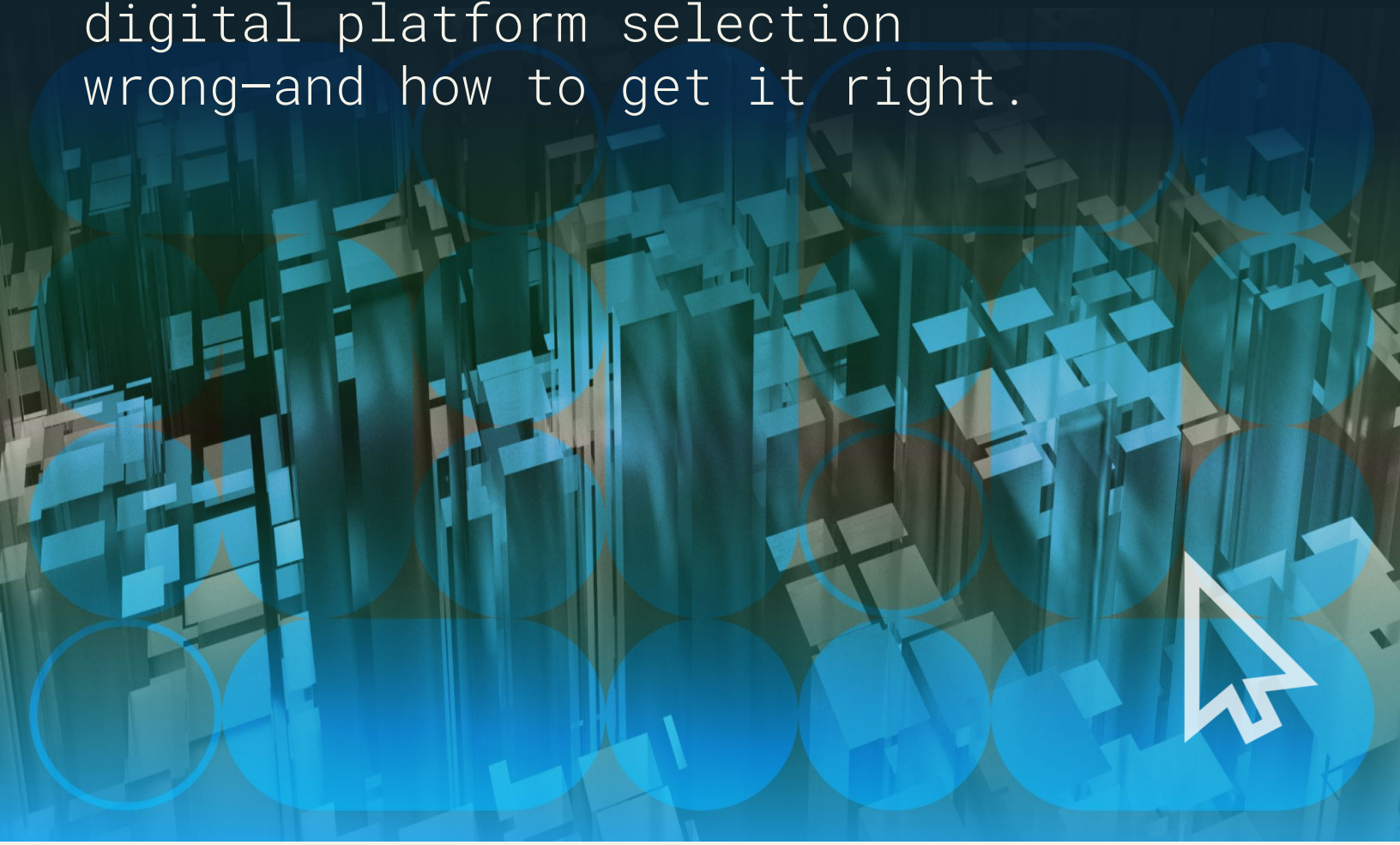
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# Beyond the magic quadrant.

## Why most enterprises get digital platform selection wrong—and how to get it right.



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July 2025

Email | Brand | Product | User Interface Design | User Experience | Customer Experience | Creative Direction | Full Stack Development | Business Strategy | MarTech

# Why Most Enterprises Get Digital Platform Selection Wrong

(And How to Get It Right)



Enterprise technology decisions carry unprecedented weight in today's digital economy. When Fortune 1000 companies select a digital experience platform (DXP), they're not just choosing software—they're betting millions on their ability to compete, adapt, and grow over the next decade.

So it's critical to ensure companies avoid implementation failures, budget overruns, and platforms that look impressive in demos, but crumble under real-world enterprise complexity.

