

Rimini Street

The Software Support and
Agentic AI ERP Company™

EBOOK

THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO INDEPENDENT, THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE

Understanding the value, assessing fit
and choosing the right provider

Executive summary

Enterprise software support was originally designed to ensure stability and access to expertise for mission-critical systems. And for years, organizations accepted vendor support as a necessary cost — even when the experience was less than optimal.

But the traditional support model has shown that it is not capable of keeping up with modern business needs and often falls short in value.

Today's enterprises face:

- Rising support costs
- Slow resolution times
- Limited access to experienced engineers
- Pressure to upgrade or migrate without clear business value

At the same time, IT leaders are being asked to fund AI, analytics and innovation initiatives while managing increasingly complex, hybrid environments — all with limited budget and skilled resources.

Created specifically for IT and business leaders, this guide provides an in-depth exploration of third-party support and services as a proven alternative. Readers will gain a practical understanding of how the model works, what factors are driving adoption, how service delivery differs from traditional vendor support and what capabilities distinguish providers in the market. It also outlines key evaluation criteria to help organizations assess fit, manage risk and select a provider aligned with their business and technology objectives.

Further, the guide examines how organizations are increasingly evaluating third-party support not only as a cost-management move but also as a strategic operating model decision that can influence flexibility, innovation and long-term technology planning.



Read on to see how thousands of organizations are leveraging third-party support to deliver significant wins for the business, including savings of up to 90% on total support fees and above-average performance 83% of the time, compared to just 27% for traditional approaches.

Why organizations are rethinking enterprise software support

Though enterprise software such as ERP has evolved over time, vendor support has lagged by comparison. Subsequently, organizations — influenced by several factors — are changing how they support and manage their mission-critical systems.

1. Stable systems, unfavorable economics

Core enterprise systems remain essential and continue to deliver value. A [global Censuswide-conducted survey](#) found that 97% of C-suites agree their current ERP systems meet their business requirements for the most part.

The results from a [CIO survey of IT leaders running Oracle EBS](#) also reflect this reality.

These platforms still underpin finance, HR, supply chain and operational processes at global enterprises. It's not their importance that has changed — it's the economics and effectiveness of supporting them.

Annual vendor support fees remain high and often continue to increase, even as fewer new features and enhancements are delivered for mature releases. Extended maintenance programs from major ERP vendors further highlight this imbalance. They may allow organizations to stay on existing releases — but it comes with the caveat of added cost, reduced scope or limited innovation.

IT leaders increasingly cite challenges with mainstream support, including:

- Mismatched cost-to-benefit expectations
- Limited return on annual maintenance spend
- Fewer advancements or innovations for mature releases
- Pressure to upgrade or migrate to access new capabilities

63%

of organizations cite high support costs as a primary issue

— [DBTA/Unisphere Research study](#)

83%

of IT leaders said their core ERP systems will be important over the next 12–24 months

— [CIO survey](#)

74%

of organizations believe ERP systems have a longer valuable life than vendors are willing to support

— [IDC research](#)

33%

described their ERP systems as mission-critical

— [CIO survey](#)

Vendor support, once the de facto choice, has become harder to justify for those running stable systems. As support costs rise and innovation shifts to newer vendor platforms, leaders are questioning whether the traditional model still makes economic sense.

2. Forced upgrades and vendor-dictated roadmaps

Traditional vendor support is rarely unconditional. To remain “fully supported,” organizations are often required to:

- Apply enhancement packs
- Upgrade to newer releases
- Migrate to next-generation platforms

Organizations often find themselves funding roadmaps they may never adopt, while paying high annual maintenance fees with diminishing value and features.

Though these moves promise innovation, they frequently do more to hinder than help — introducing disruption, consuming budget and delivering limited business value.

35%

of C-suites cite vendor lock-in with limited flexibility and forced upgrades as frustrating pressures from software vendors

– [Censuswide survey](#)

47%

of IT leaders have had to delay innovation due to upgrade requirements

– [IDC research](#)

Ultimately, many organizations end up investing heavily in upgrades just to remain supported — not to innovate.



3. The operational risk of slow support

Support speed has a direct impact on enterprise operations. Any delays responding to or resolving software issues can extend outages, worsen disruption and increase operational risk.

Yet many organizations report slow response times and inconsistent access to experienced engineers. When problems occur, internal teams often spend valuable time navigating frustrating escalation paths instead of getting actual solutions.

89%

of IT leaders don't view vendor support response times as "superior"

– [DBTA/Unisphere Research study](#)

87%

say slow resolution is somewhat problematic or worse for their organization

– [DBTA/Unisphere Research study](#)

**ONLY
16%**

rate the initial support engineer as "very skilled"

– [DBTA/Unisphere Research study](#)

For modern enterprises, slow support isn't a minor inconvenience — it's an operational liability.

