eleo® Donor Management Software

8 Areas (Things) to Consider when choosing Fundraising Software

1. **Features.** Before you even start looking for software, decide what you need the software to do and make a list. What data do you want it to hold? What features do you absolutely need? One of the mistakes nonprofits tend to make is buying more than they need. Some of the other mistakes listed: randomly looking at demos, falling in love with cool features, and prioritizing price above everything else.

2. **Integrations.** What other software products does the system integrate? Email, accounting, website forms and payment processor are some of the basic needs. This helps to cut down on duplicate entry of information.

3. **Customization.** Another thing you may want to consider is how easy the software is to customize. Let's face it, no two non-profits are alike. You have different programs and different terminology, and you don't want to build your own database from scratch if you can avoid it. So look for software with easy customization that allows you to tailor the database to your needs.

4. **Usability.** Also important to consider is usability. Because this fundraising software is going to be an integral part of your non-profit, you want it to be intuitive and easy to use. To determine just how user-friendly it is, have a look at some demo videos, get a personal demo and ask current users what they think of it.

5. **Cost.** Does the software fit into your budget, both now and in the future? In order to determine this, you have to take into account *all* of the costs associated with owning the software (the "total cost of ownership" or TCO). Direct costs include the software license itself, data conversion, installation, training, and support. Indirect costs include IT staff required to maintain the system, consultants needed, and upgrades to computers needed to run the software.

6. **Security.** Since you're dealing with donor information, security must be a consideration. There are many questions that you'll want to ask. For example: Where is the data stored? Who has direct access and authority? How is the data shared between different people and departments? How is that process managed? Is there any risk of exposure of your data to the online community?

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7. **Ability to Get Data In & Out.** This one is often overlooked, but it's so important. You'll often want to get data into your database – a list of names and addresses for instance. You'll also want to get data out – for email marketing, accounting or event purposes. So, being able to easily import and export data is very important!

8. **Technical Support.** Finally, does the fundraising software come with quality customer support? Really what you want to know is whether you'll be able to contact someone by phone or email when you really need help, and how quickly they will be able to assist you. You may also be interested in seeing what other kinds of support they offer: frequently asked questions on their website, documentation, training videos, etc.

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