

For maintenance, operations and executive leaders
in asset-intensive organisations

Investing in maintenance AI?

What if your next system upgrade includes it?

Before you commit budget, connect systems and retrain teams, understand what could weaken your supplier's advantage and what will keep delivering value to your operation.

Understand vendor risk. Recognise lasting value.
Invest with confidence.

Will you still need the solution when the AI gets smarter?

You are considering an AI solution to improve maintenance planning, support troubleshooting or make better spares decisions. Today, it offers something your existing systems cannot do.

But what happens if a more capable AI model can perform the same task? Or your existing maintenance platform includes it in its next release?

The benefit may still matter. The reason to pay for a separate solution may become less compelling.

For maintenance and operations leaders, this matters before implementation. Your commitment includes connecting systems, preparing data, training people and changing workflows. Those costs do not disappear when the capability becomes widely available.

The decision is whether the solution offers value that will remain useful as AI improves. Does it understand your equipment and operating constraints? Can it support approvals, fit into daily work and learn from completed jobs? Or does much of its value depend on overcoming limitations that newer models may remove?

What should you establish before committing?

Maintenance: What does this solution know about our assets and maintenance decisions that a general AI model would not?

Operations: How much of its value comes from helping us complete work reliably, beyond producing an answer or recommendation?

Leadership: If our existing platform or a newer model offers the same capability, what would we still be paying this supplier for?

What you will gain from this paper

Recognise how improving AI can weaken a supplier's advantage. Distinguish capabilities that may become standard from those that can retain value. Use the company cases to assess a supplier before committing budget or expanding across sites.

Supplier change is already happening

Flowise

Its sunset notice linked the wind-down to stronger reasoning models and coding agents that changed how developers build with AI. [2]

Reforged Labs

Its closure notice cited customers' growing ability to build capabilities themselves, alongside a smaller-than-expected market. [3]

These cross-industry examples illustrate supplier risk, not measured maintenance results.

[2] [Flowise sunset notice](#)

[3] [Reforged closure notice](#)

What happens when the capability you bought becomes widely available?

A specialist AI product can save time today and face a tougher business case tomorrow. The change may come from customers gaining the ability to do more themselves, without buying the same separate tool.

Flowise: the way customers build changed

Flowise provided a visual way to build AI applications. In its sunset notice, the team said stronger reasoning models and coding agents were changing development and reducing the appeal of rigid, low-code approaches. It announced a wind-down of official development and support. The open-source code remained available. [2]

For a buyer, available code and continuing supplier support are different things. Keeping the software running may require a new provider or internal engineering effort.

Reforged Labs: customers could do more themselves

Reforged Labs offered AI creative tools for gaming. Its closure notice said advances in AI made it easier for customers to build capabilities internally. It also cited a market that proved smaller than expected. The company closed its services in July 2026. AI progress was part of its explanation, not the only cause. [3]

Apply the lesson to your next demonstration

Suppose a supplier demonstrates automatic work-order summaries. Compare that task with what a current general AI model can do using the same permitted records. Then examine the work surrounding it: retrieving the right history, checking equipment references, obtaining approval and recording the result.

If the summary is easy to reproduce, the supplier needs another reason to earn your investment. That reason might be a better operational process, less checking or dependable support. Ask it to demonstrate the difference.

The maintenance example is illustrative. These cases do not show that every specialist AI tool will become unnecessary.

Separate two questions

Can the task be reproduced?

Test the capability with representative records and difficult cases.

Can the service be replaced?

Include integration, support and the work your team would inherit.

Could your existing platform make a separate tool harder to justify?

A competitor does not always have to offer a better standalone product. It may offer a good-enough capability inside a service your organisation already uses.

