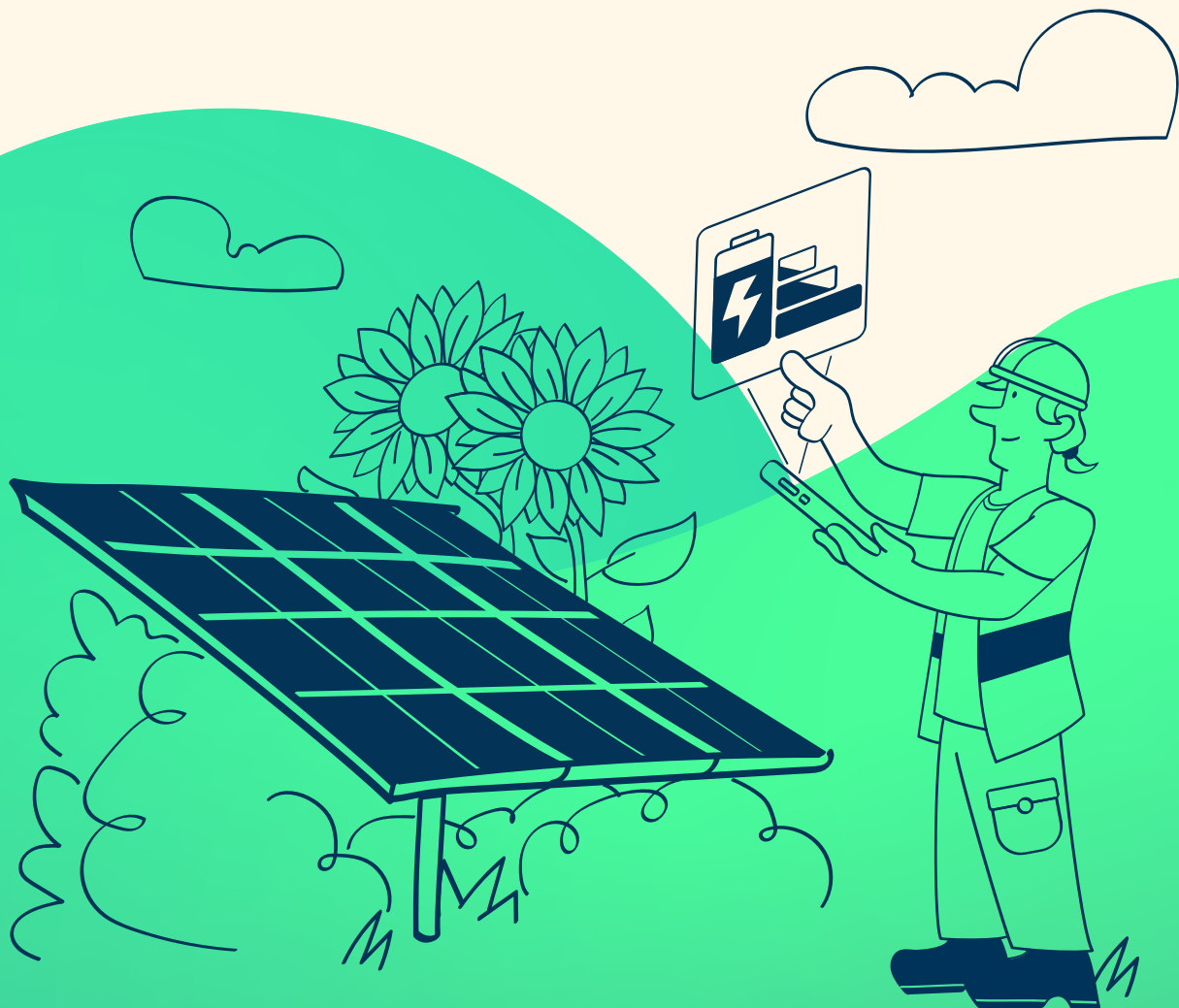


# Buying Guide: Operations Management Software

How to select CMMS and EAM tools



**In the past, it used to just be about finding a solid Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS).** Now, to create truly automated maintenance and operations, you must think about the larger organization and how all your systems work together in an automated ecosystem. The only solution that matches this flexibility is SaaS. But the transition can put a strain on your resources and disrupt your day-to-day.

Your transition to SaaS can be smooth, secure and cost-efficient every step of the way. To ensure you're considering all your options and looking forward to a more cost-effective future, we've compiled a list of the questions you should ask as you're evaluating your software options.

**6 questions to ask when purchasing maintenance software:**

1. Which companies offer the full range of software solutions?
2. What capabilities does the software have?
3. What is the real cost?
4. What is the implementation process?
5. What kind of support are you getting?
6. How forward-focused and credible is the company?



