

Research Before You Buy

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The constant decisions that you make in your life increase your stress. Within your organization, many of the decisions you face have to do with purchases of supplies or services. In many organizations, purchases go through an elaborate procedure to ensure that the selected vendor meets all the requirements set out by some specification sheet or a set of pre-determined guidelines.

From that standpoint, your ability to choose is made clearer, based on procedures. In smaller organizations, however, those procedures are often not well defined, or may not even exist. On an individual basis, people rarely follow any kind of procedural approach. Yet, when you seek a product or service, there will be more options than you can possibly entertain or understand, and it will be that way for the rest of your life.

What would it be like, the next time you're considering a new HDTV, Smartphone, or another purchase, if you created your own spec sheet in advance, which you could hand to a vendor?

If you need to buy a piece of technology, but you're concerned about something better coming out later, look to the future. Look for:

- expandability,
- portability, or
- trade-in options.

Any time you make a purchase decision, there will soon be a better, faster, or more economical model. At some point, however, you've got to put your stake in the ground. That will ease some of the burden of choosing now. Moreover, if you create your own spec sheet in advance, you eliminate the clutter and lack of focus that results from vendors telling you about all of the other things that products do.

Vendors will always be introducing new features that you may not have considered; you may then end up with more items on your list. Afterwards, go back out for round two, and see who matches your "must-have" list best.