

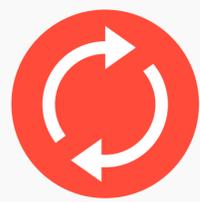
5 Mandatory Questions to Ask Billing Vendors



Billing system selection directly affects your customers, critical business initiatives, and ultimately, your career. Because of its central role in business, selecting the right billing vendor is high risk/high reward proposition. To minimize the risk, ask these critical questions.

1. How can I synchronize product catalogs across my ecosystem?

Business functions like managing leads, ordering, e-commerce portals, provisioning, fulfillment, invoicing, and collection all access a product catalog. Your provider should be able to show you how to keep product catalogs in sync. If not, it's time to move on.



2. How does your solution future-proof my business?

You might be looking at a simple subscription solution today, but who knows when a sly startup might disrupt your industry. Understand how the solution will allow you to adapt to changing markets. Be sure that business users can make changes quickly and without IT intervention. If "simple" changes require coding, consider another solution.



3. Do you have a client like me that I can talk to?

This will tell you how well the vendor understands your business, and whether they've successfully done the kinds of things your business requires. Talking to at least three reference clients should be a standard part of vendor selection.



4. How quickly can you create a proof-of-concept?

A POC that tests a few critical use cases should be part of your selection process. Beyond a paper response, creating a working POC provides a clear vision of whether a vendor understands, and can address, your business models and challenges.



5. Do I want to work with these people?

This isn't like getting a new printer—you'll be BFFs with your vendor and integration partner for a long time. And the relationship doesn't end when the platform goes live. As you're closing in on a decision, think about what this vendor will be like to work with. And perhaps most importantly, will you have access to their A-list resources?



Choosing the right billing vendor can mean the difference between a big hit or a big mess. These five questions will help you focus on the science of understanding how a vendor's solution can meet your business requirements along with the art of determining whether they can get you to a successful business outcome.

