Gartner Peer Insights ‘Lessons Learned’: Implementing Quality Management System Software

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QMS software allows organizations to develop standardized quality processes and maintain compliance of a new software within the set regulation framework. Quality leaders can learn from the implementation experience of their peers shared on Gartner Peer Insights.

Overview

Gartner Peer Insights is a free peer review and ratings platform designed for enterprise software and services decision makers. Reviews go through a strict validation and moderation process to ensure they are authentic.

We analyzed 103 Peer Insights reviews to identify lessons learned while implementing quality management system (QMS) software. This report focuses on the responses to the questions: “If you could start over, what would your organization do differently?” and “What one piece of advice would you give other prospective customers?” To browse all reviews, see the full list of Quality Management System Software reviews on Peer Insights.

Peer Lessons Learned

This edition of “Lessons Learned” summarizes clients’ firsthand experiences with implementing QMS software. The peer advice results both from successful implementation projects and learnings based on what went wrong. This peer perspective, along with the individual detailed reviews, is complementary to expert research and provides a holistic view to the implementation process. Reviewers who submitted their lessons learned represent a cross-section of small- to midsize and large organizations. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Reviewer Demographics
Below are some key lessons learned and most cited recommendations by Peer Insights reviewers to help quality leaders in the implementation process of their QMS software.

Lesson 1: Factor In Your Business Needs in the QMS Software Selection Process

The peers recommend the quality leaders to carry out a thorough assessment of the business needs of the organization prior to the selection of a suitable vendor. They advise to take these needs into consideration during the vendor selection and evaluation process to ensure optimum implementation of the software.

A peer highlights the importance of analyzing the business needs:

“Start with understanding the business needs of the organization instead of opting for the software right away without understanding the key problem. Do not over engineer the software — keep it simple and maintainable.”

— Application Professional, Manufacturing Sector

Another peer remarks on this by sharing their organization’s experience:

“Planning for business needs, as always, is key and we could have done better in that regard. In our case, bad planning led to some redundant
Peer recommendations include:

- Gather the needs of the various departments, such as IT, sales, analytics and development operations.
- Conduct an in-depth market research to select a vendor that aligns with the business needs of the organization.
- Ensure that the business needs are adequately reflected in the request for proposal (RFP).
- Review the terms of the contract and the pricing of the software carefully.

Recommended readings:

“Market Guide for Quality Management System Software”

“Toolkit: RFP for Quality Management Software”

Lesson 2: Demo the QMS Software to Validate Its Efficacy

The peer community advises the quality leaders to perform extensive testing of the software. They suggest to request demos from the vendor’s support team to ensure the effectiveness of the software in the organization.

A peer remarks on this:

“Get a demo of the software from the vendor prior to the purchase. This will really help you understand the myriad capabilities of the software and test real-world examples of usage.”

— Business Professional, Construction Sector

Another peer highlights the importance of testing by sharing their organization's experience:
“If we were to implement again, we would carry out more testing upfront to ensure user acceptance is high. Once we rolled out the software, we had to request many changes based on actual user feedback instead of just the design specifications.”

— CxO, Manufacturing Sector

Peer recommendations include:

- Evaluate the diverse capabilities of the software through a demo.
- Ensure the features required as per the business needs function properly through the use of a cross-functional team.
- Test and develop a customization plan with the vendor’s support team according to the unique needs of the organization.

Recommended reading:


Lesson 3: Impart the Know-How of the Software Through Training Sessions

The peers recommend to train the end users of the software prior to the implementation in order to equip them with the foresight required to effectively manage the functionalities, such as ensuring compliance with regulations, standardizing processes, managing their industry standards and so on, of the software.

In this context, a peer observes:

“Ensure a more hands-on training of the software. Get thorough resources and the necessary support with it. It will bring the users up to speed quicker than you would have otherwise.”

— Business Professional, Services Sector
Another peer adds:

“Training of the end users in the sandbox environment prior to the implementation phase eases the onboarding of any new team member. It also significantly reduces the learning curve while migrating from a legacy application.”