4. Self-support's drain on talent

As vendor support models rely more heavily on portals, knowledge bases and self-service, internal teams end up absorbing a growing share of the workload.

Findings from the [DBTA/Unisphere Research study of Oracle Database customers](#) show that 62% of organizations report performance issues on a monthly basis or more, requiring frequent intervention by internal staff. Resolving these issues is resource-intensive, with the most time-consuming activities including:

- SQL / database performance tuning (**51% / 46%**)
- Troubleshooting (**39%**)
- Data security, auditing and compliance work (**39%**)

And this is when IT capacity is already constrained. [CIO research](#) has revealed that approximately 58% of IT time in core ERP environments is spent on maintenance, updates and customization, leaving just 42% for transformative work.

Innovation is delayed not by a lack of ideas but by a lack of capacity — resulting from the attention teams are forced to dedicate to general software maintenance.



5. Widening skills gaps

Support challenges are compounded by a growing shortage of skilled talent.

The scale of the issue is substantial. According to a [Censuswide survey](#), 98% of leaders say a talent shortage is impacting their IT vision — underscoring the depth of workforce constraints on overall technology strategy.

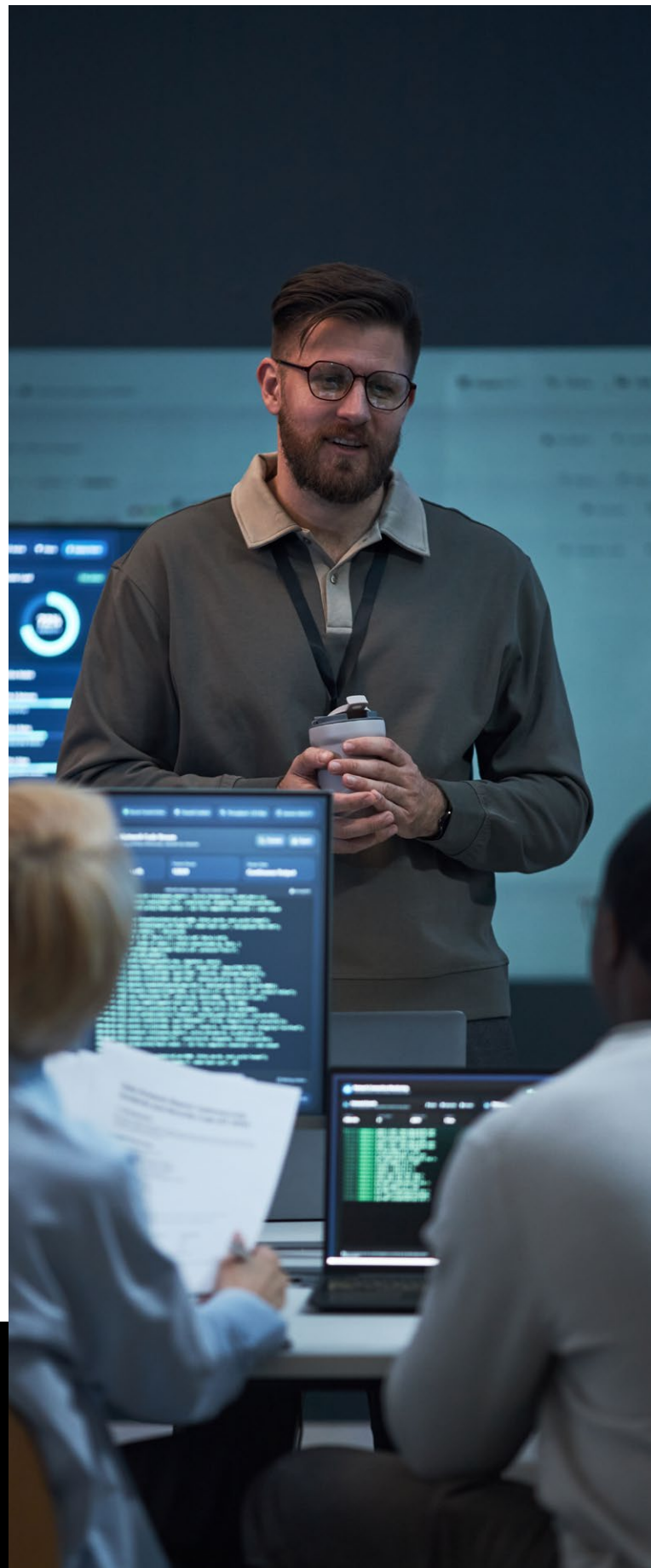
Meanwhile, organizations continue to face gaps across foundational skill sets. [DBTA's survey of Oracle Database users](#) found that 25% of respondents lack sufficient staff for basic database operations, limiting their ability to maintain and support their databases effectively.

