Quality management software buying guide

Choosing a quality improumenet tool to prevent costly mistakes, increase resilience, and boost profitability.

A best practice guide to procuring a management system which will deliver long lasting quality improvement and operational excellence.

Qualsys

Qualsys's software and solutions help you plan, manage and improve processes for making your business fitter, faster and stronger.

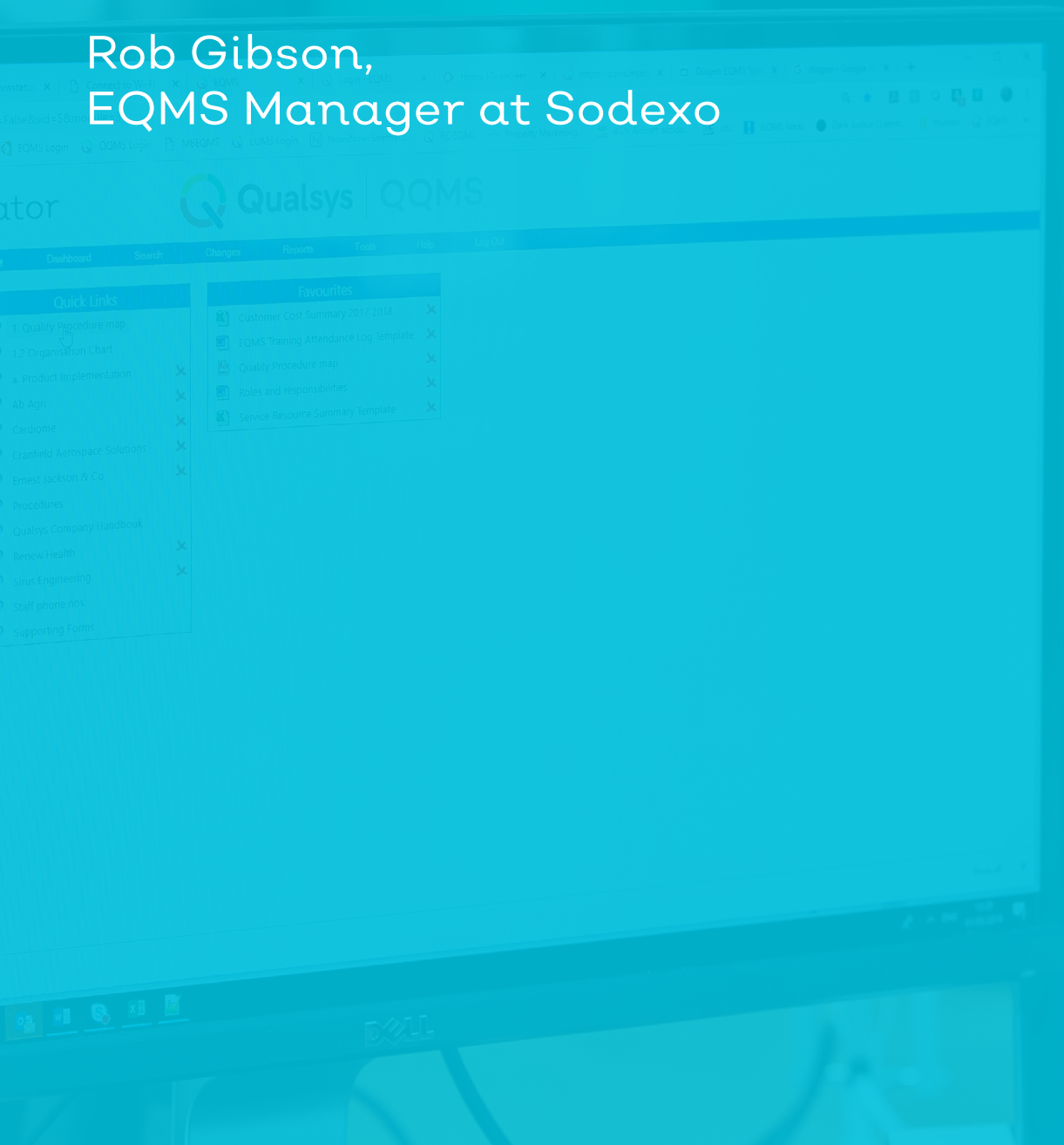We're familiar with many standards and regulations, including:

FDA 21 CFR Part 11

ISO 9001, 14001, 27001, 31000, 13485, 14791 45001

GxP QUALITY SYSTEMS

MHRA Regulating Medicines and Medical Devices

TRUSTPILOT
★★★★★

Capterra
★★★★½
USER REVIEWS

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"EQMS by Qualsys reduces the cost of compliance with our international regulations. We have improved processes, more control and better visibility."

