

EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

ERP SOFTWARE SELECTION CHECKLIST

FOR EXECUTIVE SPONSORS

An Executive Sponsor Review Tool Applied Within the Alentra Methodology



GOVERNED ERP
SELECTION DECISION

Grounded in Sponsor Intent, Governed Evidence,
Investment Quality, and Implementation Readiness

Powered by The CFO-TA, the Executive Sponsor Platform

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ERP Software Selection Checklist

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Selecting an ERP is one of the most consequential business-investment decisions within an Enterprise Transformation Program. The decision determines which platform, implementation partner, implementation approach, commercial structure, and SOW will be relied upon to support the enterprise the Executive Sponsor intends to create.

This ERP Software Selection Checklist helps Executive Sponsors and authorized Decision Authorities assess whether the definition of ERP fit, Sponsor Intent, evaluation standard, Meaning-Aligned Requirements, Sponsor-controlled demonstrations, Governed Selection Evidence, complete candidate analysis, investment position, SOW, validation readiness, and mobilization conditions required for a defensible decision have been sufficiently established.



The checklist is a practical review tool applied within the Alentra Methodology. The Alentra Methodology governs the work, sequence, deliverables, decisions, and progression across Plan, Source, Implement, Value Realization, and Operations. The checklist consolidates ERP-specific review considerations addressed through the applicable steps of that authoritative 30-step methodology.

The CFO-TA is the Executive Sponsor Platform. It connects checklist responses to Sponsor Intent, methodology deliverables, Meaning-Aligned Requirements, candidate evidence, authorized decisions, SOW commitments, implementation conditions, validation requirements, and the governed artifact chain that preserves continuity throughout implementation, Operations, Value Realization, continuous improvement, and future change.

Throughout this checklist, “candidate” refers to the complete proposed solution candidate. For an ERP decision, this includes the core platform, implementation partner, implementation approach, commercial structure, SOW, supporting applications and services, required integrations, material data and architecture dependencies, third-party dependencies, governance conditions, evidence and validation requirements, and organizational commitments under evaluation.

How to Use This Checklist

Apply each checklist item when it becomes relevant through the applicable step of the Alentra Methodology. Record the evidence supporting the response and identify the Executive Sponsor or authorized Decision Authority responsible for resolving material gaps.

A checked item should confirm that the underlying intent, decision, requirement, boundary, condition, commitment, or evidence has been made explicit, reviewed by the appropriate authority, and preserved in the applicable methodology deliverable or governing artifact. The strength and sufficiency of the supporting evidence matter more than the number of checked items.

The review domains organize related ERP selection considerations for practical use. The applicable Alentra Methodology steps govern when the work occurs, which deliverables are produced, who holds Decision Authority, what evidence is required, and when the Enterprise Transformation Program is ready to progress.

What This Checklist Reviews

The checklist brings the following ERP selection considerations into a single Executive Sponsor view:

- Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers and ERP-fit definition
- Complete Sponsor Intent and selection readiness
- Candidate qualification and evaluation design
- Meaning-Aligned Requirements, Sponsor-controlled demonstrations, and Governed Selection Evidence
- Complete candidate evaluation through the 15 Solution Selection Criteria applied to ERP
- Expected Value Feasibility, Total Cost of Ownership, Partner Delivery Risk, and tradeoff authorization
- Selection commitments and SOW alignment
- Implementation mobilization, validation, Value Realization, and lifecycle readiness

These review domains consolidate the ERP-specific conditions addressed through the Alentra Methodology and preserved through The CFO-TA. The applicable methodology steps determine when each condition is defined, reviewed, validated, authorized, and carried forward throughout the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle.

ERP is the solution class evaluated through this checklist, but the governing selection architecture is broader than ERP. The Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers establish the enterprise the solution must fit, the 15 Solution Selection Criteria provide the common Sponsor-governed evaluation standard, and ERP-specific evaluation factors determine the evidence required for the ERP decision.

Sponsor Intent and Selection Readiness

ERP selection should begin by defining what fit means before vendors demonstrate what their products can do. The 26 Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers help the Executive Sponsor establish the high-leverage positions concerning the operating model, distribution of authority, management system, economics, information architecture, technology architecture, and enterprise intelligence architecture that materially influence ERP fit.

The drivers are organized around six questions:

- How should the enterprise operate?
- How should authority be distributed?
- How should performance and value be measured?
- How should information be governed?
- How should technology be architected?
- How should intelligence, AI, and human decision-making work together?

The drivers inform Sponsor Intent by establishing the foundational positions that shape downstream decisions. The complete Sponsor Intent required for solution selection also includes Business Intent, Scope Intent, Transformation Approach Intent, Business Outcomes, Conditions of Success, Meaning-Aligned Requirements, and the complete selection criteria.

When Sponsor Intent is sufficiently explicit before candidates begin shaping the conversation, the organization can evaluate ERP platforms, implementation partners, implementation approaches, commercial structures, the SOW, governance conditions, and expected value against an authoritative Business-Side position.

Sponsor Intent is the Executive Sponsor-owned expression of purpose and foundation of the Transformation Definition. It is formed by three responsibilities that remain owned by the Executive Sponsor:

The CFO-TA is the Executive Sponsor Platform. It supports this work through guidance, methodology, authoring, analysis, deliverable production, validation, review, coordination, decision support, continuity, and Sponsor Intent Lifecycle Management across the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle.

Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers

- ☐ The applicable Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers have been identified.
- ☐ The Executive Sponsor has established sufficiently clear positions concerning the intended operating model.
- ☐ The intended distribution of enterprise, regional, business-unit, functional, and local authority is explicit.
- ☐ Standardization, governed variation, shared services, process ownership, workforce change, and acquisition integration positions are sufficiently defined.

