Software Audit for Schools
How to get the most value out of your tech

There are an abundance of edtech suppliers at your disposal. In the past five years the industry has boomed and now, software purchased three years ago may seem out of date, you may realise you've purchased too hastily and now have overlapping services and can't afford new tech, or you're a first time tech buyer and don't know where to start or what to ask.

To help you cover an internal audit of existing software or to help you make the right purchasing decision for your next software provider, we've come up with a checklist to help you realise your IT vision.

Does it solve your pain point? ☑

It's as easy to be in awe of new software that's claiming to be life changing when it hits the market, as it is to become complacent when you've been using the same software for years. So whether you're thinking about buying new tech or just assessing what you've got, make sure the software in question is solving a real pain point - if it isn't, it's only going to be a drain of money, time and energy.

Is it accessible? Can/do people use it? ☑

For an internal audit, ask yourself if the intended users have the means to access the software easily at school, from home and on the go (if necessary). If yes, are they using the software and if they aren't, why not?

If you can't provide users easy access to a new software, there's no point in implementing it as results will be inconsistent and you won't be getting value for money. Accessibility for users should be top of your list when looking into new products. If students, parents or teachers can't use the technology, you're never going to see value in it.

Is it easy to use? ☑

Edtech software needs to be easy to use, especially if it's a whole-school system as you will always have varying levels of technical capabilities.

If you're looking at existing software and finding that it isn't as intuitive or easy as you first thought, contact your supplier for additional training, or consider moving to an alternative altogether - if users can't navigate the software, you aren't going to get the results you want and end users will become disgruntled.

For prospective buyers, market research is your best bet here - speak to people who currently use the software, look for case studies and testimonials or ask for a tour of the product and how it works so you can see for yourself.

Do they offer support? ☑

Is your internal IT team acting as the support team for the software? If your supplier offers support, is this at an additional cost, does it apply to all users and what is the standard of support and SLAs offered? Technology is of course going to require IT help however, when working in edtech, suppliers need to understand the importance of quick turnarounds - especially when providing whole-school software which schools depend on.

Technology is meant to streamline processes in your school so implementing a new software that only adds to your IT team's workload defeats the object. It's also ineffective as your school's IT department aren't going to be best suited to provide a solution, your supplier is.

Query your software supplier's support package, find out who has access to it, ask for their average customer satisfaction rating and how long users typically wait for a response, and most importantly, see if the support package incurs any additional costs.

Is sufficient training provided? ☑

In order to ensure engagement and uptake of the product is high, training from the provider should be included as they're best placed to ensure staff comprehension

If you are already tied into a software licence and feel as though new users aren't well versed, check to see if they provide online resources that can assist in training, additional sessions or even CPD classes where they train staff members to become experts who can cascade key messages and provide effective training to colleagues.

Can you see the results? ☑

At the beginning of the implementation of any piece of software you should set yourself KPIs that you can use to measure its success and check in regularly to see if you can see any improvement.

If you have already implemented a piece of technology and want to see how well it's performing but don't have set KPIs, go back to your initial challenge or objective to see how much of the pressure and stress surrounding it has eased and speak to users to analyse its success.

What's their reputation like? ☑

When researching a new product, the best way to find out about how successful it is, is to see if they publicise any success stories. Speak to neighbouring schools who are already using the software and check to see if the company have been accredited either through partnerships or award wins. These will generally give you a sense as to whether or not the company in question is reputable and if they can deliver on what they've promised you.

Are they reliable and scaleable? ☑

This is applicable to both those looking to purchase a new product and those who are doing an overhaul of current technology. Questions to bear in mind are what does their uptime look like and how do they react when they do suffer a hit to the system? Are they honest and do they communicate frequently, or do they hide away? Remember, these things are bound to happen when working with technology and how they deal in a crisis says a lot about a company.

What's more, take into account the current size of the company, and if they scale, will they be able to be provide the same level of service currently given?

Can you afford it and is it worth it? ☑

Whether or not you actually implement the software obviously comes down to money. If the software is ticking all the boxes, looking at budget is your next step. Figure out where you can pull money from - will this benefit your pupil premium students, can you use money from this pot?

After following this audit, have you found you're wasting money on software that has similar features to one you're using, or on a tool that doesn't meet your needs? The next steps are to think about how you can better spend this money.

When looking at new software, always shop around and look at competitor prices, but remember if there are two software companies who do the same thing and one is significantly cheaper, ask yourself **why?**

Most importantly, ask yourself if the software is worth the cost, does it do more than you expected and will it help to improve other areas of school as well as your current objective? Is it a reputable company? Are your school body and parents requesting it? Factor all of this in, and you'll make the right purchasing decision.