GUIDE TO KICK-START YOUR BREWERY MANAGEMENT SOLUTION SELECTION PROCESS

10 key things you need to know before choosing a new brewery management solution
Brewery management solution – the secret ingredient

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An equally vital ingredient is the ability to streamline, simplify and automate business processes – from receiving raw materials to delivering products to customers. Streamlined processes help create the best-performing players in the beverage industry. This is where a state-of-the-art brewery management software solution comes in.

Brewery management solutions equal greater efficiency and profitability

The right solution will work out-of-the-box, support and automate your business processes, and boost your ability to carry out your processes in a fast and efficient way. A great brewery management solution will tie your value chain into one seamless, simple and efficient workflow. It will provide new, valuable real-time business insights that will increase speed and accuracy in your decision making.

Don’t fall behind the curve. Make sure you spend time and energy on selecting the right solution for your brewery. That’s the first critical step towards making a decisive, competitive difference in your market.

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Meeting challenges with the right tools

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When is it time to look for a new brewery solution?

Does your brewery management solution empower your business, or is it holding it back? The potential rewards of running your business on a state-of-the-art solution are huge. But when is it time to expand or replace your brewery’s current solution?

Assess your readiness

Replacing your legacy system is no trivial task. Many things need to be considered. However, relying on an old and outdated system for your business processes can be a drag on productivity and growth. Outdated systems often struggle with high operational risk, low levels of automation, poor data quality and a lack of legislative support.

But how do you know that it is the right time to expand or replace your legacy system? Assess your own situation by reflecting on the questionnaire to the right.

Assess your readiness – is it time for a new solution?

Ask yourself and your colleagues the questions below to find out if it’s time to look for a new management solution for your brewery.

• Do you use spreadsheets to compensate for lack of functionality?
• Do you have the same data or functionality replicated in multiple systems?
• Does your system need more and more workarounds and tweaking each year?
• Does your current system offer timely compliance with new regulations?
• Does your system restrict your business growth opportunities in terms of bringing new products to market, scalability, acquiring new companies or entering new markets?
• Are only a very limited number of staff familiar with your system?
• Is it difficult to integrate with other systems or data providers?
• Does the solution handle your distribution needs and preferred manufacturing strategies such as just-in-time, demand driven, quality or compliance initiatives?

If you find yourself answering ‘yes’ to most of these questions, your current solution is hindering your growth and you are likely to benefit from a new brewery management solution.

10 KEY THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE CHOOSING A NEW SOLUTION FOR YOUR BREWERY

Assess your readiness – is it time for a new solution?

How do you choose the right solution for your brewery business? Read on and learn from our 10-step guide.
Go for a brewery-specific turnkey solution

When looking for a new solution, you basically have three options: Build your own from scratch, customize a standard ERP solution to your needs, or choose an industry-specific solution developed, optimized and adapted to meet the specific needs of a brewer. Selecting a solution that is industry-specific means that you start creating value for your business faster. An industry-specific solution can offer you functionality and configuration that out-of-the-box matches your business processes and needs within finance, sales, distribution, production and quality control, as well as contract management, CRM and reporting.

Best practices included

Another benefit of an industry-specific solution is that it has been developed by a vendor with deep insight into your industry, and experience from a multitude of similar projects. This ensures that you get the best advisors and reduced project risk and costs – and that you can expect faster implementation. Industry-specific brewery management solutions are often built on industry best practices. This means that the software solution reflects a proven optimal and effective way to perform each business process in a brewery. This can have a great impact on your business. Running your brewery according to industry best practice will make your business more effective and competitive.

TCO – the actual cost

When buying a new brewery management solution, think about the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). TCO is used to calculate the total cost of purchasing (or, in the case of cloud computing, the cost of subscribing to) and operating a technology product or service over a period of time. TCO usually includes direct and indirect costs like application subscription or license fees, application design, configuration and implementation, administration and maintenance and training.

Avoid hidden costs - the iceberg that can sink your project

Although many companies factor TCO into the purchasing equation, they often underestimate the hidden costs of a new technology solution, which can result in negative consequences. For example, if you don’t have the resources needed to adequately maintain a solution, you may skip upgrades required to keep the solution running securely and at peak performance. Or if the sufficient time and expense needed to train employees on the new system is not included, potential productivity gains will be lost.

