

Identifying the Best Manufacturing Operations Management Solutions

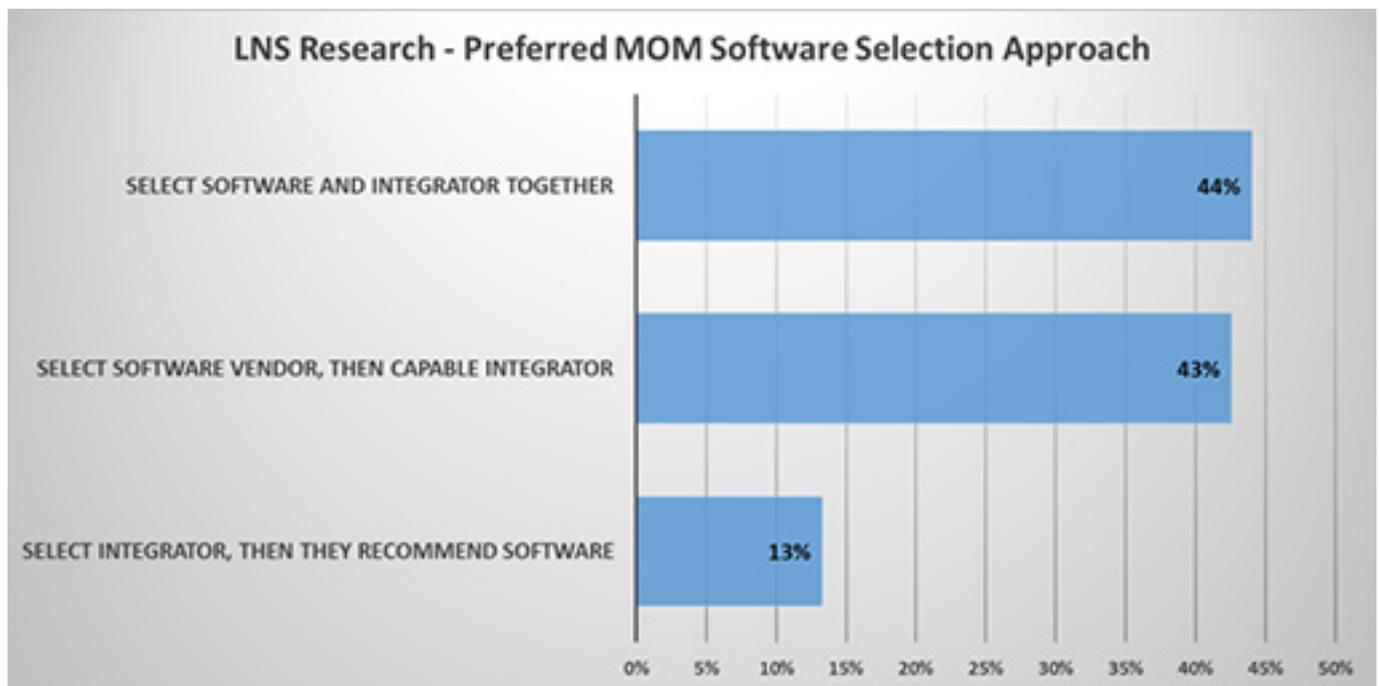
Mark Davidson

Navigating the complex landscape of expected process improvements, functional requirements, the realities of software capabilities, integration with your IT landscape, and best practices can be quite daunting. There's a lot at stake — the competitiveness of your company and the future of careers could be on the line.

Whether you're looking to implement a focused solution to assist your company in the area of quality management, to add better real-time visibility to performance with the addition of a manufacturing intelligence system, or to implement a fully blown [Manufacturing Execution System \(MES\)](#) [1] that covers a wide range of manufacturing support functions, what are some of the leading approaches being taken as part of these software selections and solution implementations?

In the [2013-2014 LNS Research MOM survey](#) [2], approximately 325 manufacturing professionals shared their preferences on how they leverage internal resources, systems integrators and consultants, and software suppliers to support their manufacturing improvement initiatives.

What Approaches Are Being Taken to Select the Right MOM Software?



