



EXPERIENCE



INNOVATION



COLLABORATION



TRUST



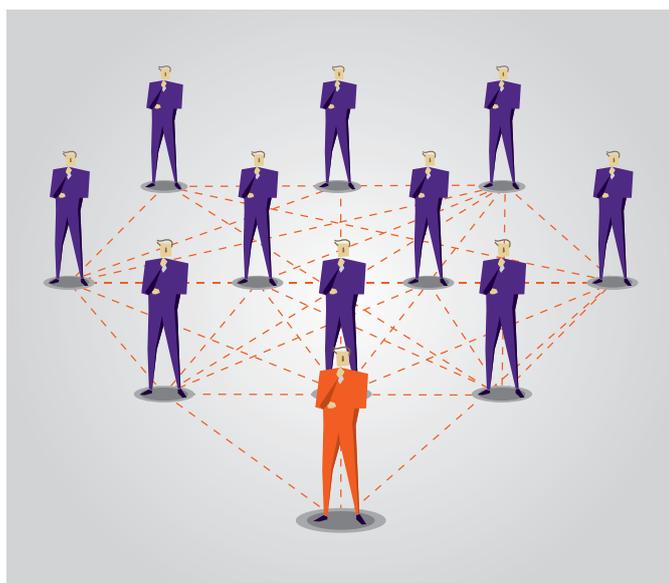
CHALLENGE THINKING

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS: ATTRIBUTES OF A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER

If the implementation partner is the primary driver of the solution, using the platform as the tool to craft your vision, then we should consider the attributes of what makes a successful implementation partner:

Experience

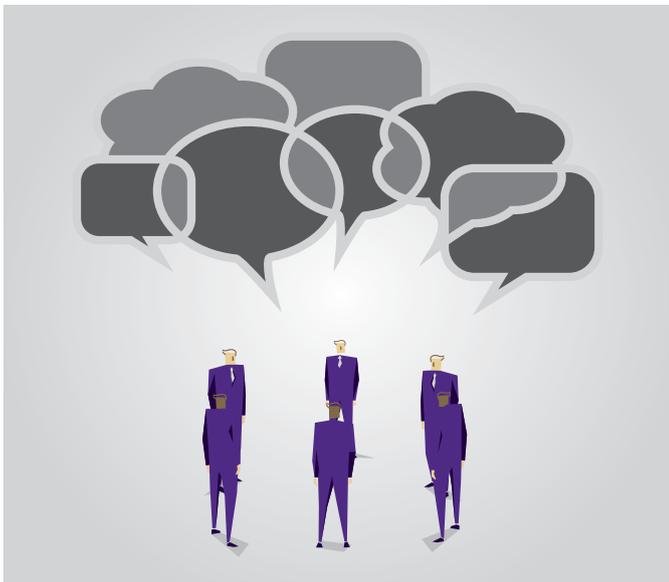
Ecommerce deployments become risky when the partner is doing something for the first time. There's no substitute for experience, particularly at enterprise-level, both in the chosen platform and the type of industry you operate in.



Working with an experienced team will help to mitigate risk and manage project cost effectively by foreseeing issues and being able to respond to them in a way which reduces impact on the overall project timelines. An inexperienced delivery team will miss key design and implementation issues that are inherent to major implementations. This will have huge knock-on effects on future rollout and integrations if not managed upfront.

