

Your Church's Best Fitting Software

Whether you are hoping to convert from one software system to another, or even trying church software for the first time, you probably know by now that it takes a lot of planning and consideration before you and your church finally decide. Below is a list of the eight most important questions to ask in order to find the best fit for your church needs.

1. What are your staff needs?

Start by gathering the most important needs of each ministry at your church. While very few software companies can meet every need, it's best to know where the gaps reside.

2. Where are you going/growing as a church?

Talk to the leaders of your church to get a better understanding of the vision and goal for the next 5-10 years. Try looking at software that offers features like Background Screenings for a growing staff or Events Management to provide members and visitors with more opportunities to get involved. Features like these can better prepare everyone for growth.

3. What is your member "type" & what are their needs/expectations?

Take note of the demographics in your congregation and focus on what would improve their connection with your church. Visitors are always important to focus on, but current members are the foundation of the church, so keeping them happy is something that your church software should help with.

4. How much support do you need from your software vendor?

This can be tricky since some companies can have great support but a product that is pretty complex. Other companies might label themselves as "simple" but they provide low-level support. Just remember: Simple can be good, but it can also mean that it lacks many important features. Talk to the rest of your church staff about support because this decision will make a big difference down the road.

5. Can the application you purchase grow with you?

With smaller churches, a system that can manage small amounts of data might be all that is needed... but once the church starts growing, it'll be necessary to find a more advanced and structured software system. If you see your church growing in the next few years, take that vision and focus on the software that is most capable of handling changes, growth, and involvement.

6. Is your prospective software vendor an established company with a good track record?

Knowing a company's history and experience is a great indicator of how well their software and support function. If the company's history doesn't make you feel completely confident with your decision, keep looking.

7. Do you require consultation from your vendor?

If you do require consultation, make sure you find a trustworthy company who understands what it takes to manage a church. Again, check the background of the company and talk to someone there about their services.

8. What is the cost of the software package?

Purchasing software with the possibility of hidden fees is one of those important things that you might forget to plan out before you buy. Make sure that this is something you consider so that your final price is not different from what you budgeted for. And remember, the 'cost' of your software isn't always measured in dollars and cents.