Demand for legacy and emerging technology expertise continues to rise, with DBTA finding skills pressure driven by:

- Increasing technical complexity (**70%**)
- More AI/ML initiatives (**58%**)
- An increase in database platforms to manage (**54%**)

Traditional support models further amplify the problem. When organizations are responsible for diagnosing issues, reproducing problems and managing escalations, the burden shifts more heavily to internal IT teams that may not have the necessary expertise.

The result is fewer skilled resources and greater technical demands, making it difficult (if not impossible) for teams to meet all expectations.



6. Innovation happening around the core

As vendor upgrades fail to deliver the innovation organizations actually need, many are adopting a different strategy: innovating around stable core systems.

Rather than replacing or overhauling existing ERP environments, forward-thinking leaders are extending their value while introducing new capabilities externally — through integrations, modular components and adjacent platforms. That way, innovation is introduced across the enterprise rather than being siloed within a single system.

It's a strategy that's becoming increasingly common. A recent [Freeform Dynamics study of organizations running SAP](#) revealed that 78% of respondents expect to leverage advancements from multiple vendors to innovate in and around the ERP system.

This approach reflects a broader move toward modular, composable architectures that enable organizations to modernize incrementally — on their terms — instead of through large-scale, disruptive transformation.

In practice, it allows organizations to:

- **Extend the life of proven systems** while maintaining stability
- **Introduce innovation selectively**, where it delivers clear business value
- **Avoid vendor-dictated upgrade cycles**, retaining control over timing and budget

By decoupling innovation from the core — and, consequently, the vendor support model — organizations can move faster, reduce risk and align technology decisions with business priorities.

59% of IT leaders are evaluating replacement of specific modules, such as HCM or CRM, likely to access innovation not delivered through core upgrades

– [CIO survey](#)

36% of C-suites envision a future built on a composable, modular ERP model

– [Censuswide survey](#)



What exactly is third-party support?

[Third-party support](#) is an alternative to software vendor support for enterprise applications, databases and infrastructure. With this option, organizations aren't reliant on the software publisher for ongoing support and maintenance; instead, they partner with an independent provider that supports their existing environment.

Unlike traditional vendor support, third-party support is designed to help organizations maximize the value of the systems they already own. Existing releases can remain supported without requiring upgrades or migrations, and support often extends to customized environments.

For organizations running stable, business-critical systems, independent support provides another option for maintaining, operating and evolving enterprise software — and the market has validated its value.

68%

of organizations believe autonomy in deciding whether and when to upgrade enterprise software is very or extremely important

— [IDC research](#)

An average savings of

75%

on total software maintenance costs can be achieved by replacing vendor support with third-party support¹

— [Valoir research](#)

1) Based on a study of 200 combined SAP and Oracle clients supported by Rimini Street

In short, third-party support is a reliable, cost-saving alternative to vendor support. But more than that, it's a strategic enabler of better business outcomes.

How does third-party support differ from vendor support?

Though both options provide enterprise software support, they're built around different objectives and operating models.

	VENDOR SUPPORT	THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT
Primary incentive	Product adoption and lifecycle progression	Service quality and client outcomes
Upgrade requirements	Necessary to continue receiving full support	Existing releases remain supported for years
Customization support	Usually limited or unavailable	Often included as part of support
Access to expertise	Often tiered escalation models	Often direct access to experienced engineers
Roadmap control	Influenced by vendor timelines	Driven by business priorities
Cost model	Annual maintenance tied to licensing	Independent support contract
Innovation strategy	Frequently centered on upgrades and migrations	Enables innovation around stable core systems
Product coverage	Limited to the vendor's products	Provides support across multiple vendors' products

Third-party support puts power back into the hands of the IT leader by allowing them to:

- Optimize existing systems rather than replace them
- Maximize the ROI of prior investments
- Decouple innovation and modernization from upgrades
- Redirect savings of people, time and money toward higher-value initiatives

Ultimately, independent support is a key part of the transition from vendor-controlled roadmaps to enterprise autonomy. It allows organizations to maintain and optimize what's working while gaining the freedom to determine their own priorities.

How to determine if third-party support is a good fit

As independent, third-party support becomes more widely used, executives need a clear framework to evaluate whether it's the right choice for their specific needs. The following criteria can help leaders assess third-party support as a strategic alternative to vendor maintenance.

