

A photograph of an elderly couple relaxing in a white hammock. The man is wearing an orange t-shirt and the woman is wearing a light blue top. They are both looking towards the right of the frame. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting an outdoor setting.

The Australian Aged Care Guide to Facilitating Growth Through Software

Help identify your requirements for simplified legislative adherence, greater integration, scalability for future growth, and more.

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✉ info.anz@epicor.com 🌐 www.epicor.com/australia 🚩 Explore the Virtual Tour

Forward

Running an aged care organisation in Australia has a unique set of challenges. Whether you're dealing with funding restrictions, operating within a small departmental team, or navigating changes to government legislation, fostering growth is no easy feat.

Today, organisational growth is born out of the ability to use senior living resources that actually provide hours back into your day, not give you something else to juggle in your already overflowing calendar.

Therefore, the real question is: how can an aged care software platform cost-effectively free you up to work on the strategies that will grow your organisation and give you the recognition you deserve?

In this eBook we will help answer this question by exploring 10 important elements you should consider when evaluating the capability of aged care software to facilitate for your growth plans.

“All change is not growth, as all movement is not forward”

Ellen Glasgow



An aerial photograph showing three people sitting around a light-colored wooden table in a meeting. One person is looking at a tablet, another is holding a coffee cup, and the third is looking towards the camera. The setting is a bright, modern office space with large windows and a tiled floor.

Expect more

Let's face it, whether you like it or not, you live in a world of complexity, regulations, compliance, and numbers. Software in this day and age should make your life easier, but in many cases it doesn't, and for some organisations this becomes accepted.

Whether it is through the perceived trade-off between functionality loss and data integrity—or any other software architecture assumptions—the reality is that even though your industry is complex, your senior living solution doesn't need to be rigid and disconnected. Think of it this way—when your e-mail client, smartphone, and mobile apps don't work fluently together, you are ready to throw something out the window. So, why would you tolerate an underperforming critical business system?

Through our own recent research¹, we found that 72% of Australian business leaders agree it isn't possible to grow without the right technology in place, which is a position that is hard to disagree with. What is most surprising, is that this same research uncovered that 67% of Australian business leaders identified that they are concerned about whether their IT systems can cope with the complexity that growth brings.

If your organisation is part of this majority, then you need to seriously consider the return you are getting from the investment in your aged care software and how these factors contribute to the total cost of ownership for that platform.

“72% of Australian business leaders agree it isn't possible to grow without the right technology, yet 67% of Australian business leaders say they are concerned about whether their IT systems can cope with the complexity that growth brings.”

¹ Source: The research was conducted by MORAR and sponsored by Epicor Software Corp, and surveyed 1,824 managing directors, and heads of finance, operations and IT in businesses with 100+ staff spanning the manufacturing, distribution and service industries (and in businesses of all sizes in retail) in Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Mexico, Singapore, Sweden, the UK, and the US. (MORAR, Growth Survey, 2015).

What are your must have's

When you work with software applications for hours every day, you get a pretty good idea of what will make your life easier. Whether it is software functionality, quality of support, or internal processes, we all have our wish lists. The key however, is to create your must-have list and separate it from your nice-to-have list. This will give you an objective tool to evaluate how well your aged care software is performing and what you can benchmark future aged care software platforms against.

To help, here are 10 important elements we believe you should consider when evaluating aged care software proficiency—we'll break these down in more detail on the following pages.

1. Is the software developed with industry and location specificity?
2. Is there knowledgeable and helpful local support?
3. Are there varied implementation options?
4. Can the software provide scalability to meet your growth plans?
5. Does the software comply with Australian Government aged care legislation?
6. Does the software facilitate Medicare's online claiming?
7. Is there effective software integration with third-party clinical care solutions?
8. Does the software provide integrated departmental features?
9. Does the software contain extensive reporting and performance management tools?
10. Does the software provide flexibility, self-sufficiency, and mobility?



If your current aged care software was not specifically built for the Australian market, or was not purposefully built as a senior living solution, but instead catered for these as an afterthought, then it is likely you are missing out on key functionality that can help you grow.

