

Eight Questions Before You Buy Another Seat

A one-page test for the subscription nobody reviewed

Software you rent never stops charging, and the decision to add one more subscription is almost never the one anybody reviews. These are the eight questions worth asking out loud first. They take ten minutes and they are the same ones I ask before recommending anything.

01 Who exactly needs this, and what will they stop doing?

A seat bought so somebody "can see it" is a read-only need paid for at full price. Check whether the tool has a viewer tier before you add a licence.

02 Does something you already pay for do this?

Overlap is the most common cause of software sprawl. Three tools sharing sixty percent of their features is normal, and nobody notices because each was bought by a different person in a different quarter.

03 What is this bill at twice your headcount?

Per-seat pricing means growing costs you more. Work the number out now, while you are choosing, rather than at the renewal where you have no leverage.

04 How do you get your data out, and has anyone tried?

Every vendor claims an export. Far fewer produce something you could actually load somewhere else. Test it in the trial, not in the year you want to leave.

05 What fraction of this product will you use?

Under a quarter means you are funding a roadmap built for companies ten times your size, and paying for the parts that make it complicated to use.

06 Who owns this internally?

Subscriptions nobody owns never get cancelled. If you cannot name the person who will review this at renewal, you are not buying a tool, you are starting an annuity.

07 What is the annual figure, said out loud?

Monthly pricing is designed to sound small. Multiply by twelve, then by the years you realistically expect to keep it, and decide against that number instead.

08 If they doubled the price tomorrow, what would you do?

If the honest answer is "pay it", you are not a customer, you are captive. That is the switching-cost question, and it is worth answering before the invoice makes you.

If three or more of these landed badly

You are probably renting something you have outgrown. Add up what the subscriptions cost over the years you expect to keep them — stantelligence.com/tools/saas-cost does the arithmetic, free and without asking for anything. Whether that total justifies building something you own is the next conversation.

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