

# How to Tell If You're in a Platform Trap

An honest diagnostic for IT leaders who suspect their "consolidation" effort might be holding them back.



## What Is a Platform Trap?

A platform trap happens when a tool that once felt like a strategic asset starts feeling like a constraint. It usually begins with good intentions: consolidate vendors, standardize workflows, cut costs. But over time, complexity grows, agility shrinks, and costs creep up. *Sound familiar?*

This quick self-assessment is designed to help you figure out if you're in a trap and what you can do about it.

### How to Use This Guide

Rate each question on a scale of 1 to 5:

1 = Never | 2 = Rarely | 3 = Sometimes | 4 = Often | 5 = Always

At the end of each section, total your score. Then check your overall score at the end.

## Section 1: Operational Red Flags

Total: / 20

Ask your team:

Do we spend more time *maintaining* the platform than *improving* user experience?

☐

Is our backlog full of "quick form changes" that require admin or dev effort?

☐

Do we delay changes because we're unsure how they will affect upstream or downstream dependencies?

☐

Does every upgrade feel like a mini re-implementation?

☐

## Section 2: Organizational Red Flags

Total: / 20

Ask yourself and your peers:

Have departments started building their own workarounds outside the platform?

☐

Are we relying on the vendor's roadmap to meet core business needs?

☐

Do stakeholders roll their eyes when we ask them to "stay out of the box"?

☐

Is our platform team overloaded with requests that should be self-service?

☐



# Section 3: Financial Red Flags

Total: / 20

Look at the numbers:

Are we paying license fees for users who rarely log in?

☐

Are we hiring more consultants just to manage complexity?

☐

Have we stopped calculating real ROI because it's too hard to untangle?

☐

Do we keep hearing, "It's too late to change now"?

☐

## Scoring: How Trapped Are You?

Total: / 60

0–20  
Low Risk

21–40  
Warning Signs

41–60  
You're in the Trap

You're staying agile and keeping control. Stay vigilant.

You're starting to feel the trap. Time to evaluate key areas.

Your approach is costing you speed, flexibility, and money. It's time to rethink.

### If You're in a Trap, You're Not Alone

Most organizations don't notice the trap until it's too late to easily pivot. But the sooner you name it, the sooner you can start to build your way out.

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## Want Help Mapping a Smarter Path?

We've helped federal agencies, financial institutions, and global enterprises rethink their workflow strategy... without ripping everything out. If you'd like a fresh set of eyes, we're here.

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