

## Site Search Key Questions to Ask Providers

### Company

1. How long have you been in this business?
2. How many customers have you sold? How many have left your platform, and why?
3. Is your solution geared more toward enterprise or the SMB space? What types of clients fall into your “sweet spot”? Won any awards in that space?
4. What peripheral or support services do you offer (e.g., cross-sell, analytics, SEM services, consulting, implementation)?

### Products/Services

1. Is your solution offered as perpetual licensed software or on-demand multi-tenant solution?
  - If perpetual license:**
    - a. What are the hosting requirements?
    - b. How complex is the installation process? What specialized skills are needed? What kind of assistance do you provide? Can a third party help?
  - If SAAS/ASP:**
    - a. What features do I lose by not subscribing to a higher tier?
    - b. What do I do if I need a feature you don't have or plan to have soon?
2. What internal resources (technical/marketing/analytical) will I need to maximize the value of your product and how many hours per month will they spend?
3. How long will a simple installation take? A sophisticated one?
4. Do you offer a free trial? What's missing in the trial version?
5. What technical support services are available?
  - a. Are there human beings I can reach during reasonable hours (chat or phone) or do I have to wait over 24 hours for an email response or callback?
  - b. Is your support team located in the US or abroad?
  - c. What is your SLA for support issues?
6. Do you have a support knowledge base, community forum, or applications that are shared by customers?
7. How do I ensure I own and control my data in the event I need to change platforms?

### Features

2. What key features are in your solution? What features are missing? On your roadmap? Does management love? Shoppers?
  - a. Do you have spelling correction, synonyms, refine search, sort, etc.?
3. Where is your product's competitive advantage over other site search packages?
  - a. Search algorithm, query processing? Display flexibility? Third-party support? Price?
4. How does your search algorithm work?
  - a. What data, in what structure, is optimal for using your features? Do I have to completely reorganize my databases in order to use your product? If not, how does it work?
5. Beyond translating queries into relevant results, what features can I manipulate to improve the overall customer experience?
6. How does your solution integrate with my eCommerce, analytics, and personalization packages?
  - a. Please list the applications for which you have standard integrations already built.
  - b. Please list the applications where you have built custom integrations.
7. Do you have a management console? What can I manage with it?
  - a. Is it web-based, does it include reporting and a dashboard?
  - b. Please describe your reporting capabilities (standard reports, batch vs. real-time, ad hoc, etc.).
8. How do your reporting functions work? How do I ensure the data does not conflict with other systems?

### Pricing

1. For software providers, do you provide a perpetual license for all my sites, one license per site, license based on users or other?
2. For SAAS providers, do you price based on page views, queries, bandwidth, etc.?
3. Are there any hidden fees (e.g., implementation, transaction costs, overages)?
4. Please provide an estimate of my total annual cost for your service, including an ROI model. How much will I need to improve sales in order to justify this investment?

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