DECISION FRAMEWORK

- ☐ **Financial impact**
Evaluate multiyear TCO, EBITDA and free cash flow effects, along with the ability to convert upgrade-driven spend into predictable operating costs.
- ☐ **Risk and compliance**
Review coverage for security; tax, legal and regulatory updates; audit readiness; and the provider's ability to support stable systems without increasing risk exposure.
- ☐ **Operating model fit**
Determine whether the provider's service delivery model, SLAs, global coverage and use of automation align with enterprise availability and governance requirements.
- ☐ **Innovation enablement**
Consider how effectively a provider's support offering frees budget and talent to pursue modernization, AI and transformation initiatives without forcing disruptive upgrades.
- ☐ **Provider scale and credibility**
Validate global coverage; financial stability and transparency; proven results; and the ability to support complex, mission-critical environments at enterprise scale.





What to look for in a third-party support provider

Organizations don't need (or want) support models designed around product lifecycles and upgrade timelines. They need support that's aligned to their business priorities — delivering stability, cost control and flexibility.

To be effective, a modern support model must go beyond just maintenance, sustaining complex, customized environments while reducing operational burden on internal teams and freeing up capacity for transformation.

The following sections take a deep dive into the specific capabilities organizations should look for when evaluating potential third-party support and service providers.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Comprehensive coverage and strong SLAs

Along with broad coverage, a modern software support model must provide consistent outcomes. For mission-critical enterprise environments, support is defined by how quickly issues are addressed, how effectively they're resolved and how much of the real-world environment is actually covered.

Evaluating providers, therefore, requires more than reviewing stated capabilities — it requires understanding how those capabilities translate into real service delivery.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

How quickly does the provider respond to critical issues?

Are response times clearly defined, and is immediate engagement guaranteed when systems are at risk?

Will you have direct access to experienced engineers?

Or, does the provider's model still rely on tiered escalation paths that introduce delays and handoffs?

How is case ownership managed throughout the lifecycle?

Is there clear accountability, proactive communication and consistent status updates?

How much of the IT landscape can the provider support?

Can the provider support applications, databases and infrastructure technologies across multiple vendors or just a narrow set of software products?

How long are legacy systems fully supported?

Does the provider offer long-term support indefinitely?

Are customizations included in support?

If the provider delivers support for custom code, is it included in the agreement, or is an additional charge required?

Are compliance updates included as part of support?

Does the provider deliver tax, legal and regulatory updates across relevant countries and jurisdictions?

Bottom line: These commitments matter because they transform support from a reactive function to a predictable, outcome-focused service. Instead of relying on best-effort escalation paths or partial coverage, organizations receive comprehensive support across the entire IT landscape, built for speed, continuity and transparency.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

AI-driven support operations

Delivering high-quality enterprise software support requires more than just experienced engineers — it requires those engineers to act quickly and accurately.

This is where AI proves its value. AI-driven support capabilities augment human expertise — helping teams work more efficiently and respond faster in high-pressure situations. AI isn't meant to replace engineers but enable them to respond more effectively in high-pressure situations and manage complexity at scale.

When evaluating any support provider, it's important to look at not just whether AI is used but how it impacts outcomes.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Does the provider have an AI- or human-first support model?

Does the provider use AI to augment experienced engineers and improve outcomes, or replace human expertise with automation and self-service?

How is AI integrated in day-to-day support operations?

Is it embedded in workflows in a practical way or used only for limited or isolated use cases?

How is AI used to improve issue resolutions?

Does the provider use it to identify root causes faster, surface relevant solutions or accelerate time to resolution?

Does AI help ensure consistency across support cases?

Are similar issues handled in a consistent, repeatable way for more streamlined resolution?

How does AI support decision-making for engineers?

Does the provider use it to pull insights, recommendations or historical context to guide faster, more accurate responses?

Is AI used to identify issues before they escalate?

Does the provider have capabilities to detect patterns, trends or emerging risks early and set off proactive intervention?

Bottom line: As enterprises increasingly embrace AI to streamline the way work gets done, advanced support providers strategically apply AI to augment the expertise of experienced engineers, accelerate issue resolution and proactively resolve issues before they surface.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Continuous coverage and active engagement

Enterprise software issues don't follow business hours, and neither should support. When critical systems are affected, delays caused by differing time zones, shift changes or escalation queues can extend outages and increase business disruption.

In the process of evaluating providers, it's crucial to look at how support is delivered outside of normal business hours — and how effectively cases are managed from initial contact through final resolution.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Does the provider offer true 24/7/365, “follow-the-sun” support?

Does work continue across regions and time zones by alert talent that's ready to solve issues?

How are cases handed off between teams?

Are there processes in place to ensure continuity, preserve context and minimize confusion during transitions?

How does the provider keep clients informed?

Are proactive status updates, communications and progress reports provided throughout the life of a case?

How quickly are experienced engineers brought into a case?

Does the provider bring senior resources into the process early or rely heavily on multiple escalation tiers?

