

Getting Started on Your IPMS Buying Journey

HELPFUL TIPS



Getting Started

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About This Guide

This document serves as a guide for companies considering transitioning to a new intellectual property management system (IPMS).

Learn essential steps to make your buying process more manageable and effective. This guide also addresses how to manage change throughout the process, which is a critical and often unexpected hurdle in moving to new, more productive systems.

Ready, Set, Go

If you're reading this guide, it's likely that your team is considering switching to a new IPMS. Perhaps you are transitioning away from homegrown IP management methods or upgrading from existing IP management technology that no longer meets your needs. Or maybe you're frustrated by the inefficiencies your IP team faces when working with multiple IP tools and applications.

In today's business environment, protecting and extracting value from your IP requires a platform that provides greater visibility into your global assets and enables employees to make informed business decisions.

It's easy to get lost in the details of the IPMS buying process. The most important thing to remember throughout the process is that your company has decided that change is necessary. Don't lose sight of this decision as you go through the process.



Change almost never fails because it's too early. It almost always fails because it's too late."

Seth Godin

Author, Marketing Expert, and Entrepreneur

01

Identify Your Major Drivers for Change

First, identify your primary challenges and goals to help you stay focused on your “North Star” throughout the process. There are many different reasons and situations that compel IP teams to move to a new IPMS.

Once you’ve identified these primary drivers, you’ll want to start assembling your team and preparing them to participate in the buying journey and be advocates for change.

What Is Your IP Team’s Major Motivation to Move to a new IPMS?

- Managing your growing IP portfolio and docketing processes in a more effective and comprehensive way
- Taking advantage of new levels of automation, online collaboration, and AI tools to increase productivity and remove bottlenecks
- Supporting strategic business decisions with better access to consolidated IP data and analytics, and competitive intelligence
- Strengthening security and addressing concerns about the vulnerability of your IP data in your current IP management software
- Improving collaboration with outside counsel or shifting outside counsel work to in-house
- Managing your budget as effectively as possible
- Addressing dissatisfaction with your current vendor’s product or customer support

02

Form Your Stakeholder Buying Team

According to the research firm Gartner, the average size of a buying group for a B2B SaaS solution ranges from 6-10 people.¹ Start with choosing group leaders, and then a selection of stakeholders representing critical viewpoints for specific IP needs:

- 1. Executive Sponsor:** Ideally, the sponsor is a senior manager on the IP team who can articulate a clear vision, establish well-defined project goals, and facilitate timely decision-making. The Executive Sponsor promotes the project across the organization and secures vital buy-in from other senior leaders and stakeholders.
- 2. Project Leader:** This person should manage the project and move your project forward. The individual should be excited about the project and committed to seeing it through to completion.
- 3. Power Users:** Select individuals who use the IPMS everyday need to be involved throughout the process from identifying the needs, shaping the project vision, and selection.



¹ The B2B Buying Journey: key stages and how to optimize them. (n.d.). Gartner. <https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey>

03

Identify Your Company's Procurement Requirements

The role of the Procurement Officer is to manage the process of acquiring goods and services for an organization, ensuring quality, cost-effectiveness, and compliance with policies. This involves sourcing suppliers, negotiating contracts, managing inventory, and maintaining relationships with vendors.

Some companies require the Procurement Officer to be involved from the start, so be sure to check your company's policy. You may also have very specific procurement information gathering requirements that are vital to plan for ahead of time.



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Get Your Team Aligned on a Project Vision

One of the biggest and often unexpected challenges to purchasing/adopting a new SaaS platform can be managing change. Employees are accustomed to current processes and products, regardless of how ineffective those methods may be. It's important to bring others along on your transformation journey and get them excited about the possibilities that come with a new system and tools.

To get your team and leadership on board, you need to align others with a vision of what's possible with a new system. As you do this, allow yourself to imagine all the possibilities and value a new system could bring, and how it could enable you to have an even greater impact on the business. Many organizations will use the same IPMS for more than five years. Aim for an IPMS that will set your team up for success and grow with you as your priorities evolve.



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Explore What Could Be Possible in a New IPMS

Below are the many capabilities that are possible with top-rated IPMS systems.

Discuss these options as a group and determine which are the most critical to start with.

