



56 QUESTIONS TO ASK A SOFTWARE PROVIDER TO AVOID WASTING THOUSANDS

Implementing new software is a significant investment, so you want your evaluation of different providers and products to be as thorough as possible. After all, you're not only buying a product, you're entering a partnership.

REMEMBER:

No software provider can give you everything. There's likely going to be some compromises no matter who you choose. The key to choosing the right provider for you is knowing who will help you meet your goals, overcome your biggest challenges and provide the most value for the money.

As software experts ourselves, we've compiled a list of 56 questions to ask as you're considering who to enter a partnership with, and a few red flags to keep an eye out for.

Use our exhaustive list of questions as a guide when you're conducting research online, talking to salespeople on demos, or are in the negotiation process.

RESEARCH

The Company

As you're evaluating software providers, consider the following questions as you dive deeper into the company you could be partnering with.

- ✓ What is the background of the company's leaders?
- ✓ Do they have experience in and understand your industry and business model?
- ✓ How do the leaders speak about their employees?
- ✓ What industries does the company cater to?
- ✓ Do they help build trust by giving honest and transparent answers?
- ✓ What are the company employees saying? Check sites like Glassdoor for employee reviews. These often give "behind the scenes" insight into how customers are treated.
- ✓ How big is the company? How many employees and customers do they have?
- ✓ If you've interacted with employees, are they friendly, helpful and work to solve your problem? Happy employees = happy customers.

RED FLAG:

If employee ratings are low and comments are disparaging, it is a strong possibility company leadership is lacking, values are not being lived by, and customer experience is poor.



LEARN ABOUT

The Product

Asking questions as you talk to sales reps on the road or during demonstrations is crucial. Be sure you're asking these types of questions as you move deeper into your consideration process.

- ✓ What new products or features have you released or created in the last 12 months?
- ✓ What is on your short- and long-term product roadmap?
- ✓ Are product upgrades free?
- ✓ I use *[current product name]*. Can you tell me how you're different and why you're better? Why should I choose your software over *[competitor]*?
- ✓ I like *[feature]* about *[competitor]*. Do you have a similar feature?
- ✓ What are you doing to keep up with the latest ATF regulations and Zero Tolerance Policy?
- ✓ How do you ensure compliance with federal and state regulations?
- ✓ Do you use 3rd party integrations? If so, how do they work and how do I know they are stable?
- ✓ How do you gather customer feedback for new features/functionality?
- ✓ Can I list items automatically on eCommerce sites or is it manual?
- ✓ Do you offer text messaging, or do I need to work with a third party?
- ✓ Do you offer a way to gather customer reviews for my store or do I need to work with a third party?
- ✓ Do you have mobile apps for employees and customers to chat and shop?
- ✓ What payment processors do you work with and how much will it cost for me to work with them too?
- ✓ Do you have a product estimator and pricing guides to help me sell used merchandise?
- ✓ Does your point of sale integrate with your own E4473, A&D book and Cloud Storage solutions, or do I need to have a third-party software for that?
- ✓ What is your uptime? Have you had any software outages recently?
- ✓ How do you keep my data secure?
- ✓ How does your software handle private party and 3rd party firearm transfers? What's my experience like?
- ✓ Do you have an automated way for me to complete eNICS forms or do I need to manually complete?

LEARN ABOUT THE PRODUCT (CONT.)

RED FLAG:

A roadmap is a company's plan for future improvements or developments. If there's no roadmap, you should expect that you're going to be stuck using an outdated system that limits your ability to get your desired results. It's also an indicator that the company has done little to no innovation in recent years and they have lagging technology.



ASK ABOUT

Business Results

A software partner should drive positive, measurable results for your business. Can the provider you're considering do that? They should be able to provide concrete answers and examples.

- ✓ These are my biggest pain points. Explain how you can solve these for me.
- ✓ How does your product save me time—what manual work can be automated with your products?
- ✓ What different products would I have to have to meet my business needs?
- ✓ Can you tell me about the ROI for your current customers using *[product name/feature]*?
- ✓ How will this product/feature make the process faster for employees and customers?
- ✓ If I add more locations, how long does it take to go live at my new store?

ASSESS

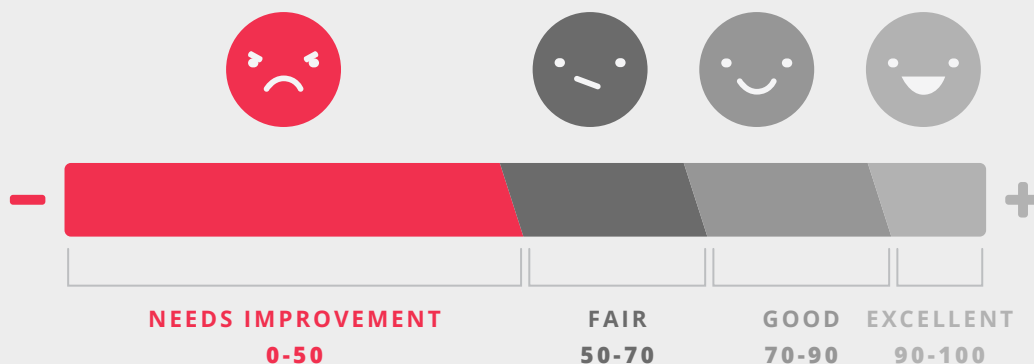
Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a huge consideration when buying software. You're going to be a customer—are your peers satisfied? Consider the following during your evaluation process.

- ✓ Are there reviews and testimonials on the company's website?
- ✓ What are customers saying on reputable third party review sites like TrustPilot and Software Advice?
- ✓ Have customers shared reviews on social media or platforms like Google?
- ✓ What is your Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)?
- ✓ If I provide a verbal commitment, can you provide customer references so I can talk with a real customer? (Reserve this request for the final stages of consideration.)
- ✓ Do you have partners in FFL industry who I can speak with about your product?

RED FLAG:

If a company does not measure CSAT, won't share their CSAT score, or can't produce any documentation about their CSAT, beware. This essentially means the company has no objective way of assessing how well they are meeting customer needs (or worse yet, they don't care).



ASK ABOUT

Support

What happens once you've signed on the dotted line? Be sure to ask about what your initial support will look like, as well as support down the road!

- ✓ Can you show me/talk me through your onboarding process?
- ✓ What does the data conversion process look like?
- ✓ Who is handling the implementation process on your end?
- ✓ What is the time commitment for implementation?
- ✓ What will you need from me for implementation?
- ✓ What does the average go-live timeframe look like for a company like mine?
- ✓ When will I know my go-live date?
- ✓ What can I expect on go-live day?
- ✓ What ongoing support will I receive as a customer?
- ✓ What training is available for my new employees?
- ✓ What does the support process look like if I have an issue?
- ✓ What training is available if we need a refresher?
- ✓ What forms of training are offered? In person, videos, documents?
- ✓ Will I reach a live person when I call or submit a help ticket?
- ✓ What is your average answer rate for phone calls?
- ✓ How quickly are your help ticket cases resolved with Support?

RED FLAG:

If there's no documented implementation/process, the vendor might be "shooting from the hip." The complete end-to-end process should be clear, repeatable and collaborative, with both parties making time investments.

Software is a big decision but asking these questions throughout your evaluation process should help you make the right choice.

Considering Bravo Store Systems?

We'd love to chat!