- ☐ Governance, exception management, pricing authority, decision participation, escalation, and intervention positions are sufficiently defined.
- ☐ Performance management, management reporting, profitability measurement, cost allocation, and Value Realization positions are sufficiently defined.
- ☐ Data ownership, enterprise structure, chart of accounts, and Organizational Intelligence positions are sufficiently defined.
- ☐ Customization, integration, solution landscape, deployment, resilience, and ecosystem positions are sufficiently defined.
- ☐ AI ecosystem, agent strategy, delegated authority, and human-governance positions are sufficiently defined.
- ☐ Material tensions and dependencies among the drivers have been identified.
- ☐ Unresolved drivers are visible and classified according to their consequence for candidate qualification, demonstrations, evaluation, economics, the SOW, or implementation.
- ☐ The applicable driver positions are reflected in Sponsor Intent Assets.
- ☐ Changes to material driver positions require review by the appropriate Decision Authority.
- ☐ The CFO-TA preserves the current position, rationale, evidence, dependencies, Decision Authority, and authorized refinements for material drivers.
 - Business Intent
 - Scope Intent
 - Transformation Approach Intent

Business Intent defines the intended Business Outcomes, priorities, governing meaning, accountability expectations, validation requirements, and Conditions of Success. It establishes the business purpose the Enterprise Transformation Program must serve and the results the investment is expected to produce.

Scope Intent defines the complete business-change boundary required to achieve the intended outcomes. It establishes what the Enterprise Transformation Program will address, exclude, sequence, defer, transfer, or depend upon, and makes explicit the assumptions, responsibilities, interfaces, integrations, customizations, organizational

impacts, external dependencies, and Units of Transformation included within the authorized scope.

A Unit of Transformation is the smallest complete business-change boundary capable of meaningfully achieving, enabling, protecting, or validating a Business Outcome. It can span multiple processes, roles, decisions, systems, interfaces, data sets, controls, reports, organizational groups, and technology components.

Transformation Approach Intent makes implementation assumptions explicit before detailed planning begins. For each in-scope domain and process, it defines the expected degree of business-process change, organizational change, operating-model change, customization, integration responsibility, data remediation, sequencing, resource requirements, risk acceptance, and other conditions that materially influence implementation effort, estimates, staffing, timelines, and delivery planning.

Together, these responsibilities make explicit the outcome assumptions, scope assumptions, implementation assumptions, responsibilities, dependencies, and decision boundaries that materially influence solution selection, implementation effort, commercial commitments, expected value, Total Cost of Ownership, and the likelihood of achieving the intended Business Outcomes.

Sponsor Intent is operationalized through Sponsor Intent Assets. These governed business artifacts make approved Sponsor Intent explicit, actionable, referenceable, accessible, governable, validatable, traceable, and durable throughout the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle. Initial Sponsor Intent Assets are expected to be partial and are progressively refined as decisions are made, assumptions change, evidence develops, and operating conditions evolve.

Core Business Definitions establish the authoritative business meaning used to classify, measure, govern, automate, report, validate, and make decisions across the Enterprise Transformation Program and ongoing operations.

Business Intent Design is the discipline responsible for progressively defining Sponsor Intent before consequential commitments are made. Intent Governance preserves and governs that purpose as participants, decisions, assumptions, evidence, and operating conditions change.

Business Intent

☐ The business reason for considering a new ERP platform has been explicitly defined.

- ☐ The required Business Outcomes have been identified and authorized.
- ☐ Each Business Outcome describes the meaningful business change the Enterprise Transformation Program is expected to produce.
- ☐ The rationale for each Business Outcome has been documented.
- ☐ The intended priorities and governing meaning associated with each material Business Outcome have been made explicit.
- ☐ Accountability expectations associated with each material Business Outcome have been made explicit.
- ☐ The Conditions of Success have been defined at the Enterprise Transformation Program level.
- ☐ Validation requirements establish how conformance with Sponsor Intent and achievement of the intended Business Outcomes will be assessed.
- ☐ The evidence and measures required to evaluate Business Outcome achievement have been identified.
- ☐ Conditions that must remain true for the Enterprise Transformation Program to be considered successful have been identified.
- ☐ Core Business Definitions are explicit where differences in meaning could affect scope, requirements, evaluation, implementation, reporting, automation, validation, or AI-enabled behavior.
- ☐ The expected value of the ERP investment is connected to the Business Outcomes it must enable.
- ☐ Material assumptions influencing expected value have been made explicit.
- ☐ The Executive Sponsor can explain why the ERP investment is required in business terms.
- ☐ The CFO-TA contains or references the current Sponsor Intent Assets governing the selection.

Scope Intent

- ☐ The complete business-change boundary required to achieve the intended Business Outcomes has been identified.

- ☐ The Business Domains, processes, capabilities, roles, decisions, systems, interfaces, data sets, controls, reports, organizational groups, and technology components within scope have been identified.
- ☐ Units of Transformation preserve the smallest complete business-change boundaries capable of meaningfully achieving, enabling, protecting, or validating the intended Business Outcomes.
- ☐ Operating units, legal entities, geographies, user populations, and organizational impacts within scope have been identified.
- ☐ Required scope, optional scope, excluded scope, deferred scope, conditional scope, transferred scope, and candidate-proposed scope can be distinguished.
- ☐ Material interfaces, integrations, customizations, data, reporting, security, regulatory, and architecture boundaries have been identified.
- ☐ Responsibilities assigned to the platform provider, implementation partner, Business-Side, Technology, third parties, and other Enterprise Transformation Programs have been made explicit.
- ☐ External dependencies and protected boundaries have been documented.
- ☐ Candidate proposals can be compared using a common scope basis and consistent Units of Transformation.
- ☐ The Executive Sponsor has identified which scope decisions require direct Sponsor authorization.
- ☐ Candidate-recommended scope changes will be evaluated through the applicable Governing Tradeoff Decision.
- ☐ The CFO-TA preserves the rationale, evidence, Decision Authority, and authorized disposition associated with material scope decisions.

Transformation Approach Intent

- ☐ The intended implementation strategy has been established at the level required for candidate evaluation.
- ☐ For each in-scope domain and process, the expected degree of business-process change has been defined.

