Four Routes Decision Guide

Choose between DIY, Rent, Borrow, and Embed for a specific workflow.

For: Sponsors, function leaders, and delivery teams | Use when: When deciding where delivery capacity should come from | Suggested time: 20 minutes

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Use synthetic or authorized information. Keep sensitive work in approved tools. A named person owns each decision. These tools support discussion and planning; they are not validated assessments.

Compare the four routes

These are capacity choices inside the Internal Product House. A portfolio can use all four.

DIY

Someone already in the function builds a bounded solution. Check approved tools, scope, testing, time, and maintenance.

Rent

Use a vendor or platform. Check fit, permissions, integration, total cost, and vendor responsibilities.

Borrow

Use another internal team, a contractor, or professional services. Check access, capacity, handover, and ownership after delivery.

Embed

Dedicated delivery capacity sits with the function. Check demand, prioritization, technical standards, decision rights, and ongoing funding.

Record the choice

No single score determines the answer. Compare problem fit, context and access, delivery capacity, continuity, and decision authority.

Chosen route and tradeoff

Which route fits now, and what alternative did you consider?

Long-term owner

Who supports the product after delivery?

Evidence that would change the route

What would make a different route preferable?

Next decision

Who decides and when?

Completed companion example

All organizations, workflows, numbers, and results in these examples are fictional and provided for learning. Targets are proposed decision criteria, not validated standards or promised outcomes.

DIY

Consider for a narrow draft-only prototype with a capable owner.

Rent

Consider if an existing service-desk product already fits the approved policy-answer workflow.

Borrow

Borrow retrieval expertise for a scoped prototype with a documented handoff.

Embed

Consider after sustained demand justifies continuing domain-focused capacity.

Chosen route and tradeoff

Borrow for the pilot; compare Rent before committing a custom production build.

Long-term owner

Service-desk lead owns the workflow; platform partner owns technical support.

Evidence that would change the route

A suitable existing product, continuing product demand, or unavailable internal capacity.

Next decision

Sponsor reviews fit, cost, and support evidence after the synthetic test.

Original guide: https://builtinto.work/resources/four-routes