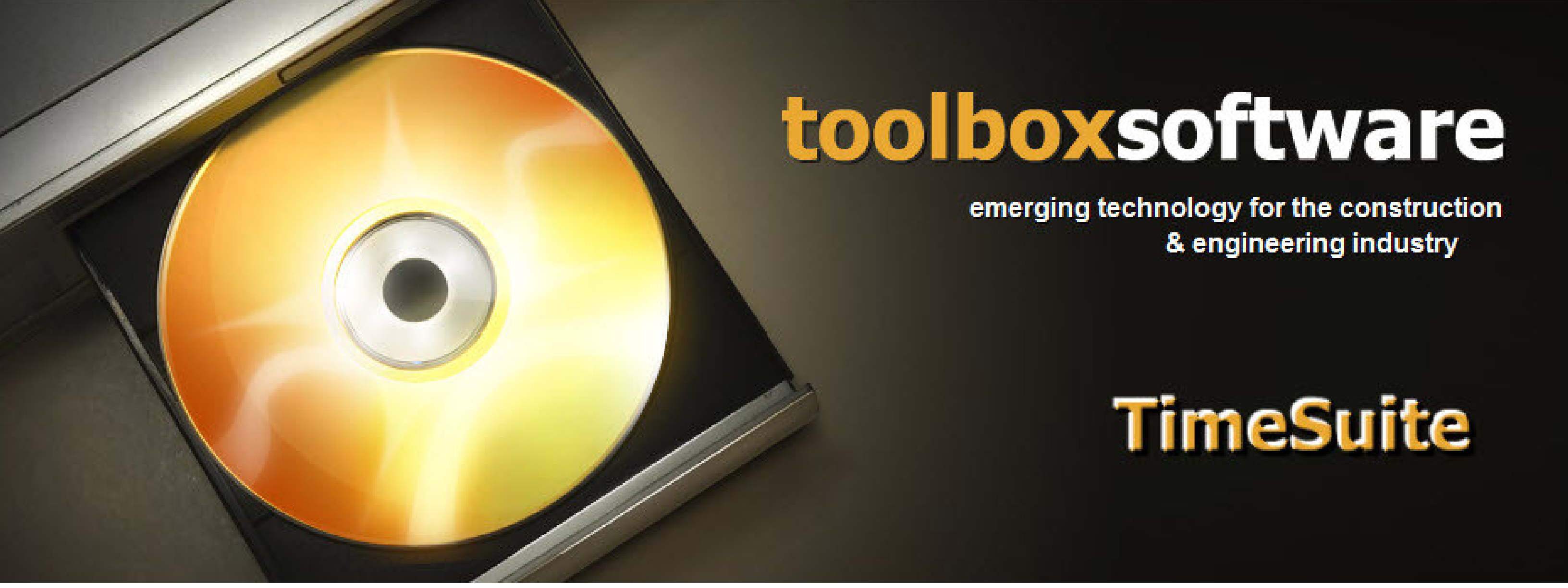

Due Diligence/Distinguishing Features Check List

- Is the Software Company willing to put a full running demo on your computer? Viewing a well rehearsed presentation is not the same as actually testing a system. A big mistake made in the evaluation process is the willingness to make assumptions about the mechanics of system processes. Spend a half hour entering transactions, jobs, budgets, billings etc. before you move forward, and commit to investing thousands of man hours maintaining a system. A non-deceptive presenter will walk you through making those entries in a short efficient session.

- Is the system modular based? Systems that are 20+ years old are based on a modular approach. This approach breaks database architecture rules relating to duplicating data. The newer relational architected system will feel like a smaller streamlined system. Relational architecture databases will generally have less than 50 tables in their database. Modular based systems will generally have more than 200 tables in their database. Modular based systems are generally too big and complex to allow prospective users to evaluate full running demos. Many have tried in the past, but have had trouble selling their systems when prospects actually get to test drive them.

- Can users customize entry screens? The users should be able to turn on and off fields, and order entry fields to minimize training, minimize data entry time, and hide features that are not applicable.

- Real Time vs. Batch. Batch systems require posting to various modules before the transactions will show up in your reports. Transactions show up on reports immediately with Real Time systems. Real Time systems post transactions as soon as they are entered.

- Does the system have an automated audit trail? Modular based systems almost always do not allow you to edit and modify existing transactions. They make you reverse the transaction, and re-enter a corrected transaction. Don't confuse this feature with a batch system allowing you to edit and modify transactions before they are posted. An automated audit trail system will allow you to edit a transaction, and make corrections. Upon the user saving the correction, the software will leave the original transaction in the database unchanged. An offsetting transaction is automatically created to effectively negate the effect of the original entry, and then new correcting transaction is automatically created. An automated audit trail is a significant time saver.

- Does the software use a high end SQL database? The newer high end SQL databases provide systems with massive capacity and speed. Non-SQL databases are generally rigid with respect to archive (data purging) requirements. Many systems require the users to purge data when they cross over the fiscal year end. If a system is non-SQL based, you should find out about the different module archive requirements. A system that uses a high end SQL database will generally not have required purging/archiving limitations.

- Does the software allow users to email reports and forms out of the software?

- Can users download reports and forms to Excel, other spreadsheets, and word processors?

- How extensive is drill down reporting? Is on-demand sub-reporting (dashboard reporting) available?

- Verify that you can be in multiple areas at the same time. For example, can users be in a window in general ledger at the same time as they are in an accounts payable window? Some of the systems out there will not allow you to be in multiple areas/modules at one time.

- Does the system have automated entries such as work in progress (over/under billings), accrued wages, and depreciation entries? Does the system have the ability to reallocate over/under allocated indirect costs?

- Can users modify Inventory Item Codes, GL Account Numbers, Department Numbers, Vendor Codes, Customer Codes, Job Numbers, Cost Codes, etc.? In older applications, developers used these codes/numbers as keys for the database tables. If this outdated practice was followed, users are precluded from modifying these codes/numbers.
- When setting up departments, are users required to add additional general ledger accounts for each account the department will affect?