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Accounting Software Migrations

Over the years we have played an integral part of numerous Accounting Software Implementations & Migrations. In the early years, starting in 1982, almost all the Libra Accounting Software installations we did were first time new installations. Then as the years went by we participated in conversions from other software that didn't work particularly well. Over 30 years later we have now assisted with many migrations from Libra to newer software better suited to our customer's needs. In this we have come full circle.

We are proud of the fact that many of our customers have made that journey with us. A fair number of them have been using Libra in its different iterations for 30 years now. Many of those that have migrated from Libra still use our services and expertise for Canadian Payroll, other Specialized Custom Programming, Computer and Network installations and assorted technical support issues that are part of their business.

That being said there is a lot of potential in some newer software and when the time comes to move on we will be glad to help you during the transition. In making a decision to migrate to new accounting software you really have to do your homework. You need to pick the right software and the right company to help you implement it and verify references.

In the past we have seen people going out with a shopping list of features they need, only to select a program that fails in many areas that their existing program excelled. You have to include the things that your existing software does well in any selection process as they cannot be taken for granted.

The first step in any selection process is to locate a software vendor that has experience in your industry. Get a basic overview of the software and a reasonable estimate of software and implementation costs to make sure that it can fit within your budget. Keep in mind that many companies may low ball an initial quotation knowing that once you've started a project it's very difficult to turn back. We've seen many projects end up costing two, three or more times the original estimate. This is not always the software vendor's fault as there are often many features in an existing system that are more difficult to replicate than expected. Users also don't always accurately represent all of the functionality they already have so the software vendor cannot quote it properly.

In either case, get as much detail as possible integrated into the quotation and have it tied to certain deliverables to limit the amount of money you pay out before you can actually start using the new program.

Cost aside, there are many more issues that can cause a new software installation to fail. If the company implementing a good product does not know it particularly well, then there can be many problems the result of poor implementation and training.

For this reason we strongly recommend a multi-stage approach to software migrations. Start by surveying the market for software programs used in your industry and get rough estimates to rule out any that are just cost prohibitive. Keep in mind that many estimates are number of users specific. A program may cost $50,000 for 5 users and $200,000 for 20 users. Try to determine the annual maintenance and support fees as well, which can be 10-20% of the original purchase cost annually. Also confirm the hardware/software requirements, such as minimum Server, Workstation and Supporting Software levels which can affect cost.

Arrange an initial meeting to discuss your needs and review the software to see if it looks like a good fit. Bring a short list of the features you currently use as well as those you feel you need and query them as to the how they work in the software you are looking at. Be very sceptical of statements like "I think it can do that". Ask for specific details to make sure they really understand what it is that you are asking for.

Arrange a full demo of the product where you follow critical business processes thru a normal cycle and ask questions if anything is unclear. Where possible, see if you can arrange trial access to the product where key people can play with it and try it out before you buy. Contact companies that have implemented the software and confirm that they are happy with it.

In either case we are here to help for as long as you choose to run Libra and during the conversion to new software when the time comes. We can extract data from all Libra systems into Excel spreadsheets and these can usually be imported into most new systems. We don't usually get involved with the setup of really specialized file servers, but we can assist with many other hardware and software updates where required. If, for example, all computers require Windows 7, 4gb Ram and MS-Office 2010 or above this is an area in which where we could help to meet your needs.