## Beyond the Analyst Quadrants: A Practical Evaluation Framework

The most successful enterprise DXP selections follow a structured evaluation methodology that goes far beyond Gartner Magic Quadrants and Forrester Waves. This guide provides the framework for a  platform selection to avoid making costly mistakes:

# Technical Capability Assessment: The Foundation That Matters

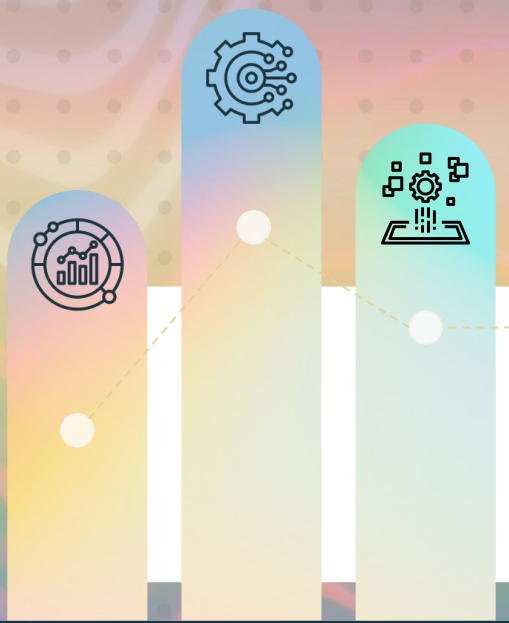
## PLATFORM ARCHITECTURE DEEP DIVE

The difference between a platform that scales and one that breaks lies in architectural fundamentals that rarely surface in vendor demos. Look for comprehensive, well-documented APIs that enable custom integrations without requiring vendor intervention. Demand proof of sub-second response times under enterprise-level traffic across global markets—not just in controlled demo environments.

Security compliance isn't negotiable for enterprise deployments. Verify SOC 2, ISO 27001, GDPR, and CCPA compliance with enterprise-grade data protection that extends beyond basic encryption. Evaluate pre-built connectors for your existing enterprise systems—Salesforce, SAP, Oracle, Microsoft integrations should work seamlessly, not require months of custom development.

### OMNICHANNEL ORCHESTRATION + INTEGRATION

True omnichannel capability means unified customer experience management across web, mobile, email, social, and offline touchpoints with real-time data synchronization. Evaluate comprehensive customer profile creation and management capabilities that actually work across your existing systems.

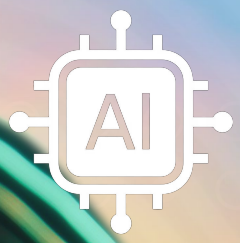


Integrated marketing automation should provide cross-channel campaign orchestration with performance tracking that gives you actionable insights. Multi-touch attribution modeling and comprehensive performance measurement across all channels separate enterprise-ready platforms from sophisticated marketing websites.

## AI AND PERSONALIZATION

Every DXP vendor claims AI-powered personalization, but few deliver meaningful capabilities. Evaluate machine learning sophistication through behavioral prediction accuracy, content optimization results, and customer journey automation effectiveness. Real-time processing capability means making personalization decisions within milliseconds based on current session behavior—not batch processing overnight updates.

Look for built-in data science tools including analytics, experimentation frameworks, and predictive modeling capabilities that your team can actually use.