Loki Build: customers preferred an existing supplier

Loki Build's founder described customers preferring Claude Design within their existing supplier relationship. The account reported a product sunset and a company pivot. It did not establish that the company itself had closed. [4]

Hushl and Mave: a capability became less distinctive

Hushl's founder described users leaving its content-generation product after ChatGPT became available, followed by a move towards services. Mave's founder described a more crowded AI trip-planning market after ChatGPT and a shift towards experiences. These accounts describe different responses to changing competition, not identical business failures. [5, 6]

What this means for a maintenance buyer

Imagine buying a separate tool to draft job plans. If your maintenance system later adds a comparable feature, the existing system may be easier to use because asset records, user permissions and work orders are already there.

That does not make the built-in option better by default. A specialist may handle complex equipment, incomplete records or unusual failure modes more effectively. Compare the complete job, including the time needed to correct and approve the output.

Ask your existing platform supplier what it can deliver now. Treat roadmap promises as uncertain. Ask the specialist to show where its advantage matters in your operation, beyond a more polished demonstration.

The maintenance scenario is illustrative. The company accounts show customer and product changes, not a measured effect on industrial operations.

Compare the completed job

Same records

Use the same asset history and task in each demonstration.

Same standard

Judge whether the result is usable, with correction and approval time included.

Same cost boundary

Count licences, integration and ongoing effort.

If a supplier pivots, what happens to your implementation?

A supplier can survive by changing its product or target customer. That may be sensible for the supplier while creating uncertainty for a customer implementing the earlier offering.

DryMerge: a move towards a more specific job

DryMerge's founder discussed an earlier shift from broad automation towards CRM. The pivot preceded the ChatGPT Agent announcement discussed in the post, so the announcement should not be described as causing it. Its Y Combinator profile also describes the CRM-focused product. [7, 8]

The case raises a useful buyer question: is your use case central to the supplier's direction, or could it become a legacy feature with less attention?

Jasper: a sharper focus on marketing teams

Jasper's July 2023 statement announced restructuring and a focus on mid-size and enterprise marketing teams. It is evidence of a business and product strategy changing. It is not proof that one model release caused every difficulty the company faced. [9]

Plan for the product you will depend on

For an asset-intensive business, a change in product direction could affect a connector, a specialised planning function or the support needed to expand across sites. The practical issue is whether the service you bought will continue to receive investment.

Before scaling, establish which functions are supported, how changes are communicated and what happens if a service is retired. Identify who would maintain integrations and how your team would continue work during a transition.

A narrow pilot may need little preparation for switching. A tool built into daily planning needs a more credible fallback. Match that preparation to the operational dependence you are creating.

Ask before you scale

Product direction

Is our use case part of the supplier's core market?

Continuity

What happens to support and integrations if the product changes?

Exit

Can we recover the records and continue the work?

Does your data actually improve the result?

“We use proprietary data” is not enough to explain why an AI solution will remain valuable. The data must help produce a better result, and the supplier should be able to show how.

Chegg: valuable information faced a new alternative

Chegg had built a substantial collection of educational content and expert support. In its May 2023 earnings materials, management reported that growing student interest in ChatGPT was affecting new-customer growth. It also described CheggMate, an AI service combining conversational technology with Chegg’s content and expertise. [10]

The research uses Chegg to illustrate a risk: information can lose some commercial value when customers find another way to meet the same need. A competitor does not necessarily have to copy the collection. This is an interpretation, not a complete explanation of Chegg’s performance. [1]

For maintenance, follow what happened after the advice

A tool that reads your work orders has access to information. A tool that records what the planner changed, what the technician did and whether the problem returned has a basis for improving future recommendations.

Consider a recommendation to reduce a slow-moving spare. A useful record would show whether the item was critical, whether the recommendation was accepted, what stock changed and what happened afterwards. Simply recording that someone viewed the suggestion tells you much less.

Ask for evidence of improvement

Have the supplier show how feedback changed a recommendation and how it checked that the change helped. Then establish who may use those records and whether your organisation can retain and export them. Your operational data should not casually become described as the supplier’s exclusive asset.