 Operational Efficiency & Automation	 IP Lifecycle Management	 Data-Driven IP Intelligence	 Portfolio Visibility	 Technology/ Security	 Enhanced Collaboration
<p>Automated IP Docketing Reminders: Reduce risk with a global law engine that automatically calculates matter dates and sends reminders.</p>	<p>Complete IP Tracking: Maximize your use of IP assets by managing the entire innovation-IP lifecycle from idea generation to prosecution, renewals through monetization.</p>	<p>Decision Support: Choose the best course of action for prosecution or portfolio pruning with easily accessible patent analytics, competitive intelligence, trends, and costs.</p>	<p>Portfolio Management: Deliver more value to your company with the ability to organize, manage, and prioritize your IP assets and portfolios to get a better view of strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>Platform Security: Protect new ideas in development and all IP activity with the most stringent security.</p>	<p>Outside Counsel: Communicate and share documents seamlessly from your IPMS.</p>
<p>Streamlined Workflows: Streamline communication processes and coordination among team members, making it easier to track progress, secure approvals, and share updates.</p>	<p>Institutional Knowledge: Retain a history of all innovation and IP-related decisions in a single platform.</p>	<p>IP Project Insights: Make easier decisions on licensing, M&A, and other projects with all related data, patent analytics, and AI insights in one place.</p>	<p>Portfolio Budgets: Gain more control over your budget with the ability to monitor global IP costs for your entire portfolio or a selected set of IP families.</p>	<p>User Security: Protect your sensitive data with controlled employee access.</p>	<p>Cross-Team Communication: Improve coordination with teams outside IP (such as marketing and outside counsel) with a centralized portal for activities such as trademark search and clearance.</p>
<p>Automated PTO Downloads: Lighten manual work with automatic downloading of documents and correspondence.</p>	<p>Integrated IP Services: Reduce the risk of missed deadlines and make payment/filing decisions by sending instructions from a central system.</p>	<p>Outside Counsel Performance: Optimize your outside counsel budget as effectively as possible with the ability to track and compare performance vs. costs.</p>	<p>Patent Classification: Assess your company's patent coverage by creating a private patent taxonomy using AI. Evaluate competitors using the same and compare side-by-side.</p>	<p>Sensitive Data: Ensure compliance with government using advanced security permission controls for IP subject to export control and other sensitive data such as trade secrets.</p>	<p>Cross-Functional Innovation: Capture new ideas with inventor portals and provide virtual workspaces where other inventors can provide feedback and reviewers can evaluate and rank submissions.</p>
<p>AI-Driven Docketing: Save time by allowing AI to automatically process PTO documents and correspondence.</p>	<p>Application Integration: Connect your systems needed to manage data, documents, expenses, and employee access in one platform. Reduce data duplication and bottlenecks.</p>	<p>Operational Management: Stay on top of critical IP metrics such as productivity, monthly invention submissions, global and country filing details to meet annual goals.</p>	<p>IP Relationship Insights: Make decisions in context with the ability to view relationships between different types of IP as related to products, agreements, and conflicts.</p>	<p>Hosting/Access: Provide reliable and secure access from your IP data.</p>	<p>R&D — IP Alignment: Achieve seamless collaboration between R&D and IP to ensure inventor focus on business goals and innovation that also meets freedom-to-operate criteria.</p>

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Determine Requirements for Final Approval

Your organization may have a very defined process for approval, or it may not. Before moving ahead, investigate which approvals will be needed to move forward as smoothly as possible.

An IPMS purchase often involves a 3-to-5 year contract, which often requires financial approvals beyond the standard departmental purchase.



- **Senior Management/Department Head Approval:** Identify in advance the person or persons who will make final sign-off decisions on the entire project or sections of the project.
- **Finance:** Determine the finance team member responsible for budget approval. Depending on the company's size, this could be the CFO or VP of Finance.
- **Procurement:** Many companies now have a separate Procurement Officer or department. Make sure your Procurement Officer is involved and aware early on of your project.
- **Technical/Security:** Consult with the IT/Security/DevOps team to determine who will conduct this review. Often their stringent requirements will quickly shorten your list of possible vendors.
- **Legal Department:** Find out which person on your legal team will review, negotiate, and approve contracts. Learn in advance what steps they have for finalizing contracts and the average length of time.