— Data and Analytics Professional, Manufacturing Sector

Peer recommendations include:

- Read the tutorials on the vendor’s website to learn about the full functionalities of the software.
- Join the vendor’s web community, if any, to understand the particularities of the software.
- Schedule a training program for all the end users. Appoint an administrator to ensure an effective completion of the training program.

Recommended reading:

“QMS Training Methods”

Lesson 4: Adapt Your Processes to Ensure They Fit the QMS Software

The peers advocate to thoroughly evaluate the processes, such as business infrastructure models, regulatory functions, predictive analytics and so on, that need to be integrated with the software. They further recommend to optimize them to augment their adaptability while integrating with the software.

In this regard, a peer remarks:

“Make sure you understand your own processes before trying to configure them in the electronic system. Bad paper processes lead to bad electronic processes and a cause of frustration to the end users.”

— Application Professional, Unnamed Sector
Another peer adds:

“It’s important to think about the integration and associated impacts on other functionalities carefully. Choices made to have a complete control on the software may backfire later when it is moved. Complexity can be created to a point where it may make the system inefficient globally due to local optimization.”

— Data and Analytics Professional, Manufacturing Sector

Peer recommendations include:

■ Analyze the processes to integrate with the software.
■ Automate the processes that boast the required capability to do so.
■ Set up an internal team of subject matter experts to perform due diligence on achieving process harmonization.
■ Review the mapping of individual and administrator accounts to ensure that their linking is arranged properly.

Recommended reading:

“Ignition Guide to Planning for Quality Management System Standardization”

Lesson 5: Follow the Implementation Timeline; Customize the Software as Needed

The peers encourage the quality leaders to ensure that the deployment team follows the implementation timeline appropriately. They further suggest to leverage the out-of-the-box (OOTB) functionality initially, and customize the software according to the dynamic needs of the business environment.

In this context, a peer states:

“If we were to run the implementation again, we would start from the OOTB experience and customize as necessary. We chose to extensively customize prior to deployment to match our old system. This may have
customize prior to deployment to match our old system. This may have been necessary at the time for securing buy-in but in the next upgrade, we will try to move back to OOTB.”

— Data and Analytics Professional, Services Sector

Another peer remarks:

“Take the time to ensure the customizations you make to the system are sustainable. Make sure the customizations do not bend the capabilities of the software too much or introduce complexity that no one will understand in 10 years.”

— Application Professional, Healthcare Sector

Peer recommendations include:

- Launch one OOTB module at a time to ensure smooth deployment.
- Establish the groups and naming conventions in an optimum manner.
- Customize the software according to the business and end-user needs.
- Adhere to the implementation timeline that was finalized during the planning phase. Request for the vendor’s support, if required.

Recommended reading:

“Increase Quality Management System Efficacy”

Methodology

Of the Peer Insights survey data considered for this market, only those responses meeting the following criteria were included in this synthesis:

- Reviews less than 12 months old.
- Responses that pertain to the project experience and are not tied to the capabilities of a vendor.
Reviews were clustered into the top-five most-referenced categories (lessons learned) and then listed in order of relevant phases in the project life cycle.

The results of this synthesis are representative of the respondent base and not necessarily the market as a whole.

**Recommended by the Author**

Gartner Peer Insights 'Voice of the Customer': Quality Management System Software

Quality Management Systems Benchmarks

Quality Management, Strategy and Leadership Primer for 2020

The Three Flavors of Global Quality System Standardization

**Recommended For You**

Summary Translation: 3 Effective Actions to Drive Cost Optimization

A Strategic Approach to Reducing Communications and Collaboration Spending in Light of COVID-19

The Modern Chief Data Officer: 3 Insights From Social Media Discussions (2018-2020)

Summary Translation: How to Use AI to Fight COVID-19 and Beyond

Market Share Analysis: Security Consulting Services, Worldwide, 2019