Always compare TCOs from competing solutions

Looking at the TCO gives you a strong starting point for making the right choice. When two solutions provide roughly equivalent benefits over a defined period of time, but have different types of costs associated with acquisition, maintenance and operation, a TCO comparison gives you a framework to better evaluate competing solutions, and helps you avoid hidden costs and unwanted surprises.
Avoid the risks of outdated, unsupported or random systems

When you buy a brewery management solution, you are not just buying a static product. You are actually forming a continuous relationship with the vendor – a relationship based on the trust that the vendor will continue to keep the software updated and supported for many years to come.

Be aware of the fact that many systems become money-machines for the vendor, and hence a millstone around the neck of the user - you. Oftentimes vendors will shift strategy or get acquired. In that case, their investment in their software might stop and the roadmap will end, leaving you with no more upgrades, enhancements or new functionality. Just imagine the consequences of lacking future support of new regulatory demands.

Benefit from endurance

If your joy in brewing great beer is more important to you than wrestling with technological challenges, you should look for a solution that is developed on a proven and future-proof technology from a vendor that can show a strategic, long-term focus on continuous research and product development.

Go for a solution from a vendor with the endurance to continually develop new and compelling functionality for your platform. Don't put your brewery at risk by choosing a platform that looks attractive today but might become outdated tomorrow.

It doesn't have to be lengthy

The risk of a potentially painful, lengthy, complex and risky implementation project can hold any brewery back from adopting a modern brewery management solution. A proper evaluation of implementation vendors' track records can be a good indicator of whether the implementation project will be a major change – but the process does not have to be long and tedious.

Go for a modern solution that stays modern

Replacing your old brewery management solution can be a daunting task. But your choice of system will determine what kind of implementation project you are about to face.

Will the implementation be fast and efficient?

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Check the average time of implementation

Lengthy deployments equal costly deployments. Our experience shows that the deployment time of real transformational brewery management solutions may vary up to as much as 30%. Your first step towards mitigating the risk of a lengthy and costly project is to focus on the average time of deployment of the solution you are looking at. You might be surprised.
Change is inevitable and happens fast. Today’s needs will be different from the ones you will have in 6 months. If you are serious about protecting your solution investment, flexibility and scalability, demand a deeper look.

Change is the only constant
The market changes and so does your business. If your software remains static, the result is a disparity between the way the solution was originally implemented and the new requirements of the business. This evolution continues until you get to the point where the processes in the system actually constrict the ability of users to efficiently run your business.

A state-of-the-art brewery management solution offers flexible business processes based on best practice and process tools such as workflow, which give you the ability to set up and change process flows within the system. This means your workflows can be changed as your preferences and requirements evolve.

Make sure your new brewery management solution is able to embrace both expected and unexpected changes, so your business processes maintain their flexibility and adaptability.

Bringing your excellence across borders and to new hubs
Are you considering expanding in your home market or going into new markets? Or have you already expanded and are looking for a way to consolidate your business? Either way, bringing operational excellence with you into an expansion is vital for its success.

When selecting a new brewery management solution, you need to consider an expansion scenario. Consider what kind of model you would like to implement in the short and long term and make sure that the solution you are considering supports your plans.

Depending on your needs, be sure that your solution supports a single-instance implementation, a multi-instance implementation and a hub-and-spoke implementation. This way you have maximum flexibility to operate in the future, no matter which path your business might take.

Start small. Or start big. But choose a system that allows you to start where it creates value. Be sure that you select a system that is born modular. Make sure you select a system that is born modular. If it is a new business process, tie several areas and processes together, or rethink your entire value chain. You can start small, or start big. Make sure it is your needs that determine your approach – not the design of the solution.

Beware of bricks that don’t fit
When you are looking for a modular solution, beware of the bricks that don’t fit. In some solutions, separate modules might have been written at different times by different programmers. The look and feel could be quite different between modules. Separate modules might have duplicate or redundant data, too.

So when you’re looking for your new brewery management solution, be sure to take a close look at the bricks – do they actually fit together?

Does the solution embrace change? Think long-term!

Is the solution modular?
How do you harvest the low hanging fruits first?
By choosing a solution that allows you to optimize your processes step by step.
Embrace flexible working

Mobile devices are becoming an important extension to the brewery management solution. The goal is to unlock workforce productivity with two distinct benefits of mobility devices. The first benefit is the mobile device’s enhanced user interface, featuring portability, high screen resolution and finger-swipe functionality that promotes productivity.

The second benefit is extending the reach of your solution to employees, partners and even customers, to when they need it, where they need it. The combination of mobile devices and brewery management solution empowers workers and makes it possible for them to engage more fully with their peers and customers.

Mobile brewery management solution delivers real-time access to business operations and can steadily increase productivity through lower transaction costs, improved cash flows, enhanced communication and better customer relations. While it is unlikely that mobile brewery management applications will altogether replace traditional desktop applications in the near future, they help meet the need for agility and flexibility in today’s changing business environment.