- ☐ For each in-scope domain and process, the expected degree of organizational and operating-model change has been defined.
- ☐ The organization has distinguished replatforming, process standardization, process optimization, business-process redesign, operating-model redesign, and broader business transformation where applicable.
- ☐ The organization's position on standardization, configuration, customization, extension, custom development, automation development, and Agentic AI development has been defined.
- ☐ The organization has identified where platform-standard practices are preferred and where business differentiation must be preserved.
- ☐ Integration responsibilities identify whether each connected system, the new platform, or both are expected to change.
- ☐ Existing customizations, interfaces, data conditions, process nuances, and specialized operating requirements that could materially affect implementation effort have been evaluated.
- ☐ The intended approaches to data remediation, migration, releases, sequencing, testing, validation, change enablement, cutover, stabilization, and operational transition have been established at the level required for selection.
- ☐ Resource requirements, risk acceptance, client responsibilities, provider responsibilities, and third-party responsibilities have been made explicit.
- ☐ Candidate estimates, staffing models, timelines, and detailed project plans can be evaluated against authorized Transformation Approach Intent.
- ☐ Material changes to Transformation Approach Intent require authorization by the appropriate Decision Authority.
- ☐ The CFO-TA preserves the current Transformation Approach Intent and its authorized refinements.

Decision and Governance Conditions

- ☐ The Executive Sponsor and delegated Decision Authorities have been identified.
- ☐ Decision rights are explicit for requirements, scope, architecture, data, security, commercial terms, implementation approach, and candidate selection.

- ☐ Materiality thresholds identify which decisions require escalation.
 - ☐ Exception and escalation paths have been established.
 - ☐ The basis for scoring, weighting, evidence acceptance, and tradeoff authorization has been approved before candidate evaluation.
 - ☐ Sponsor-owned decisions remain distinguishable from implementation management responsibilities.
 - ☐ Material decisions preserve rationale, evidence, assumptions, dissent, consequences, and authorized tradeoffs.
 - ☐ The CFO-TA provides a governed environment for maintaining the selection decision record.
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Candidate Qualification and Evaluation Design

Candidate Qualification

- ☐ Each candidate has been qualified against the applicable Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers.
- ☐ Each candidate demonstrates credible potential alignment with Sponsor Intent.
- ☐ Each platform can support the defined business domains and material scope boundaries.
- ☐ Relevant industry, regulatory, geographic, localization, security, data, and operational conditions have been considered.
- ☐ Material platform limitations have been identified.
- ☐ Native capabilities can be distinguished from configured, customized, extended, integrated, planned, and third-party-dependent capabilities.
- ☐ Dependencies on additional applications, integrations, data services, infrastructure, and partner-developed components have been identified.
- ☐ The proposed implementation partner possesses the demonstrated knowledge, experience, leadership, specialized expertise, delivery competencies, and organizational capacity required to convert platform potential into operating reality.

- ☐ The specific proposed delivery model has been evaluated separately from the implementation partner's underlying capability.
- ☐ Staffing commitments, resource continuity, location and availability, subcontractor arrangements, estimates, milestones, sequencing, dependencies, qualifications, exclusions, client responsibilities, contingency assumptions, status reporting practices, change-order procedures, commercial models, and commercial exposure have been made explicit.
- ☐ The implementation partner's proposed role aligns with Transformation Approach Intent.
- ☐ Potential conflicts, incentives, commissions, referral arrangements, and commercial relationships that could influence recommendations have been disclosed.
- ☐ The candidate's potential Fit-for-Purpose Alignment has been evaluated against the intended future-state business environment, operating model, complexity, and expected degree of transformation.
- ☐ The Executive Sponsor can understand why each candidate was included or excluded.
- ☐ Candidate qualification evidence is preserved through The CFO-TA.

Evaluation Design

- ☐ The organization has distinguished the 26 Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers that define the intended enterprise from the 15 Solution Selection Criteria used to evaluate the complete candidate and the ERP-specific factors used to determine the required evidence of fit.
- ☐ Material Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers have been classified as weighted considerations, mandatory conditions, non-compensating criteria, disqualification conditions, Governing Tradeoff Decisions, or SOW conditions as appropriate.
- ☐ The evaluation criteria have been approved before demonstrations and detailed scoring begin.
- ☐ Criteria weights reflect authorized Business Outcomes and Executive Sponsor priorities.
- ☐ Mandatory conditions and non-compensating criteria have been identified.
- ☐ Scoring guidance defines what each score represents.

- ☐ Evaluators understand which decisions they are authorized to make.
 - ☐ The evaluation distinguishes documented facts, demonstrated capabilities, assumptions, dependencies, estimates, roadmap commitments, and opinions.
 - ☐ Platform capability, Implementation-Partner Capability, and Partner Delivery Risk can be evaluated as distinct but connected decision domains.
 - ☐ The commercial structure and implementation approach are included in the evaluation.
 - ☐ Governed Selection Evidence quality, sufficiency, provenance, and limitations influence the evaluation result.
 - ☐ Validation and Evidence Readiness: The selected platform and implementation partner can support the Business-Side's validation responsibilities and produce the evidence required to assess continuing conformance with Sponsor Intent and achievement of the intended Business Outcomes.
 - ☐ Sponsor Intent Conformance, Business Outcome Support, and Fit-for-Purpose Alignment are evaluated as distinct decision domains.
 - ☐ Mandatory conditions, non-compensating criteria, evidence sufficiency requirements, disqualification conditions, contract conditions, and residual risks remain visible outside aggregate scoring.
 - ☐ Material uncertainty remains visible in the candidate assessment.
 - ☐ The evaluation design can be traced to Sponsor Intent through The CFO-TA.
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Meaning-Aligned Requirements, Demonstrations, and Evidence

Meaning-Aligned Requirements

- ☐ Requirements are connected to the Business Outcomes they support.
- ☐ Requirements are connected to the applicable Sponsor Intent Assets.
- ☐ Requirements reflect the applicable Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers.