In the survey, when LNS Research asked manufacturers about their preferred approaches to [making their software selection](#) [3], the goal was to understand the influence of the software vendors and the system integrators/implementers. We can

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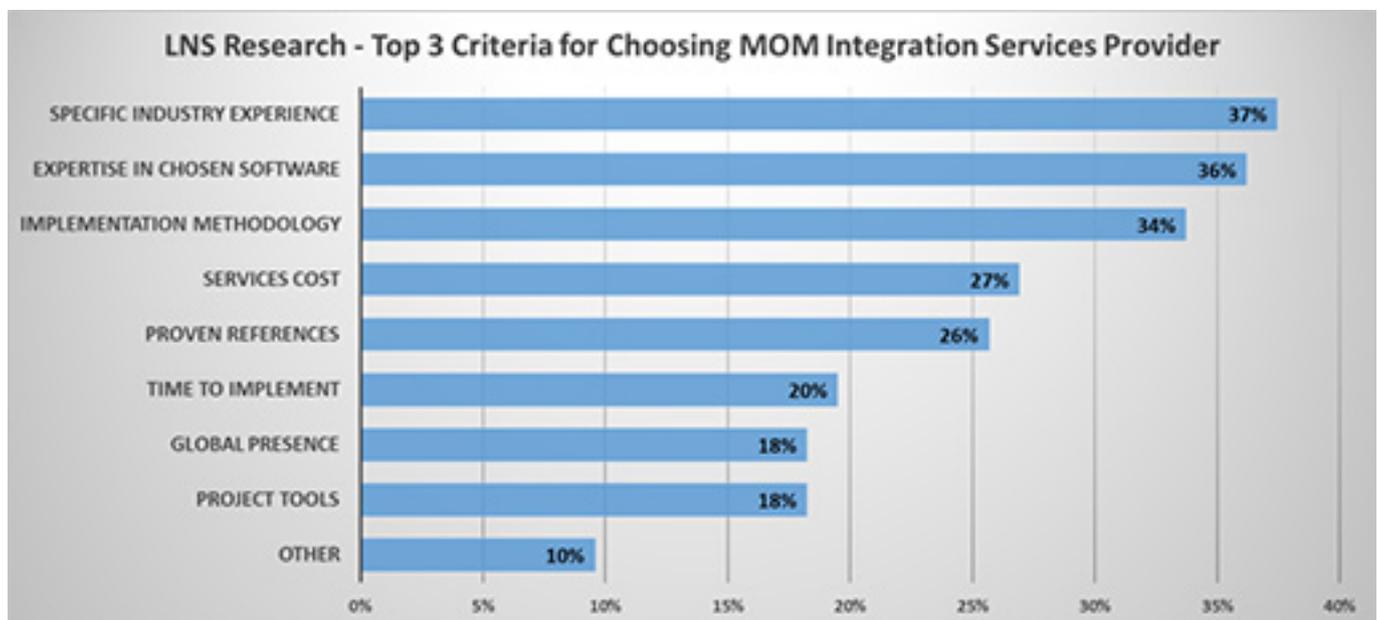
see that manufacturing companies put a lot of emphasis on ensuring that the right software is selected.

In nearly equal proportion, software is selected in combination with the integrator (44% of respondents) or the software is selected first and a capable integrator selection follows (43% of respondents). This is not to diminish in any way the importance of selecting the right system integrator for overall success. It just shows that getting the software selection right is of primary concern.

Only 13% of the respondents took the approach of selecting the systems integrator first and had the integrator recommend the best software for the situation. This doesn't necessarily mean this is a bad approach. In fact, LNS Research can see situations whereby a small or mid-sized manufacturing company does not have the expertise or resources to properly [go through the software evaluation process](#) [4], and instead they use a trusted system integrator to take the lead in this area.

It's also important to note that systems integrators are playing a key influencing role in the software selection process in the 44% cases where software and integrators are selected together. At the end of the day, the software and the implementation are both critically important to the success of these projects, and as the chart below shows, it's very important that the chosen integrator has a proven track record with the chosen [MOM software](#) [5].