## 1. Which companies offer the full range of software solutions?

Start your search by finding companies that offer the holistic software solution you need. If you're an operations manager, this might mean consulting with others in your organization to find out their requirements and needs. An integrated solution from one vendor can often save a company a great deal of time and money. While it may seem this could slow you down, the long-term time savings may make it worth it. Plus, showing your executives that you're thinking about the business more globally is a great career move.

CMMS systems are designed to manage a single location or provide limited multi-site support, while Enterprise Management Systems (EAM) systems offer comprehensive features for managing multiple sites and businesses. An EAM system allows operators to see the full picture of their assets and make smarter data-driven decisions about repair, longevity and life cycle. Comparatively, a CMMS only tracks an asset after it's been purchased and installed.

Selecting a full range of software solutions with the right partner puts you in control of your asset management — and gives you all the analytics needed to make informed decisions across your organization.

### Why this matters to executives

Combining CMMS and EAM creates long-term cost savings and provides the numbers needed to plan ahead and stretch budget dollars with more viable operational assets.

## 2. What capabilities does the software have?

There are a number of different CMMS and EAM software providers out there, but they can vary wildly in their capabilities. You want to look for a provider that your team, department and organization can grow alongside..

An all-in-one solution is always better than a one-off option. Ask your provider if the software has functionality around not just maintenance management but also:

- Enterprise asset management
- Inventory tracking
- Capital Planning
- Compliance and safety documentation and protocols
- Extensive analytics and reporting
- Energy management
- Event management

Both EAM and CMMS are used to optimize asset, maintenance, work order and inventory management through software and the cloud. The difference is that an EAM system looks more holistically at asset management across an organization.

In addition to maintenance, work order and inventory tasks, EAM systems also manage:

- Asset register and data collection
- Inspections and survey data
- Contract management
- Asset valuation

If you find a full-range software system that can expand as your business and efficiencies do, then you will benefit from having one system of record and intelligence to guide your operations. This also makes the learning curve much easier for your team since you can add to your current system.

### 3. What is the real cost?

When purchasing software, there are sometimes hidden costs associated with your choices that vendors won't always disclose upfront. Keep asking questions and understanding the costs, and you'll end up with a solution that really meets your organization's needs and fits your budget.

#### Cloud vs on-premises

Cloud-based software is hosted on the vendor's servers, whereas on-premises software is installed on your servers. There's no upfront hardware cost for cloud-based, the maintenance costs are minimal and it's easy to scale up and down. This option comes with a monthly or annual fee that is often higher than that of an on-premises solution, but overall, cloud-based solutions are easier to get up and running and often cost less in the long run.

On-premises software has no or low monthly fees, but it typically comes with higher costs upfront. You also have more local control, but that requires an IT professional to manage which means additional expenses.

#### Why this matters to executives

With a CMMS, organizations can expect:

- **35-40%** improvement in the reliability of your equipment
- **28.3%** increase in productivity
- **20.1%** reduction in equipment downtime

#### Implementation

The success of any software purchase depends heavily on implementing it correctly. On-premises software often requires specialized technical expertise during set up while a cloud-based solution requires little to none. This can drastically reduce the time spent on implementation and dollars spent.

The main difference between cloud and on-premises software is in the implementation process. With cloud, maintenance software data is stored in the vendor's data center and accessible through the internet. On-premises software is installed on the company's server, which is only accessible on-site.

#### Staff costs and training

Will you need additional skilled people to run the software? Will you need to send your staff to training sessions? Is there an additional cost for training? Service providers often charge you based on the number of users of the software. This means you will need to calculate how many users — both current and future — to estimate these costs.

With this in mind, cloud-based solutions can be an excellent choice as they eliminate the need for on-site servers and prevent you from spending money on IT support and maintenance.

#### Upgrades and support

Will you need to pay for future software upgrades? Do you have to pay extra for a dedicated support person or team? Some systems require you to store all your facility and asset information on on-site servers. These so-called "desktop" solutions come with unpredictable expenses.

First, you have to shell out funds to buy the necessary servers and devices. Additionally, you will encounter costs to power and maintain essential hardware. This means you have to tackle IT updates, upgrades, repairs and replacements all on your own, which can pile on unforeseen expenses. You'll also be responsible for on-premise data security, whereas a software provider takes responsibility for the security of cloud-based solutions.

## 4. What is the implementation process?

Once a team decides to adopt a solution, it's time to tackle the implementation process. While desktop software systems can often take some time and considerable effort to get up and running, cloud-based systems can be substantially easier and less time-consuming to implement.