- ☐ Each material requirement explains why the required capability or operating behavior matters.
- ☐ Core Business Definitions establish the authoritative business meaning where differences in definition, classification, interpretation, or use could affect candidate responses, decisions, reporting, controls, automation, validation, or AI-enabled actions.
- ☐ Decision Authorities, Decision Boundaries, Exception Rules, and Accountability Requirements are included where relevant.
- ☐ Evidence Requirements are identified for material candidate claims.
- ☐ Requirements distinguish mandatory needs from preferences and optional capabilities.
- ☐ Requirements preserve authorized scope boundaries.
- ☐ Requirements avoid embedding an incumbent process or candidate solution unless that constraint has been explicitly authorized.
- ☐ AI, automation, analytics, and Agentic AI requirements include explicit purpose, authoritative business meaning, inputs, outputs, data conditions, decision boundaries, authority, accountability, exceptions, evidence, validation, escalation, and human-governance conditions.
- ☐ The CFO-TA preserves traceability from Meaning-Aligned Requirements to Sponsor Intent.

Sponsor-Controlled Demonstrations

- ☐ Product demonstrations begin only after the Sponsor-owned positions required to define the tested concept of fit are sufficiently explicit.
- ☐ Demonstration scenarios test the candidate against the intended operating model, authority structure, management system, information architecture, technology architecture, and enterprise intelligence architecture where applicable.
- ☐ Demonstration scripts are created from Sponsor Intent and Meaning-Aligned Requirements.
- ☐ Every candidate must demonstrate the same required business scenarios.
- ☐ Required scenarios are completed before optional candidate capabilities are presented.

- ☐ Scripts define the business context, Core Business Definitions, starting conditions, required actions, decisions, authority boundaries, exceptions, outputs, and evidence.
- ☐ Demonstrations include realistic roles, data conditions, decision points, and exception conditions.
- ☐ AI-enabled demonstrations test normal conditions, exceptions, conflicting objectives, incomplete data, unauthorized requests, required escalation, and the evidence needed to validate resulting behavior.
- ☐ Copilots and agents demonstrate how they apply business meaning, operate within authority boundaries, manage exceptions, explain consequential actions, interact with human Decision Authorities, and produce attributable evidence.
- ☐ Candidates identify which capabilities are native, configured, customized, extended, integrated, planned, or dependent on third parties.
- ☐ Unscripted claims and optional capabilities are recorded separately from required scenario performance.
- ☐ Evaluators score observed evidence against the approved standard.
- ☐ Presentation quality does not substitute for evidence of capability.
- ☐ Material questions, exceptions, and follow-up evidence requests are documented.
- ☐ The CFO-TA produces and preserves demonstration scripts, evaluation responses, evidence requests, and resulting decision records.

Governed Selection Evidence

- ☐ Evidence standards define what candidates must provide to support material claims.
- ☐ Evidence is classified by type, source, relevance, reliability, currency, provenance, limitations, and decision significance.
- ☐ Candidate statements are distinguished from demonstrated capability, configurable capability, custom capability, third-party-dependent capability, implementation-partner-dependent capability, manual workarounds, future-roadmap capability, and insufficient evidence.
- ☐ Demonstrated evidence is distinguished from documented and independently validated evidence.
- ☐ Contractually committed capabilities are distinguished from informal representations.

- ☐ Future-roadmap claims include expected timing, dependencies, conditions, evidence, remedies, consequences, and enforceability.
 - ☐ Reference information is evaluated against comparable organizational and implementation conditions.
 - ☐ Evidence gaps remain visible in scoring, risk evaluation, and decision materials.
 - ☐ Conflicting evidence is documented and resolved by the appropriate Decision Authority.
 - ☐ Raw evidence, evaluator observations, approved findings, scores, recommendations, decision rationale, and SOW use remain connected but separate.
 - ☐ Material evidence can be traced to the requirement, criterion, assumption, finding, or decision it supports.
 - ☐ Candidate evidence used during selection remains distinct from the evidence required to validate implementation conformance, sustained operating behavior, Sponsor Intent achievement, and Business Outcome achievement.
 - ☐ Evidence produced by AI-enabled and Agentic AI capabilities is attributable to the applicable agent, configuration, model, data, instructions, permissions, operating conditions, and human authority.
 - ☐ Persistent evidence will be stored on the client's infrastructure.
 - ☐ The CFO-TA connects Governed Selection Evidence to Sponsor Intent, evaluation criteria, decisions, commitments, and future validation requirements.
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Complete Candidate Evaluation and Investment Quality

The 15 Solution Selection Criteria Applied to ERP

The 15 criteria form a common Sponsor-governed selection standard. Their application changes with the solution class being evaluated. ERP selection places additional emphasis on transactional integrity, operating-model and process fit, configuration and customization, data migration, integration architecture, implementation capability,

platform extensibility, upgradeability, and the role ERP will play within the broader enterprise ecosystem.

☐ **Sponsor Intent Conformance**

The candidate can operationalize the Sponsor Intent authorized by the Executive Sponsor without requiring an unauthorized material change to that intent.

☐ **Business Outcome Support**

The candidate presents a credible path from platform capability to the approved Business Outcomes, including the required implementation conditions, operating conditions, accountabilities, dependencies, and Outcome Evidence.

☐ **Conditions of Success**

The complete proposal supports Capital Protection, Outcome Confidence, AI & Data Integrity, and Compliance Proof.

☐ **Fit-for-Purpose Alignment**

The candidate is naturally suited to the future-state business environment, operating model, complexity, and transformation the organization intends to establish.

☐ **Scope and Unit of Transformation Coverage**

The proposal completely and comparably covers the authorized business-change boundary and applicable Units of Transformation.

☐ **Meaning and Decision Integrity**

The solution can preserve approved business meaning, Decision Authority, accountability, decision boundaries, Exception Rules, escalation paths, and Evidence Requirements as work becomes increasingly automated.

☐ **Governed Selection Evidence**

Material candidate claims are supported by observable, attributable, traceable, accessible, reviewable, and sufficient evidence produced under known conditions.

☐ **Implementation-Partner Capability**

The proposed implementation partner possesses the demonstrated capability required to convert platform potential into operating reality.