07

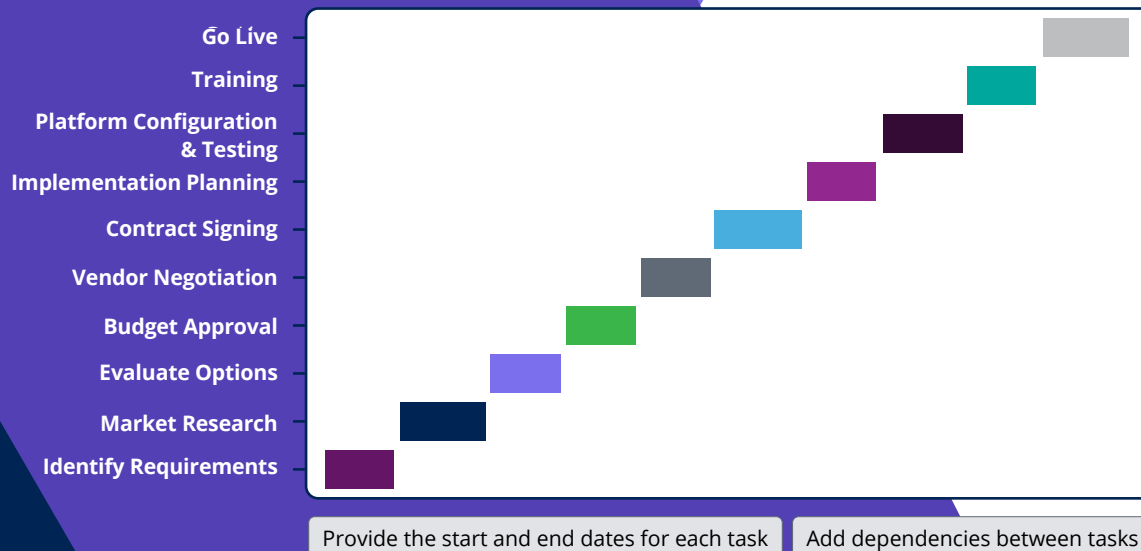
Create a Project Timeline

According to research firm Gartner, the average timeline for a SaaS buying process is around six to nine months with many businesses taking a longer period of time to finalize a software purchase. So, it's a good idea to create a reasonable timeline and try to adhere to it and keep your team on schedule.

Steps to consider for your timeline:

- Identify Future State/Vision
- Determine Project Approval Requirements
- Identify Challenges & Requirements
- Figure Out Your Security Requirements
- Develop a Short List of Vendors
- Evaluate Software Vendors
- Make Your Choice & Secure Approval
- Finalize the Contract

Gantt Chart for Purchasing a SaaS Platform



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Team Communication Throughout the Process

Once you have formed your team and created your project timeline, it is important to communicate frequently and openly with everyone involved throughout the process.

Regular communication with your team and stakeholders will help avoid misunderstandings about your goals and minimize the risk of the project stalling. Your core buying team may require weekly or biweekly communication, while senior decision makers may only need monthly updates on decisions that have been made.



To achieve a sustainable change, it is important to monitor progress over the long term and to communicate the degree of achievement transparently to all parties involved.”

CIO article: [Change management: Achieve your goals with the right change model](#) | CIO

Summary: Ensuring Meaningful Change

Businesses face increasing competitive pressures, and the pace of innovation isn't slowing down. Today's IP teams are responsible for safeguarding some of a business's most valuable assets. There are many risks to staying in the same system: the risk of making suboptimal decisions, the risk of losing valuable intellectual property assets, and the risk of losing your competitive edge.

Throughout the buying process, it's important to focus on selecting a system that will significantly improve your IP processes and ability to impact business success over time.

It can be difficult for staff to envision or embrace changes from current processes, but it is vital that you choose a system that delivers meaningful results. Ensuring that everyone on your buying team understands the possible new outcomes and agrees to a vision for growth will result in the best long-term buying decision for the health of your IP efforts and business.

Additional Resources & Inspiration to Get You Started:

- [*Change management: Achieve your goals with the right change model | CIO*](#)
- [*The 8-Step Process for Leading Change | Dr. John Kotter*](#)
- [*\\$80 Trillion and Growing: Lisa Jorgenson on Why IP Matters*](#)
- [*Ultimate Guide to Stakeholder Communication in Tech*](#)

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