



Digitech Systems White Paper

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Reseller Considerations for Choosing an ECM Vendor

Want to find the best Enterprise Content Management (ECM) vendor and reseller partner? This white paper outlines nine criteria that will help you distinguish superior ECM solutions and identify the best reseller opportunities. Keep reading so you can make the smartest partnership decision.

Nine Criteria to Help You Find the Best ECM Reseller Partner

Finding the best ECM reseller opportunity isn't just about money and profit margins. Resellers need an ECM vendor that is also a trusted business partner. They need a partner that is a team-player and will help grow their business. Nobody wants to sign on the dotted line and six months later find out they made the wrong decision. These criteria will help you evaluate vendors and highlight what to look for in a dependable partner and reseller program. Plus, four bonus criteria will help you identify the best cloud ECM solutions and vendors.

1. A Trusted Partner



Strategic partnerships, certifications and a strong company foundation are all important differentiators that set apart reputable ECM vendors with superior products and quality reseller programs. You'll want a vendor that has established strong partnerships with key industry players, analyst firms, technology companies and scanner manufacturers. Vendors that align themselves and their products with other companies typically offer a network of reseller resources as well as complementary technologies that can strengthen the value of your offerings. Additionally, awards and certifications, like Certified Microsoft Partners, can also distinguish vendors that are experts in their field. Finally, don't overlook the company's goals and values. Successful partnerships depend on the ability of both parties to work together. Investigate the vendor's company culture, and make sure your partner is a value-based organization that operates with integrity. When things go wrong a trusted partner will make all the difference.

2. Years of Experience

Look for a vendor that has at least ten or more years of experience offering ECM solutions. More experienced vendors better understand the technology, offer superior product functionality and adhere to higher standards of excellence. If you want to sell cloud ECM, you'll also want to pay attention to years of cloud experience. While the popularity of cloud ECM is exploding, the technology is well established. Make sure your partner is a seasoned leader in cloud technology and not a follower trying to quickly stamp out a cloud model in order to ride the coattails of the trendy cloud bandwagon. The best vendors will have at least ten years of cloud ECM experience. See the bonus criteria 1-4 for more cloud tips.

Becoming a Winning Team

"Cloud computing represents both big opportunities and potential threats to solution providers. That means channel partners need to work closely with their vendors for technical, marketing, financial and sales assistance as they migrate to new models of computing."

- 2016 Partner Program Guide, CRN

3. Legendary Technical Support



Nothing makes resellers and customers more irritated than waiting on hold. Your ECM partner should offer timely live phone support from product experts that are both located in the U.S and are easy to understand. Don't rely solely on an email address to answer technical questions. Ideally, the vendor should track and share their customer satisfaction ratings. The best vendors will answer phones within seconds (not minutes) and close at least 85% of customer cases on the same day. Don't be afraid to put them to the test—ask about their customer service statistics and try calling technical support before you sign a contract.

4. Professional Services from the Manufacturer

More and more potential customers expect sophisticated ECM software integration and help consolidating their departmental systems that were installed years ago or inherited through acquisition or consolidation. With professional services direct from the manufacturer, resellers are more likely to meet special requirements, successfully customize solutions for unique needs and increase sales. Professional services should offer everything from needs assessment, implementation, configuration and user training to custom integrations, custom reports and special software coding. You should expect free quotes for professional services and receive assistance only from certified product experts employed by the manufacturer.



5. An Accommodating Reseller Program

The reseller partnership should be a flexible arrangement that fits easily into your business strategy. The best vendors won't restrain your success. They'll give you the power to make decisions and will let you own the customer. Look for a flexible program that doesn't have rigid sales territories and strict pricing models that saddle you and your customers with pay-per-click fees and complex licensing. You'll want the freedom to decide what industries to target and what pricing structure best fits your location and market segments.

Keep Control of Your Business

"The most important thing a vendor can do for its channel partners is to not get in the way."

-Ronnie Parisella, CTO of Primary Support Solutions, a NY-based solution provider, in an interview with ChannelWeb

6. Comprehensive Reseller Resources

Excellent training and a toolbox of reseller resources will help jumpstart your new ECM business. Product and sales training should be offered on a regular basis and should include online training and educational webinars. The best vendors will also provide new reseller training designed specifically to introduce products and policies and show resellers how to do business with their new partner.

Resellers should also expect a wealth of contacts and online resources. First, you should be assigned an account representative who will act as your personal sales consultant and provide hands-on targeted assistance with everything from business planning and product demonstrations to introductory training. The best vendors will also offer new reseller introduction kits, including roll out plans, resource guides and marketing tips to help you start selling now. You should also have access to an online reseller portal with everything you need to manage your ECM business via the internet. This should include convenient access to all your account information, the latest software downloads and technical resources, as well as company news, events and ready-made marketing materials. Your partner should also supply a reseller community forum for reseller interaction and a knowledge base with searchable articles that answer product-related questions.



A Vendor Who Will Help You Grow

"Vendors should offer comprehensive support for your business from the beginning of the relationship, conducting training and ongoing education, and offering sales and marketing tools that will help you break into new markets."

-Terry Cunningham, Evault, MSPMentor.Net article

7. A Flexible ECM Product Suite

The more flexible your product offering, the more likely you are to sell, sell, sell. Look for a vendor that offers both traditional ECM software and a cloud ECM model. The solution should also easily scale up for more users and scale out to expand the system across multiple locations and distributed environments. Additionally, your offering should assist customers in any industry, handle any type of project and manage a wide variety of document types. Features like unlimited index values and the ability to handle hundreds of file types are signs of a highly flexible solution.