☐ **Partner Delivery Risk**

The specific delivery model provides a credible and sufficiently controlled path to the authorized result, with material Business-Side exposure made explicit.

☐ **Implementation Readiness**

The selected solution and implementation model have reached the level of definition, authority, resource commitment, environmental preparation, and dependency resolution required to mobilize responsibly.

☐ **Value Feasibility and Total Cost of Ownership**

The evidentiary strength and feasibility of the expected value justify the complete cost, risk, time, dependencies, and organizational commitment required to achieve it.

☐ **Commercial and Contractual Enforceability**

The material commitments supporting the selection decision can survive negotiation and become enforceable.

☐ **Data, Analytics, Automation, and AI Governance**

The proposed environment can operate within explicit purpose, business meaning, authority, accountability, decision boundary, exception, evidence, validation, and governance conditions.

☐ **Validation and Outcome Evidence Readiness**

The selected platform and implementation partner can support the Business-Side's validation responsibilities and produce the evidence required to prove continuing conformance with Sponsor Intent and achievement of the intended Business Outcomes.

☐ **Risks, Assumptions, Dependencies, and Tradeoffs**

Material risks, assumptions, dependencies, exclusions, qualifications, limitations, and tradeoffs are visible and governed by the appropriate Decision Authorities.

Value Feasibility and Total Cost of Ownership

☐ Expected value is traced to authorized Business Outcomes.

☐ Expected Value Feasibility reflects the evidence supporting Business Outcome achievement.

☐ Value assumptions, timing, dependencies, confidence, durability, operating conditions, and accountable parties are explicit.

☐ Expected value dependencies involving customization, future-roadmap capability, third parties, temporary staffing, manual workarounds, extraordinary leadership attention, unstable data, or unestablished operating conditions are visible.

- ☐ Expected Value Feasibility has been classified as strongly supported, supported with qualifications, conditionally supported, weakly supported, or insufficient evidence.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership reflects a consistent and authorized analysis horizon.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership includes software licensing, subscriptions, consumption-based charges, AI usage, infrastructure, hosting, and implementation services.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership includes Business Intent Design, Sponsor Intent Lifecycle Management, validation activities, and The CFO-TA operating costs.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership includes internal Business-Side and technical resources.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership includes process analysis, process design, business-process redesign, operating-model redesign, data remediation, and migration.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership includes integrations, customization, extensions, custom development, automation development, Agentic AI development, and third-party products.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership includes testing, validation, training, organizational change, adoption, cutover, and stabilization.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership includes support, managed services, maintenance, upgrades, regression testing, continuing Sponsor Intent Testing, evidence production, compliance, assurance, security, and privacy.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership includes model, prompt, policy, configuration, and agent changes, together with agent monitoring and human oversight.
- ☐ Total Cost of Ownership includes Future Units of Transformation, decommissioning, transition, exit, contingency, and material risk exposure.
- ☐ User, volume, transaction, data, consumption, scope, responsibility, resource, timing, pricing, renewal, third-party, and exchange-rate assumptions are explicit where applicable.
- ☐ Included, excluded, deferred, transferred, candidate-borne, and client-borne costs are clearly distinguished.
- ☐ Candidate positions have been normalized across scope, volumes, time horizons, responsibilities, and implementation assumptions.

- ☐ Expected Value Feasibility and Total Cost of Ownership remain visible as separate but connected dimensions.
- ☐ Forecast ROI is used when an authorized financial methodology and supportable inputs exist.
- ☐ The future validation of realized ROI will use actual Outcome Evidence, actual TCO, the authorized financial methodology, and supportable evidence for attribution and durability.
- ☐ The Executive Sponsor has authorized the investment position and its governing assumptions.
- ☐ The CFO-TA preserves the relationship among Sponsor Intent, Business Outcomes, expected value, TCO, assumptions, evidence, risks, decisions, and future outcome validation.

Organizations devote substantial effort to governing cost because cost has an enforcement mechanism. Value rarely has an equivalent mechanism. Expected value can drift, assumptions can change, responsibilities can become unclear, and intended outcomes can weaken without creating the same immediate visibility as cost overruns.

Value requires explicit governance.

Partner Delivery Risk, Assumption, Dependency, and Tradeoff Review

- ☐ The specific implementation model has been assessed independently from the implementation partner's general reputation and capability.
- ☐ Proposed staffing levels, named resource commitments, resource continuity, location and availability, and subcontractor arrangements have been evaluated.
- ☐ Estimates, milestones, sequencing, qualifications, exclusions, client responsibilities, implementation responsibilities, and evidence obligations have been evaluated.
- ☐ Contingency assumptions, status reporting practices, change-order procedures, commercial models, remediation accountability, and commercial exposure are explicit.
- ☐ The Business-Side understands how fixed-fee, time-and-materials, managed-services, outcome-based, or hybrid commercial structures affect incentives, risk allocation, change-order behavior, and cost exposure where applicable.

- ☐ Material candidate and implementation risks have been identified.
 - ☐ Assumptions influencing scope, cost, timing, value, capacity, or technical feasibility have been documented.
 - ☐ Dependencies on client decisions, resources, data, integrations, third parties, and other Enterprise Transformation Programs are visible.
 - ☐ Confidence levels are explicit where conclusions depend on incomplete evidence.
 - ☐ Candidate-proposed mitigations have been evaluated.
 - ☐ Accepted risks have accountable owners, mitigations, monitoring expectations, and escalation triggers.
 - ☐ Mandatory conditions remain protected from unrelated scoring strengths.
 - ☐ Material tradeoffs are documented separately from aggregate scoring.
 - ☐ The consequences of each recommended tradeoff are explicit.
 - ☐ The appropriate Decision Authority has authorized each material tradeoff.
 - ☐ Dissenting positions and unresolved evidence gaps are visible to the Executive Sponsor.
 - ☐ The recommendation explains why the preferred candidate represents the strongest complete transformation position.
 - ☐ The CFO-TA preserves each material risk, assumption, dependency, tradeoff, rationale, supporting evidence, Decision Authority, consequence, and required follow-through.
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Selection Commitments and SOW Alignment

- ☐ The specific implementation model has been assessed independently from the implementation partner's general reputation and capability.
- ☐ Proposed staffing levels, named resource commitments, resource continuity, location and availability, and subcontractor arrangements have been evaluated.
- ☐ Estimates, milestones, sequencing, qualifications, exclusions, client responsibilities, implementation responsibilities, and evidence obligations have been evaluated.