Rob Gibson,
EQMS Manager at Sodexo

1.

Welcome to our guide

Once you've decided you need an integrated quality management system, you're faced with the prospect of wading through the marketplace, comparing multiple systems, until you find the right solution for the right price.

We understand that this is most likely not your full time job and you've got to do all of this whilst managing your normal responsibilities at the same time! This may seem like a daunting task, but it shouldn't be.

Kate Armitage
Compliance Director

We've put together a six step guide to help you through the process.

This guide will help you make the right decision and that you get the best solution for your needs. We'll cover everything from features, getting the most from a demo and trial and building a case for return on investment, to help you plan a budget and put your proposal together.

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Desired qualities of quality management software tool: Framing your objectives and requirements	EQMS	Manual	Sharepoint
Visibility	●●●●●	●○○○○	●●●●●
Audit trail	●●●●●	○○○○○	○○○○○
Scalable	●●●●●	●○○○○	●●●●●
Lifetime cost of ownership	●●●●●	●○○○○	●●●●●
Efficiency	●●●●●	●○○○○	●○○○○
Accessibility	●●●●●	●○○○○	●●●●●
Functionality	●●●●●	●●○○○	●●○○○
Reporting capabilities	●●●●●	●○○○○	●●○○○
Configurable	●●●●●	●●○○○	●○○○○
Low initial cost	●●○○○	●●●●●	●●●●●
Maintenance cost	●●●○○	●●○○○	●●●○○
Speed of implementation	●●○○○	●●●○○	●●○○○
Ownership	●●●●●	○○○○○	●○○○○
Ability to manage change	●●●●●	●○○○○	●○○○○
Compliance	●●●●●	●●○○○	●○○○○

Image: It can be useful to compare your current issues wiht your solution to get buy in

2.

Your objectives

Getting the right eQMS starts by establishing what you need and your long term business objectives. This will also help you to communicate the project goals and rally support internally.

Here are twenty of the most common reasons quality practitioners started talking with Qualsys about replacing their current systems in 2019:

1. Manual, paper based systems absorbing time and energy of quality team so there is no time for continuous improvement
2. No visibility and data of quality performance in some areas of the business
3. End-of-life software applications no longer supported
4. Single purpose applications such as SharePoint and Box limited to just documentation control - no risk, issue, and CAPA management
5. Current quality management system not scalable for growing or changing organisation
6. Company planning to achieve one of multiple ISO standards and limited by management system
7. No integration of quality, environment, health and safety, information security, etc.
8. Reactive, frustrated company culture
9. High Cost of Poor Quality resulting in a strategic continuous improvement project to gain more insights and control
10. Failed audit
11. A strategic project to gain competitive advantage by giving customers access to micro-quality management systems
12. No formal management system
13. High growth and a need to gain control before issues arise
14. Company is entering new markets and needs to meet new compliance requirements
15. Desire to share best practices across a global organisation
16. Lack of engagement with the management system
17. Outdated legacy systems which aren't user friendly
18. Existing vendor price increase
19. Outgrown existing quality management software
20. Homegrown tools aren't fit for purpose, too costly to maintain, no resource to manage them

Most quality practitioners plan to implement a new quality improvement tool due to either one or a mixture of several of the above challenges.

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"[Qualsys] delivers over and above expectation. Not only are they highly responsive in the Pre-Sales process (like most), this level of responsiveness continues throughout your journey of engagement: Project Management, Implementation, Go-Live and then
into BAU."

