

8 Key Factors for Choosing a Right System Integrator



Introduction

Like any CIO, Brian was googling for “Systems Integration Solution” and landed up in more than 10 million search results. While several companies offered “systems integration solution” with distinct services and a modern strategy, identifying the ideal solution that suits his business needs was the biggest challenge.

This is because most organizations like Brian’s, only come up with a need for a solution or service but are really not aware of how to choose the right solutions partner. There could be multiple scenarios where,

- Brian could have done some basic groundwork on the market and then filter the solution companies by himself
- He could be someone who has absolutely no idea about how the integration market works or
- He is not well equipped to ask the right questions to a solutions provider

Nevertheless, in choosing the right System Integration solutions partner, we have witnessed many organizations that were quite unclear, ignorant or confused during the vendor selection process. Keeping this in mind, our technology experts have penned down some of the top key points that organizations should look for in a system integration vendor before choosing one.



1 Assessment Exercise

Before even commencing the project on a full scale, System Integrator should propose an assessment exercise on the existing IT landscape of applications including tool evaluation.

A thorough study on the existing IT landscape with system architecture background should be carried out and assessment feedback presented with observations, recommendations, roadmap and finally plan for implementation.

This should be the first step because the assessment exercise is a vital indicator on the current state of the systems and better approaches that the organization can undertake.



2

Expertise

One must look for System Integrator that demonstrates the expertise they possess in their focused organizational business domain. Providing an opportunity to introduce various technology leaders and business domain SMEs from the System Integrator to your organization will inspire confidence and proof that they can implement the solution through a highly scalable architecture.

Global system integrators need to showcase their expertise through previous success stories and delve deeper into key pain points of the current state of the organizations' systems.

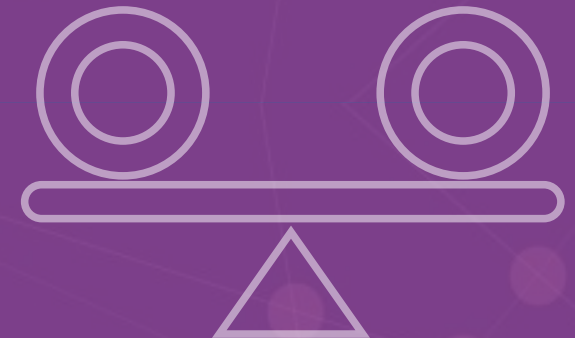
At the end of these discussions, leaders from System Integrator's should be able to provide high level solution approaches and methodology steps to the organization to prove that they are the right set of people to do the job.



3 Stability

System Integrator need to prove to the organization how stable they are in the competitive market by showcasing various successful projects that they have taken up in the past. Stability doesn't stop with just implementing a solution for an organization and then leaving the spot.

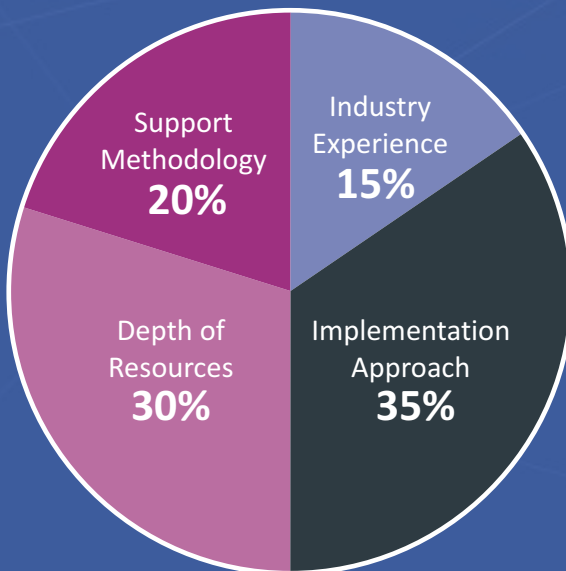
Stability factor should focus more on how robust the solution is working out for organizations, what are the various continuous set of benefits that the organizations receives out of the solution, and how stable the solution is built to handle more enhancements and features that the organization might think to add on.



4 Implementation Methodology

System Integrator should have a proven approach and/or a solid process implementing a complex system integration (similar to the one that the validating organization is looking for) in a complex environment. They should be able to demonstrate the evidences of such methodology practices that were done in earlier projects.

Process metrics should be shared with the organization, explaining the success rate of all projects that were handled by them, various levels of documentation prepared in accordance to comply with the process that was originally laid.



