THE BREAK-UP GUIDE:

everything you need to know about switching your accountancy software provider

.IRIS

Let's face it, breaking up with someone is hard, and ending things with your current software provider is no exception.

Even the prospect of changing software raises panic-inducing questions, such as: what should I be looking for? How do I find a new solution? Will my new relationship be any better? What can I do to make my new relationship a success?

Fear not! This handy break-up guide covers all those questions, helping ensure your new software relationship isn't just love at first sight but the real deal.

Relationship red flags:
evaluating your accountancy software

In the dating world, things such as a lack of communication, gaslighting and even talking in a baby voice are often referred to as relationship red flags (warning signs that you need to leave).

There are a million and one advice articles highlighting these potential relationship red flags, but what if I told you red flags also exist in the software world?

Perhaps your practice has grown to the point that your current software no longer copes, or your vendor promised the world and has failed to deliver – either way, there are often clear indicators that it's time to move on.

Identifying your software isn't sufficient

So, how do you distinguish between minor irritations in your software and fundamental red flag issues? Essentially, you're looking to determine if the software is causing more problems than it fixes and whether it meets your current and future needs.

Consider these two sides when evaluating your software.

Firstly, like with any relationship (personal or otherwise), there's the *softer side:* it simply doesn't feel right anymore.

And then there's the *pragmatic side:* the relationship no longer does what you need it to.

Software red flags checklist

Like with any long-term relationship, it can be tough to spot the glaring warning signs if it's all you can remember.

To help you assess your current software, here's a checklist of features, or lack of, you should evaluate.

1. Flexibility

Ask yourself: can you and your people reliably access your software from any location, at any time?

Having flexible software is vital in today's society. Working remotely, for example, is a huge part of life now, and for most top talent, it's a key reason for choosing an employer.

Studies found that **75%** of employers now offer some form of hybrid working; to remain competitive during the talent war, flexible working is something your firm needs to look into facilitating.

Additionally, from a talent perspective, think of remote working in the way a dating app facilitates you to connect with more people than previously possible. Offering remote working enables you to hire outside your local area, subsequently unlocking far more candidates, which is invaluable at the moment.

Does your software stop you from doing this? Unlike traditional desktop-based software, cloud technology enables you to access all your vital applications from anywhere with an internet connection.

More content: *read this blog for information on tackling the recruitment crisis.*

2. Security

Did you know that accountants are **_30% more likely_** to be hacked?

Is your software secure enough, and does it utilise safety measures such as two-factor authentication, data encryption and ISO-accredited processes?

Picture the scenario: you've spent years building your reputation, only for it to crumble due to a security breach.

The data accountants hold – both employee and client – is incredibly sensitive, and should it be compromised due to human or software error, the consequences for your firm can be disastrous.

3. Connectivity

Like a romantic relationship, having the right connection is crucial to making everything work.

In the world of accountancy, you have systems that do X, systems that do Y and systems that do Z; to be efficient, these need to be able to share data and connect, otherwise, employees waste time jumping between systems.

Does your current software have an open API, enabling it to integrate with other applications in your tech stack or are you working on siloed systems?

> **What is an API?** *An Application Programming Interface (API) is a way for computer programs to connect. Having software with an open API means you can easily connect and link various other apps as they become available, creating a unified tech ecosystem.*

Additionally, linking back to talent, if employees constantly waste time jumping between systems, it's not only bad for the bottom line, but you also risk people leaving your firm in search of better processes.

