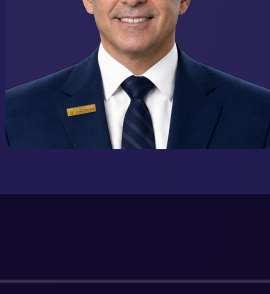


Too much choice is the new bottleneck

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Enterprises have never had more technology to choose from. That is exactly why choosing has become so slow.

A decade ago, the hard part of innovation scouting was finding anything at all. Teams heard about promising vendors through analysts, conferences and the occasional cold email. Options were scarce, so the shortlist more or less built itself.

Today the opposite is true. There are more than 30,000 SaaS vendors worldwide. Close to 50 million new startups are founded every year. Platforms built purely to track emerging companies now index millions of them, and AI has added a fresh wave of tools on top, many only months old.

Abundance should make buying easier. In practice, it makes it slower.

The cost of too much choice

Psychologists call it choice overload: past a certain point, more options lead to worse decisions, or to none. Enterprise buying shows every symptom.

Discovery stretches out. A scouting brief becomes a long list of 200, then a spreadsheet nobody fully trusts, then a shortlist made up mostly of names the team already knew. 6sense puts the average complex B2B purchase at around ten months. By the time a decision lands, the problem it was meant to solve has often moved on.

85%

Of buyers had prior experience with the vendor they finally chose

Familiarity wins by default. When evaluation is hard, people retreat to safety. In 6sense's 2025 research, 85% of buyers had prior experience with the vendor they finally chose. That is sensible for any single buyer. Across a whole market, it means the newest and often best-fitted solutions rarely get a fair look.

Risk hides in the gaps. Around 70% of digital transformation programmes fail to deliver what they promised. Not every failure starts with the wrong vendor, but many start with a choice made under time pressure, from a list that was never complete.

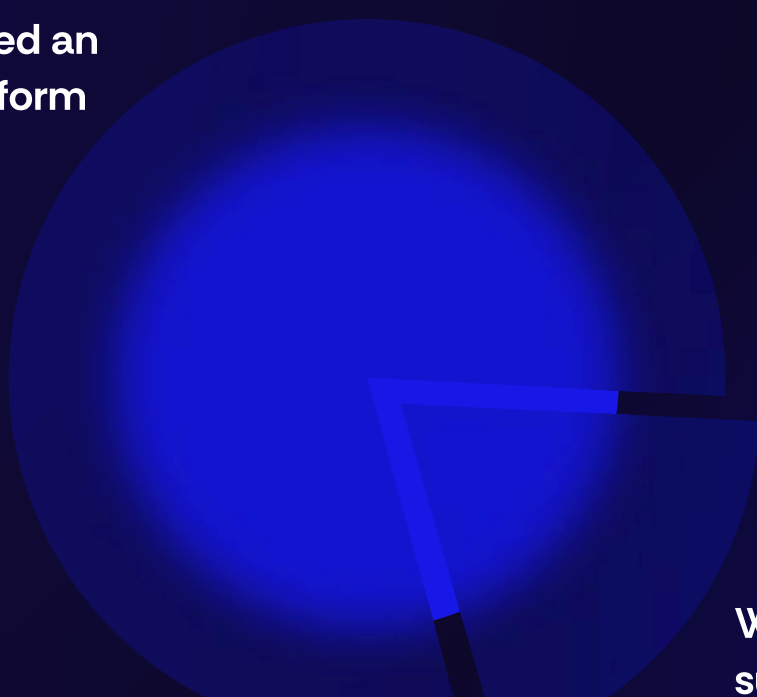
70%

Of digital transformation programmes fail to deliver what they promised

What to buy: start with the problem

Good scouting starts with a narrow question. What exactly are we trying to change, and how will we know it worked? 'Which tools exist?' comes second.

We need an AI platform



We need to cut supplier onboarding from six weeks to one

A sharply framed problem shrinks the market on its own. 'We need an AI platform' matches thousands of vendors. 'We need to cut supplier onboarding from six weeks to one' matches a few dozen. The second brief is faster to scout, easier to evaluate and much harder for a vendor to answer with a generic demo.

It also changes what you buy. A tightly framed problem points to an outcome you can measure. That makes it easier to ask vendors for evidence rather than promises, and easier to walk away when a pilot misses. Enterprises are moving, slowly, towards paying for results rather than licences. A clear problem statement is what makes that kind of contract possible.

How to buy: let machines widen, let people narrow



AI is very good at the first half of scouting. It can scan a global market in seconds, group vendors by what they actually do and surface companies no analyst report has covered yet. One discovery platform claims a single search replaces weeks of manual research. That is real leverage.

The second half still needs people. Judging whether a vendor can work inside your security model, your culture and your budget cycle is a question of experience. Someone who has run the programme before, or bought in that category before, will spot in an hour what a scoring matrix misses in a month.

The two halves need each other. AI on its own produces a longer list. Experience on its own produces the same list as last year.

Enterprises that scout well tend to share a few habits:

- They scout continuously. A standing view of their market beats a scramble every time a project is approved.
- They write the success measure before the long list. It keeps evaluation honest when a polished demo arrives.
- They keep the shortlist short. Three serious options, properly tested, beat 12 skimmed.
- They pilot small, with an exit. A 60-day test with clear criteria costs less than a year committed to the wrong answer.
- They look past the names they know. The best fit is often a vendor nobody on the team has met.

The real goal

Innovation scouting exists to shorten the distance between a business problem and the right solution. In a market this crowded, a longer list wins nothing. The advantage goes to whoever can filter fastest, with the best judgement.

That is the work NIIOMA was set up to do: map emerging technology to real enterprise demand, with senior experience applied to every shortlist.

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