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# 36 questions every IT leader should ask before choosing an ESM platform



Use this checklist for evaluating strategic fit, platform readiness, AI governance, delivery and long-term value.

## Business direction

1. What business outcomes must the platform help us achieve?
2. Which strategic priorities should this investment directly support?
3. What happens if we keep the current platform for another three years?

## Current-state reality

4. Where does our current platform create friction, delay or unnecessary cost?
5. Which workarounds, manual steps or disconnected tools have become normal?
6. What do users, service teams and leaders find hardest today?

## Enterprise scope

7. Which service functions need the platform now - and which may need it next?
8. Can it support shared standards without forcing every team into the same process?
9. How will it connect work across IT, HR, facilities, finance and beyond?

## Experience and adoption

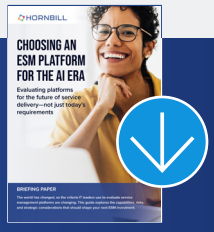
10. How easy will it be for employees to find help and track progress?
11. How well does it support analysts and service owners day-to-day?
12. What will encourage people to adopt the platform instead of bypassing it?

## Architecture and adaptability

13. Can we configure and evolve the platform without excessive custom code?
14. Will the architecture scale across teams, services, users and transaction volumes?
15. How easily can workflows adapt as policies and priorities change?

## Integration and data

16. How will it connect with our core systems, data and automation tools?
17. Can it provide a reliable, shared view of services, assets, people and work?
18. Which data quality, ownership or migration issues must we resolve first?




Turn your answers into a clearer shortlist –and a stronger case for change.

**Read Choosing an ESM platform for the AI era**

hornbill.com/choosing-an-esm-platform-guide

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# 36 questions every IT leader should ask before choosing an ESM platform (continued)



## AI capability

19 Which AI capabilities solve a defined problem rather than add novelty?

20 What evidence shows the AI works reliably with service-management data?

21 Can we start with focused use cases and scale as readiness improves?

## Governance and control

22 How are AI access, permissions, actions and decisions governed and audited?

23 Where can we require approval, apply guardrails or restrict autonomous action?

24 How will the platform protect sensitive data across service functions?

## Implementation readiness

25 What people, skills, governance and capacity will implementation require?

26 How will we prioritise use cases and deliver value in manageable stages?

27 Which risks could slow migration, adoption or organisational change?

## Value and measurement

28 What baseline measures will let us prove improvement?

29 How will we measure value beyond licence savings and efficiency?

30 Which early outcomes would build confidence and support wider expansion?

## Commercial confidence

31 What is the full cost of ownership, including services and change?

32 How predictable are costs as usage, automation and AI adoption grow?

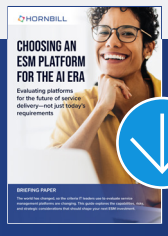
33 Which contract terms could limit flexibility, portability or future choices?

## Vendor partnership

34 Does the vendor understand our objectives, constraints and environment?

35 What evidence shows it can support implementation and long-term adoption?

36 Is the product roadmap credible - and how much influence will customers have?




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