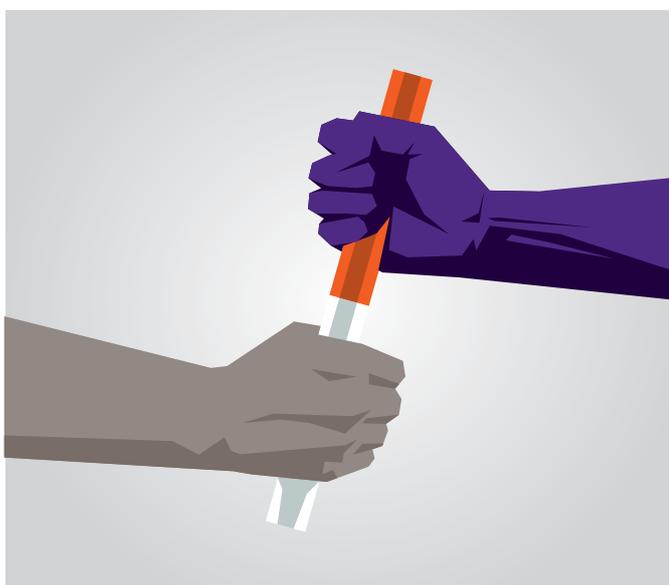
Ask the vendor to provide details on the team they will provide, and interview those people to get a sense of their experience. Ask them for specific examples of work that are in your industry. It's not essential that the experiences match perfectly, and you will always have both senior and junior team members in any project, but you want to get a sense that the people working on your project know what they are doing, so when the sales people and senior management leave the room, what you are left with is still a partner you have confidence in "handing the keys to the car" to.

Nearly all (97%) ecommerce decision-makers cite 'experience with implementing enterprise level platforms' as a most important factor in partner selection.*



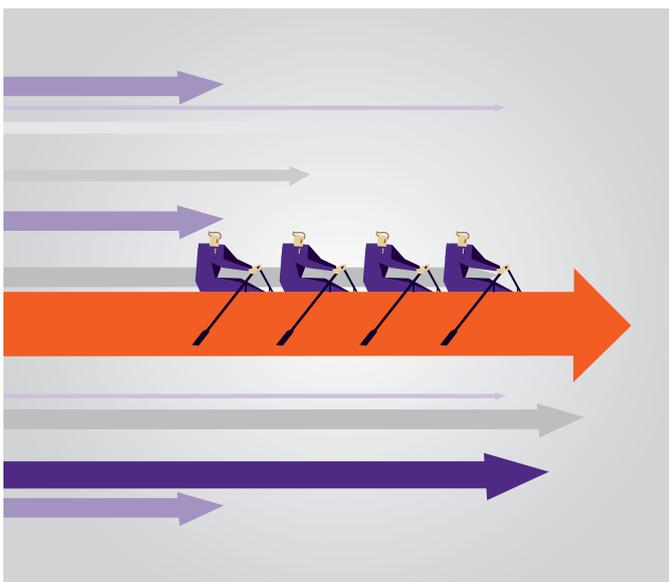
Ability to challenge your thinking

A true partner is one that will challenge you, encouraging outcomes that help you move from good to great. Be wary of vendors who ask you what you want, and focus solely on that; seek out those partners that already have a vision for what they think you need. There's a key difference between a partner that will just implement what you tell them to, and charge you for it again when you find it doesn't achieve your vision, and one that will align their work and cost to achieving the results of your vision.



Trust

You're speaking to your dentist. Do you tell him or her how to drill your teeth, at what angle, and how long the appointment is going to take? The dentist has been trained and knows through deep experience what works and what doesn't. This is what you are doing with any implementation partner – giving them the latitude to apply their experience to your problem, listening to their approach and validating it through the lens of your ecommerce vision. If you can't trust them to make the right decisions, it's likely you have hired the wrong consultant, or chosen the wrong platform.



Collaboration and Transparency

Rather than ask an implementation partner for a "project cost", work with them to define the business case and return on investment. If you are both driven by the business case, then decisions will be made to craft your ecommerce platform to achieve the ROI goal. You may even want to structure deals to reflect this.

9 out of 10 ecommerce decision-makers rate the 'ability to challenge their thinking' as a major factor in partner selection.*

*Source: 2017 research commissioned by Salmon and conducted by Censuswide across UK, Germany and Benelux

This is an excerpt from Salmon's authoritative report "The Insider's Guide to Enterprise-level Commerce Platform Delivery". Download the full report [here](#).