How does the provider minimize delays and idle time?

What steps are taken to continue moving a ticket toward resolution rather than stalling?

Can the provider deliver a consistent experience globally?

Will teams in different regions provide the same level of responsiveness, communication and expertise?

Bottom line: Whereas traditional support models often bring handoffs, delays and reactive escalation paths, a modern support model built on continuous coverage and active engagement delivers faster, more consistent and more reliable support outcomes.

“Support” requires more than just product support

For many organizations, “support” has historically meant break-fix assistance for specific products. But that definition no longer fits the way enterprise environments function today.

Modern enterprise software environments are:

- **Highly customized** to support business-specific processes
- **Deeply integrated** across multiple applications and platforms
- **Operated in hybrid and multi-cloud** architectures
- **Continuously evolving** to meet security, compliance and operational demands

As complexity grows, so does the scope of what “support” must actually deliver.

To be truly comprehensive, enterprise software support from a third-party provider must encompass a broader set of services that keep systems running, secure, interoperable, compliant and performant.



73%
of organizations
embrace hybrid cloud²
– Flexera 2026 State of
the Cloud Report

2) Flexera 2026 State of the Cloud Report,” Flexera, retrieved 19 August 2026 from <https://learn.flexera.com/flexera-business-value/1491301>



MORE THAN PRODUCT SUPPORT:

Managed services and unified operations

Product support alone doesn't address the ongoing effort required to run enterprise systems. Organizations also need to monitor environments, optimize performance, maintain operations and perform routine system upkeep — activities typically handled through a managed services offering.

In traditional enterprise IT environments, organizations rely on two disconnected providers: a software vendor for product support and a systems integrator for managed services. While common, this split model often leads to friction that manifests as:

- Fragmented accountability
- Slower issue resolution
- Higher costs and operational risk

As such, it's well worth looking for a provider that seamlessly integrates product support and operational services into a single, coordinated framework.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

How much operational responsibility can the provider assume?

Does the provider offer support only, or can they take on day-to-day operational activities?

How integrated are support and managed services?

Do support and operational teams work within a coordinated service model, or will internal teams still need to manage communication?

Who owns accountability when problems arise?

Is responsibility clearly defined, or are there multiple parties involved in diagnosing, troubleshooting and resolving issues?

How does the provider reduce the burden on internal teams?

Which activities remain the responsibility of internal staff, and which are handled by the provider?

How are service quality and performance measured?

Does the provider focus on proactive improvement or just ticket closure?

Can the provider support both current and future operations?

Does the service model support optimization as the environment evolves?

Bottom line: When managed services are clearly defined and consistently executed, internal IT teams can focus on higher-value initiatives that support business priorities. Coupled with support, managed services turn system operations into a more disciplined, governed and financially manageable function.

Traditional split model vs. unified support and managed services

	Traditional model: Vendor support + systems integrator	Unified support and managed services model
Accountability	Fragmented ownership across multiple providers; issues often bounce between vendor and integrator	Single provider accountable from end to end for support and operations
Issue resolution	Slower resolution due to handoffs, escalations and vendor coordination challenges	Faster resolution through coordinated teams with shared context and responsibility
Operational efficiency	Duplicated processes, overlapping tools and inconsistent standards	Streamlined operations with unified processes and tooling
Cost predictability	High vendor maintenance fees plus variable, time-and-materials consulting costs	Predictable, consolidated cost model that reduces TCO
Support for customizations	Vendors often exclude custom code from their support; integrators bill separately to troubleshoot	Customizations supported as part of the unified service model
Access to expertise	Tiered vendor support and rotating integrator staff	Consistent access to experienced engineers familiar with the environment
Security and compliance	Security handled through upgrades, patches or separate projects	Integrated, risk-based security and compliance services aligned to stable systems
Alignment to business goals	Incentives tied to upgrades, migrations or billable hours	Incentives aligned to system stability, cost reduction and business outcomes
Roadmap control	Vendor-dictated timelines and upgrade pressure	Business-driven roadmap with flexibility over timing and scope

Combining support and managed services delivery from one trusted partner offers a myriad of benefits, including stability, efficiency and measurable outcomes in comparison to disconnected service execution.



MORE THAN PRODUCT SUPPORT:

Security services and solutions

Security threats continue to evolve regardless of whether enterprise software is upgraded. This simple fact means that maintaining a strong security posture requires more than applying patches or reacting to [software vulnerabilities \(also known as bugs\)](#).

Many organizations assume vendor-provided security patches are sufficient protection. But patches usually only address vulnerabilities after they've been identified. A strong security strategy must also account for emerging threats, configuration risks, operational exposures and unknown vulnerabilities.

