

Selecting the right delivery partner

When implementing a new product, business capability or technical enabler, there are several routes available to financial services organisations. Internal teams are often preferred for integration of tools and systems, but available capacity in these teams often prevents this from being a viable choice. Vendors offering commodity technology components may also offer a delivery capability. This can be a valid choice for the vendor's product knowledge or implementation experience, but this route may be costly and limited in scope, leaving many areas of change in an out-of-scope bucket of technical debt.

The third route to implementation is with the support of an external delivery partner. The right partner can assist with the provision of skilled technical resources and project delivery experts, they can work in a standalone manner or as an integrated part of an internal team, giving a blend of implementation skills, knowledge transfer and delivery assurance.

So comes the big question – how can we select the right delivery partner? You can't just trust your gut - a flashy proposal is one thing, validating that they can deliver is another. Make sure you've selected the right partner for success using a method-driven selection process.

Delivery Partner Selection

When selecting a delivery partner, a number of elements will fall into the equation. Selection processes will vary between organisations, as will past experiences, and delivery priorities. Core to the selection should be an assessment where the weightings of different factors are considered, prospective partners are scored and the outputs quantified. Whilst first impressions, vendor approved partners, shared experiences from competitors and existing relationships with vendors are important, any decision reached needs to be justifiable if delivery starts to falter.

Core offering

The primary selection criterion for a delivery partner would need to be the partner's skills and experience in the area where they are to support. These are the elements on which the delivery provider will be assessed, they are the reason the provider is being brought in and they will form the core of the partners offering. Being able to ask the right questions, probe the marketing in the right way and accurately assess the delivery partner can be a challenge, and this is often best assessed by someone with sufficient skill in the area under assessment. This can be particularly challenging when these skills are in short supply within the organisation in the first place.

These skills and experience will cover some or all of the following, depending on the type of work in scope:

- Skills with relevant technologies and design patterns
- Experience with software and tools in scope for the project
- Proficiency in project management, tracking and reporting, and potentially in broader programme management.
- Capabilities in testing, integration and handover to client businesses
- Ability to work within the client business, transferring knowledge and skills as appropriate.
- Previous relevant examples of successful delivery in similar projects and for similar clients.

Other considerations

Alongside the core offering, consideration should be afforded to some of the softer assessment categories. This can include financial situation, speed to stand up resource, perceived quality of individual resource, flexibility of the partner and alignment to the principles and values of the client organisation.

Partner Approach

A core element of the scoring, and one that is often overlooked, is that of the candidate partner's approach. Identify in advance of the process the approach you're looking for. Are you looking for a partner to deliver independently, and hand over a system at the end of their engagement? Are you looking for a consultative expert to support, enthuse or empower your delivery team? We often find a lot can be learned about the candidate's approach to delivery by the way they approach the selection process.

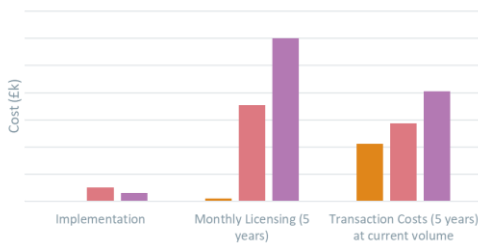
Assessment

You must be able to give a clear and quantitative assessment of your partner selection, internally at least if not to external parties. To enable this, providing scoring across multiple areas of the response is necessary. This can provide internal views of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the providers, validating initial conclusions.

Delivery Partner – Holistic View



Indicative Relative Costs



Scoring should be applied across multiple channels of response; using a combination of the below:

- Written response to RFP
- Comprehensive answers to specific questions presented by client
- Provider presentation and Q&A session
- Case studies from relevant previous provider experience

Comparison can then be made across the candidate partners, highlighting relative strengths and aligning these to the client organisation's strategy and objectives.

Find out more:

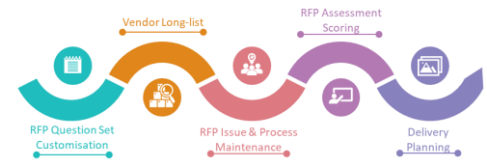
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Selection Process

We have developed a standard approach to selection which we run with our clients where a formal RFP process best fits the requirements.



- **RFP Question Set Customisation** – From our extensive list of RFP questions, collate and refine a set of questions in each section relevant to the specific client requirements.
- **Vendor Long-list** – Within each area, draw on our experience and industry knowledge to define a list of industry partners and technology specialists which can form the distribution list of the RFP. Augment this with additional vendors known to our clients.
- **RFP Issue & Process Maintenance** – Produce the formal documentation required for the RFP process. Review this with the client and issue to the vendors in the process. Orchestrate clarification questions, consolidate questions and answers and maintain transparency in the RFP process.
- **RFP Assessment Scoring** – Define the assessment criteria, score the responses against the criteria and manage client scoring, producing aggregated scoring results across the categories identified.
- **Delivery Planning** – Support the client in producing a consolidated delivery plan that sits across all areas of proposed change and ongoing change initiatives. Identify cross-programme dependencies and prioritisation, and support in technical oversight of delivery provision.

Engaging with our team

Altus Consulting have a wide range of experience in technology and vendor selection across many areas of Financial Services, leading to successful programme delivery and improved business outcomes for our clients. We use our proven approach to selection processes to design our engagements, be they standalone selections, vendor or partner selection following strategy or operating model development, or selection as part of an ongoing change delivery programme. In all engagements we include the option for ongoing consultation with our team to give an external perspective to your decision making and governance processes. To find out more contact our team.