When looking for your new brewery management solution, be sure to ask for the level of mobility support the solution offers.

Corporate data can be used to provide insight, analysis and competitive advantage. Empower your decision making with real-time insights from dashboards, reports and analytics that bring you up to speed at a glance.

Go for a solution that offers both rich reporting options and integrates seamlessly with leading and proven Business Intelligence tools. This will help your brewery keep track of information and make that information accessible to employees, management and board members that need it – when they need it.

To realize better decision making, you should go for a solution that enables better decision making. Most businesses today have more data than they know what to do with. And getting to that data and then presenting it in a way that is useful for cogent analysis is two tasks that many organizations find difficult.

A state-of-the-art brewery management solution helps you pull data and create reports at the click of a button, access better info to remain ahead of the competition, and monitor past and present performances to make better informed decisions.

Don’t forget mobility

As the need for flexibility, speed and accuracy increases, access to your brewery management solution from a mobile device is no longer just a nice-to-have option.
Consider the strengths and weaknesses of cloud vs. on-premise

Are you faced with the dilemma of whether you should go for an on-premise solution or a cloud solution?

On-premise or cloud?

If you are considering a new brewery management solution for your brewery, chances are you are being bombarded with choices. As you consider your options, one of the most important decisions you will need to make is whether to select a cloud-based solution or one that’s installed locally.

The basic difference between on-premise and cloud is clear: on-premise solutions are installed locally on your company’s hardware and servers and then managed by your IT staff while cloud solutions – also called SaaS, or Software-as-a-Service – are provided as a service. With this type of deployment, a company’s brewery management solution and its associated data are managed centrally (in the internet “cloud”) by the software vendor and are accessed by customers using a web browser.

A few points to consider

What may not be so clear is that the type of deployment model you choose can have a significant impact across your business. Making the choice between on-premise and cloud must rely on the current and future situation of the company.

Here are a few points to consider:

• Ownership costs
• System performance and accessibility
• Deployment speed

Taking the time to consider how different deployment options will affect your company is critical. Look for a vendor that offers the competences to help you with both models - a vendor that knows the advantages and disadvantages of both deployment models.

Time for the litmus test

Now that you have narrowed down the technology options that would fit your particular needs and goals, it is time for the litmus test. Talk to a few of the references of the solution that has delivered projects that have successfully solved challenges of other breweries similar to yours.

The only way to find this out is by speaking with reference clients. Talk to at least three references and ask them what went right, what went wrong and what they might have done differently.

If a vendor cannot provide at least three verifiable, happy customers, they may not have the experience you need.

Ask for references
A state-of-the-art brewery management solution can provide a host of advantages for your business. The solution is your information backbone and reaches into all areas of your business and value chain. Replacing a legacy ERP or brewery management solution can open unlimited business opportunities. The cornerstone of this effort is finding the right solution and partner. Your long-term business strategy will form the basis of the criteria for your selection of a solution. Your solution provider must be part of your vision. It is their duty to help you get there by helping you make sure your next solution will be your last one you ever need.

**CONCLUSION**

Drink-IT is a complete and easy-to-use brewery management solution covering your entire value chain. Drink-IT simplifies your business, makes your processes more effective, and makes your business more profitable. The solution powers more than 120 well-run brewery businesses, ranging from mid-size companies to the world’s largest. It has been implemented in more than 50 countries.

Meet your unique challenges

Drink-IT addresses all the unique challenges of the brewery industry, including the need for detailed profitability analysis, integrated production and quality management, order fulfillment and customer service. With Drink-IT you will be able to manage your pricing and discounts professionally and make it easy to handle EMCS. Drink-IT also offers smooth MES integration and makes it easy for you to comply with regulatory obligations.

**Power your business with Drink-IT**

Go for a reliable and future-proof solution

Drink-IT is built on the world’s most reliable and advanced ERP-platform, Microsoft Dynamics NAV. With Drink-IT you can efficiently integrate your entire value chain with one end-to-end business management solution. The solution is modular and lets you optimize a single business process, tie several areas and processes together or rethink your entire value chain. Start small with Drink-IT and grow with us – or start big, if that’s what you need.

Want to learn more?

Read more about Drink-IT here: www.drink-it.com
Make beverage a better business

Drink-IT is a brewery management solution powering hundreds of breweries across the world. Built on cutting edge Microsoft technology, this scalable and flexible solution is used by large multinationals and other successful brewers to manage any aspect of their business. Learn more about Drink-IT here: www.drink-it.com