- ☐ Contingency assumptions, status reporting practices, change-order procedures, commercial models, remediation accountability, and commercial exposure are explicit.
 - ☐ The Business-Side understands how fixed-fee, time-and-materials, managed-services, outcome-based, or hybrid commercial structures affect incentives, risk allocation, change-order behavior, and cost exposure where applicable.
 - ☐ Material candidate and implementation risks have been identified.
 - ☐ Assumptions influencing scope, cost, timing, value, capacity, or technical feasibility have been documented.
 - ☐ Dependencies on client decisions, resources, data, integrations, third parties, and other Enterprise Transformation Programs are visible.
 - ☐ Confidence levels are explicit where conclusions depend on incomplete evidence.
 - ☐ Candidate-proposed mitigations have been evaluated.
 - ☐ Accepted risks have accountable owners, mitigations, monitoring expectations, and escalation triggers.
 - ☐ Mandatory conditions remain protected from unrelated scoring strengths.
 - ☐ Material tradeoffs are documented separately from aggregate scoring.
 - ☐ The consequences of each recommended tradeoff are explicit.
 - ☐ The appropriate Decision Authority has authorized each material tradeoff.
 - ☐ Dissenting positions and unresolved evidence gaps are visible to the Executive Sponsor.
 - ☐ The recommendation explains why the preferred candidate represents the strongest complete transformation position.
 - ☐ The CFO-TA preserves each material risk, assumption, dependency, tradeoff, rationale, supporting evidence, Decision Authority, consequence, and required follow-through.
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Implementation Mobilization Readiness

ERP selection creates an authorized direction. Implementation mobilization requires the organization, platform provider, implementation partner, governance structure, data

environment, operating leadership, and delivery conditions to reach the level of definition, authority, resource commitment, environmental preparation, and dependency resolution required to act responsibly on that direction.

This review protects continuity between the authorized selection decision and implementation mobilization. It provides a structured basis for authorizing work, constraining conditional activities, and preventing implementation from becoming a semantic reset, scope reinterpretation, commercial reset, or transfer of unresolved Sponsor responsibilities to the Delivery-Side.

The CFO-TA preserves Sponsor Intent, evidence, decision rationale, commitments, cost and value assumptions, risks, validation requirements, and SOW controls as governed lifecycle assets. These assets remain actively governed and continuously connected to implementation, validation, operations, Value Realization, continuous improvement, and subsequent Sponsor decisions throughout the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle.

Sponsor Intent Lifecycle Management Studio (SILMS) provides the major platform capability used to establish, preserve, challenge, validate, monitor, improve, reaffirm, revise, and prove Sponsor Intent throughout the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle and ongoing operations.

- ☐ The Executive Sponsor has authorized the selected platform, implementation partner, commercial structure, and implementation approach.
- ☐ Sponsor Intent reflects material decisions and refinements made during selection.
- ☐ Approved Business Outcomes, Conditions of Success, Scope Intent, and Transformation Approach Intent remain accessible to the implementation team.
- ☐ Decision Authorities, escalation paths, Exception Rules, and materiality thresholds are active.
- ☐ Sponsor-owned decisions remain distinguishable from implementation management responsibilities.
- ☐ Required internal leaders, subject-matter experts, process owners, data owners, and Decision Authorities have sufficient capacity.
- ☐ Initial implementation dependencies, risks, assumptions, and readiness conditions have assigned owners.

- ☐ The implementation roadmap reflects authorized Units of Transformation, sequencing, dependencies, progression requirements, and evidence expectations.
 - ☐ The Business-Side owns the Sponsor Intent Validation Plan and has defined the planned validation activities required to assess Sponsor Intent throughout implementation and operations.
 - ☐ Business-Side-owned Sponsor Intent Test Cases can validate Sponsor Intent Assets, Conditions of Success, decision boundaries, Exception Rules, Accountability Requirements, and Evidence Requirements.
 - ☐ The platform and implementation partner can support Business-Side validation responsibilities through appropriate environments, data, evidence sources, access, attribution, retention, remediation, observability, and retesting capabilities.
 - ☐ The distinction between Governed Selection Evidence and future validation and Outcome Evidence remains explicit.
 - ☐ Monitoring expectations have been established.
 - ☐ Validation will occur through planned events defined by the Sponsor Intent Validation Plan.
 - ☐ Continuous improvement can refine Sponsor Intent Assets as decisions are made, assumptions change, evidence develops, and operating conditions evolve.
 - ☐ Persistent evidence will be stored on the client's infrastructure.
 - ☐ The selected agreements, decision record, evaluation evidence, and governing artifacts are available to the implementation team.
 - ☐ SILMS can support Sponsor Intent continuity across Solution Selection, contracting, Govern Implementation, validation, Prove Outcomes, operations, continuous improvement, and future change.
 - ☐ Sponsor Intent, evidence, decision rationale, commitments, cost and value assumptions, risks, validation requirements, and SOW controls will remain actively governed throughout implementation and operations.
 - ☐ The Executive Sponsor can monitor whether the Enterprise Transformation Program continues to operate against authorized Sponsor Intent.
-

Final Executive Sponsor Authorization

Before authorizing the ERP investment, the Executive Sponsor should be able to explain the decision in business terms. The explanation should connect the required Business Outcomes to the selected platform, implementation partner, commercial structure, SOW, implementation approach, Expected Value Feasibility, Total Cost of Ownership, principal risks, authorized tradeoffs, SOW protections, validation readiness, and mobilization conditions.