1) Industry and location specificity

As a senior manager of an Australian organisation, at one point or another during your career it is likely you have had to use technology that caters for Australia as an afterthought. Dealing with the lack of localised understanding and financial requirements can be a real burden. Obviously the nature of the application determines how much of an impact it has on your organisation, so when it is business critical, it only makes sense to use software that was purposefully developed for the Australian market.

If your current aged care software was not built as a senior living solution, but instead also catered for your industry as an afterthought, then it is likely you are missing out on key functionality that can help you grow and make money.

Think of it this way, if you are in the market for a family-sized car, you wouldn't buy a tractor and modify it to add extra seats, and then have a mechanic custom-build parts that make it compliant to use on Australian roads.

When you are investing the sort of money it takes for an organisation to procure and manage an aged care software application, you need to make sure its primary function is to help you be effective.



2) Knowledgeable and helpful local support

In years gone by, the concept of technical support meant you choose between a technical guru and an effective communicator, as it was hard to find someone who possessed both skills. Today, the quality of technical support in many industries has improved. The challenge now faced by many is receiving timely, relevant, and cost-effective support.

In weighing up the important functionality you should expect from your aged care software, you are within your rights to expect to be somewhat self-sufficient. However, when you do need support, you want to be confident that you are getting value for money.

For the most part, this comes down to the value proposition the vendor provides for its support services.

If your vendor provides an Australian-based support service with knowledgeable staff, then you are likely to be able to speak to someone who truly understands the gravity of your challenges—someone who can deliver a timely resolution because of their understanding of the local industry.

The value of Australian-based support is therefore not about avoiding awkwardly inaccurate icebreakers about the Brisbane Opera House—because they're actually quite entertaining—the value is in being confident in your ability to get the most out of your software.

If you are speaking to someone who thinks you are trying to be cool when you use terms such as RAD and DAP, then you aren't exactly going to venture down the path of something more technical. This is a real shame, as you are limiting your performance because of a deficiency in your vendor's support, not because of your innovative and proactive capabilities.

If you are speaking to a support engineer who thinks you are trying to be cool when you use terms such as RAD and DAP, then you aren't exactly going to venture down the path of something more technical. This deficiency in your vendor's support leaves you limiting your performance.



3) Varied implementation options and 4) scalability to meet your growth plans

Given the relational nature of these two points, let's deal with them together.

The choices you make about your aged care software today shouldn't serve to restrict your capacity to make a change that suits where your business will be tomorrow. However, quite often aged care organisations are handcuffed to the choices they (or others) made in years gone by.

Technology moves at the blink of an eye, so the notion of being limited by a mode of deployment doesn't suit the narrative of modern aged care. Speaking for our own service offering, the Epicor Senior Living Solution (SLS) offers the exact same solution deployed at a customer's site as it does in the cloud. Therefore, if you opt to deploy in the cloud, the option is there in the future to move to an on-premises model.

There is no argument that cloud technology has changed the way the world sees software. Gone are the misconceptions of security risk and functionality loss, and now businesses across a range of industries are making the move to the cloud.

The financial case for moving to the cloud is well supported, too. When you consider the reduced capital investment, implementation costs, and IT administration, a cloud deployment means smaller aged care organisations can access functionality similar to that enjoyed by much larger entities.

That is not to suggest that a cloud deployment is the best option, but rather that it should always be an option.

The only thing that is constant is change. Therefore, you should view your selected aged care software platform through the lens of best facilitating your future requirements, whatever they may be.

In a recent ERP to cloud migration report by Mint Jutras, 55% of respondents expressed concerns over security. However, when deployed, 33% cited one of the benefits of SaaS was improved IT security.²

² Source: Mint Jutras, So Your ERP Is On-Premise...How Do You Get to the Cloud? July 2015.

5) Software compliance with Australian aged care legislation and 6) Facilitating Medicare's online claiming

Efficiency and peace of mind come from working with software from a vendor that has a demonstrated commitment to keeping pace with the Australian legislative environment and Medicare's online claiming system.

The Australian aged care industry is highly regulated and given its recent period of change, financial requirements can be complicated. With this in mind, both today and in the future, successful aged care organisations will be those that have the capacity to adapt and be nimble.