> **_More content_**_: learn about attracting top talent here._

*Recent research revealed that **25%** of accountants lack time to implement value-added services and business strategies, showcasing employees can't afford to waste time with inefficient software.*
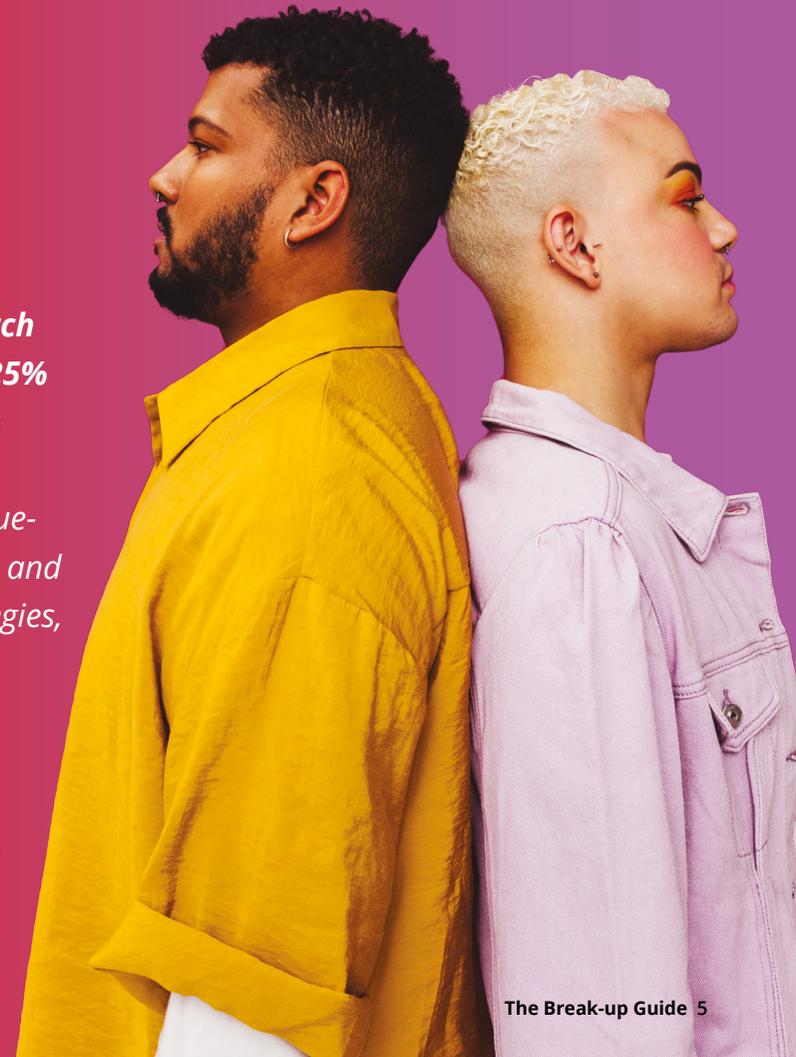
4. Support

What support does your current software provider offer?

Chances are, as your practice grows, so do the demands you place on your software, meaning what was fine last year may no longer suffice today. Do you find your system slowing down and crashing?

There's nothing worse than being halted from completing a critical deadline due to a software issue and getting nothing but radio silence from the support team.

When reviewing your supplier, examine whether assistance such as troubleshooting guides, FAQs and online training is available.

Additionally, check your supplier's service-level agreement (SLA), which outlines how quickly they aim to get back to your queries – the last thing you want is to be ghosted.

At IRIS, we're always striving to develop, improve and grow, the same can be said of our customer support services. Here's some of our credentials...

ACCOUNTANCY CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
95%

ACCOUNTANCY RETENTION
91%

ACCOUNTANCY HOSTING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
95%

Learn more about our industry-leading accountancy solutions here.

How to embark on the software dating game

So, you've decided that you want to break up with your current software provider and want to find someone different, but now, you're left with nothing but a sinking feeling because a new question arises: where do you even start?

When you've been out of the dating game, including the software dating game, for a while, it can be daunting.

Fear not – here are some pointers you can look to use when finding a new software sweetheart.

Use a software scorecard

While the dating world from a romantic perspective is typically more spontaneous, and often, people simply click, with software, you can be much more data-focused and analytical when finding a new provider.

Consider creating a scorecard where desired functionality is rated out of five against actual functionality to ensure a robust and objective selection process.

When creating a scorecard, outside of the fundamental features you need for your day-to-day, also consider criteria such as:

- Commitment to Research & Development (R&D)

- System stability

- The software's ability to scale

Speak to peers

On paper, most software looks incredible, jam-packed with features and the answer to your problems.

But too often, software vendors over-promise and underdeliver – don't fall prey to software catfishing.

A way around software catfishing is to speak with your friends, colleagues and peers to find out what solutions they're using to ensure you receive an unbiased viewpoint on the functionality.

If you're new to the industry and don't have anyone to turn to, I'd recommend two alternatives.

Firstly, look on providers' websites for case studies which showcase customer successes and secondly, attend industry events to network and discuss with like-minded individuals.

Google, Google, Google

If you're after specific software requirements – whether that's features such as cloud, open APIs or Anti Money Laundering (AML) modules – Google is your best friend.

