The four essential pieces of the automation puzzle: How to select the correct system for your stations.
Introduction:
Starting with a baseline

Determine Evaluation Criteria

Introduction

ENCON
Assign each category a level of importance (1–100), then a rank (1–100), then apply a basic evaluation formula like:

\[(\text{CATEGORY RANK}) \times (\text{IMPORTANCE}/100)\]
Add all values – company with the highest rank "wins."

Introduction

Section One
Section One: Production Workflow

How do you create, ingest, manipulate and distribute content?

- 3rd party software suite integration (news, multi-track editors)
- Automated downloads
- Scheduled background recordings (including source/routing integration)
- Metadata changes from 3rd party sources
- Manual recordings
- Site to site content distribution
- Remote personnel (news)
How do you create, ingest, manipulate and distribute content?

- Delineate how each of these tasks are accomplished within your current workflow
- Make a “wish list” for how you’d like this to change in the future
- Evaluate each systems’ tools to meet these needs and how they would fit into your environment now and in the future
- List what other “abilities” you’ll gain

Section One: Production Workflow

Section Two
Playlist Creation Workflow

Section Two

How do you create the daily logs which your stations air?
- Traffic/Billing suite, Music Scheduling
- Integration with the above
- Workflow for creating, merging and changing logs
- Error reporting
- Voicetracking – locally and remotely
- User modifications
- Reconciliation

Section Two: Playlist Creation
How do you create the daily logs which your stations air?
- Delineate your process for each of these as it exists now
- Investigate what options are available if 3rd party utilities are changed such as Traffic/Billing or Music Scheduling
- Clearly map out your desired workflow
- Look at each systems’ abilities within this workflow and determine how it will work in your environment

Section Two: Playlist Creation

Section Three
How do you “make radio”? 
- Delineate your station’s basic playout scheme 24x7
- Investigate how your air staff interacts with the system both on the air and while preparing for air
- Map out your air chain including audio routing/switching, relay control, metadata distribution, etc.
- Identify special areas of concerns such as split logs, automated content filling, playtime adjustments, clock specifications, shared logs, etc.
How do you “make radio”?  
- Identify which areas of this on air environment are going to need to stay the same and which will change (IP Audio, studio switching, format changes)  
- Have key air staff interact with a fully working demo of any system which may be used and evaluate their ability to “catch on.”  
- What new “toys” will you gain with a new system?  
- What items outside your current system could it replace? Phone recording, hot key audio, etc.

Section Three:  
On–Air Workflow

Section Four
Installation, Integration, Support

Section Four

How does it all work?
- Current system architecture (servers, clients, sound cards, network, etc.)
- Licensing scheme
- Hardware/Software platforms
- Ongoing costs
- Support and training
- Data architecture (audio codecs, data scheme, groups, etc.)
- Install environment (KVM, workstations, Network, audio interconnects, GPIs, etc.)

Section Four: Install, Integrate, Support
How does it all work?
- Architectures available with new system
- Purchase options
- Support for existing hardware/software platforms intermixed with new environment requirements
- Longterm cost of ownership estimate
- Install costs/time estimates
- Data migration and new data structure
- Peripheral requirements (USB, DVI, CAT6, audio connections, GPIs, etc.)

Section Four:
Install, Integrate, Support

DON’T FORGET
“THE WILD CARDS”

Conclusion
And then… Wild Cards

- Talk money first – do you have the budget?
- Personal preferences and experiences
- Nearby stations/engineers already using and supporting another system
- Company reputation
- Future company stability
- Current company structure
- Product EOL concerns (development path)
- Local presence (dealers, integrators, etc.)

Section Four:
Install, Integrate, Support