As we outlined at the outset of this eBook, software should add value to your organisation by delivering efficiency and reducing manual processes. Some of the most effective ways this can be achieved in this industry is through localised functionality and compliance. Practically, this means having a software platform that:

- ▶ Facilitates Medicare claims
- ▶ Allows flexible reporting capabilities
- ▶ Facilitates adapting to varied funding structures
- ▶ Meets the industry's wide governance and compliance requirements
- ▶ Delivers software updates that cater to legislation changes

Not only can such functionality drive efficiency, it can also provide peace of mind if your software vendor has a demonstrated commitment to keeping pace with the Australian legislative environment and Medicare's online claiming system.



7) Effective integration with third-party clinical care solutions and 8) integrated departmental features

When an organisation is in a position where they have to use a wide range of duplicated systems, the pressure on internal resources to keep up with information management tasks can be stressful.

In the cut and thrust of a busy environment, data entry can be seen as a lower priority task and be left for completion in a time frame which lends itself to errors. When this occurs, a lack of trust in data integrity is the likely outcome. This stifles the development of valuable business intelligence.

Growth, profitability, and efficiency are not synonymous with disconnected solutions. So, when evaluating your integrated system needs, consider the capability of your aged care software based on its ability to provide integrated functionality. For perspective, here is the integrated functionality we provide in the Epicor SLS:

- ▶ Resident Management
- ▶ CRM
- ▶ Performance Management
- ▶ Project Management
- ▶ Billing, Funding, and Claiming
- ▶ Financial Management
- ▶ Facilities Management
- ▶ Procurement
- ▶ Workforce Management

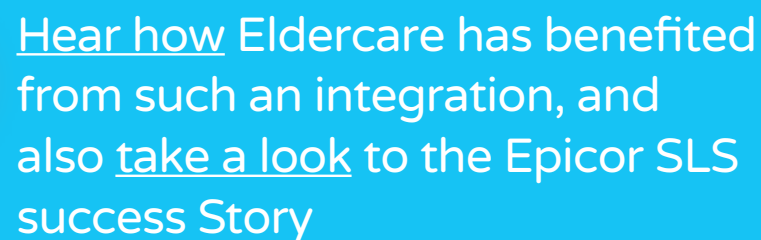


Learn how
the integrated
functionality in
Epicor SLS can
deliver these
requirements for
your organisation

Beyond just having your software facilitate for integrations across departments, you should also look for the capacity to integrate with third-party clinical care solutions. For example, when recording incidents, observations, and progress notes on a client in your aged care software, you would benefit greatly from being able to efficiently use this data in your care plans and then export the data to a third-party clinical care system for charting. When your systems are truly integrated, staff are more productive and have a much more positive user experience. The wider benefits this can generate for the organisation are substantial.

“We’ve also been able to integrate our clinical care system with Epicor SLS, to feed data between both systems. As a result, we have shortened our end of month timeframes to deliver more accurate and timely financial reports.”

Scott Morgan, Corporate Services Executive for Eldercare |
Adelaide based aged care provider



[Hear how](#) Eldercare has benefited from such an integration, and also [take a look](#) to the Epicor SLS success Story

9) Extensive reporting and performance management tools

Many effective software platforms today make use of dashboards that serve role relevant information to the user. Benefits in this approach are derived from integrating access to relevant applications and placing control in the hands of the user. This is particularly evident when you harness the value of data visualisation in the form of charts which display organisation performance indicators. When dashboards are used to allow ad hoc reports, and the metrics you display are relevant to the user, it invites inquisitiveness. This can also be a positive driver for collaboration and an organisation-wide understanding on the smaller performance indicators that make up overall organisation success.

If you subscribe to the belief that knowledge is power, then you are likely to measure the value of an aged care software platform on its advanced financial reporting. CFOs will want an intuitive interface that allows for simplicity in accessing data from a single account, or range of accounts across a number of business units. From here you should expect functionality that allows you to drill down all the way to the transactional level.

Reporting and performance management functionality should naturally also extend to other departments. As we discussed in the previous section, integration should be a base expectation in your aged care software. Therefore, sales and marketing staff should be able to report on trend analysis and sales pipelines as equally as operations staff should be able to report on purchasing and inventory management functions.

When productivity matters, you need to be sure that all your departments have access to reliable and timely data that can drive informed business decision making.

