If you are looking to buy Help Desk software here are some helpful tips that will make the process easier. Remember that the software is only one part of a successful help desk; you will also need to think about the staff and help desk management processes for both IT and general business. This will allow you to cater to each area individually and get the most out of your system.

**Start at the beginning, define what you want**

Before looking at help desk systems make sure you have gathered all the current and future requirements. A common mistake is only looking at IT and the help desk requirements, you also need to find out what your customers (the business) needs from a new help desk solution.

When gathering the requirements it is often helpful to use the MoSCoW method to prioritise the requirements. All requirements are important, but they are prioritised to deliver the greatest and most immediate business benefits early.

- **M - MUST**: Describes a requirement that must be satisfied in the final solution for the solution to be considered a success, this is also known as the minimum requirement.
- **S - SHOULD**: Represents a high-priority item that should be included in the solution if it is possible, depending on time/price/resources etc.
- **C - COULD**: Describes a requirement which is considered desirable but not necessary. This is often features you would like to use in the future.
- **W - WON'T**: Represents a requirement that stakeholders have agreed will not be implemented initially, but may be considered for the future.

**What core features should Help Desk software have?**

All help desk software on the market has different features, license and deployments options and there is often a core and additional component price. Here is some core functionality that must be included in a help desk system to deliver value in a modern business.

- Self service portal
- Support for tickets/incident logging through multiple channels such as portal, email and phone
- Service Level management
- Workflow management
- Satisfaction surveys
Knowledgebase

Support for IT asset management

Reporting, Metrics, and Dashboards

Escalation management including auto escalation

Ability automate tasks

The list can be made longer depending on business factors but these are core requirements and if you are moving towards an ITIL implementation then you will also need the help desk software to have support for ITIL processes such as incident, problem, change and configuration management to list a few.

Selecting Help Desk software

Use the your requirements list to select potential help desk vendors, and make sure you get indicative pricing upfront so you are not wasting time on evaluating systems that are beyond the budgetary scope for the project.

Do not select more than a handful system for evaluation as evaluating a large number of vendors involves significant time and therefore cost. Be clear in advance with vendors so that demos are tailored to your requirements. The key to a great demo is giving the presenter your unique requirements and challenges in advance of the demo. This way your needs are addressed and, with greater insight into your requirements, the vendor may have additional functions or features that would help you optimize your system that you may not have thought about.

Explore all areas of the systems you evaluate, and take into account things like how scalable the system is and will it cost you more to add additional processes or features in the future. Make sure that the system is able to capture all of your business processes and procedures and that you can change them without help from the vendor as that will inevitably lead to high costs.

Buying Help Desk software

The best way to start is normally to do some basic ROI calculations and determine where you can make substantial savings with a new system. It is also important to create time scales for the selection, evaluation and implementation of the new system. In looking at the budget, you need to evaluate both short and long term costs associated with the purchase to make the correct decisions during the process.

Another area to look at is Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), which is more than the original cost of purchasing hardware and software. TCO must include all direct and indirect costs associated with the system, over a minimum 3-5 years, to reflect the true cost over time. Make sure to compare costs of a new system against what you are currently paying. If the current system isn’t fulfilling your requirements and you are looking to replace it, why should you expect to pay the same price? Finding the solution that is right for you and can be customized to meet your unique needs is paramount – not the price. Keeping this top-of-mind, the system you end up with could even be cheaper. Often companies buy big product packages; and, while these options give organizations a lot of features, if they aren’t using them then its money and implementation time wasted.

Companies often evaluate systems as a whole instead of looking at different parts or applications within a system. You may not need all of the bells and whistles from a given system to maximize your efficiency and ROI.

Finally set a realistic timeline for purchase through to implementation, projects often fail before they get off the ground because internal opinions conflict about how long the entire process should take.