For leaders, the question isn't whether a provider offers additional security services but whether their approach can reduce risk without introducing unnecessary disruption. When evaluating providers, organizations should consider how threats are proactively mitigated and how security capabilities are incorporated into day-to-day processes.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

What systems does the provider offer security coverage for?

Does the provider only protect enterprise software applications, or do they also cover databases, middleware and hypervisors?

How are vulnerabilities identified and analyzed?

Does the provider offer ongoing threat intelligence, vulnerability analysis and assessment of potential exposures within supported environments?

How does the provider address zero-day and emerging threats?

Are security advisories, mitigation recommendations and hardening guidance available when new threats emerge?

What security support is available when incidents occur?

Does the provider offer security case support, incident response assistance and escalation processes to help organizations respond effectively?

How does the provider help strengthen the overall security posture?

Does the provider deliver ongoing security guidance to help reduce risk over time?

Can security be maintained without disrupting stable systems?

Does the provider offer solutions that improve defense while preserving stability and minimizing operational disruption?

Bottom line: A layered security model allows organizations to take a more proactive approach to identifying and mitigating risks before they disrupt operations. And when aligned with support, it ensures that security evolves alongside the environment.



MORE THAN PRODUCT SUPPORT: License and advisory

A clear understanding of licensee rights is essential for organizations running enterprise software. Yet licensing models, contractual terms and policy changes can be complex and difficult to navigate. This complexity often creates information asymmetries that favor software vendors, making licensing-related advisory services especially valuable for organizations seeking to protect their rights, manage risk and make informed decisions.

When looking for a third-party support and services provider, leaders should assess the provider's licensing expertise, along with their ability to help interpret vendor policies, prepare for audits and support strategic software decisions.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

What kind of licensing expertise does the provider have?

Does the provider employ former software auditors?

Does the provider help maintain compliance with licensing requirements?

Can the provider ensure your organization's use of specific systems aligns with vendor policies?

What guidance is available regarding vendor policies and commercial changes?

Can the provider help interpret pricing changes, policy updates and contractual implications that may affect the organization?

How does the provider support audit readiness?

Is help available for audit preparation, compliance reviews and licensing inquiry response?

How unbiased is the provider's guidance?

Is the provider free from any connections with software publishers that may lead to conflicts of interest?

How does the provider help clients maintain control over technology decisions?

Can the provider provide the information needed to make informed choices and maintain a strong negotiating position?

Bottom line: By providing greater clarity into licensing rights, obligations and options, a trusted support and services provider can help organizations make more informed decisions throughout the software lifecycle while maintaining greater control over future technology and investment strategies.



MORE THAN PRODUCT SUPPORT:

Tax, legal and regulatory update services

Keeping enterprise software compliant requires more than responding to technical issues; organizations must also keep up with changing tax, legal and regulatory (TLR) requirements across countries, jurisdictions and industries.

For many, this is a continuous and resource-intensive effort, especially in global environments where requirements change frequently.

As part of the evaluation process, leaders should look at whether a provider delivers updates — and how those updates are monitored, validated and implemented. This can be an important differentiator among providers.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

How does the provider monitor regulatory changes?

Do they continuously monitor tax, legal and regulatory developments?

How are new requirements interpreted and validated?

Does the provider have processes for evaluating regulatory changes and determining how they apply to supported environments?

Can the provider support country-specific requirements?

Are country-specific updates developed, tested and maintained as requirements evolve?

How are updates delivered?

Does the provider have a set approach for quick, efficient implementation?

How does the provider help reduce disruption?

What steps does the provider take to deploy updates without disrupting stable production environments?

How much effort is required from internal teams?

Does the provider assume responsibility for monitoring, validating and delivering updates, or is significant internal effort still required?

Bottom line: Integrated TLR services enable organizations to keep pace with evolving requirements while minimizing risk, protecting operational continuity and reducing the burden on internal teams. In doing so, they transform regulatory compliance from a recurring challenge into a managed, repeatable process that supports both stability and business agility.



MORE THAN PRODUCT SUPPORT: Professional services

Even the most stable environments require change — whether to support new initiatives, improve performance or adapt to evolving business needs.

Professional services can complement support by extending into targeted initiatives that help organizations enhance their systems for future-readiness in a practical, coordinated way.

In the search for a third-party support and services provider, leaders should explore the scope of professional services offered to determine if it's sufficient for both current and future needs.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

What professional services does the provider offer?

Do they support initiatives such as software installation, architecture planning, cloud migrations and system enhancements?

Can the provider support the environment as it exists today?

Do they have experience working with customized environments, business-specific configurations and complex integrations?

Can the provider help shape future technology plans?

Do they offer guidance, roadmap planning and strategic advisory that align with business objectives?

How quickly can project teams become productive?