A defensible ERP decision requires explicit Sponsor Intent, disciplined comparison, Governed Selection Evidence, visible uncertainty, authorized tradeoffs, enforceable commitments, confirmed implementation readiness, and a durable explanation of why the selected candidate represents the strongest complete transformation position. The CFO-TA preserves that explanation as an authoritative decision record connected to the governed assets used throughout implementation, validation, operations, and Value Realization.

- ☐ We can explain how the 26 Foundational Sponsor Intent Drivers define the intended enterprise and the ERP fit required to support it.
- ☐ We can identify which driver positions became mandatory conditions, weighted criteria, Governing Tradeoff Decisions, SOW conditions, or accepted risks.
- ☐ We can state the Business Outcomes this investment is expected to produce.
- ☐ We can explain how the selected candidate conforms to authorized Sponsor Intent.
- ☐ We can explain why the candidate is naturally suited to the intended future-state business environment.
- ☐ We can identify the complete Units of Transformation and scope boundaries required to achieve the intended Business Outcomes.
- ☐ We can identify the Governed Selection Evidence supporting each material selection claim.
- ☐ We can distinguish demonstrated, configurable, custom, third-party-dependent, implementation-partner-dependent, manual-workaround, future-roadmap, and unsupported capabilities.
- ☐ We have independently assessed platform capability, Implementation-Partner Capability, and Partner Delivery Risk.

- ☐ We understand the implementation partner's staffing model, estimates, milestones, dependencies, contingency assumptions, reporting practices, change-order procedures, commercial model, and client responsibilities.
- ☐ We understand Expected Value Feasibility, Total Cost of Ownership, and the assumptions connecting the two.
- ☐ We understand the timing, confidence, dependencies, durability, and evidence supporting expected value.
- ☐ We understand the complete Total Cost of Ownership across acquisition, implementation, operations, governance, validation, change, and transition.
- ☐ We know the principal risks, assumptions, dependencies, exclusions, qualifications, limitations, and unresolved uncertainties.
- ☐ We have explicitly authorized the material tradeoffs.
- ☐ We have translated critical selection commitments into enforceable agreements.
- ☐ We have confirmed implementation mobilization readiness.
- ☐ The Business-Side owns the validation requirements, validation activities, evidence evaluation, and determination of Sponsor Intent and Business Outcome achievement.
- ☐ The platform and implementation partner can support those Business-Side validation responsibilities and produce the required evidence.
- ☐ AI-enabled and Agentic AI capabilities can operate within explicit purpose, business meaning, authority, accountability, decision boundaries, exceptions, evidence, validation, and human-governance conditions.
- ☐ We can explain where ecosystem coherence creates material enterprise value and where specialized capability justifies another architectural boundary.
- ☐ We have evaluated the complete candidate across product fit, solution fit, and enterprise fit.
- ☐ Sponsor Intent, evidence, decision rationale, commitments, assumptions, validation requirements, and SOW controls will remain governed throughout implementation, operations, Value Realization, continuous improvement, and future change.
- ☐ We can defend why this complete candidate represents the strongest decision for the organization.

☐ The CFO-TA preserves the Sponsor Intent, evidence, decisions, commitments, assumptions, and validation requirements supporting the authorization.

Executive Sponsor Review Summary

Enterprise Transformation Program:

Executive Sponsor:

Review Date:

Current Alentra Methodology Step:

ERP Platform Candidates:

Implementation Partner Candidates:

Review Status

- ☐ Sponsor Intent requires further definition or refinement.
- ☐ Material Governed Selection Evidence remains outstanding.
- ☐ Candidate scope or Unit of Transformation coverage requires further definition or normalization.
- ☐ Implementation-Partner Capability requires further evaluation.
- ☐ Partner Delivery Risk requires further evaluation or authorization.
- ☐ Expected Value Feasibility or Total Cost of Ownership requires further analysis.
- ☐ Material risks, assumptions, dependencies, exclusions, qualifications, limitations, or tradeoffs require resolution.
- ☐ SOW commitments require further alignment.

- ☐ Business-Side validation responsibilities or evidence requirements require further definition.
- ☐ Implementation mobilization conditions require further work.
- ☐ The applicable Alentra Methodology requirements have been satisfied for the decision under review.

Material Conditions Requiring Resolution

1. _____
Owner: _____ Decision Date: _____
2. _____
Owner: _____ Decision Date: _____
3. _____
Owner: _____ Decision Date: _____
4. _____
Owner: _____ Decision Date: _____
5. _____
Owner: _____ Decision Date: _____

Executive Sponsor Decision

- ☐ Authorized to proceed in accordance with the applicable Alentra Methodology requirements.
- ☐ Conditionally authorized subject to the documented conditions.
- ☐ Further evidence or decision work is required before authorization.
- ☐ Authorized subject to specified contractual, validation, or implementation controls.

Decision Rationale:

Authorized Conditions and Tradeoffs:

Executive Sponsor Signature:

Date:

Use The CFO-TA to Govern the ERP Selection Decision

The CFO-TA is the Executive Sponsor Platform. It is a Business-Side platform purpose-built for Executive Sponsors responsible for major transformation investments. The platform helps Executive Sponsors govern their three Sponsor-owned responsibilities: Business Intent, Scope Intent, and Transformation Approach Intent.

Together, these responsibilities form Sponsor Intent, the Executive Sponsor-owned expression of purpose and foundation of the Transformation Definition. The CFO-TA supports the Executive Sponsor through guidance, methodology, authoring, analysis, deliverable production, validation, review, coordination, decision support, continuity, and Sponsor Intent Lifecycle Management across the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle.

During ERP selection, The CFO-TA helps progressively define Sponsor Intent, establish Meaning-Aligned Requirements, create Sponsor-controlled demonstration and evidence scripts, evaluate complete candidate positions, assess Expected Value Feasibility and Total Cost of Ownership, evaluate Implementation-Partner Capability and Partner Delivery Risk, govern material tradeoffs, document authorized decisions, align SOW commitments, and preserve the basis of the selection decision in the SOW and through implementation, validation, operations, and Value Realization.

