



The CMMS Buyer's Guide

A Practical Checklist for choosing a maintenance system your team will actually use.



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Choosing the right CMMS

Whether you're moving away from spreadsheets or replacing a CMMS that's become difficult to work with, it's easy to get lost comparing maintenance systems. Feature lists get long. Pricing becomes difficult to compare. And every supplier seems to offer slightly different versions of the same things.

The best CMMS isn't necessarily the one with the longest feature list.

The right system should make everyday maintenance easier for your team. It should be:

Easy to use...

Can engineers find, update and complete work without unnecessary steps?

Easy to implement...

Can you get started without turning the rollout into a major internal project?

Easy to live with...

Are pricing, support and ongoing changes straightforward once the system is in use?

Before comparing CMMS suppliers, start with one simple question:

What problem is your team actually trying to solve?



Start with the problem

Picking a CMMS is much easier when you're clear about what needs to improve. You may be introducing a CMMS for the first time, or you may already have one, but find that engineers avoid it, information is difficult to find, or routine tasks involve more admin than they should. Whatever your situation, it's best to begin by understanding the key problems with your current maintenance management:

- ☐ Maintenance is managed through spreadsheets, paper or disconnected systems
- ☐ Our current CMMS is difficult for engineers to use
- ☐ Too much maintenance information sits outside the system
- ☐ Planned maintenance is difficult to organise or track
- ☐ Work orders involve too much administration
- ☐ We lack visibility over outstanding or completed maintenance
- ☐ Asset records are incomplete or difficult to maintain
- ☐ Reporting takes too much manual work
- ☐ Our current system is expensive or difficult to understand commercially
- ☐ Support from our existing supplier is limited or slow
- ☐ We have features we pay for but rarely use
- ☐ We need a system that can grow with our maintenance operation

The ideal CMMS would help our maintenance team...

Build your requirements

Once you understand what needs to improve, build your requirements around the way day-to-day maintenance actually works. Avoid starting with a supplier's feature list. Start with your own processes.

For each requirement, select either 'Must Have', 'Nice To Have' or 'Not Needed'

Requirement	Must have	Nice to have	Not needed
Create and manage work orders	☐	☐	☐
Assign work to engineers	☐	☐	☐
Record completed maintenance	☐	☐	☐
Manage planned / preventive maintenance	☐	☐	☐
Create and manage asset records	☐	☐	☐
View asset maintenance history	☐	☐	☐
Access the system from mobile devices	☐	☐	☐
Attach manuals, images and documents	☐	☐	☐
Record parts or materials used	☐	☐	☐



Build your requirements

Requirement	Must have	Nice to have	Not needed
Manage stock / spares	☐	☐	☐
Create dashboards and reports	☐	☐	☐
Track outstanding maintenance	☐	☐	☐
Set different user permissions	☐	☐	☐
Send alerts or notifications	☐	☐	☐
Import existing maintenance data	☐	☐	☐
Export data when required	☐	☐	☐
Integrate with other systems	☐	☐	☐
Support multiple sites or teams	☐	☐	☐
.....	☐	☐	☐
.....	☐	☐	☐
.....	☐	☐	☐

A useful rule is to be strict with the “Must have” column. If everything becomes essential, it becomes much harder to tell which system is genuinely the best fit.

Look beyond the feature list

Two CMMS platforms may appear very similar when their features are compared side by side.

The bigger differences often emerge once you ask what it will actually be like to implement and use them. There are seven key areas worth considering when looking at any CMMS:

Usability

A system only adds value if people use it properly. Consider how many steps it takes to complete everyday tasks and how easily an engineer can use the system while working on equipment.

Implementation

Ask what happens between signing the contract and actually using the system. Who configures it? Who imports your data? How much input is expected from your team? When can you start using it?

Data migration

Understand how existing maintenance records, spreadsheets or CMMS data will move across and what the supplier will actually handle.

Training

Training should reflect the people who will use the system. Maintenance managers and engineers may need very different things.

Support

Understand where support is based, how you can contact them, how quickly they will be able to respond, and what other help is included after launch.

Pricing

Compare the complete commercial picture rather than only headline subscription prices. Understand users, modules, onboarding, integrations and support costs.

Flexibility

Check how easily you can add assets, users, requests, sites, processes or integrations as your maintenance operation changes.



Questions to ask a CMMS supplier

Use these questions during demos, sales calls or procurement discussions.