More Options Win More Business

“Looking to provide more options and more technology to customers is a key part of winning business in today’s IT landscape.”

-Corinne Sklar, VP of Marketing at Bluwolf, a NY-based solution provider, in an interview with ChannelWeb



8. A Scalable Suite of Integrated Components

ECM products vary from limited storage and retrieval solutions to complete product suites with add-on components like workflow, document capture, forms processing and more. Choose a trusted vendor that offers a complete product suite, so you don’t have to stitch together multiple products (from different manufacturers) in order to sell a comprehensive solution. But more importantly, make sure the product suite is a fully integrated, scalable solution. Add-on components and additional features should be easy to just turn off or turn on at the customer’s request. You’ll want these service changes to be easy to manage with just one phone call to a single vendor.

9. Easy Installation and Integration

Quick installation and simple integration are strong ECM selling tools, and the best vendors will provide products that make implementation easy and straightforward. With an easy-to-use solution, your team should be able to handle basic installation and configuration. If you need help, the vendor should provide technical support for simple troubleshooting and professional services for more sophisticated or customized implementations.

Minimally, the vendor should supply standard API capabilities for seamless integration with virtually any application. However, the best vendors will provide more integration features such as out-of-the-box integration with commonly used applications like Microsoft® Office and Microsoft® SharePoint®. Some even offer a point-and-click integration module. This integration tool makes it easy to allow the user to be working within their line-of-business application and quickly launch the ECM solution just by hitting a hotkey or keyboard shortcut.

Additional Considerations for Cloud ECM Vendors

Customers that purchase cloud solutions are trusting the ECM vendor’s software, personnel and data center to safeguard all their critical business information. Don’t put your reputation on the line. Make sure you’ll be selling only the most secure and reliable cloud solutions. These bonus criteria can help you do a quick product evaluation.



1. Uncompromised Security

Security is the first priority when it comes to cloud ECM. Make sure your vendor has their priorities straight. Security features can help you distinguish the most protected cloud solutions. First, make sure the vendor has a myriad of physical and technical security measures at the data center. Also, ask about their network security to ensure your customers' stored data is never exposed to externally accessed systems and potential attackers. The best solutions provide data encryption both during transmission and when stored. Also, ask how they control information access. The vendor should have ECM system monitoring including daily network vulnerability testing by an independent third party.

2. The Strongest Product Reliability

Partner with a vendor that provides a reliable cloud ECM solution. The service should be scalable and easily expand with more use. Plus, the vendor should ensure your customers never lose access to their information. Look for solutions that have no single point of failure. In other words, storage system failures should be able to occur without data loss or service interruptions. Ask about the scalability of their data storage, and their data restoration systems. The best vendors should have a redundant storage system or multiple data centers that act as backup for the primary system. Don't forget about disaster recovery capabilities. Your vendor should also be able to provide a secure backup copy of your customer's online data.

3. Guaranteed Availability

When vendors have reliable cloud ECM systems and infrastructure as defined above, they can easily guarantee the availability of their service. The best vendors will provide a 99.9% uptime guarantee and even give you money back if they don't keep their promise.

4. SOC2 Auditing

SOC 2 replaces the SAS 70 and SSAE 16 certifications and focuses on the security, availability, processing integrity, confidentiality and privacy of operations and compliance processes. It is the authoritative guidance that allows service organizations, such as cloud computing providers, to disclose their control activities and processes related to operations and compliance to their customers and their customers' auditors in a uniform reporting format. The SOC 2 Type 2 Report includes a description of the security and availability processes of the organization and offers comprehensive reviews and tests of controls. Federal regulations such as Sarbanes-Oxley, Gramm-Leach-Bliley and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) require corporations to audit the internal controls of their suppliers, including those that provide cloud services. By undergoing the SOC 2 audit, the best cloud companies can provide their customers with comprehensive audit reports that facilitate compliance with these and other regulations.

The demand for ECM is strong because it helps companies do more with fewer resources. Now is the perfect time to make a smart investment in your business by joining the fastest growing segment of the ECM industry. With this white paper, you will distinguish the finest ECM solutions and the most supportive partner programs. It's easy to get started, and the returns can help you gain recurring revenue streams and create a more sustainable business model. Now get out there and explore the ECM community, identify the cream of the ECM crop and build a wildly successful ECM business!

Want More Evaluation Criteria?

Get more tips to help you assess ECM solutions. Read the white paper *Ten Security and Reliability Questions to Address Before Implementing ECM*.



You can find it here:
<http://www.digitechsystems.com/10questions>



Digitech Systems, LLC

Join the ECM explosion today! Learn more about Digitech Systems ECM product suite and award-winning reseller opportunities at www.digitechsystems.com.

About Us

Digitech Systems, LLC enables businesses of any size to more effectively and securely manage, retrieve and store corporate information of any kind using either PaperVision® Enterprise content management (ECM) software or the world's most trusted cloud-based ECM service, ImageSilo®. By significantly reducing the cost, Digitech Systems has moved ECM from a luxury convenience to an essential element for every well-managed business.

Digitech Systems continues to raise the standard of excellence in the ECM sector, as evidenced by the numerous awards they have received including the *CIOReview* Top Document Management providers, *InfoWorld* 100, *CRN's* Emerging Tech Dynamos and multiple Nucleus Research ROI Awards. In addition, Buyer's Lab has recognized both PaperVision® Capture and PaperVision Enterprise as the best products in the enterprise capture and ECM fields. To learn more about the company's software and services that deliver any document, anywhere, anytime, visit www.digitechsystems.com or on Twitter [@ECMNOW](https://twitter.com/ECMNOW).

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