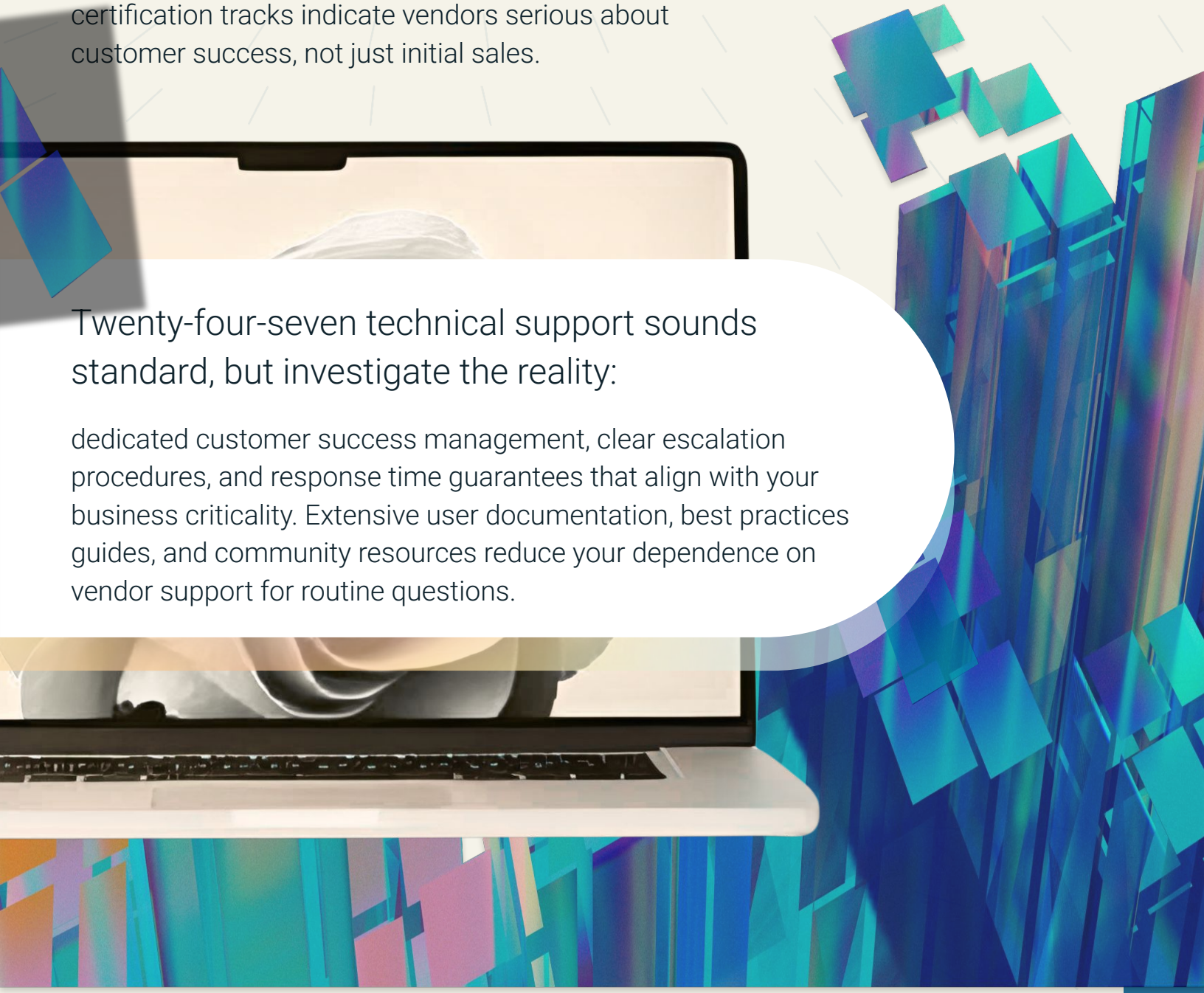



Content intelligence should provide **automated content creation, optimization, and performance analysis** that reduces manual work rather than creating new complexity.

# Organizational Fit: The Make-or-Break Factor

## IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT REALITIES

Platform capabilities mean nothing without successful implementation. Evaluate professional services quality through demonstrated experience with Fortune 1000 implementations and proven change management expertise. Comprehensive user training programs and certification tracks indicate vendors serious about customer success, not just initial sales.



Twenty-four-seven technical support sounds standard, but investigate the reality:

dedicated customer success management, clear escalation procedures, and response time guarantees that align with your business criticality. Extensive user documentation, best practices guides, and community resources reduce your dependence on vendor support for routine questions.

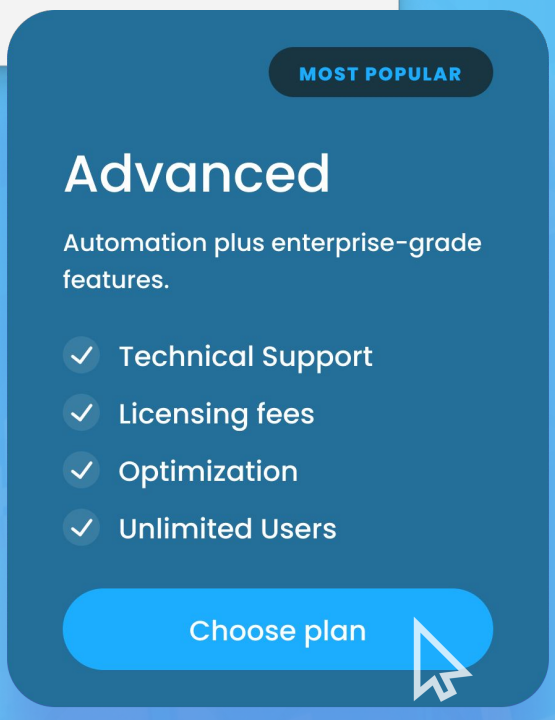
## Vendor Stability and Strategic Alignment

Evaluate software vendor revenue growth, profitability, and investment backing that indicates genuine long-term viability. Product roadmap alignment with enterprise digital experience trends ensures your platform investment grows more valuable over time.

