provider, adopt a schedule for updating the catalog data throughout your business.

### **Plan to Update**

Developing a plan for keeping your software current is similar to the plan for distributing and installing new data. However, it is not guaranteed that software updates will be distributed on such a regular basis as data. So the plan for updating software may require some modification.

How will you distribute the data within your company? Will traveling sales professionals with the software be required to come into the office and update or can they update from the road? Will each individual be updated separately or will a network process update all individuals at the same time? Are there any current projects in process that will still need access to existing data before you update? All of these questions will help you build a distribution plan for data.



# Section

# 6

## Checklist of Questions to Ask

Follow this checklist to make sure you've asked the right questions before buying software for your business.

### Initial Research:

- Who are you buying software for?
- What is your business process?
- What areas within your process are the least efficient?
- Who will use the software?

### Evaluating Software Providers:

- Is the provider dedicated to the kitchen and bath industry?
- Is the provider a well-established and stable company?
- What is the company's reputation in the industry?
- How large is the provider's current installed user-base for the product?
- What is the company's product pricing model?
- What other software is available from the company?
- Does the provider offer professional training on their products?
- Does the provider offer both customer AND technical support?
- How complete is the provider's data offering?

## Software Selection Guidelines:

- Can the software expand with your business?
- How long is the installation process?
- Is the installation process easy to follow?
- How often is installation of software, data, patches, etc. required?
- How often does the vendor distribute updated software, data, patches, etc.?
- Can the software be installed from or distributed via a network?
- What are the compatible network platforms?
- Does the vendor maintain backwards compatibility policies?
- What are the hardware requirements of the software being reviewed?
- How does the vendor distribute its data and technology?
- What training is available?
- How readily available is training?
- What is the learning style of your employees?
- What is your budget for training?
- Does the software price include training?
- How much training will you need to become productive?
- Are advanced training courses available?
- What is the reputation of the vendor's training services?
- Does the vendor offer any special expertise in its training services?
- How is technical support handled?
- How can technical support be contacted?
- What are the hours of availability?
- Does the vendor track performance? Are metrics available on service?
- Does the vendor publish regular newsletters and product announcements?
- Does the technical support staff use the Internet?
- Is technical documentation readily available?
- How readily available is design, specification and other data?

- How accurate is the data?
- Is the data delivered in a timely fashion?
- How advanced is the data?
- Is the user interface easy to understand and intuitive?
- Does the software allow designs to be shown in different views through multiple windows?
- Does the software offer complete 2D drawing tools?
- Does the software contain design automation tools?
- Does the software contain error-checking capabilities during both the design and specification process?
- Does the software allow for pricing & discounting?
- What types of reporting does the software create?
- Does the software offer quick pricing for quoting?
- Does the package offer a pricing section for both cost and sale prices?
- Can the software create 3D renderings and presentations?
- What level of technical ability is required?
- Are there any additional hardware requirements for rendering?
- How realistic do the visualizations need to be?
- Does the software integrate with other products in the industry?

**Hardware Selection:**

- What are the minimum requirements required for the software?
- What are the recommended requirements?
- What operating system does the software run on?
- How much memory does it require to run?
- How much disk space is required?
- What processor speed is optimal?
- What port is required for security devices?
- What is the ideal internet connection speed?
- Is a network connection required?

Notes

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