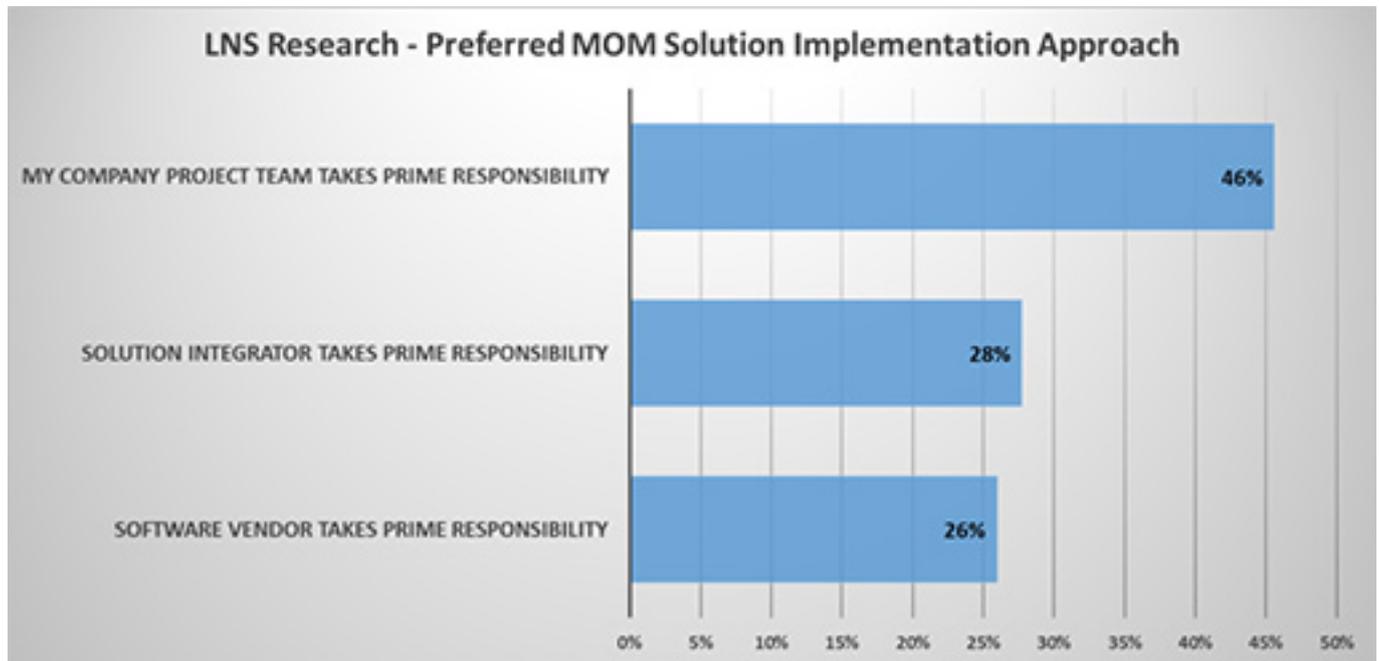
What Criteria Is Being Used to Select the Right Integration Services Provider?



The survey asked participants to select from a multiple-choice list of criteria, and allowed the selection of their top three. We can see that the most-selected criteria were having expertise in the specific manufacturing industry (selected 37% of the time), expertise in the chosen software (36% of the time), and having confidence in the integrator's implementation methodology (34% of the time). Other considerations like costs, time, etc., are shown above. As "Other" was selected only

10% of the time, this shows that the most important criteria were presented.

Who Is Ultimately Held Accountable for Success?



Now that we understand how companies are making their software and integration services selections, at the end of the day, who do they hold accountable for success?

LNS asked these same manufacturing professionals about how they prefer to approach the responsibility for the overall MOM solution, and the results were clear. Even when there are outside vendor resources being brought to bear, the leading approach (46%) was for the internal project team to take the lead and accountability for success. LNS Research sees this as a best practice for companies if they have the talent and resources to pull it off. There is nothing like having your own team take the ultimate responsibility, given they need to ensure success not only for the initial implementation but also to [ensure sustainable success over the lifecycle](#) [6].

It's clear that not every company is in a position to do this, as 28% of respondents have independent integrators take the lead, and 26% having the implementation team from the software vendor take the lead can make perfect sense. Some companies prefer or have trust in the independent voice and expertise of an independent system integrator. Others prefer to have one point of contact with the software vendor to avoid finger pointing between whether issues are software- or integration-related. Both of these can be valid approaches, based on the strength of relationships that can exist with a given integrator or software vendor.

LNS Research Solution Selection Guide

Given the highest importance of getting a software selection right, it's important for

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companies to utilize every resource available in gathering information about potential vendors to narrow selection down to a suitable shortlist. That's why LNS Research is offering a free download of its MOM Solution Selection Guide. The guide provides an overview of the MOM vendor landscape based on criteria such as specific functionalities and modules, company sizes served, geographic footprint, industry strengths, time to solution value, and others. [Click here](#) [7] for free access to the guide.

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