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5 Key Considerations
When Purchasing Payroll Software

PAYROLL

This white paper outlines the five key considerations when purchasing payroll and HR software, and tips for seeking the right solution for *your* payroll service business.

5 KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PURCHASING PAYROLL SOFTWARE

THE EVALUATION:

Whether your decision involves a first-time payroll software purchase, or you are evaluating upgrading your current payroll technology, you should begin with an honest self-assessment before you evaluate solutions. Once you calculate and determine your company's true needs, real strengths, and known weaknesses, then mapping the next steps becomes much easier.

For example, if you know your company lacks deep technology proficiency, then ease of use and ongoing support become critical considerations. **This paper addresses the five key considerations, but should be combined with the knowledge of your company's strengths and weaknesses, to help you make the right choice for your business and your clients.**

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INTRODUCTION:

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The five key considerations range from the tangible to the intangible. On the tangible end, a big consideration and one of the first you should look at, is the foundation of a good payroll software; that is, it should be based on a solid **Technical Platform and Architecture.** The technology should be easy to learn and use, well designed, fully functional and seamlessly scalable to fit the needs of a growing payroll service bureau. An equally important second consideration is **Customer Support.** Helpful, knowledgeable and accessible support should follow the initial purchase and continue throughout the implementation process. Even after the purchase, trainings and live webinars should be offered alongside a personal experience, tailored to fit your business needs. The third key consideration is **Partnerships.** Why do partnerships matter when considering technology providers? Think about it this way, you are investing in the backbone of your business and you need to maximize the return on investment. A broad partner eco-system brings you additional value and revenue generating opportunities to help your business grow. With a broad range of partner solutions and offerings, the more you can offer to your clients which also drive greater retention and customer lifetime value. Because this technology is your business's backbone, it drives the fourth consideration; the **Financial Security** of the payroll technology partner. You cannot afford to base your business on a partner lacking the financial resources to consistently change with the rapidly evolving payroll and HR market. A tenured and profitable company constantly investing in technology and skilled workforce, provides you long term security. The fifth key consideration, and on the farthest end of intangible spectrum; look for a company with a proven track record of **Forward-Thinking** business decisions and products that reflect industry leadership and long-term payroll industry vision.

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1: Technical Platform & Architecture

When considering a software that is the core of your business, the technical platform and it's capacity to handle you and your client's needs, are an important precedence to focus on when deciding which software to purchase

Can the software deliver on your needs? The platform itself needs to be highly reliable, scalable and customizable to meet any company's growing needs. The architecture of the product should be able to leverage the inevitable technological advances that evolve often in the payroll and software industry.

To compete and win, feature for feature, against larger established payroll and HCM firms, search for an all-in-one, single source platform. This type of payroll technology will provide your clients with a consistent user experience across the entire platform. The software should also be highly customizable to allow you to adapt to the needs of clients large and small across various industries. Having the ability to not only "keep up with the Joneses" but continue to be one step ahead of them with your adaptable software, is key to maintaining a competitive edge in today's market.

Thoroughly explore the reliability, accessibility, and ease of use:

- *Can the software be easily learned by new users and the type of users relevant to your company?*

- *What kind of storage and sharing capabilities does the platform possess?*

- *Does the software company provide down-time and resolution statistics they are willing to share and stand behind?*

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State of the art technology today resides in the Cloud. Old platforms, based on local site-installed software, often lack fast processing, scalability and ease of use. In addition, Cloud based systems typically evolve and develop new features and enhancements more quickly. The Cloud is the way of the future. Any forward-thinking company will be doing business in the cloud, and should be your preferred technology architecture.

Cloud based payroll software provides:

- *Flexibility* - your clients, their employees, and your staff can access information anytime and from any device wherever they are with an internet connection instead of being restricted to a static workstation in the office.
- *Real Time Processing* - provides you the ability to run your business with less overhead by allowing your clients to pre-processs and process payroll in real-time without having to rely on someone from your office to be involved with each customer's payroll. Once a client completes their payroll, the checks and reports are ready.
- *Security* - control levels of access by payroll service bureau users or client users by associating them with unique roles which can broaden or limit access by various levels including company, division, location, department and reports.Because storage is always in the cloud, the burden of automatic back-up and disaster recovery is removed from the local IT department, and placed in the hands of the software company. This data security is built right into the system.
- *Time Sensitive & Cost Effectiveness* – purchasing new servers, configuring them, and integrating them in to your environment is costly and time-consuming. Choosing a Cloud based solution eliminates this issue.

Today, few reasons remain to consider less than a Cloud based technology platform.

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Apex Human Capital Management (HCM) designs and builds our proprietary technology using the expertise of in-house software engineers, based in Atlanta, GA. We hire technology professionals with payroll industry experience that understand you and your clients' needs. Cloud based architecture provides you with:

- Automatic software backups, maintenance, updates, ongoing operation and support, and disaster recovery. All of these issues are important to you and your clients.

