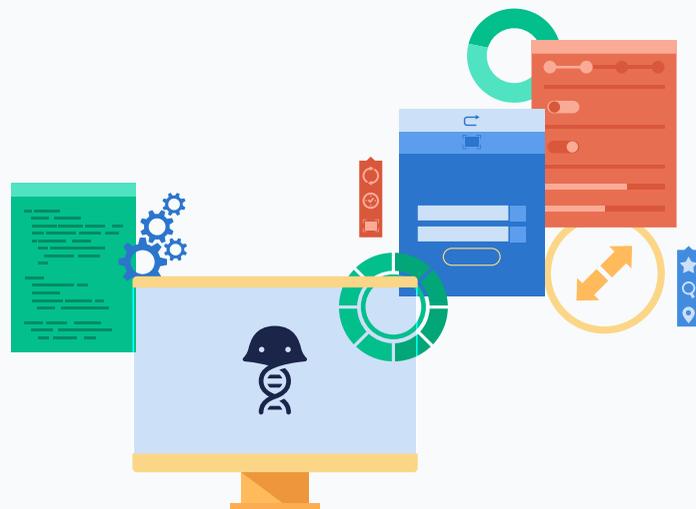


How to Run an Informatics Platform Evaluation

Evaluating an informatics platform for your R&D organization is no small task. The needs of your organization are complex, and making the wrong decision costs you time, resources, and an advantage over your competitors. Especially if you haven't run an informatics platform evaluation before, you might not know where to start.

This document should serve as a guide to help you structure your evaluation process. Going into an evaluation with deliberate timelines, explicit organizational needs, and involvement from all relevant stakeholders will help ensure that you make the right decision.



Before entering into your evaluation process, it's critical that you assess the following four key factors.



NEEDS

Why do you want an informatics platform? Are there processes that are breaking down? What difficulties are you trying to avoid as you grow? How do you want an informatics platform to change how you're doing things today?



BUDGET

How much have you set aside for this informatics platform? Finding a platform that will truly suit your needs is a serious investment that shouldn't be glossed over, so entering into an evaluation with a well-defined budget is a must.



TIMELINE

When do you want a system in place? Although having a clear internal process can help keep your evaluation on-track, it's important to be realistic and keep in mind that a new informatics platform will take additional time to implement after purchase.



STAKEHOLDERS

Who will actually be interacting with this informatics platform, either as an end-user or as an administrator? Make sure to clearly delineate the groups that this purchase will affect - and make sure to involve a representative from every relevant group in your evaluation process. This is especially critical when determining your needs for the platform.

SOURCING VENDORS

Week 1

Individuals Involved

- Primary decision-maker
- Primary R&D stakeholders
- Primary IT stakeholders

Actions

- Reach out to your broader network of colleagues at comparable R&D organizations.
- If relevant, consider reaching out to the venture capital firms or accelerators that support you.
- Reach out to online communities, such as those on LinkedIn.
- Reach out to industry groups, such as the Pistoia Alliance.
- Explore the advice of industry research firms, such as Gartner.

Outputs

- A list of 4-6 vendors that seem like they could possibly meet your informatics needs.

INITIAL CALLS WITH VENDORS

Week 2

Individuals Involved

- Primary decision-maker
- Vendor sales consultant

Actions

- Primary decision-maker should be sure that they've thought through the four key factors described earlier.
- Speak with vendor sales representative to communicate budget, timeline, and high-level needs.

Outputs

- Get a high-level understanding of what the vendor's platform offers and how it could potentially help your teams.
- Get a sense of comparable companies that the vendor has worked with.
- 3-4 of the initial vendors should move on to the next phase.



WORKFLOW DISCOVERY CALLS

Weeks 3–4

Individuals Involved

- Primary R&D and IT stakeholders

- Vendor field application scientist (the vendor's technical lead for the evaluation) and vendor sales consultant

Actions

- Key stakeholders will speak to the vendor's representatives to share scientific needs in-depth. Stakeholders should be prepared to share details around workflows, molecular targets, diseases of interest, process bottlenecks, current technologies used, and plans for growth.

- If your organization is sensitive around sharing details about your science, sign a non-disclosure agreement with the vendor.

Outputs

- Through conversations with your stakeholders, the vendor's representatives should have all the information they need to put together a detailed, tailored demonstration of how their product can fit your needs.

TAILORED DEMO

Week 4

Individuals Involved

- Everyone on the decision-making committee

- *(Optional)* Additional end-users who would be using the system

- Vendor field application scientist and sales representative.

Actions

- Attend a tailored demonstration of the vendor's platform, based on the scientific needs expressed in the Workflow Discovery phase.

- Be prepared to ask detailed questions during and following the demonstration.

Outputs

- You will learn the details of how the vendor can support your workflows.

- Less tangible aspects of the vendor's offering – such as usability, intuitiveness, and overall attractiveness of the platform – will also be evident.

- 1-2 vendors should make it to the next phase.



[Optional] FINAL TECHNICAL EVALUATION

Week 5

Individuals Involved

- Final key decision-makers.
- Vendor field application scientist and sales representative.

Actions

- Ideally, the tailored demo should address all questions you have about the system's functionality. However, if your R&D processes are particularly complex, or if there are remaining areas you'd like to cover, asking further questions at this stage is a good idea.
- Following the catered demo, convey to the vendor specific questions pertaining to the platform's functionality. Technical questions from IT stakeholders can also be conveyed.
- If relevant, discuss an action-plan with the vendor to address any shortcomings in the vendor's offering.

Outputs

- If relevant, an action-plan to address any shortcomings in the vendor's offering.
- A proposal from the vendor reflecting the discussed software and services, as well as a detailed plan for rollout and onboarding.
- A final chosen vendor.



Ready to start your
informatics platform evaluation?

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