



WHEN to UPGRADE
YOUR CMMS/EAM
and WHY

**WHITE
PAPER**

CHAMPS



When to Upgrade Your CMMS/EAM and Why

Team evaluations with clearly stated objectives lead to project success

Advancements in technology happen so quickly that most of us can barely keep up. Computer processing speed, performance gains, and data capacity are just a few of the functional aspects of technology that seem to change at lightning speed. Equally, software solutions follow a similar pattern. Sophisticated programming tools and flexible deployment options now allow developers the ability to continually improve applications with releases available practically on demand. While these facts may represent opportunities for an organization, they also offer their own level of challenges for companies who are comfortable with their current technology and software applications. The thought of changing those for any reason can send shockwaves throughout an organization. But, in order to remain competitive with efficient operations that minimize cost, companies must deal with the decision to upgrade their systems.

The legacy letdown

For those within a company's maintenance organization, this pertains specifically to their CMMS/EAM software. What once was probably 'the best of the best' may now be a worn and dated application. Legacy systems have the tendency to provide a certain level of comfort due to familiarity for users; but for the business, they can become a drain on efficiency. Costs are typically higher to operate these systems because of dated technology platforms and a greater dependency on IT support. On top of that, a company is missing out on the functional features

available in the newest release of their CMMS/EAM solution. In most cases, these features are largely based on existing user input who help influence the functionality of a release. When a company continues to run a dated version of the software, there is often a fairly wide functionality gap between that version and the latest release of the software system. As a result, they are missing aspects of the application that could help them manage their maintenance and work processes more effectively.

Although the newest release of a CMMS/EAM may offer some very powerful features, it is still important to carefully evaluate why the upgrade is important, how it should happen and when it should take place. This requires a focused effort that involves the right team capable of making an upgrade decision. A balance of operations, maintenance, finance and IT personnel should have input and participate on the evaluation team. This way, one group doesn't dominate the project which can often lead to animosity and hinder project success.

An honest assessment



The evaluation period should take into consideration the primary upgrade objectives for the organization. What will be gained from the newest release? What specific functionality will enhance work processes? What is the impact on IT? What technology opportunities does it represent?



How will the user community adapt to the new system? One way to answer these questions is to compare the existing CMMS/EAM against the available features in a new release. By developing a matrix, the evaluation team can easily see what the system offers now and what will potentially be gained from an upgrade. The matrix should also include a technology comparison of the organization's current infrastructure with technological options designed for operational efficiency.

In going through this evaluation process, a company will normally realize there are tremendous advantages to be gained from the upgrade. Factors that often come into play include consideration for deeper system functionality, faster processing of large amounts of data, less dependency on hardware, and lower cost of ownership. Deployment options should also be assessed to determine what is best for the organization. With real-time updates to the CMMS/EAM in web-architected environments, a company can realize significant cost savings as compared to previous system maintenance and support models.

Additionally, regulatory compliance issues may influence the need for upgrading the CMMS/EAM. Those in the food/beverage, chemicals, petrochemicals, and oil/gas industries already know how critical it is to maintain asset integrity and meet compliance mandates. These companies need to be sure their CMMS/EAM is capable of providing the proper tracking, management and reporting required for regulatory compliance.

A community with a voice

Don't forsake the needs of your user community. Forcing an upgrade on this group can be risky. Ease of

Upgrade Value

- Feature-rich functionality for operational efficiency
- Work process management and real-time reporting gains
- Lower cost of ownership with less IT infrastructure and support dependency

use remains a prevailing factor in gaining user adoption. System upgrade projects should also take this into consideration as a key element toward project success. Equally important is ensuring the upgrade matches your work processes. This assumes that your current processes are well structured and efficient. If they are not, this is an excellent time to evaluate them for improvement opportunities. Throwing a CMMS/EAM upgrade against a poorly structured work process will not deliver the type results you want.

The evaluation process is also a good time to review your reporting capabilities. Some companies rely on standard reporting options offered by their CMMS/EAM while others have custom developed reports or use a report writer. The key is being able to pull useful data from your system and display it in meaningful graphics. Key performance indicators in dashboard views are a beneficial way to instantly see how areas are performing. Oftentimes, an upgrade in reporting functions takes place concurrently with the overall system upgrade. When these occur together, your organization benefits from the new CMMS/EAM release and the ability to easily evaluate system data for critical decision making.



Finally, system support should be considered when evaluating the upgrade. Operating on the latest release of your CMMS/EAM means the support available to you is based on the same version you are running. This allows your vendor to quickly and easily address any issues that may arise. Otherwise, it may become an increasing challenge to find knowledgeable support resources if you continue to run an older, outdated version of the system. And, depending on your CMMS/EAM deployment platform, support may be available in real time. The key is to have a vendor who will serve as your long-term solution partner.

After the evaluations have been completed and your team is in agreement to upgrade your CMMS/EAM, an implementation schedule should be developed. This will specify all the details for data and technology migration; training; and the 'go live' target date. Companies will need to determine when this can take place in order to minimize or avoid disruptions to production and operations. The evaluation team should work directly with the CMMS/EAM vendor to develop an implementation plan that works best for the organization. The inclusion of roles and responsibilities, project milestones, and target dates will help ensure that all participants remain focused on the stated objectives for achieving project success.

Reaping the benefits

Even though advances in technology may be occurring at breakneck speed, it isn't difficult to jump on board to take advantage of the benefits. Upgrading your CMMS/EAM is going to result in a more robust system for your maintenance management needs. Plus, depending on the method of deployment, your on-going system maintenance and support costs will decrease while your work management efficiencies increase. ■

About CHAMPS

For more than four decades, CHAMPS Software, Inc. has been developing and delivering Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) and Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) software solutions that enable enterprises of varying size, sophistication, and industry to optimize the life cycles of their capital assets. CHAMPS CMMS/EAM continuously improves operations by incorporating industry best practices with the flexibility inherent in component based web architected solutions.

Regardless of organizational size or geographical layout, CHAMPS CMMS/EAM is purposely scalable to manage business processes for asset optimization across the enterprise. Efficient acquisition, maintenance, repairs, replacement or salvaging of these critical assets result in operational excellence, leading to decreased cost and increased profits.

CHAMPS Business Intelligence Software specializes in turning your CMMS/EAM data into meaningful and actionable information. Whether your data is in one system or multiple systems with different databases – we provide a layer of Business Intelligence that allows you to see across all these systems in a matter of seconds. As a result, you will be able to make better, informed decisions to maximize your profits and reduce your costs.

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