

FREE SCORECARD

Vendor Selection Scorecard

Score any software option in 15 minutes — buy, build, or extend what you have.

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Free resource — 2026

seattle.dev/downloads/vendor-selection-scorecard.pdf

Vendor Selection Scorecard

Score any software option you're considering on 8 criteria, 1–5 each. Highest total wins — but read the notes. Some criteria matter more than others depending on your situation.

01

02

03

04

Scoring rubric (8 criteria × 3 options)

How to score fairly

Red flags during evaluation

Decision thresholds

The scorecard

Criterion	Option A	Option B	Option C	Winner
Fit to workflow Does it do the work as it actually happens, or do we have to change our process to fit it?	1-5	1-5	1-5	total
Note: Custom usually wins; off-the-shelf needs heavy customization.				
Total cost of ownership 5-year cost including subscriptions, integrations, customization, training, and exit costs.	1-5	1-5	1-5	total
Note: Tie-breaker. Calculate honestly.				
Customization ceiling How far can we push before hitting 'that's not possible'?	1-5	1-5	1-5	total
Note: Higher = more flexible. Off-the-shelf usually caps out.				
Time to value How fast does someone using this become productive?	1-5	1-5	1-5	total
Note: Off-the-shelf usually wins on speed.				
Vendor lock-in / exit risk What happens if we need to leave? Data export, retraining, contract terms.	1-5	1-5	1-5	total
Note: Custom wins — you own the code.				
Support quality When something breaks, who fixes it and how fast?	1-5	1-5	1-5	total
Note: Off-the-shelf has SLAs; custom depends on your team/dev.				

Integration with existing tools How cleanly does it talk to CRM, accounting, email, etc.?	1-5	1-5	1-5	total
Note: Off-the-shelf has pre-built; custom needs development.				
Internal capability to maintain Can your team update and extend this without outside help?	1-5	1-5	1-5	total
Note: Off-the-shelf: yes. Custom: only if your team codes.				
Total				A / B / C

How to score fairly

- **Score based on evidence, not hope.** If you haven't tested it, your score is a guess — and you should score it lower.
- **Use a real workflow, not the vendor's demo script.** Walk through your top 3 use cases end-to-end.
- **Score integration separately from features.** A great tool that doesn't talk to your accounting system is a problem.
- **Get input from the people who'll actually use it.** Executive preference ≠ user preference.

Red flags during evaluation

In the demo

- Demo uses fake data, not yours
- Salesperson can't show your specific workflow
- "Customization is on the roadmap" (vague)
- Hard to get pricing in writing

In the contract

- Auto-renewal without cancellation window
- Data export not in standard contract
- Price increase clause above 7%/yr
- "Implementation partner" required at extra cost

Decision thresholds

WHAT YOUR TOTAL MEANS

Clear winner (gap of 6+ points): Pick the winner. Don't second-guess.

Close call (gap under 6 points): Tie-breaker = whichever has lower exit cost if it doesn't work out.

All under 24: All three options are weak. Step back and re-scope the problem before picking any of them.

NEED A SECOND PAIR OF EYES?

If you've scored your options and you're not sure the winner is right, I do free 30-minute review sessions. Send your scorecard ahead of time and we'll go through it together.

seattle.dev/schedule-consultation