System Integrator - Scoring Breakdown

5 Tools

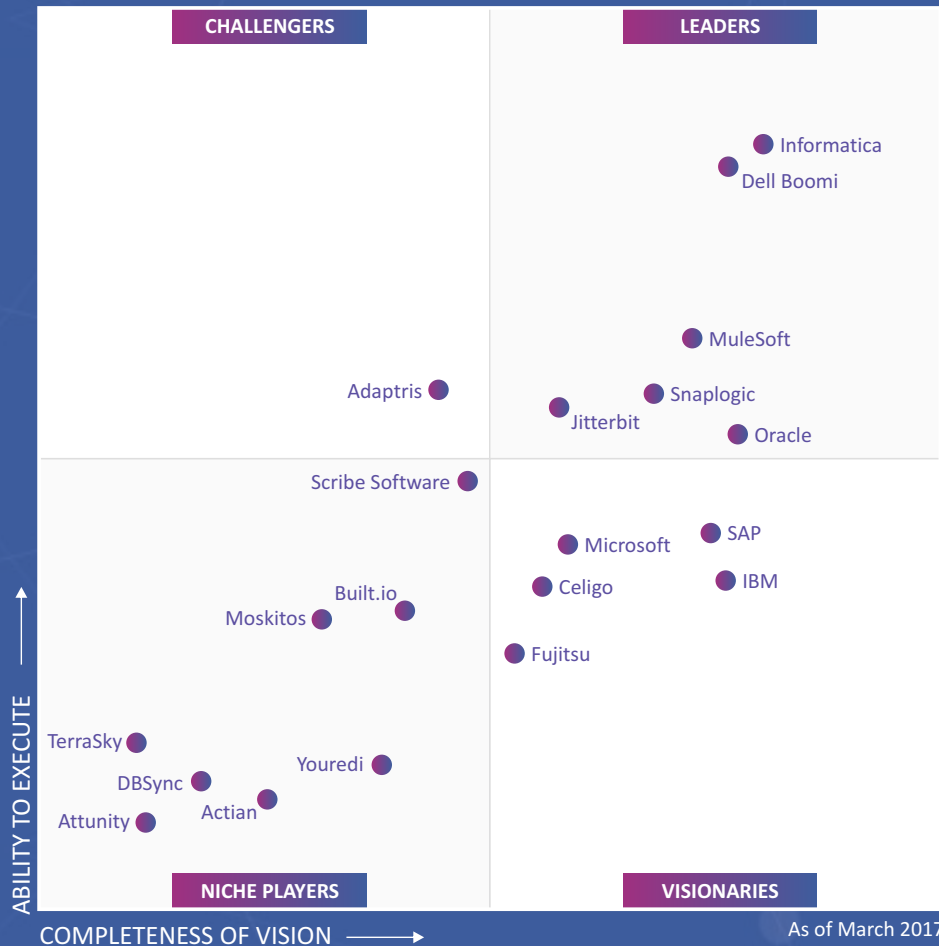
System Integrator should be ready to do an extended workshop session with the organization to demonstrate capabilities of a wide variety of suggested tools for the proposed project and offer answers to all your system integration questions.

A specific use case has to be taken up for the demonstration and the results should be presented to the organization. The results should be on a comparative format that depicts all the pros and cons of the chosen tools in terms of percentage of success achieved for the use case, data accuracy, scalability, re-usability, and ease of understanding the coding techniques, deployment strategies, maintenance aspects and finally the time and cost for implementation.



5 Tools

Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Integration Platform as a Service



Reference from Gartner:

<https://solutionsreview.com/data-integration/whats-changed-2017-gartner-magic-quadrant-for-enterprise-integration-platform-as-a-service/>

6 Expertise

Organizations should request for multiple success stories from the System Integrator, to understand the level of expertise and confidence that they possess in varied business domains.

Those case studies should cover the business domain aspects, key business & technical pain points, methods of increasing Return of Investment (ROI), tools and techniques.



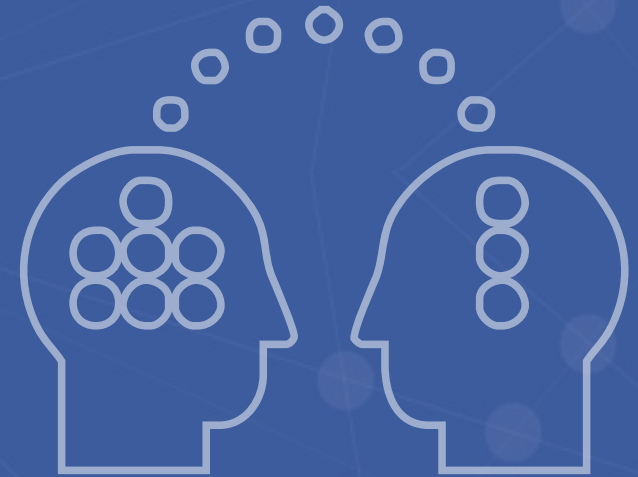
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Knowledge Transfer, Training and Maintenance

System Integrator should never focus on leaving the place once they are done. A successful engagement with a system integrator doesn't stop with implementation. If implementation was thought as the first part of the journey, then there is an equal half of the journey left for knowledge transfer, training and maintenance. Every system integration vendor should provide comprehensive options of knowledge transfer plans to the technical team and business team of the organization.

