Q. We’re about to embark on an administrative system selection and we want to start off on the right foot. Is there a set of guidelines you could give us to make sure we do this the right way?

A. There are four critical success factors that should be present to make this important project successful. 1) Support from top administration for the effort: involvement, encouragement, a sense of this being a high priority, a declaration that this is something very important for the institution to do with the same level of quality that it does other things. 2) Buy-in, involvement, and ownership of the project by the user community, from the selection of a system all the way through the implementation. 3) Enough resources to make sure the institution is in a position to reap the full range of benefits and protect its investment. 4) A willingness to consider new approaches to information management and business practices to take full advantage of the features a new system will offer.