Strong references from Fortune 1000 companies with comparable complexity provide the best indicator of real-world performance. Quality integrations with complementary vendors and technology partners create an ecosystem that supports your evolving needs rather than creating vendor lock-in.

# Financial and Commercial Evaluation:

## The Total Picture




### Total Cost of Ownership

Platform licensing represents just the beginning of your financial commitment. Demand transparent pricing models with predictable scaling costs and absolutely no hidden fees. Factor in professional services, integration, and customization expenses for full deployment—vendors who can't provide accurate estimates lack implementation experience.

Ongoing operations costs including support, maintenance, training, and optimization often exceed initial licensing fees. Realistic ROI projections based on comparable implementations provide the foundation for intelligent budget planning and stakeholder buy-in.

# Getting Platform Selection Right from the Start

The complexity of enterprise DXP selection demands more than internal evaluation alone. The most successful implementations begin with objective, expert assessment that cuts through vendor marketing to identify solutions that truly fit your technical landscape, business goals, and organizational realities.

Rather than relying solely on analyst reports that tell you what's ***"best in market,"*** consider what's actually best for your specific environment, resources, and strategic objectives. The difference between platform selection success and expensive failure often comes down to asking the right questions before you've committed to the wrong answers.

## Ready to find your platform fit?

Many enterprises are discovering the value of expert, vendor-neutral assessment before launching expensive evaluation processes. SH/FT offers a complimentary Platform Fit Finder that provides a structured, no-cost evaluation that identifies the 1-3 DXP solutions best matched to your specific context—**delivered in just 1-2 weeks**.

The process includes an executive discovery session with your IT, Marketing, and Digital leaders, comprehensive enterprise architecture review, and proprietary fit analysis that goes beyond generic recommendations.

### Executive Discovery session

IT, Marketing, and Digital leaders

### Enterprise Architecture Review

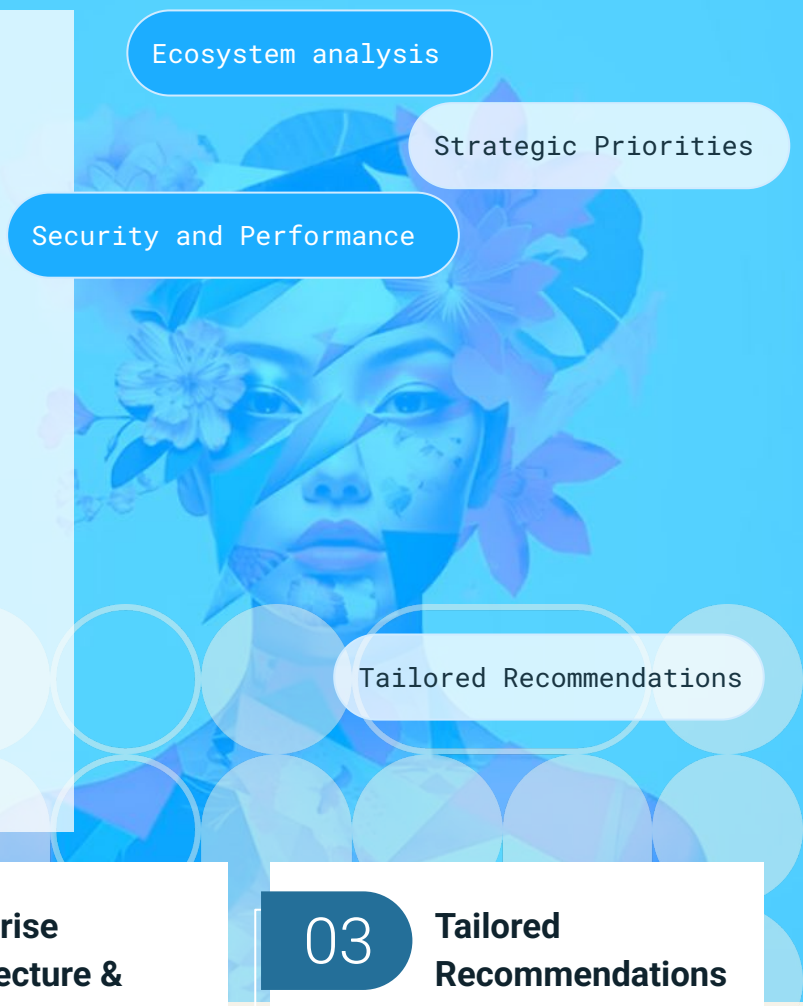
Comprehensive analysis of ecosystem

### Tailored Proprietary Analysis

Comprehensive analysis of ecosystem

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SH/FT's complimentary **CMS/DXP Fit Finder** goes beyond analyst grids to give you an objective, tailored assessment of CMS/DXP solutions that actually fit your technical landscape, business goals, and organizational realities. And we do it in 1–2 weeks, at no cost.