- Seamlessly scale your system as your business grows. There is no need to purchase new hardware or expensive software programs with each interval of expansion. Unconstrained capacity offers your organization the flexibility and customization to fit your ever-changing needs.

- Apex HCM Cloud provides leading-edge security and reliability for client data. We strive to set the industry standard in security, enabling you to focus on running your business, knowing with confidence your sensitive data is being managed properly.

- Apex HCM operates within the Microsoft Azure Cloud and possesses the infrastructure and bandwidth to accommodate any organizations changing requirements on demand. With complete disaster recovery in place Apex HCM provides the resiliency and capacity to handle unexpected events including failover to a separate data center.

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- **Beyond routine system redundancy design, we provide a load balanced system environment to ensure servers do not overload and you receive steady peak system performance**

- **Provisioning and implementation are done on demand, reducing the time to implement new services. Cloud computing enables Apex HCM to dramatically reduce the time to deploy a new application. Compared to traditional IT projects that may require weeks or months to adapt and implement new software, being Cloud based enables greater agility of a business, and the reduction of costs.**

	apex	Your Current Software
Automatic Backup	✓	?
Seamless Scalibilty	✓	?
Leading Edge Security	✓	?
Backed by Microsoft Azure	✓	?
Implementation On-demand	✓	?

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2 : Customer Support

Once the sale is completed, you and your staff need skilled support teams and systems in place to guide you through implementation, onboarding, and any general questions. Your software partner absolutely must provide a high level of attention and product satisfaction beyond their sales pitch. Make sure they can demonstrate real resources, systems, and processes that support the promises made during the sales process. Support and onboarding will determine the speed at which you get up and running.
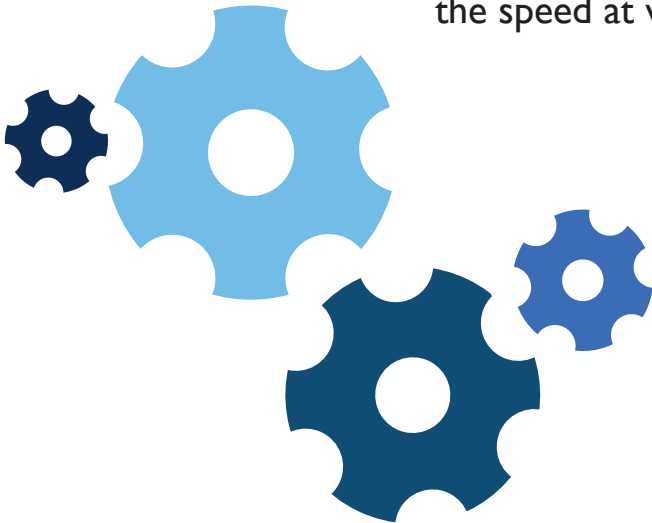
Besides training and learning, data conversion often becomes the largest factor toward implementation success. Data conversion is the process of migrating your client data from your existing software platform over to the new platform. Do not underestimate the effort and expertise required to convert clients. Consider your partner's tools, resources, experience and support personnel available to help you through this portion of the transition. The right vendor will help reduce your transition time.

When evaluating software companies, take note of the service level the vendor will commit to providing. Does the vendor publish Service Level Agreements on every support ticket submitted? Does the vendor post guaranteed support response times?

Apex HCM provides full cycle customer service resources including:
- **Robust training programs including 20 hours of 1 on 1 training, support, and ongoing live webinar sessions, to ensure you and your staff gain a solid understand of our technology, products and services. With Apex HCM, you and your clients can hit the ground running.**
- **Apex Online User Community provides our customers a complete library of educational videos, reference material, and other Apex users to help answer your questions.**
- **Live customer service phone support via a team of our Atlanta-based experienced professionals, available to assist with all your support questions with extended operating hours.**
- **Unlimited conversion support for the first 90 days, payroll history and employee data conversion tools, and conversion assistance.**

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3 : Partnerships

Access to a large partner network with a broad range of offerings across the solutions spectrum, allows more ways for you to beat the competitors. Keeping highly rated and well-known partners in a company's arsenal only helps to market yourself as more customizable to client, and prospects, thus creating a more desirable all inclusive solution. In addition to broadening your service offering, these partnerships will affect your bottom line by increasing revenue per client and drive higher retention rates.

Apex HCMcustomers value an integrated, seamless, end-to-end solution. Via our Application Programming Interfaces (API) of the Apex HCM platform, we can configure third-party services into the Apex ecosystem. **Our technology seamlessly integrates with numerous strategic partners enabling you to offer clients even more options.** Apex partners span every aspect of the Human Capital Management spectrum from job postings, applicant tracking, payments, taxes and insurance to background checks and lead generation. Our strategic partners' offerings complement the Apex HCM platform to further increase your ROI. Choose and implement exactly what best fits your unique business and clientele.

