

Vendor & tool evaluation

Test vendors against your workloads, not their demo.



BEST FIT Choosing between providers	ANCHOR LENGTH 4–6 weeks	WAY IN Published shortlist teardown	STARTS WITH Shadow Scanner
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01 THE PROBLEM

A demo runs clean data on a happy path. Your environment does neither. And picking a vendor is partly a bet it still exists at renewal: one software category retired 1,367 products in a year.

02 WHERE IT LIVES

AI STACK

Applications
Delivery & lifecycle
Models
Orchestration & runtime
Data platform
Infrastructure

DELIVERY STAGE

Design & assess
Implement
Enable
Monitor
Iterate

03 METHODOLOGY

Criteria first → Bake-off → Cost → Viability

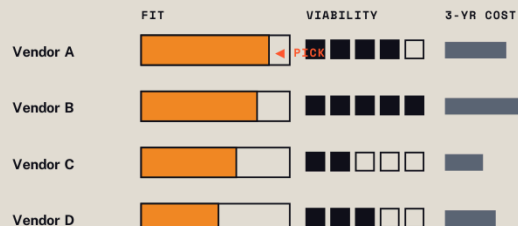
- 1 Criteria first**
Scoring written from your workloads and weighted before any vendor calls.
- 2 Bake-off**
The shortlist runs the same tasks, data and failure cases, side by side.
- 3 Three-year cost**
Licensing, inference, egress, integration and the staff to run it.
- 4 Viability & exit**
Funding, concentration and acquisition risk, plus what it takes to leave.

04 HOW WE DO IT · THE 808 REPORT

808 Fit & Viability Matrix

Each vendor scored on fit to your workloads and on viability at renewal. Bar length is three-year cost. The runner-up stays on the page, with where it would have won.

SAMPLE · FICTIONAL DEMO COMPANY · NOT CLIENT DATA



05 THE ENGAGEMENT

2.1 ENTRY Vendor Shortlist Teardown Free published comparison PLANNED	2.2 ANCHOR ENGAGEMENT Bake-Off Report Fixed-fee engagement · 4–6 weeks PLANNED	2.3 ANCHOR ENGAGEMENT Three-Year TCO Model Deliverable artifact · spreadsheet PLANNED	2.4 CONTINUING Renewal Watch Annual subscription PLANNED
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06 THE OUTCOME

- A scored comparison you can defend in procurement
- A three-year cost model you can re-run yourself
- A recommendation that states its trade-offs

MEASURED BY

Cost and fit against the model at first renewal

THE TRADE-OFF

A real bake-off takes weeks and your team's time. A demo shortlist takes an afternoon. The difference shows at renewal.