Will they already be familiar with the environment, or will additional time be needed for knowledge transfer and discovery?

Can the provider help address staffing or skills gaps?

Are staff augmentation and specialized expertise available when internal resources are constrained?

How are projects aligned with broader business and technology goals?

Are engagements treated as standalone initiatives or part of a larger strategy to optimize and evolve the enterprise environment over time?

Bottom line: The strongest providers combine project expertise with ongoing knowledge of the environment, enabling organizations to make changes more efficiently and with less disruption. By bringing continuity and context to every engagement, they can help organizations optimize existing systems while supporting future priorities.



MORE THAN PRODUCT SUPPORT: Interoperability solutions

Enterprise systems rarely operate in isolation. As surrounding technologies evolve — from operating systems to browsers — maintaining compatibility becomes a challenge. Organizations often face upgrade decisions driven by concerns about whether their systems will continue to work in a changing tech stack.

However, interoperability services help ensure that existing systems continue to function effectively. When evaluating providers, leaders should assess each company's ability to preserve compatibility without forcing disruptive upgrades or unnecessary change to stable core systems.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

How are compatibility issues identified and resolved?

Does the provider proactively assess interoperability risks and help address them before they impact operations?

How does the provider help maintain interoperability with evolving technologies?

In addition to providing interoperability support, does the provider offer proven, always-on solutions to proactively maintain compatibility with updated browsers, operating systems, Java versions and email servers?

Can the provider support integrations between existing and new technologies?

Does the provider have experience connecting stable core systems with modern applications, platforms and services?

How does the provider minimize disruption when technology changes occur?

Are solutions designed to preserve operational continuity and reduce the risk associated with compatibility-related changes?

How does the provider approach innovation around existing systems?

Does the provider enable new capabilities to be introduced without requiring upgrades, migrations or disruption to the current environment?

How does the provider help clients maintain control over technology decisions?

Does the provider help clients determine when and how new technologies are adopted rather than being driven by compatibility-related upgrade requirements?

Bottom line: With the right provider, organizations can innovate around stable core systems — introducing new or updated capabilities while minimizing downtime, disruption or reliance on vendor code, and preserving control over timing, cost and risk.



MORE THAN PRODUCT SUPPORT: Observability solutions

Traditional monitoring tools often provide limited visibility into complex enterprise software stacks. As environments become more dispersed, understanding how they perform in real time grows increasingly critical.

Observability services go beyond the basic monitoring typically offered with support to deliver deeper, end-to-end insight into system behavior — helping teams identify and resolve issues more quickly and proactively.

When searching for third-party support and services providers, leaders should determine what monitoring capabilities, if any, are offered and how effectively the provider can translate data into actionable insights.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

How much visibility does the provider offer across the environment?

Do they deliver end-to-end visibility across applications, databases and infrastructure?

How are performance issues identified and addressed?

Can the provider detect performance degradation, anomalies and emerging issues before they impact users or operations?

How does the provider accelerate root-cause analysis?

Are insights correlated across systems to help identify the source of an issue rather than troubleshooting in isolation?

How does the provider help prevent recurring issues?

Do they use operational data and trend analysis to identify patterns and recommend improvements?

How are observability capabilities integrated into support delivery?

Do support teams use observability to prioritize, diagnose and resolve issues more efficiently?

Can the provider scale its observability services as environments grow increasingly more complex?

Will the provider maintain visibility and insight as new technologies, integrations and workloads are introduced?

Bottom line: By improving visibility across the enterprise environment, a third-party support and services provider that offers observability services can help reduce downtime, improve performance and shift support from reactive issue resolution to proactive system management.



MORE THAN PRODUCT SUPPORT:

Change management solutions

Enterprise software environments are in a constant state of change — driven by business requirements, regulatory updates, infrastructure evolution and security needs. Without a structured approach, even routine changes can introduce unintended and potentially disastrous consequences.

Change management solutions, however, provide a more controlled, coordinated way to manage change across systems. That's why leaders in the market for a third-party support and services provider should examine whether the company is equipped to help implement change without undermining operational continuity.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Does the provider offer a change management solution or structured process?

Has that change management solution or process been proven?

How does the provider plan and validate changes before deployment?

Are changes tested, reviewed and validated prior to implementation to minimize operational risk?

How are dependencies and potential risks identified?

Does the provider evaluate how proposed changes might affect connected applications, integrations, infrastructure and critical business processes?

How does the provider coordinate changes across environments?

Are changes managed holistically across systems and teams to reduce conflicts, disruptions and unexpected outcomes?

How are compliance and audit requirements maintained during change activities?

Does the provider take steps to support governance, documentation and audit readiness throughout the change lifecycle?

How are changes aligned with ongoing support and operations?