10) Flexibility, self-sufficiency and mobility

Increasingly we are becoming a mobile world. Mobility, however, is not a concept reserved for exclusively working off-site.

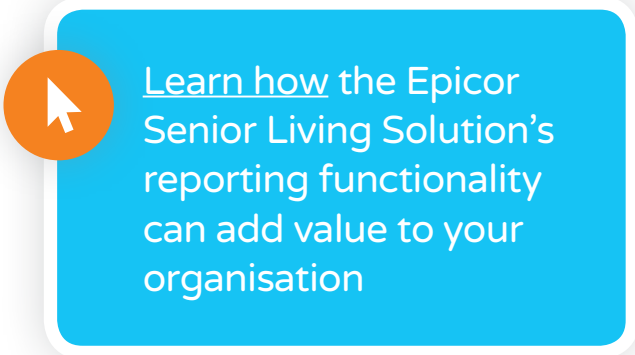
Enterprise mobility is about flexibility and serving to develop technological systems that work the way you intuitively do. This means facilitating for aged care software tools on mobile devices which empower your staff to be productive whenever they aren't at a desk, such as in providing flexible recording methods of client observations.

For those staff that need the ability to perform work off-site, the value of being able to check inventory levels while waiting for a flight, or juggle rosters while on break at an exhibition, provides for a fluent and efficient business. Moreover, it fosters a culture of productivity and makes the idea of down-time a redundant one.

While flexibility and mobility are inherently interconnected in this context, flexibility is also contingent on being able to operate in a relatively self-sufficient way. Quite often organisations don't take full advantage of software functionality because customisation is limited without playing with source code. This then creates a requirement for a cost benefit consideration on a case by case basis. Then, if it is difficult to get timely support that represents value for money, it only serves to compound the issue. It shouldn't be this way.

Growth is born out of continuity and productivity, which can't occur when you use rigid systems.

84% of organisations that have more than 20 staff have employees that, excluding working from home, do their job away from an office of fixed location³



[Learn how the Epicor Senior Living Solution's reporting functionality can add value to your organisation](#)

³ Source: Telsyte, Implementing Modern ERP: Uncovering Key Components For A Successful Business Outcome, 2015. Report commissioned by Epicor Software and independently produced by Telsyte.

Summary

The purpose of this eBook is to provide insight into the considerations you should have towards a range of software functionality elements.

We understand from speaking to our customers that they are time poor and need solutions that represent value for money. This is why we advocate a considered process when establishing what business critical resources they will be adopting for their organisation.

While your ideal aged care software platform may not be made up of all the individual components we have listed, the most important thing is that you identify the components that are right for you and move as effectively as possible to that platform.

At the outset, we identified that fostering growth for an aged care organisation in Australia has a unique set of challenges. Hopefully, the insights you have taken from this eBook will allow you to move towards an aged care software platform that help you overcome some of these.



About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software that is designed around the needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 40 years of experience with our customers' unique business processes and operational requirements is built into every solution—in the cloud, hosted, or on premises. With a deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions spur growth while managing complexity. The result is powerful solutions that free your resources so you can grow your business. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com/australia.



EPICOR.

Contact us for more information on Epicor Products and Services

 +61.2.9927.6200  info.anz@epicor.com  www.epicor.com/australia

Corporate Office
804 Las Cimas Parkway
Austin, TX 78746
USA
Toll Free: +1.888.448.2636
Direct: +1.512.328.2300
Fax: +1.512.278.5590

Latin America and Caribbean
Blvd. Antonio L. Rodriguez #1882 Int. 104
Plaza Central, Col. Santa Maria
Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, CP 64650
Mexico
Phone: +52.81.1551.7100
Fax: +52.81.1551.7117

Europe, Middle East and Africa
No. 1 The Arena
Downshire Way
Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1PU
United Kingdom
Phone: +44.1344.468468
Fax: +44.1344.468010

Asia
238A Thomson Road #23-06
Novena Square Tower A
Singapore 307684
Singapore
Phone: +65.6333.8121
Fax: +65.6333.8131

Australia and New Zealand
Suite 2 Level 8,
100 Pacific Highway
North Sydney, NSW 2060
Australia
Phone: +61.2.9927.6200
Fax: +61.2.9927.6298

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