## 01 Executive Discovery Session (60 mins)

We bring IT, Marketing, and Digital stakeholders to the table to:

- Clarify strategic business and experience priorities
- Uncover pain points in your current CMS/DXP ecosystem
- Align on transformation and modernization goals as well as current roadmap

## 02 Enterprise Architecture & Capability Review

Enterprise Architecture & Capability Review

- A structured evaluation of your environment and readiness, including:
- Current platform infrastructure, hosting, and integration landscape
- Security, compliance, and performance benchmarks
- Basic understanding of internal devops capabilities and process

## 03 Tailored Recommendations

Tailored Platform Fit Recommendations:

- 1–3 CMS/DXP platforms that match your business model and technical needs
- Key trade-offs and implementation considerations
- Cost model insights (SaaS vs PaaS vs on-prem)

## What you get

01 **CMS/DXP Fit Report:** 1–3 tailored recommendations with rationale

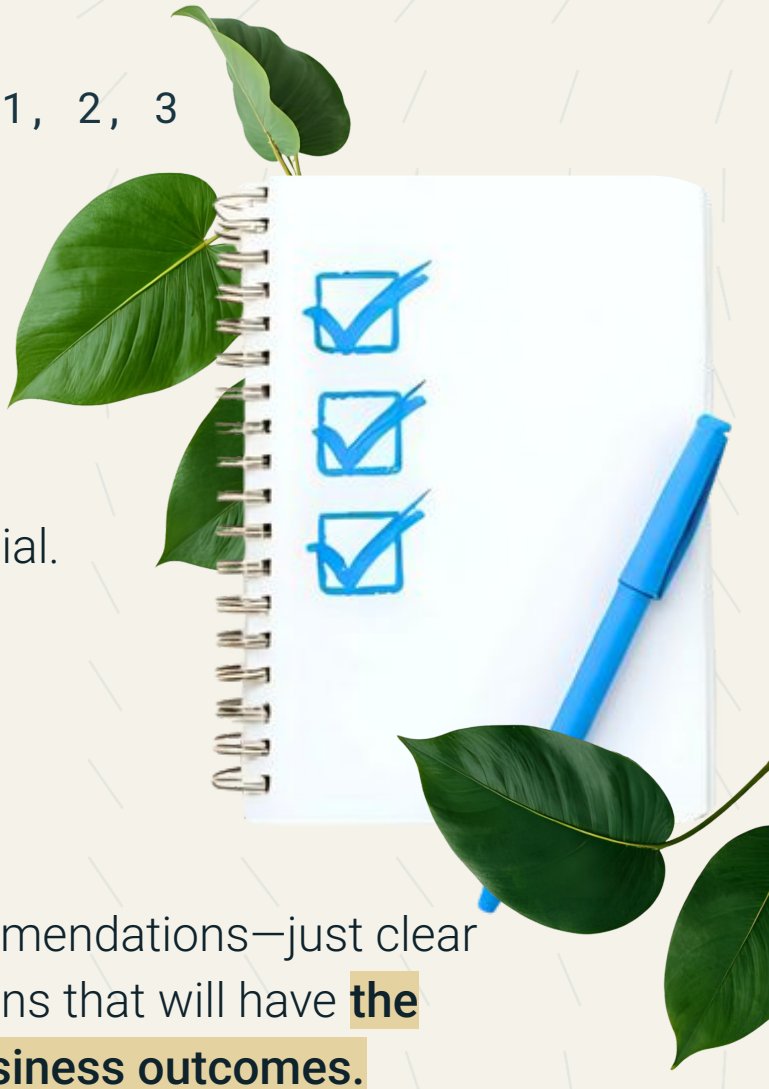
02 **Actionable Guidance:** Clear next steps for further evaluation or RFP prep

GETTING STARTED IS AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3

01 Book an intro call to discuss your goals.

02 Execute a mutual NDA to keep everything confidential.

03 Receive comprehensive insights in < 2 weeks.



No vendor pitches, no generic recommendations—just clear identification of viable platform options that will have **the greatest impact on your specific business outcomes.**

# Are you ready to find the right platform for your business?

Get your free CMS/DXP evaluation.

**Sign-up for: SH/FT's CMS/DXP Fit Finder**

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