

6 Questions that Lead to the Best Technology Decisions

Testing technology to determine its feasibility within your organization is the best way to know if it will meet your desired results. Maybe you want to improve productivity or reduce costs. After thorough proof-of-concept testing by your team your results can be moved forward on a larger scale.

While most organizations perform some form of proof of concept, this valuable tool often is seen only as a box to check. Done correctly, proof of concept will improve the overall success of a project and improve the entire life cycle of the tool or product being evaluated.

How to Achieve Proof of Concept for Informed Decision Making

1.

Who on your team makes the decision?



While the IT director may be the ultimate decision maker, input from other stakeholders is essential to fully prove the value of new technology. Invite representatives from other departments who may be end users of the new technology or whose workflow will be impacted.

TIP: Make sure to include one or two representatives from outside IT. If you have too many team members to manage efficiently, put together a steering committee to keep everyone in the loop.

2.

How do you measure success or failure?



The team will identify the objectives, scope, time, effort and expectations of the new technology's performance. Each stakeholder will put forth the priorities of the department they represent. The proof-of-concept team also determines the requirements for the technology versus the nice-to-have features.

TIP: Use a point system or similar method of measurement to define success or failure. Let everyone in your organization know the measurement system selected as early in the process as possible.

3.

What is the timeline?



Achieving proof of concept doesn't have to take a lot of time; however, it is important to agree to a definite endpoint. If the team agrees to spend 40 hours over the course of two months on the project, this commitment needs to be kept.

TIP: Keep supervisors and other organization leaders apprised of the time commitment necessary to successfully complete the proof-of-concept project.

4.

When is it time to pull the plug?



Knowing when to quit actually can lead to faster progress. Decide on 3 must haves from the technology you are considering. Test these 3 necessities in the first week. If they fail, pull the plug. Don't go further into your evaluation since the new technology doesn't meet your agreed-upon needs.

TIP: Don't spend more time and energy evaluating the technology if your organization doesn't have the talent or skill sets to use it practically.

5.

How will the proof of concept results be shared?



Once the team has agreed upon the outcome of the evaluation, results may be presented to executive leaders for a decision or forwarded as a requested joint initiative during budget time.

TIP: The proof-of-concept team needs to come to a consensus regarding the technology. Everyone is heard but individual concerns should not derail the whole project.

6.

What should be documented?



Most importantly, features, pricing and other promises made by vendors must be in writing. The team's list of priorities, along with the outcomes of the evaluation, should be documented. Finally, the team should wrap up the process by noting changes that need to be made to the process.

TIP: Use the results from the process to demonstrate how technology, vendors and services will work for your organization.

Protocol Networks helps businesses evaluate technology to achieve proof of concept for their ideas. We welcome your proof of concept evaluation. Retain our premier managed services to make the best decision for your IT network.

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