Are the teams responsible for support, operations and change management working together within a coordinated framework?

Bottom line: When integrated with enterprise software support from a trusted provider, change management solutions can reduce operational risk and ensure that change doesn't undermine system stability or performance.



STRATEGIC DIFFERENTIATOR:

Agentic AI and intelligent user experience

As enterprises look to adopt AI, many are discovering that meaningful value doesn't require replacing stable core systems.

[Agentic AI ERP](#) takes a different approach — layering intelligent, autonomous capabilities on top of existing ERP systems, enabling users to interact with, optimize and automate processes without disrupting the underlying applications. Organizations can then implement AI in a practical, business-driven way while preserving the reliability of mission-critical systems.

For leaders seeking a true IT partner, providers with the knowledge, skills and resources to help with adopting Agentic AI ERP can stand out from the rest.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Does the provider offer innovation solutions?

Can the provider assist with incorporating AI and automation into the enterprise, or are their offerings limited to support and other services?

What expertise does the provider bring to AI initiatives?

Does the provider have experience with AI-focused projects?

Does the provider have a broader ecosystem for AI innovation?

Does the provider work with technology partners to expand AI capabilities?

How does the provider enable AI adoption without disrupting existing systems?

Do they help layer AI capabilities onto the core ERP system without altering it?

What types of AI capabilities are supported?

Does the provider offer a way to unlock intelligent agents, workflow automation and data-driven insights in ERP systems?

Does the provider have specific AI solutions available?

Can the provider recommend and deploy solutions based on industry and/or business processes?

Bottom line: With the support of a provider that combines deep ERP expertise, enterprise software knowledge and a strategic ecosystem of technology partners, organizations can leverage Agentic AI ERP to increase productivity, accelerate innovation and realize AI-driven benefits sooner — without the cost, risk or disruption of upgrades, migrations or replatforming.



Conclusion: Support strategy is a business strategy

As enterprise environments become more complex and budgets remain constrained, support decisions increasingly influence far more than system maintenance. They affect operating costs, innovation capacity, access to specialized expertise, compliance readiness and control over future technology investments.

Independent, third-party support represents a growing alternative for organizations looking to balance stability with transformation. By enabling organizations to maintain proven systems while pursuing modernization on their own timeline, the model offers a different approach to creating business value from enterprise technology investments.

Looking ahead, enterprise software support is likely to continue evolving from a vendor-centric maintenance model to a service-centric operating model. Support services will (and should) increasingly be evaluated by the business outcomes they enable. And in hybrid, multi-vendor environments, third-party support and services providers will play a broader role — helping clients operate, secure, optimize and modernize complex technology landscapes while integrating AI and other new capabilities around stable core systems.

The question is no longer simply how enterprise software is supported. It's how support, services and innovation capabilities work together to help organizations achieve their business objectives, maintain control of their technology roadmap and realize greater value from the systems they already own.

Common questions about third-party support

Can we still upgrade in the future if we choose third-party support?

Yes, it's possible to upgrade in the future even after switching to third-party support.

Organizations retain rights to the software they've licensed. They can download and organize an archive of module versions, patches and documentation they're entitled to before leaving vendor support, preserving future options and implementing upgrades if there's a clear business case to move to the next version.

Can third-party providers support systems without source code?

Yes. Many issues that occur in enterprise systems stem from configuration, data, integrations and customizations rather than vendor source code. Independent providers use proven techniques to diagnose and resolve issues without modifying vendor IP.

How can we remain secure without vendor patches?

Vendor patches are only one security mechanism. Moreover, they tend to be reactive, correcting known vulnerabilities but not guarding against the unknown. Many organizations already rely on more proactive security solutions that mitigate both known and unknown vulnerabilities, in addition to implementing compensating controls.

Is third-party support only suitable for stable environments?

Few enterprise environments are truly 100% stable. Independent providers routinely onboard environments with active issues, focusing on stabilization and root-cause resolution as the first order of business to reduce case backlogs and prevent issue recurrence.



Thousands of organizations are leveraging Rimini Street third-party support and services for Oracle, SAP, VMware and more to achieve greater operational efficiency, faster growth and more innovation capacity.

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About Rimini Street, Inc.

Rimini Street, Inc. (Nasdaq: RMNI), a Russell 2000® Company, is a proven, trusted global provider of end-to-end, mission-critical enterprise software support, managed services and innovative Agent AI ERP solutions, and is the leading third-party support provider for Oracle, SAP and VMware software. The Company has signed thousands of IT service contracts with Fortune Global 100, Fortune 500, midmarket, public sector and government organizations that have leveraged the Rimini Smart Path™ methodology to achieve better operational outcomes, billions of U.S. dollars in savings and self-funded AI and other innovation.

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