

DECISION CHALLENGE | ILLUSTRATIVE DECISION BRIEF

Should we approve a \$225,000 order-processing system?

Fictional request and initial assessment. All company details, figures, and dates are invented. Not a client submission or result.

Get specific evidence first.

The request does not yet justify signing the full contract or buying for one division. It also does not establish that the investment is unfavorable.

The initial request

We're a 500-person distributor considering a \$225,000 order-processing system. The vendor forecasts \$140,000 in annual savings, but finance hasn't confirmed how much spending would actually fall. We aren't planning staff reductions.

We want to reduce order-entry costs and errors without delaying deliveries. IT believes implementation is feasible, but operations is concerned about the exception handling and customer-data work that will remain.

The quote expires October 23, 2026, but our current system remains supported. Should we sign, start with one division, improve the existing process, or get more evidence first?

What the request supports

Business value	A \$140,000 annual vendor forecast , not established cash savings. No staff reductions are planned. Released time may have value, but the spending reduction or productive use needs support.
Operating work	IT reports that implementation is feasible. Operations reports possible omitted work. Neither account establishes the complete workload, owners, costs, or protection of customer deliveries.
Decision timing	The COO faces an October 23, 2026 quote expiration , not a shutdown of the supported system. Extension availability and the cost of waiting remain unknown.

Evidence boundary: the fictional request above only. No contracts, finance calculations, operating records, or technical assessments were supplied or inspected. This is an illustrative draft, not a completed, verified client brief.

DECISION CHALLENGE | SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT

What needs to be established before committing

Same fictional case. The proposed assignments and review date below are not agreed actions.

The financial calculation is not yet a business case

\$225,000 ÷ \$140,000 = 1.61 years

About 19.3 months. This is a price-to-forecast ratio, not verified payback. It excludes additional costs, benefit delays, and any shortfall in realizable savings. Unknown benefits are not zero benefits.

Compare each option over the same period. Include implementation, transition, support, exceptions, data maintenance, and exit costs. Payment timing, peak funding need, and accessible funds remain unknown.

Evidence that could change the finding

Finance lead Proposed owner	Reconcile the vendor forecast with company volumes and spending. Separate cash reductions from usable capacity; establish total costs, payment dates, and available funding. Purpose: determine whether the benefit is supported and the commitment affordable.
Operations with IT Proposed owners	Examine representative orders and exceptions, data-maintenance effort, owners and available time, and applicable technical evidence. Include migration, training, verification, fallback, and ongoing support. Purpose: establish that the required work can protect deliveries.
COO or purchasing lead Proposed owner	Obtain full and division-level terms, dependencies, exit obligations, and the consequences of quote expiry. Check current process costs and credible improvements. Purpose: compare full purchase, smaller scope, process improvement, and temporary continuation.

Next action and review point

Proposed: the COO agrees an evidence-effort limit and reviews the findings on **October 20, 2026**, before quote expiry. Start with existing records and clarification. A live trial is not yet necessary or justified.

Supported value, feasible work, accessible funding, and accepted downside could justify the full purchase or a specific change. An essential uncertainty requiring new observations could justify a bounded trial. An established unfavorable case or constraint breach could justify rejection.

Strongest challenge: waiting may forfeit favorable terms and postpone real benefits. Establish those consequences and the cost of further evidence. Unresolved essential gaps do not justify signing merely to preserve the quote.

Status: illustrative draft only. No client decision, human release, or business outcome is recorded. Decision Challenge remains under evaluation.