

## Sandy Pullinger

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To: Friends of nFold  
Subject: nFold Software Quarterly - January 2004

Welcome to the latest edition of nFold's Software Quarterly. Last quarter the newsletter was in pdf format. This quarter, nFold is trying an email only approach. Next quarter, the full edition will be web based, with an email summary only. Email your suggestions to me, or subscribe a friend.

### **SOFTWARE SPOTLIGHT**

#### **Customers**

Solutional has developed a highly customisable Web based CRM system, called Radical. Local is lekker at about R5,000 per user. The software is sold in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana. With customers such as FNB (Card Division), Debswana, Wimpy and Boart Longyear, Solutional is well on its way to having an established user base. The software is suitable for a range of sales, marketing and support functions. It is based on a SQL database, uses Crystal Reports for reporting and integrates easily to your enterprise systems. For more information, visit [www.solutional.net](http://www.solutional.net).

#### **Information**

Media is an affordable business intelligence solution that helps managers make better decisions with less effort. At about R3,000 per user, the system enables managers to see at a glance the key performance criteria for the business, such as financial performance, customer satisfaction and production levels. The system combines and summarises information contained in enterprise databases. The software was developed by Speedware, listed on the Toronto stock exchange in Canada. With more than 3,000 customers, Speedware has a network of about 40 distributors in 35 countries. For more information, visit [www.speedware.com](http://www.speedware.com).

#### **Employees**

SolidWorks is a well established CAD package used for three dimensional mechanical designs. At an upgrade price of about R9,000 per Solidworks user, PDMWorks helps SolidWorks users to manage the designs, parts and drawings created in the system. PDMWorks includes revision control and product life-cycle features. The system is useful in a multi-user environment where parts can be shared across several products, or where many products are changed frequently. It takes the hassle out of manual revision control, where errors can be costly. For more information, visit [www.solidworks.com](http://www.solidworks.com).

### **SOFTWARE EVALUATION METHOD**

It's fun to sit on the other side of the table once in a while. nFold has recently been involved in several software evaluation projects as an impartial advisor. In the course of these evaluations, nFold has developed a method for comparing and evaluating different software solutions. For your interest, here are a few lessons learned the hard way.

#### **Know the Need**

Take some time to define your requirements on paper, even to the extent of knowing in advance how you will evaluate responses. This will not only encourage suppliers to make their responses more relevant to your needs, but will also make it easier for you to compare different solutions. nFold recommends that you include a summary sheet in your requirements document, for suppliers to complete. For example, you can include a cost summary format that will help you compare responses.

#### **Widen the Net**

Internet research and the grapevine are good ways to find potential suppliers. The first supplier to mind is not always the best to meet your needs. Sometimes, it pays to broaden your mind a little, to consider longer term solutions.

#### **Pick up the Phone**

We are all so tempted to rely on the convenience of email that we sometimes forget the good old-fashioned way. Chasing up on responses can waste valuable implementation time, so it's worthwhile

to call each supplier in advance and get the name of the specific person who will respond to your request for information. The effect is remarkable. Supplier response rates went up from 5% to 50% when nFold applied this simple technique.

### **Do the Maths**

We all know that the quoted cost of a solution is a fraction of the total cost to your company. When comparing solutions, it makes sense to look at a three year TCO for each solution. By making high level assumptions about deployment time & effort, and by looking at hidden costs such as extra hardware and software, you can quickly assess whether solutions are within your budget limitations, without having wasted too much time and energy on meetings and demos.

### **Seeing is Believing**

The work really begins when you have narrowed the list down to a handful of suppliers able to meet your requirements without breaking the bank. It's now time to get up close and personal to understand the relative merits of each solution. After one or two demos and perhaps even a trial period, you will have confidence in the recommendation you make to the holder(s) of the purse strings.

### **NEWS CORNER**

nFold is proud to announce that it is now a [business partner for EtQ in South Africa](#). EtQ Solutions is a flexible web based workflow solution that automates all the business processes required for Quality Management. The software guides companies through compliance with ISO 9000, QS-9000, cGMP (FDA), ISO 14000 and similar standards for Quality and Environmental Management. For more information, contact nFold or visit [www.etq.com](http://www.etq.com).

Kind Regards,

**Sandy Pullinger**

Director, nFold (Pty) Ltd

**e:** [sandy@nfold.com](mailto:sandy@nfold.com)

**c:** +27-83-326-6763

**t:** +27-11-486-2418

**f:** +27-11-486-0335

**a:** PO Box 1421, Parklands, 2121, South Africa

**w:** [www.nfold.com](http://www.nfold.com)

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