EGM

EGM Family Holdings Ltd

Twelve questions to ask any software or AI supplier

Take this to every meeting. Score each answer 0 (no clear answer), 1 (a partial answer), or 2 (a clear answer you could hold them to in writing). Ask us the same questions.

BUYER'S SCORING SHEET · SEPTEMBER 2026

	QUESTION	WHAT A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE, AND A POOR ONE	SCORE 0 · 1 · 2
1	Who will own the code, and on what date?	**Good** "You, on the date the final stage is paid. It says so in the contract." **Poor** "You have a licence to use it." Or: "We retain the IP in our frameworks."	0 1 2
2	Where will the code live while you build it, and what happens if you stop trading?	**Good** "In a repository you can see, on infrastructure we name; a copy is delivered to you at each stage." **Poor** "On our company account." Or a pause.	0 1 2
3	What will I pay, and what changes the figure?	**Good** "A fixed fee, written down before we start; only a change of scope changes it, and you sign the change first." **Poor** "A day rate and an estimate." Or: "It depends how it goes."	0 1 2
4	What do I receive at each payment?	**Good** A list: the specification; working software you can test; the handover pack. **Poor** "A percentage of the work."	0 1 2
5	Can my own staff restore it without you? Will you show me?	**Good** "Yes. Before the final payment your staff restore it from a cold start, timed, with us watching, and we write down the result." **Poor** "We provide support." Or: "Backups are automatic."	0 1 2
6	What is in the handover?	**Good** Source code, build instructions, an operator's guide written for the people who will run it, credentials, and a session with them. **Poor** "Documentation." Or: "Training on request."	0 1 2
7	Where does my data go, and my customers' data?	**Good** The country, the servers, the sub-processors, and whether any AI provider sees it or trains on it, in writing. **Poor** "It's secure." Or: "The cloud."	0 1 2
8	If the AI part is wrong, what happens?	**Good** "A person checks it; every output is logged; there is an off switch, and this is who can use it." **Poor** "The model is very accurate."	0 1 2
9	Who will do the work, and where?	**Good** Named people, their roles, and whether any of it is subcontracted. **Poor** "Our team." Or: "Our offshore partners."	0 1 2
10	What will it cost to run after you leave?	**Good** Hosting, licences and any fees, itemised; whether it can run on our own machines. **Poor** "Minimal." Or a figure with no items.	0 1 2
11	What will you refuse to do?	**Good** A real list: things they will not build, data they will not take, terms they will not sign. **Poor** "We can do anything you need."	0 1 2
12	Can I speak to a client you handed over to a year ago?	**Good** A name and a number, for a project that ended. **Poor** A client still in the middle of a project, or a testimonial on the website.	0 1 2

Score _____ out of 24

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Reading the score

20 to 24	A supplier who has thought about what happens after they leave. Check the references.
14 to 19	Workable, if the low scores fall on questions that matter less to you; write the missing answers into the contract before signing.
Below 14	The risk is with you, not with them.

Most bespoke software goes wrong at questions 1, 3 and 5.

How to use the sheet. Score during the meeting, not afterwards; a clear answer you could hold them to in writing is a 2, a partial answer a 1, and no clear answer a 0. Keep one sheet per supplier. The sheet is meant to be fair: a good supplier of any kind scores well on it.

Before commissioning anything, the three-minute test at egmfamilyholdings.com/do-not-build tells most businesses whether they need software built at all.