

10 TIPS

STEP-BY-STEP SOLUTIONS

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Selecting Global Trade Management Software

Looking for guidance on selecting a flexible global trade management software (GTM) package that easily integrates into your supply chain strategy? Here's some advice from Brian Hodgson, vice president of marketing and business development for Kewill Americas, Marlborough, Mass.

1 Set clear requirements and well-defined scope. Determine, for example, whether you need import or export compliance, integration with your customs broker, or a regional or global solution. Understand the unique process requirements that make your company competitive.

2 Seek out a GTM software provider that thinks global and acts local. Your partner should have a global presence with local expertise in the areas you serve. The provider should maintain relationships with your supply chain partners to ensure domain knowledge and end-to-end integration.

3 Focus the ROI on a series of smaller victories. This approach is more efficient than a multi-year big bang. Small successes might start with automating export documentation, or integrating with brokers or forwarders.

As you achieve these wins, you build momentum for additional success, investment, and organizational buy-in.

4 Look for rapid ERP implementation. Select a provider with the tools, standard APIs, staff, and record of success in implementing solutions with your ERP provider.

5 Define a deployment strategy. Ask potential GTM providers for a sample deployment plan, typical project tasks, and risk management methodologies. Assign an internal project manager to build a strong relationship with the provider's implementation team. Most implementation challenges stem from unplanned change requests, so make sure the process accommodates them.

6 Consider your global reach. Can the GTM provider and software accommodate current and future country-specific content requirements and meet import and export challenges? Make sure the provider can grow as your needs expand.

7 Make sure the provider possesses local compliance expertise. It's crucial that the GTM solution meets local regulatory requirements. The

provider's staff must maintain a close relationship with local authorities, associations, and government agencies to stay current on changes.

8 Define one centralized global item master. Invest in a single system that manages all global part numbers. This helps you meet both import and export requirements, simplifies your systems, reduces redundancy, ensures compliance, and enables easy integration.

9 Ensure supply chain integration. To meet today's growing need for connectivity, make sure the solution can easily integrate with other vendors, suppliers, carriers, brokers, and government agencies. A tightly integrated system provides the efficiencies and productivity gains necessary to deliver a strong return on your investment.

10 Build internal alignment by getting an executive sponsor and creating a communications plan. This ensures all internal stakeholders have visibility to the elements surrounding GTM strategy and implementation. With the proper internal team, issues are highlighted early and knocked down quickly. And promoting successes helps increase momentum and support. ■