

Buying Software

When we feel the need to solve a problem with software we have two options: Invest in the creation of a tailor-made solution or customize an out-of-the-box product.

When deciding to build a tailor-made software, we have a lot of development to do but we can influence the software while creating it. When deciding to use an out-of-the-box product, we still have to do the customizing. We can save a lot of time and hassle but especially for enterprise software it can be quite some effort to adjust the software to an existing ecosystem. And we have make a decision up-front which we usually have to stick to for several years.

So both approaches have their benefits and liabilities. How do we decide which way to go?

The question becomes more complex as there are often several products or service providers to choose from.



- So what information do we need to make a decision?
- Which company principles and checklists do we need to consider?
- Which data that we have at hand do we actually use for the decision?
- How do we deal with the risk caused by the fact that we cannot have a deep understanding of all available alternatives before we make a decision?
- How important are explicit features and what role do "soft" features like usability and performance play in the decision process?

Goals

In this focus group we are going to explore and discuss the process of buying software and the decision process behind it.

The goal is to identify forces involved in a software buying decision. We also look for patterns in successful software sales and how they are connected to the identified forces.

Target Audience

This focus group is relevant for everybody who buys or sells software. Additionally, everybody who builds a piece of software is welcome to bring it to the group so we can reflect on it.

The scope explicitly includes open source software because it also requires a decision process.