

BUYER'S GUIDE - How to Select the Right Product

The process of selecting the right IP management system can be daunting. Due to the time required for full implementation, it can be months or even a year before the features of a system are fully appreciated or exploited. It is therefore crucial to make the right selection the first time around. Interestingly, over ninety percent of the systems we sell are to replace an existing system, many of which were purchased only a year or two earlier.

With 16 years of experience, we have been exposed to thousands of consumers in this niche market ... from the humble practitioner who has just "opened shop" and cannot seem to make a choice, to the largest organizations armed with external consultants and 20 page RFI's ... and each may easily wind up with the right or wrong system.

Whether through RFI or question-and-answer, in the last few years we have noticed an alarming focus on form over function. Specifically, the volume of questions about system architecture, email capability, document management compatibility and the like are beginning to dwarf the volume of questions related to the practice of prosecuting and maintaining Intellectual Property rights. These questions are important and we take them quite seriously. The problem is that many consumers assume that all systems are solid at the core. In other words "all IP systems must do the job of calendaring correctly, so why not brush the surface on such issues and focus on the bells and whistles?"

So what can be done up-front to minimize risk? The complete answer to this question would require hours of discussion. Regardless, here are a few thoughts that may help guide the first time buyer (or perhaps the second time buyer after having been less-than-satisfied the first time around) ...