

AI Vendor Question Sheet

Take this into every AI sales conversation — and keep the answers

Before the call: what problem is this solving?

Write the specific task the tool should improve, who will use it, and what success looks like in numbers (hours saved, faster responses, fewer errors).

1. Data handling: where does our information go?

- ☐ Is our data used to train your AI models, or anyone else's? (Business tier answer should be a clear no, in writing.)
- ☐ Where is our data stored and processed — UK, EU or elsewhere? If outside the UK, what safeguards cover the transfer?
- ☐ Who at your company can see our prompts, uploads and outputs, and under what circumstances?
- ☐ How long is our data retained, and can we delete it — including from backups?
- ☐ Which sub-processors handle our data, and will you tell us when that list changes?
- ☐ What happens to our data if you are acquired or shut down?

Vendor's answer / notes:

2. Pricing: what will this really cost?

- ☐ Is pricing per user, per usage (credits, tokens, messages), or both?
- ☐ What happens when we hit a usage limit — stop, slow down, or extra billing?
- ☐ Is the advertised price introductory? What is the standard price at renewal?
- ☐ Is the price in pounds or dollars?
- ☐ Are the features in the demo included in the tier we are buying?
- ☐ Is there a minimum number of seats or a minimum contract term?
- ☐ How much notice will we get of price increases?

Yearly cost at our headcount (before VAT and overages):

3. Lock-in: how hard is it to leave?

- ☐ Can we export our data — conversations, documents, prompts, configurations — in a usable format, ourselves?
- ☐ Do custom assistants, templates or workflows we build belong to us? Can they move elsewhere?
- ☐ What is the notice period for cancellation, and does the contract auto-renew?
- ☐ Does the tool only work inside one vendor's ecosystem?
- ☐ If we stop paying, how long do we have to retrieve our data before deletion?

Vendor's answer / notes:

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Support, reliability and your UK GDPR obligations

4. Support and reliability: who helps when it breaks?

- ☐ What support is included — email, chat, phone — and what are the response times for our tier?
- ☐ Is there a published uptime commitment and a status page we can check during an outage?
- ☐ How are changes communicated? Will we be told before AI behaviour changes?
- ☐ Is there a UK or European support presence, or a day's delay on every reply?
- ☐ How long has the company been operating — will it exist for the life of our contract?

Vendor's answer / notes:

5. UK GDPR: our obligations do not transfer to you

- ☐ Can you provide a data processing agreement (DPA)? (If the vendor does not know what a DPA is, walk away.)
- ☐ If data leaves the UK, what legal safeguard covers the transfer (adequacy decision, standard contractual clauses)?
- ☐ Do we need a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) for this use? (ICO provides free small-business guidance.)
- ☐ Can we find and delete an individual's data inside this tool if a customer asks?
- ☐ Does our privacy notice need updating if AI is used in decisions affecting customers or staff?

Vendor's answer / notes:

6. Before we commit: trial and verify

- ☐ Run a small paid trial — two or three licences for a month on real work.
- ☐ Judge the trial against the success measure written down before the call.
- ☐ Treat the tool's output as a draft, not a fact — verify before it reaches decisions or customers.
- ☐ Get every important answer from this sheet in writing.

Red flags

- ☐ No clear written answer on model training
- ☐ No DPA, or vagueness about what one is
- ☐ "Nobody has asked that before"
- ☐ Demo features only in a higher tier
- ☐ No self-service data export



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A vendor that answers well is a good sign. Hesitation is an answer too.

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