Sponsor Intent Lifecycle Management Studio (SILMS) provides the major platform capability used to establish, preserve, challenge, validate, monitor, improve, reaffirm,

revise, and prove Sponsor Intent throughout the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle and ongoing operations. SILMS maintains the governed relationships among Sponsor Intent Assets, Business Outcomes, evidence requirements, evaluation criteria, candidate evidence, approved findings, risks, assumptions, decisions, SOW obligations, validation activities, operational evidence, changes, and lifecycle status.

These governed assets remain active throughout Solution Selection, SOW finalization, implementation, validation, operations, continuous improvement, and future change. SILMS preserves continuity among what the Executive Sponsor authorized, what providers committed to deliver, what implementation produces, what operations sustain, and what evidence demonstrates.

The ERP Selection Decision Should Remain Connected to the Business Purpose It Must Serve

A defensible ERP decision is grounded in explicit Sponsor Intent, disciplined comparison, Governed Selection Evidence, visible uncertainty, authorized tradeoffs, realistic value and cost analysis, enforceable commitments, confirmed implementation readiness, and Business-Side validation ownership.

Use The CFO-TA to apply the ERP Software Selection Checklist within the Alentra Methodology and preserve the authoritative basis of the decision throughout SOW finalization, implementation, validation, operations, Value Realization, continuous improvement, and future change.

People compensated for ambiguity. Autonomous agents amplify it.

The ERP Selection Decision Should Remain Connected to the Business Purpose It Must Serve

A defensible ERP decision is grounded in explicit Sponsor Intent, disciplined comparison, governed evidence, visible uncertainty, authorized tradeoffs, realistic value and cost analysis, enforceable commitments, and confirmed implementation readiness.

Use The CFO-TA to apply the ERP Software Selection Checklist within the Alentra Methodology and preserve the authoritative basis of the decision throughout the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle.

People compensated for ambiguity. Autonomous agents amplify it.

Request a Confidential ERP Selection Briefing

Determine Whether Your ERP Selection Decision Is Grounded in Sponsor Intent, Governed Evidence, and Investment Quality

If your organization is preparing to select, contract for, or implement a major ERP platform, Alentra Advisory can help your leadership team determine whether the proposed decision is aligned with Sponsor Intent, supported by Governed Selection Evidence, economically justified, protected in the SOW, prepared for Business-Side validation, and ready to advance through the Alentra Methodology.

ERP selection influences operating processes, data structures, decision rights, implementation scope, commercial commitments, organizational change, AI enablement, Total Cost of Ownership, and the Business Outcomes the Enterprise Transformation Program can produce. The CFO-TA connects Business Intent, Scope Intent, and Transformation Approach Intent to Meaning-Aligned Requirements, Sponsor-controlled demonstrations, candidate evidence, evaluation criteria, value and cost analysis, authorized tradeoffs, SOW commitments, implementation conditions, and future outcome validation.

A confidential ERP Selection Briefing will help your leadership team:

- Determine whether Sponsor Intent is sufficiently explicit to govern the ERP selection decision
- Evaluate whether Business Outcomes, Conditions of Success, Scope Intent, Units of Transformation, and Transformation Approach Intent are reflected in the evaluation
- Assess whether shortlisted platforms and implementation partners are being evaluated against a common Business-Side standard
- Determine whether Meaning-Aligned Requirements preserve the business purpose behind requested capabilities
- Evaluate whether vendor demonstrations follow Sponsor-controlled scripts and produce decision-relevant evidence
- Distinguish demonstrated, configurable, custom, third-party-dependent, implementation-partner-dependent, manual-workaround, future-roadmap, and unsupported capabilities

- Assess whether the 15 Solution Selection Criteria are being applied to the complete ERP candidate
- Evaluate Implementation-Partner Capability separately from Partner Delivery Risk
- Review staffing models, contingency assumptions, status reporting practices, change-order procedures, commercial models, and client responsibilities
- Determine whether Expected Value Feasibility justifies the complete Total Cost of Ownership, risk, timing, dependencies, and organizational commitment
- Identify material assumptions, evidence gaps, dependencies, risks, and tradeoffs requiring Executive Sponsor attention
- Determine whether material selection claims and commitments are reflected in the Statement of Work
- Assess whether the organization and selected candidate are ready to mobilize implementation
- Confirm that Business-Side validation ownership and provider evidence-support obligations are explicit
- Understand how SILMS preserves Sponsor Intent, evidence, decisions, commitments, validation requirements, and operational evidence throughout the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle

Request a Confidential ERP Selection Briefing

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About Tim Hourigan

Tim Hourigan

Founder and Chief Business-Side Advisor

Alentra Advisory

Tim Hourigan is an enterprise transformation advisor with more than 35 years of experience leading and supporting more than 185 Enterprise Transformation Programs spanning ERP, CRM, analytics, data, AI-enabled operations, automation, and business-process modernization.

Tim originated Business Intent Design and created The CFO Transformation Agent, The CFO-TA, the Executive Sponsor Platform. The platform helps Executive Sponsors govern their three Sponsor-owned responsibilities: Business Intent, Scope Intent, and Transformation Approach Intent. Together, these form Sponsor Intent, the Executive Sponsor-owned expression of purpose and foundation of the Transformation Definition.

The CFO-TA provides guidance, methodology, authoring, analysis, deliverable production, validation, review, coordination, decision support, continuity, and Sponsor Intent Lifecycle Management across the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle. During ERP selection, the platform helps Executive Sponsors connect Sponsor Intent to Meaning-Aligned Requirements, Sponsor-controlled demonstrations, Governed Selection Evidence, evaluation decisions, Expected Value Feasibility, Total Cost of Ownership, SOW commitments, implementation conditions, and outcome validation.

Sponsor Intent Lifecycle Management Studio (SILMS) provides the major platform capability used to establish, preserve, challenge, validate, monitor, improve, reaffirm, revise, and prove Sponsor Intent throughout the Enterprise Transformation Program lifecycle and ongoing operations. SILMS preserves the governed relationships among Sponsor Intent, evidence, assumptions, decisions, SOW obligations, validation activities, operational evidence, changes, and lifecycle status as participants and operating conditions change.

Document Version 1.3