Consider the steps you need to take when setting up and maintaining an on-site (or on-premise) system:

- You have to either wait for the software license and/or download installation files from their website.
- You need to verify that the software is compatible with your computer, operating system and network.
- You may need the assistance of your IT staff.
- If your computer gets updated, you may no longer be compatible with the software.
- Access to the software is limited to that specific computer.
- If the vendor makes an update, you have to perform upgrades yourself — which leads right back to the original chores. You are rarely on the latest version, and it's difficult to manually keep up.

### Questions to ask your software provider:

- How long does a typical implementation take?
- How many clients have they successfully implemented?
- Do they have a documented process for implementation?

Knowing this upfront can help you feel secure in your vendor's ability to prioritize your success and ensure you have a smooth implementation.

## 5. What kind of support will you receive?

When you're depending on a software system to store all of your operation's data and daily work, you need reliable, knowledgeable professionals providing you support. If something were to go awry or you just need to learn something new, you want to know that you can reach your service provider for backup as soon as possible to ensure minimal downtime.

It is very important to assess the support services offered by each software company you are investigating. Given that a new software will be uncharted territory for your staff, you should look for a service provider that will train your team, guaranteeing that your organization has a handle on all of the functions available through your new system.

Each CMMS/EAM service provider offers a different way of getting support — some have online tutorials (which can be useful, but limit the ability of your staff to ask questions and cannot present multiple ways to learn a task), others send representatives to your facilities to walk you through these tools in person (highly effective but time-consuming).

A good option can be online interactive training, as these sessions can be slotted into a free hour instead of monopolizing an entire workday.

After you've learned the ropes of your new software solution, you may still run into bumps down the road. If you have problems or questions, you should be able to contact your service provider in a convenient manner — whether that be by phone, through email or via chat.

### Why good customer support matters!

Research shows that workplace stress due to factors such as lack of training and organizational support leads to an increase of almost 50% in voluntary turnover.<sup>1</sup>

## 6. How forward-focused and credible is the company?

You need to evaluate your proposed software provider to make sure they are a safe bet. When you're looking to put your workflow and operations data into the hands of a third party, you want to be sure that the company is trustworthy and dependable.

### You should look for a company that is:

- Established and knowledgeable in the industry with a long-standing market presence
- Innovative and always improving their products
- Trustworthy with many good reviews and client success stories
- Focused on your organization's success

It's important that a company is growing and moving into full enterprise asset management. This is a more future-proofed way to manage physical assets by understanding the full lifecycle of each asset within your operational ecosystem. When paired with strategic asset management software, you get to see the full asset lifecycle come to life.

Overall, strategic asset management software helps:

- Stretch asset lifecycle by understanding age, condition and longevity
- Predict asset breakdowns and needs sooner with data and analytics on the full lifecycle
- Provide data for better capital planning, so it's easier to predict needs and allocate resources

When operators have more data on their asset inventory, state, history and predicted failures, they can make better, quicker decisions that lead to higher asset performance.

Lastly, the company you choose for your operation's asset management needs to prioritize data security. The benefits of the cloud are abundant — as long as the system is protected. Service providers should make regular updates to their software and incorporate new features that will keep your organization's information safe, and back up your data so nothing disappears.

By pairing with a provider that stays on top of data security, you can adopt a CMMS that is both effective and safe.

[Learn more about our data security practices.](#)

### Why this matters to executives

Choosing a software partner that will support you into the future means fewer costly vendor switches and time-consuming business interruptions. Looking to the future protects your business for the long term.

## Take the next step in your software journey

Choosing the right partner sets you up for long term success. At Brightly, we are committed to you and your organization's future. With the framework of Brightly's award-winning cloud-based applications and trusted data security solutions, you don't have to go the road alone. Your transition to enterprise asset management can be smooth, secure and cost-efficient, every step of the way.

Our 20-year repository of data is key to unlocking the potential of operational analytics and better, faster decision-making; our global expertise delivers you the relevant best practices, market conditions and learnings you need — whether from around the corner or across the globe.

Because of the importance of data to our business, the integrity of your data is central to all our decision-making. We will continue our substantial investments in data security to provide you with the assurance of responsible stewardship.

Whether you're looking for a specific service or you just want to learn more about what it's like to be a Brightly client, we're here to help you build smarter assets and sustainable communities for today and the future.

[Request a demo](#)





## About Brightly Software

Brightly, the global leader in intelligent asset management solutions, enables organizations to transform the performance of their assets. Brightly's sophisticated cloud-based platform leverages more than 20 years of data to deliver predictive insights that help users through the key phases of the entire asset lifecycle. More than 12,000 clients of every size worldwide depend on Brightly's complete suite of intuitive software – including CMMS, EAM, Strategic Asset Management, IoT Remote Monitoring, Sustainability and Community Engagement. Paired with award-winning training, support and consulting services, Brightly helps light the way to a bright future with smarter assets and sustainable communities. For more information, visit [brightlysoftware.com](https://brightlysoftware.com)