The plan has to cover various knowledge transfer sessions including system architecture definition, coding techniques, coding standards, trouble shooting tips and framework study. Successful System Integrator's always plan for periodic knowledge transfer sessions, so as to keep the teams within the organization to know what is going on within the project and to avoid any last minute surprises.

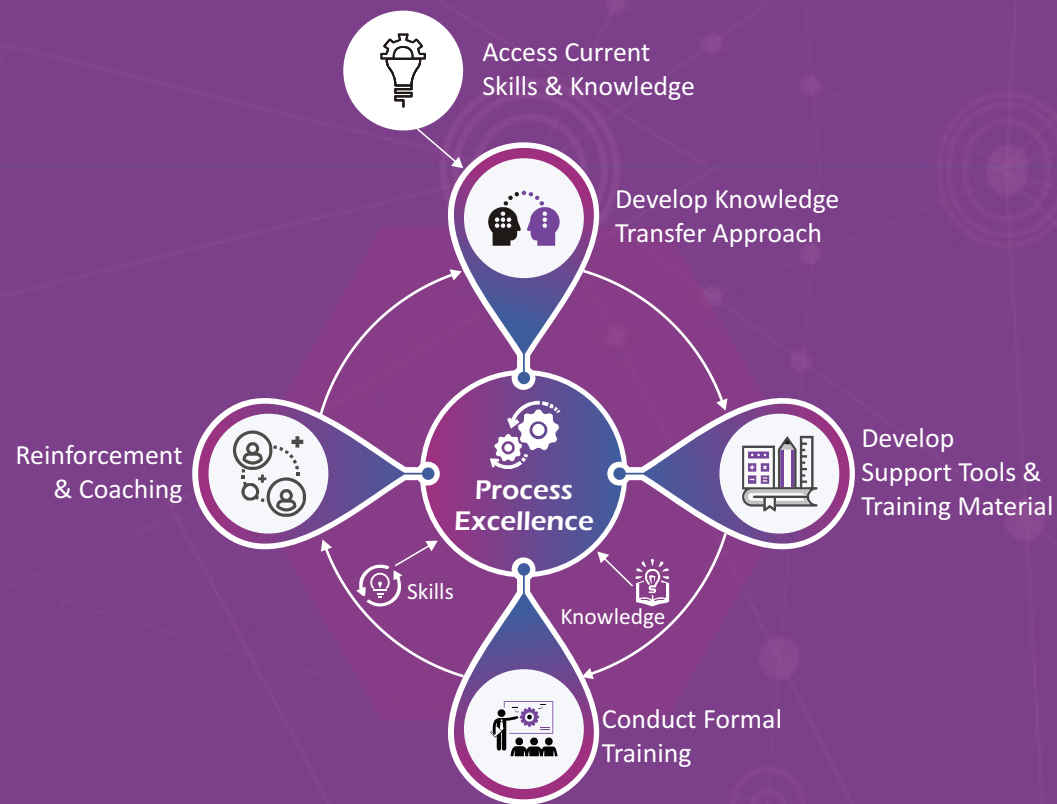
By doing this, organizations can get away from the risk of retaining the Intellectual Property (IP) just with the System Integrators' instead of sharing the knowledge and have a good set of representatives from the organization to share the same and prepare to lead it forward.



7

Knowledge Transfer, Training and Maintenance

Any specific training on the tools chosen should be well planned by System Integrator right at the beginning of the project. This is on a good will note from System Integration vendor, to have a solid set of team members from the organization actively participating in developing the solution collectively.



Education is a process, not an event



8

Managed Services

Once the solution is LIVE, with no doubts System Integrator should have a maintenance plan to support the application/system. The contract could be negotiated for a variety of timing options for the maintenance plan. The plans could be, 15 days, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year or a continuous period maintenance mode.

The maintenance period can be shared between the System Integrator and organization team to take care of the activities, but no System Integrator should leave the place without a valid maintenance plan. This is very vital for a successful engagement!





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SINGAPORE
+65 3163 3050

NORTH AMERICA
+1 630 368 0970

EUROPE
+44 203 170 6115

INDIA
+91 44 6740 4000

MIDDLE EAST
+971 50 658 8831

For more info contact
info@aspiresys.com or visit www.aspiresys.com