Paul Leipnik
Implementation & Validation Consultant, Pharmaceuticals

Document Manager

Risk Manager

Equipment & Asset Manager

Unified To Do List, Workflow & KPI Reporting

Training Record Manager

Supplier Manager

CAPA, Complaint & Incident Manager

Audits & Inspection Manager

Image: EQMS by Qualsys is a modular software tool. Each employee has their own customised view.

3.

What should I look for in a vendor?

There are lots of tools which claim they will deliver rapid return on investment, time and cost savings for your business. What really matters will be unique to your business.

Best practice approach to selecting a vendor:

1) Long list vendors

Ask employees for recommendations, industry peers, and search google to get a list of approximately 10 quality management software tools. After a look through their website and a short 15 minute discovery call, you'll swiftly be able to get this long list down to around five quality management softwre tools.

2) Prepare for the demonstration

Before the demonstration, we recommend using our vendor scorecard spreasheet. It's a simple spider diagram you can tailor by adding your own needs and filling it in as you go to compare costs, features, benefits, service, validation, experience in industry. This way you will stay focused on your goals without getting derailled by scope creep as more people get involved with the project as it evolves.

Email info@qualsys.co.uk to request the vendor scorecard

3) Have five demonstrations of quality management software

Pairing up with at least one other person in the business, we recommend arranging one hour demonstrations with each of the quality management software providers. This will help you to get a real understanding of the tools, technology and services available to you.

> Tip: Ask the vendor what their internal software stack looks like. This helps you know where the weaknesses are in their software.

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4) Scope the project

Implementing a quality management system isn't as straight forward as many other enterprise software solutions. The goal is usually to get everyone using the same system and ensure the tool is configured to meet the needs of every department.

After the first demonstration, Qualsys invites you to have a scoping workshop which brings together stakeholders from across your business to ensure all the important questions are on the table early in the process. This helps meet the expectations of departments in your business and ensures a smooth implementation.

5) Do more research

Now you know a bit more about the vendor, it's time to make sure everything adds up.

We recommend checking online reviews, social forums and talk to their existing customers. If you don't already know any of their customers, most vendors will arrange this for you.

Qualsys also has a portal of templates and onboarding tools to help you get buy in from information security, leadership and internal teams. Our business development team are able to give you a unique login.

6) Meet the vendor

Procuring a governance, risk and compliance solution is an important decision. At Qualsys, we always recommend getting the decision makers in the room for 2 - 3 hours to understand more about the solution and ask any questions. Qualsys also hosts monthly open days on the third Thursday of the month. This is your opportunity to meet the team, ask any questions and get the project moving.

"EQMS system provides an excellent platform to enable the company to grow without the admin burden of managing documentation and training. Qualsys tailor the planning, configuration and testing to suit the company's requirements."

Sajeevan N.

Head of Quality, BAP Pharma Ltd.

4.

What should I budget?

To set your budget, we recommend calculating the total cost of ownership of your existing business processes and contrasting that to the four year cost of the tool.

Consider fators such as:

- How much waste is there?
- How long does it take to process?
- What is the cost of the wasted time?

Most leadership teams are surprised when they realise how much lost opportunity and costs are going into systems which aren't fit for purpose.

Getting the budget

We would always recommend building a business case and presenting that to your leadership and finarical decision makers. Qualsys provides a business case writing service. If you would like support, please talk with your dedicated business development contact or email info@qualsys.co.uk.

A note about our pricing

Qualsys's pricing is in line with our mission to make quality and compliance accessible and natural for everyone in the business. We have a scalable pricing model designed to help you to embed quality into the DNA of your business.

"With EQMS by Qualsys, we have a central system for all our ISO policies, procedures, records and training materials. It is accessible by all staff within the firm."

