



Fit or Features? 2 Criteria to Consider When Evaluating a Technology Platform for Mining

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SEARCHING FOR THAT PERFECT PIECE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUR MINE SHOULD FILL YOU WITH EXCITEMENT AND CURIOSITY, NOT DREAD AT HAVING TO WADE THROUGH TECHNOLOGICAL JARGON.

Evaluating technology to make an informed decision for your organization can be a daunting task for anyone. As new working environments (i.e., remote offices, dispersed teams) intersect with the constantly changing technology landscape, knowing the right questions to ask a technology provider becomes more complicated. Long lists of feature and function capabilities make it hard to see the whole picture – and easy to overlook some of the aspects that can make technology an excellent fit for your company.

Instead of running down a list of features, focus on how the technology fits your business goals, your team structure, and what meaningful improvements it can bring to your mine.

In short, it's better to focus on the big picture when it comes to technology – how does it fit with the existing structure of your business, and what potential does it have to help you grow?

Earlier this year, we looked at “4 Key Considerations to Transition into an Increasingly Digital Mine”. The 4 considerations were: Data access, licensing and permission limitations, task alignment, and institutional knowledge. Here are two additional criteria for evaluating software platforms that shouldn't be overlooked:

1. EASE OF DEPLOYMENT

Many technology platforms require complicated, individualized, and sometimes painful implementations for

team rollout. This is not unique to mining – and even other existing platforms at the mine (HR, Accounting, etc.) face these issues.

As an industry platform, SourceOne® works across the mining data and process chain. This is a new type of platform with far-reaching capabilities, yet deploying the platform is simple:

- a. The SourceOne platform can be safely deployed remotely. In a world of restricted travel and dispersed working environments, the deployment of technology must be flexible. This includes the ability for deployment and implementation to be performed from a remote location. SourceOne is built with this in mind, to take advantage of virtual machine and containerized deployment methods. These techniques allow for a smooth deployment, regardless of location in the world.
- b. Updates and installation. The SourceOne platform uses modern installation and update technology. Like web-based technology, version updates for many machines at once is straightforward and clear. This can be administered by the IT group and includes Active Directory for permission and user creation. The update technology makes it, so there are never software version mismatches at a site, version dependency issues, and complex installation and update processes.

2. OPTIMIZING YOUR MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE – YOUR PEOPLE

It cannot be said enough: Your people are the most critical asset to your mine. Keeping your people safe, productive, and focused on their work is what technology should empower them to do. The SourceOne platform empowers collaborative and streamlined work with open data and collaboration tools, integrations with other software, and more. In addition to these features, there are less immediately apparent but equally important features of the SourceOne platform that allow your people to do their best work while optimizing for time and what they already know:

- a. External reporting capabilities. If you are like many mining organizations, you may already be taking advantage of a suite of reporting and analytic tools (such as Microsoft Power BI or Tableau by Salesforce). These powerful tools can deliver insights into your operation – but are only as useful as the data provided to it. Many times, this requires complex data transformations from the source data, and the data itself may not be accessible in an open format. This leaves the picture incomplete – and forces people to use tools they may be less familiar with or tools that do not have access to all the data they need.

The SourceOne platform addresses these issues with an open data format and data connectors that make all the data in SourceOne accessible (including historical versions) to external reporting and analytics tools. This level of interoperability and connection is not to be understated. All versions of any data point in the SourceOne platform can be accessed by analytics and reporting tools you may already be using. The result is

not a blob of unreadable data, rather data that these tools can use. This translates to more effective and efficient use of the data and allows your company to use analytics tools they may already be familiar with (or if you aren't using them, it will enable you to do so). This means more efficient use of everyone's time at the operation and less time spent transforming and transferring data around.

- b. Validation tools. How do you know that your implemented data and processes are correct or what you need or want? How can these processes be improved? A large percentage of time is spent on validating the provenance of data and the processes used to create, use, and report on that data. SourceOne created a toolkit that takes advantage of automatic validation, and as an industry platform, has a far-reaching scope of centralized data access and process capture. The more validation and automation that is implemented, the more efficient the mine can be, and the more value your mine brings you. Process improvement cannot start without process awareness and validation, which is what SourceOne provides for your mine.

CONCLUSION

Do not be afraid to ask the hard questions when evaluating technology, and remember a holistic approach to a platform will lead to the best results for bringing value to your mine. Feature lists are nice to have but look beyond them to understand the benefits of how a modern industry platform for mining can make authentic changes for your operation. When it comes to technology for your mine, it's about fit over features.

Through products that revolutionize data connectivity and data management, their decades of experience in the industry and freedom from restrictive legacy technology, the Eclipse team is uniquely equipped to bring a much-demanded sea of change to the industry.
