

Hannon Hill Corporation

800.407.3540 | www.hannonhill.com | info@hannonhill.com

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How is Purchasing a CMS like Buying a New Home?

By Joel Dixon

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Recently I've read a number of articles related to purchasing a content management system (CMS), including a great blog post by Blaine Herman (See [Advice from a Vendor when creating your RFP](#)). Well, having just purchased a new home I recognized several basic principles that apply to the process of buying a CMS as well.

Like buying a house, buying a CMS is a significant financial decision, which requires great care and involves a certain degree of apprehension and uncertainty.

However, I found that, while the process of searching for my home wasn't easy (nothing worthwhile ever is), the more thorough and specific I was about what I wanted, the easier it was to narrow my search. It ended up not only saving time, but also allowed me to look at a larger percentage of properties that were actually good matches. So here are several tips for CMS purchasing or buying a home:

- Establish your price range – I considered homes only within a narrow price range and this immediately simplified my search list from tens of thousands to a hundred or so. Price should never be the sole decision-making metric for a CMS purchase, but having a budget for the project (license, support and services) allows you to save time and resources up front by qualifying which vendors you should even be considering.
- Determine the fundamentals of what you want – I compiled a complete list of features that I desired in a house (i.e. # of rooms and bathrooms, description of inside/outside, and proximity to various areas of the city). Of course, while the “trendy” features available in a home or CMS are constantly growing, the list should really be personalized for your organization because general trends don't make happy business users. CMS features that appeal to your users, make their work easier and are easy to use make happy business users. There are many CMS Functionality Checklists so use them as starting points and then create your unique list based on the interests and needs of your users.
- Prioritize your List – I probably would still be deciding on which house to buy had I not prioritized this “wish” list. Most purchases require some give-and-take since it's usually difficult to get all that you want, how you want, at the price you want. However, when you have to address CMS trade-offs, knowing the things that can't be compromised on (and why) provides a great guiding light in making the final decision.

I have completed my journey to home ownership and am enjoying every minute in my new home. Your organization may be just beginning its CMS search, and while the process requires planning and patience, the benefits of a CMS-powered site is well worth the effort. If you need some good resources to assist in your planning check [our white papers](#). Happy CMS-hunting!!

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