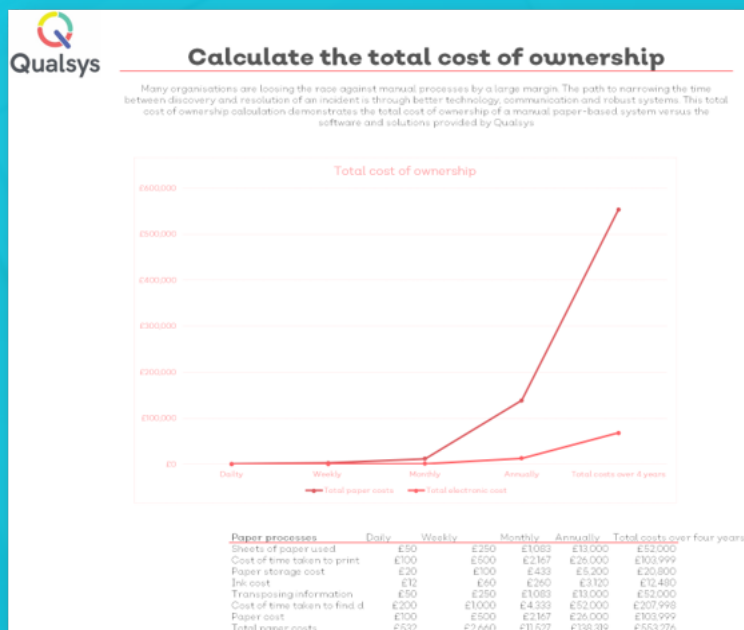Greig Robertson, Project Manager

Aberdein Considine

Image: Toal cost of ownership template
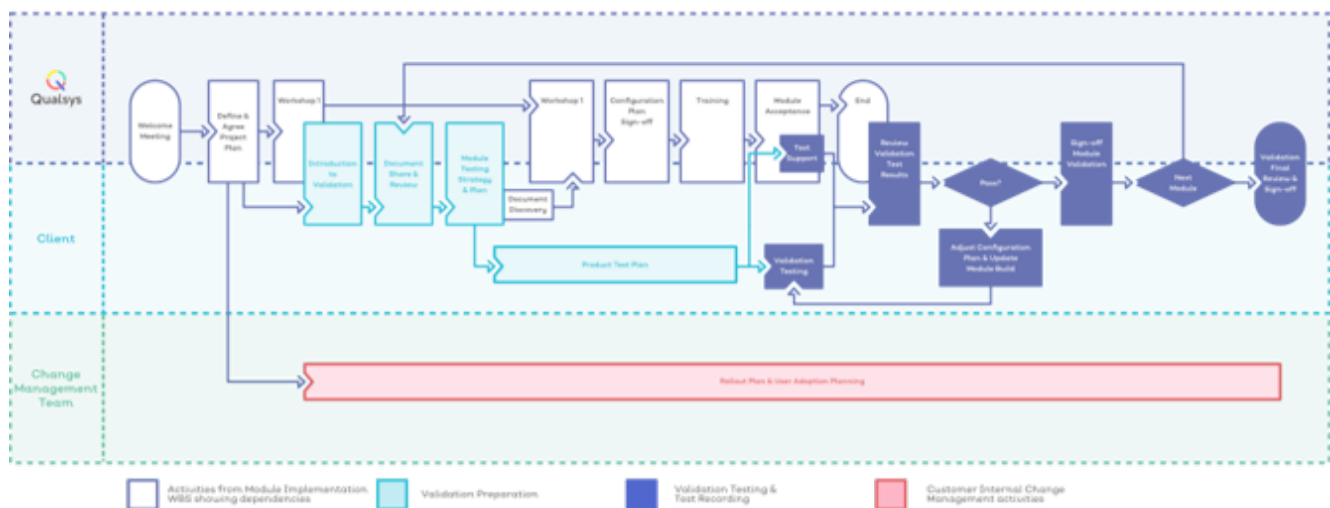
5.

How long will it take to implement?

Implementing a quality management system is no mean feat!

The duration of the implementation will vary based on:

- Complexity of the project
- Size of the project
- Amount of data
- Number of modules
- Existing systems and state of management system
- Your internal resources

Qualsys provides a range of services throughout the implementation process to accelerate your onboarding time. Data migration, product training, configuration support, and even end user engagement services are all available.

As a result, some customers implement EQMS within very short timescales e.g. a month. Others it can take a year or more to ensure it is properly implemented across a global organisation with complex challenges.

"We needed all of our quality, health and safety and environment management, customer feedback, issues and training to be managed centrally so we can identify risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities."