- **1. What does implementation actually include?**
Who configures the system, prepares your data and supports the launch?
- **2. How long does a typical implementation take?**
Ask for an answer based on businesses similar to yours.
- **3. How will our existing asset and maintenance data be migrated?**
Understand what the supplier handles and what your team needs to prepare.
- **4. What does an engineer need to do to complete a typical work order?**
Ask to see the process rather than simply hearing it described.
- **5. How does the system work on a phone or tablet?**
If engineers work away from a desk, test the actual mobile experience.
- **6. What training is included?**
Find out how different users are trained and what happens with new employees.
- **7. What support do we receive after implementation?**
Ask who provides it, where they are based and how you can contact them.
- **8. Which features are included in the quoted price?**
Make sure important functions do not depend on additional packages or modules.
- **9. What costs could be added later?**
Consider additional users, sites, integrations, storage, support or premium functionality.
- **10. Can we easily change workflows, assets and planned maintenance ourselves?**
Routine changes shouldn't require a project every time.
- **11. What reporting is available without manual data work?**
Ask to see how the reports you actually need would be produced.
- **12. How does the system integrate with other software?**
This becomes increasingly important as maintenance operations mature.



CMMS red flags

No individual warning sign necessarily rules out a supplier, but several appearing together should prompt more questions.

Watch for	Why it matters
A very long feature list but little discussion of your actual maintenance process	The system may be focused on demonstrating functionality rather than solving your specific problem.
Pricing that is difficult to explain clearly	Additional modules, services or user charges can make the real cost much higher than the headline figure.
Vague answers about implementation	Responsibilities, timescales and data requirements should be clear.
Basic tasks taking too many steps	Complexity is likely to become more frustrating in everyday use.
Heavy reliance on lengthy training	Long-term adoption may become difficult if routine tasks require extensive training.
Important functions requiring multiple add-ons	You may end up paying extra for functionality you assumed was standard.
Your maintenance process has to dramatically change to suit the software	The system shouldn't create unnecessary work for your team, and should instead support your processes.
Limited clarity around support after launch	Implementation is only the start of the relationship, and it's important to know that support will be available when needed.
Difficulty getting your data back out	Your maintenance history should remain accessible and useful.



Supplier comparison scorecard

Score each supplier from 1 = Poor to 5 = Excellent.

Area	Supplier 1	Supplier 2	Supplier 3
Fits our core requirements			
Ease of use for engineers			
Mobile experience			
Work order management			
Asset and PPM management			
Reporting and visibility			
Implementation approach			
Data migration			
Training			
Ongoing support			
Pricing clarity			
Overall cost / value			
Flexibility			
Ability to grow with us			
Overall fit			

The supplier with the most features isn't automatically the best choice. The strongest option is the one that addresses the problems you started with, covers the requirements that genuinely matter, and will be adopted by the people who will use it every day.



Looking for a simpler CMMS?

iMaintain CMMS gives maintenance teams a simple, intuitive way to manage day-to-day maintenance: manage work orders, assets, PPMs, spares and reporting, all in one place.

Get the maintenance functionality your team needs without the complexity you don't.

Simple to use

Fast, easy onboarding

UK-based support

Straightforward pricing

Unlimited assets, WOs, PPMs

Free Work Request Users

Custom dashboards

Real-time notifications

iMaintain CMMS Maintenance Management System

Find out if iMaintain CMMS fits your requirements.

Learn more

imaintain.uk/cmms

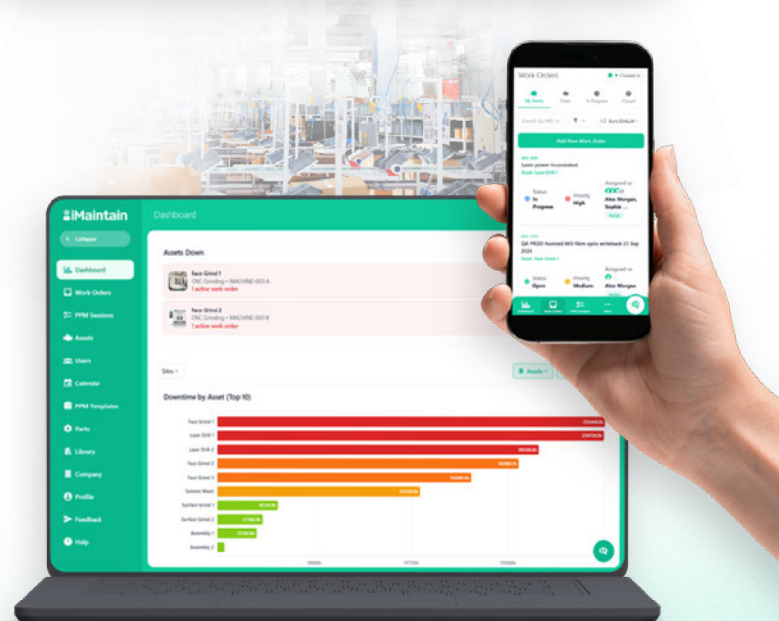
Book a demo

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Want to add more intelligence?

iMaintain RMP

A CMMS gives you a system for recording and managing maintenance activity. As your maintenance operation develops, the next challenge is often making better use of the information that system creates. iMaintain RMP works alongside your CMMS to help your team get more value from maintenance data and knowledge.

find out more at: imaintain.uk/rmp