Software vendors often have dedicated web pages for their key features or add keywords to their main product pages, meaning if you're after a specific tool, a quick Google search is often a great starting point.
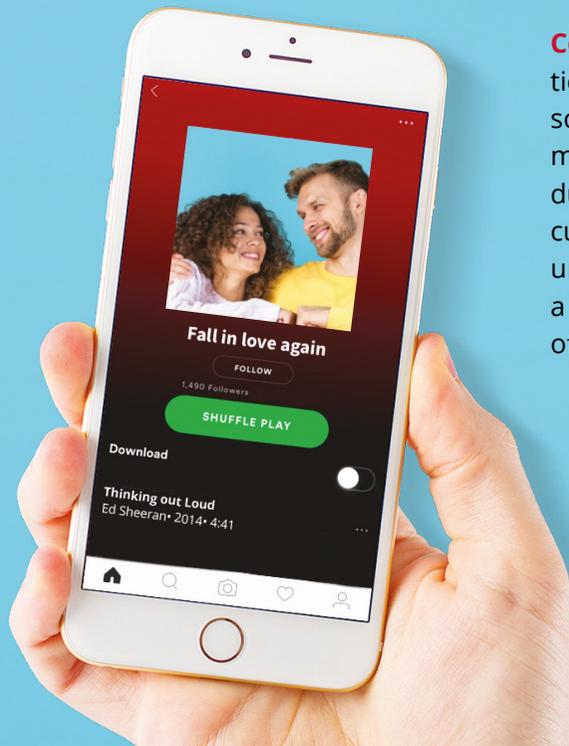
Considerations when changing providers

When embarking on the journey to change software, there are some additional logistical considerations that you should consider to ensure your new relationship starts on the right foot.

Resource: when looking to change your software provider, factor into your project the time required to move across client and employee data. The move can take time, but a quality supplier will make the process as quick and easy as possible.

Investment: some providers or features may be more expensive than what you're currently paying; however, when looking to change software, it's crucial to weigh up the time and efficiency savings against the initial fees. The long-term savings you receive from better software often outweigh most cost discrepancies – *learn more about how abolishing tiresome admin can help revolutionise your practice here.*

Contracts: for those who are tied into contracts, there may be some early exit costs. While you may initially be put off switching due to early exit fees, if you're current provider is severely underperforming, the cost is often a small price to pay for the benefits of better processes.

For help with embarking on your new software journey, speak to our team on **0344 815 5555**

Fall in love again

FOLLOW

1,490 Followers

SHUFFLE PLAY

Download

Thinking out Loud
Ed Sheeran• 2014• 4:41

The secrets to a successful software relationship

Your previous software relationship is over, and you're looking to kickstart something new with a different supplier.

It's understandable if you're worried that the cycle will repeat itself and you'll face another software regret.

Don't panic – we're here to help. There are steps you can take to ensure the relationship with your new supplier remains fruitful and prosperous for as long as possible, leaving you singing: I will always love you.

1. Get to know your new sweetheart

It's important you form a meaningful relationship with your new software provider and the team you'll be working with.

I'd advise you to reach out to your new account manager and share your business strategy, goals, and expectations if you haven't already. Additionally, it's also handy to learn a bit more about your new software vendor; consider asking the following:

- What does the product roadmap look like?
- How else can they assist?
- What other solutions are available that could support my firm?

By having an open and honest dialogue, you can create a better working relationship which benefits both parties.

> **Top tip:** *this isn't a once-and-done conversation – it should be something you regularly discuss with your account manager to ensure that both sides of the relationship are kept up to date.*

2. Utilise change management

Let's face it: change can be hard.

If someone has spent years working a certain way, the prospect of altering that can be incredibly daunting; if steps aren't taken, your team may be nervous, resistant and unwilling to adopt your new software sweetheart.

To combat people's natural aversion to change, utilise a change management strategy that tackles the psychological hurdles by focusing on awareness, desire and involvement.

Awareness: communicate to your employees and answer why they should bother with the change, why you are changing software and what's in it for them.

Desire: once you've created awareness, the next step is to promote the benefits of your new software, cementing people's desire for the change.

Involvement: after the concept of change has been accepted, bring staff into the planning and implementation, helping drive accountability and ease the adjustment by making them feel part of the new solution.

> **_More content:_** _for more information on change management, read our comprehensive blog here._

3. Familiarise yourself with their resources

While you may not find love letters, software vendors, such as IRIS, tend to have a heap of resources available on their websites.

From webinars and industry thought leadership to FAQs and training videos, chances are, you'll be able to find content that helps you along your journey and enables you to stay at the forefront of the industry.