John Thompson, QHSE Manager

A G Barr

6.

What mistakes should I avoid?

1) Don't underestimate the implementation process

Very few businesses have all of their processes, procedures and policies ready to upload and configure on a new system. In fact, usually they're in a bit of a mess. Legacy systems are outdated and tired. And although the business itself has changed a lot, their processes haven't changed with it.

You might be in a similar situation, and buying a GRC solution for that very reason. But tread carefully. Any vendor who tells you they can implement a new system in a week is setting unrealistic expectations and will only disappoint at a later stage.

It takes a lot of time, energy and investment to get right. At Qualsys, we intend our solutions to have a truly transformational effect. We're talking about providing complete visibility, ownership and accountability. Overhauling and streamlining your processes. Making compliance a natural and invisible part of the everyday. This is one of your business's most important strategic and operational projects.

2) Make sure you and the vendor have a good cultural fit

The second thing to consider is whether the vendor fits your company culture. Do they share the same values? Are they positive and proactive? If something seems odd, unrealistic or concerning now, imagine what it'll feel like weeks or months down the line.

Companies don't always work well together. They have different aims and intentions, and a collaboration would feel very forced. At Qualsys, we're all about "growing by case study". This means we want satisfied, happy customers. We won't sell you our products if we don't think it's a good fit. Partnership is very important to us. We want to make sure your systems move with the times, and we want you to love using them. We want you to get amazing results that we can share with our other customers.

We always encourage our potential customers to shop around and to either visit or call one or two of our existing customers. We find this creates a positive community of sharing, where you know there's someone who's been through the same process you're hoping to embark upon.

3) Consider all your requirements

Our software consists of 10 different modules designed to work together as one integrated solution. Most customers start with three or four core modules – such as document management, audit management and issue management – and then extend the number as they go. Some customers choose to implement all 10 modules at the same time.

It doesn't really matter which way you do it. Our pricing model means you buy administrator licences from across any of the modules.

But whichever modules you opt for, make sure you have a clear "why" from the very start of the project. By this, we mean knowing exactly what you want the software to achieve in the long run. What do you want it to change throughout your business? What results do you want to see as you go along?

Our team will help you understand what questions to ask and who to speak with. It may be that you have an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system which you could integrate with a GRC system. Perhaps you need a system to keep thousands of disorganised company documents under tight control. Or maybe your business extends over a number of sites and you want a different configuration or separate systems.

It's common for your specification to change. Work with your leadership team and management team to clearly define the scope of the project, and put it in a place where everyone can refer back to it. This will help prevent stress later! Once the project gets underway, there will be lots of moving parts and you are going to be a lot busier. But remember, you don't need to do everything at once.

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4) Don't neglect the engagement process

Engaging the people who are going to be using the software is crucial. If your employees have no idea why your business has chosen to introduce the system into their daily lives, or why they should be using it, they're not going to. They need to understand what it will do for them and how it'll help them to work more effectively.