4 : Financial Security

A more overlooked factor in selecting a new software partner, is the financial health of the company. Doing business with a company struggling to stay afloat puts your entire business at risk. Take the time to research the history of the vendor and their financial health. Are they growing in size or revenue? These are both good indicators the company is doing well enough to invest in new employees, enhance their products, keep up with compliance, and pursue new technologies. Do they possess stable and credible investors? Do they have of Board of Directors with industry records of accomplishment?

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Inc. 5000

"Of the tens of thousands of companies that have applied to the Inc. 5000 over the years, only a fraction has made the list more than once. A mere one in ten have made the list four times."

Apex HCM has enjoyed a 108% compound annual growth rate over the last three years, making the coveted Inc. 5000 list of fastest growing companies four years in a row. "Of the tens of thousands of companies that have applied to the Inc. 5000 over the years, only a fraction has made the list more than once. A mere one in ten have made the list four times." Not only that, but during the 2017 expansion of the company, we've nearly tripled our employee size and are on pace toward 100 employees in 2018. Our growth is a result of industry adoption of our cloud technology and the additional investment by Serent Capital, who came onboard in September 2016. Continued growth and institutional investors provides Apex HCM a strong financial foundation for the future, and the stability to be your long-term technology provider.

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5 : Forward-Thinking

The future is the final key consideration area when evaluating a payroll technology partner. The previous four consideration areas all focused on evaluating the partner in terms of today. But, when selecting a new software partner, it is important to examine where they are going. Search for a company on the cutting edge of technology and an active member in the Payroll and HCM community. A company that leads industry associations and, hosts thought leadership forums of their own. Your technology providers should be able to articulate a clear vision of their future products, direction of the industry and direction of technology. It's important to ask questions about the vision of the company like: how they make decisions on the product roadmap and features; what technology integrations they plan for the future; how do they generate new ideas? Gathering as much information upfront about not just the past decisions of a company, but asking about the future, only helps target the best software partner for your business long term.

At Apex HCM, we remain committed to discovering and creating game-changing technology that is rooted in listening and understanding what our customers and their clients need. In the past year, we have initiated several programs to keep us at the forefront of the industry. Keeping those ideals in mind, in 2017 Apex announced the formation of the Apex Industry Leaders Council; a group of industry leaders from our customer base, who meet several times a year to discuss and engage in new and exciting ways to improve our business. In addition to the council, Apex launched a new product roadmap with Aha!, the technology allows our customers across the United States to post new ideas, and vote for the ones that would work best in their market. In the first three weeks after the initial launch, we'd had 90 new ideas and over 1500 votes from the Apex community! At Apex HCM, our vision is always set on the future. A future where we do not just offer you the latest HCM software, but solutions for your long-term success and that show we are listening to your needs.

"We achieve success only through our customers' success, and we are driven and dedicated, to ensuring that our customers have what they need to differentiate themselves and win in the marketplace."

- Marty Hamby, President Apex HCM

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THE CONCLUSION:

When selecting and deploying a new payroll processing solution, there are many factors to take into consideration. Just like our customers, we are passionate about what we do. We realize that our products and services change the lives of everyone who uses them, and one size does not fit all. Apex HCM provides the technology, resources and support our customers need to scale their businesses, without sacrificing what sets them apart … their unparalleled local service and expertise. With nearly 30 years of industry experience, we have seen it all, and we know how to run a profitable and scalable payroll business. We share our best practices and our gained wisdom with you, so you can avoid the common mistakes from the beginning. Your business is unique, why shouldn't your software experience be? Give us a call today and see how Apex HCM can grow your business, and give *you* the personal experience you and your business deserve.

ABOUT US:

Apex HCM provides a state-of-the-art software platform allowing our clients to take full advantage of the benefits cloud computing technology offers. We help organizations escape the bindings of traditional software, including the hidden costs of protracted implementations. All the while we provide you the infrastructure and software without the worries of managing your infrastructure, data security, software upgrades, and everyday IT needs.

Apex HCM is a market leader in licensing Cloud based payroll, benefits and HR technology. Over 300 payroll service firms nationally use Apex's technology as the core of their business foundation. Our highly customizable and comprehensive suite of products and services include payroll & tax, time & attendance, benefits enrollment, ACA, human resources, mobile apps, reports & analytics, employee onboarding, applicant tracking and other business management tools normally reserved for large enterprises. Apex HCM's cutting-edge Cloud based software allows its customers to effectively compete feature for feature with larger established firms while dramatically improving their workforce productivity. For more information, please visit www.apexhcm.com or call 877-750-APEX (2739).

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