As an example, **_see the IRIS blog here_** and our **_resources hub here._**

4. Reassess how you use software

So, you've made the switch to a different software provider – it's time to fall in love with all the new features and improved capabilities.

Examine what automation and workflow capabilities are now available, then cross-reference the functionality with your current processes.

You could now be sitting on fantastic time savings, but unless you evaluate how you work, they may be missed.

If you're unsure where to start, speak with your new vendor, and they'll be able to assist.

5. Stay in the know

Whether it's service updates, such as reduced staffing over Christmas or upcoming product changes, a good software provider will communicate news through a variety of channels.

To make sure you don't miss a beat, be sure to follow your new provider on their main social media channels and ensure their email is on your safe senders' list.

Also, make sure your colleagues know which emails, newsletters and social channels to sign up to and follow – the more people in the know, the more effective the team can be.
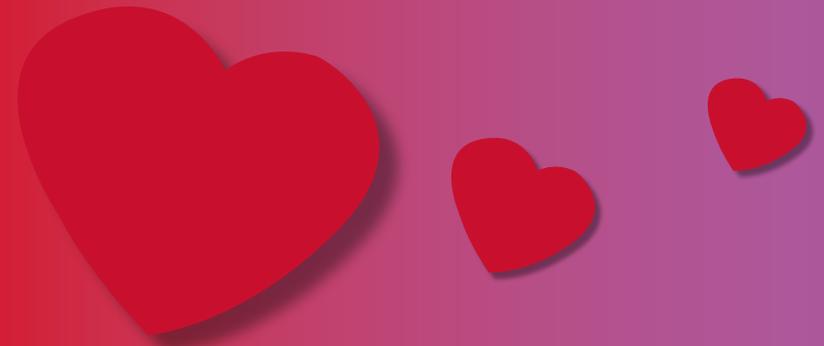
6. Communication, communication, communication

Like with any relationship, communication is key.

If something isn't working for you, don't suffer in silence and try to resolve the issue single handedly.

Reach out to your account manager or the support teams, and someone will be able to assist, minimising frustration and saving you time.

On a similar note, if your software requirements change, you have suggestions or are thinking about expanding your tech stack, speak to your new supplier as they can support and advise.

7. Limit the number of vendors you use

If we've learnt anything from Take Me Out, it's that choice and options can be important for finding the one.

However, with software, multiple vendors can often complicate processes, especially if your various apps don't connect.

Whether it's hosting and digital record keeping or the HR and payroll software you use internally, we advise you to explore what other solutions your new provider offers and see if you can bring more of your tech stack under one roof.

Often, there are numerous add-ons and additional apps that can make your life significantly easier; it can be worth spending some additional time browsing your new vendor's full catalogue of products.

"Don't cling to a mistake just because you spent a long time making it."

Whether you're considering breaking up with your current software provider, or you're in the process of finding your new software sweetheart, we hope this guide has alleviated some of the stress associated with the process.

We understand the prospect of moving can seem daunting, but the benefits always outweigh the negatives.

So, go forth, and embrace a new, better relationship that actually enables your firm to operate optimally and stress-free.

Say yes to love, and fantastic software

As the official supporter of accountants, we make it our life's goal to provide you with software that you'll love from the moment you start using it as well as years down the line.

If you're curious about our industry-leading offerings, see a few highlighted solutions below:

IRIS | Accountancy Suite

With an unbeaten compliance track record, open connectivity and integrated document sharing, the IRIS Accountancy Suite provides the most extensive portfolio of integrated and automated solutions on the market for any thriving practice.

LEARN MORE

IRIS | Elements

It's here! The first ever end-to-end cloud accounting solution – one platform, one experience, one shared customer record.

From bookkeepers and sole practitioners to large accountancy practices, IRIS Elements offers unique flexibility, scale and powerful automation, leaving you to focus on your customer and growing your practice.

LEARN MORE

IRIS | Resourcing

Allow our experts and accounting specialists to fill in the gaps and inject additional capacity into your practice.

We provide support to businesses of all sizes for a range of services including year-end accounts preparation, iXBRL tagging, payroll processing, personal tax return preparation, bookkeeping and Making Tax Digital (MTD).

LEARN MORE

staffology HR
By IRIS

Ensure greater productivity by eliminating your daily admin and streamlining core HR processes such as holidays and absence management, reporting, onboarding and engagement.

LEARN MORE

Find out more or arrange a demo at:
www.iris.co.uk/accountancy or call us on: **0344 815 5555**

The break-up guide:

everything you need to know about switching
your accountancy software provider

.ıIRIS