We don't leave this up to you. We provide the software but we also give you your own customer success champion and dedicated account manager. They work to help you raise awareness, engage your employees and encourage the action you need.
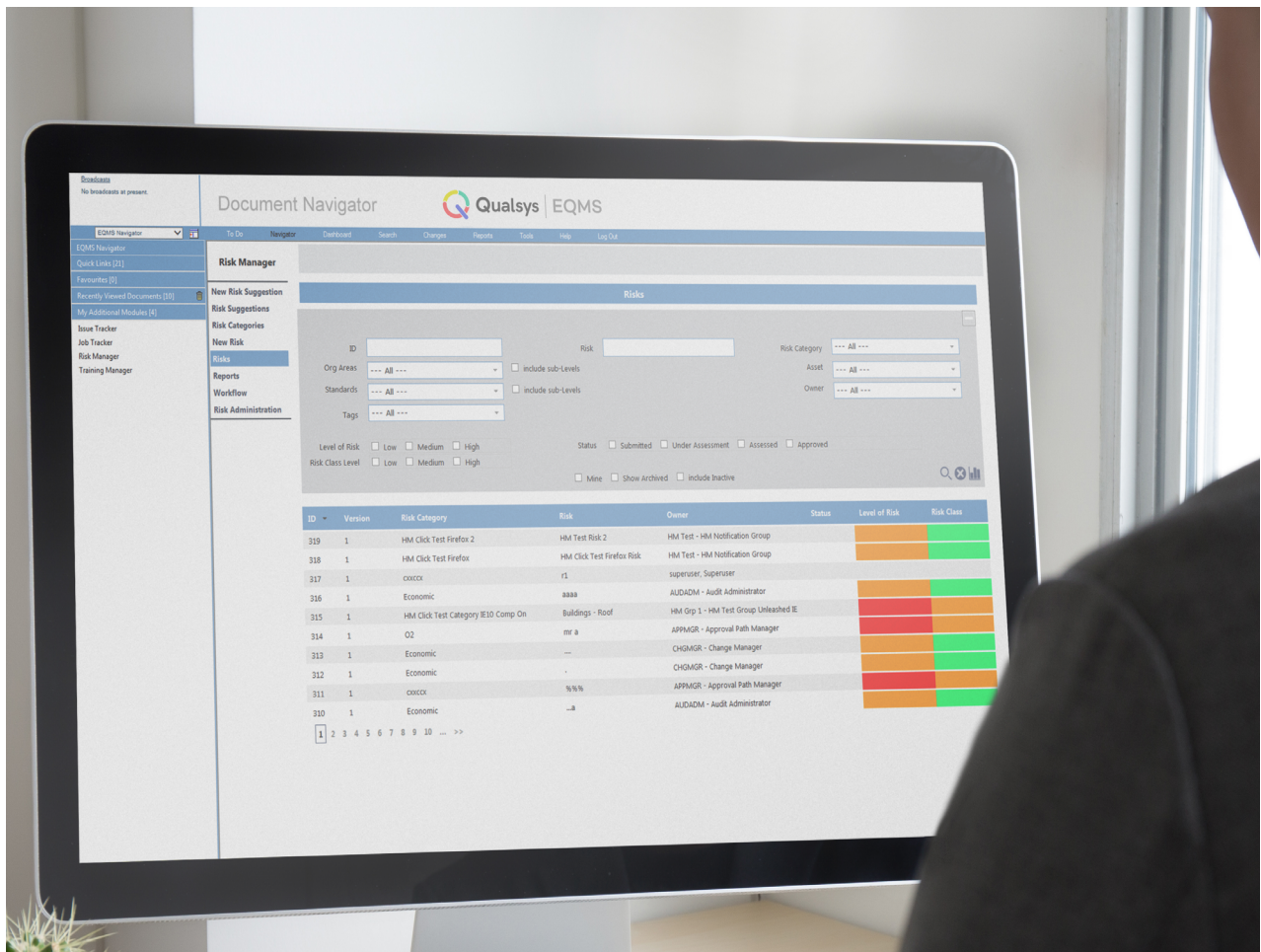
5) You're not stuck with something that doesn't work for you

Our customers love our feature-rich modules, but sometimes the software doesn't quite fit the bill without a little tweaking and customisation.

When this happens, we ask whether this additional functionality will benefit all other customers. If it will, we'll usually do the extra development free of charge. If it's a very custom request, we'll ask for a contribution towards the cost of making the changes. If you think you'll need lots of changes made, talk to us and we'll consult our development team about how we can develop those enhancements for you.

We've had some of our customers request almost entirely bespoke modules as it's more cost-effective and quicker than doing it with other vendors or internally.

We have a process whereby requests for change are put into a development 'sprint'. Each sprint lasts for three weeks. At the end of the three weeks, we put all the enhancements live on your system. This is a very customised option, and requests for change range from a few hundred pounds to several thousand.

Want to see what we can do for you?

Schedule a discovery call

During the call, we listen to your questions, find out what you're looking for and tell you whether our solution can meet your needs. We can also give you an overview of our pricing.

The call usually lasts 15 minutes. If we're a good fit for you, we'll arrange the next steps.

Email: info@qualsys.co.uk
Call: +44 (0) 114 282 3338