The work-order and spares examples illustrate a possible learning process. They are not reported deployment results.

A useful feedback record

The recommendation

What did the system suggest?

The correction

What did the expert change?

The action

What was actually done?

The result

Did the decision help?

What makes a solution worth keeping as AI improves?

Sawhney's "shallow and deep" framework distinguishes capabilities that others can reproduce from advantages built around their use. For a buyer, its four asset types translate into four things to examine. None guarantees that a supplier will remain competitive. [1]

1. It learns from useful operating evidence

The solution uses corrections and results to improve future decisions. Ask for an example using relevant work, with evidence that performance improved. A large document store alone does not demonstrate learning. The paper calls this **data capital**.

2. It handles the exceptions your experts recognise

A capable solution should account for equipment context, incomplete records and situations where a normal recommendation would be inappropriate. Test it on difficult cases with your planners and engineers. This is the practical value of **encoded expertise**.

3. It helps your team finish the work

Useful integration connects information, decisions, approvals, action and the completed record. Ask whether it removes steps or creates more checking and duplicate entry. The paper calls this **workflow embedding**. Being difficult to replace is not, by itself, a benefit to your organisation.

4. You can rely on how it is controlled

Users need to know what evidence supports an answer, who can approve an action and how mistakes are handled. Examine testing, access controls and accountability for your use case. These support what the paper calls **trust assets**; a general certification does not establish that a recommendation is correct.

The strongest case connects these capabilities: the solution helps complete work, captures the outcome and uses that evidence to improve. Ask the supplier to demonstrate that connection in your operation.

Bring a difficult case

For example

An incomplete equipment history, conflicting records or a recommendation that needs an expert exception.

Watch the response

Does the tool recognise uncertainty and support an appropriate review?

Can better AI make your solution more valuable?

Improving models can strengthen a useful product. The question is whether the product helps your organisation put that intelligence to work in ways a model alone cannot.

Abridge: more than producing a clinical note

The research describes Abridge in the context of clinical documentation, clinician review and health-record integration. Its proposed value extends beyond generating text to supporting a specialised process. Better models could improve the output while review and integration remain important. [1]

Rilla: connecting conversations to coaching

The paper describes Rilla's use of field-sales conversations, coaching and links to commercial outcomes. The proposed value comes from turning real interactions into useful improvements, beyond transcription alone. Both Abridge and Rilla still face competition, including from established platforms. [1]

Databricks: making enterprise data usable and controlled

Databricks' Unity Catalog materials describe access controls, auditing and tracking where data comes from. These address requirements around using data and AI. More capable models do not automatically remove the need for those controls. The customer's data should not be treated as data owned by the supplier. [11]

Apply the distinction to your operation

A stronger model might draft a better maintenance recommendation. You may still need a system that retrieves the correct equipment history, respects access permissions, routes the recommendation for approval and records what was done.

Assess whether the supplier makes those steps measurably easier and more dependable. That is a stronger reason to keep investing than the claim that its model will always be the smartest.

Abridge and Rilla are interpretations from the research paper, not independent product evaluations. These examples are not endorsements.

Test the next upgrade

What improves?

Does a better model improve the completed job?

What remains necessary?

Which operating processes and controls still matter?

What can be simplified?

Which steps only compensate for current model limitations?

Ask for proof before you commit.

An AI tool does not need a permanent advantage to be worth buying. A simple tool can repay its cost quickly. The larger the integration effort and operating dependence, the stronger the evidence you need.

Compare it with the alternatives you already have

Use the same representative tasks to compare the proposed solution, a current general AI model and your existing platform. Include difficult cases. Measure the time to an accepted result, including corrections, approvals and record entry.

Agree what success means in your operation

Choose measures that fit the use case: planner time, rework, usable job plans, stock decisions or avoided interruptions. Record a baseline and how results will be checked. A faster draft is not the same as a better maintenance outcome.

Understand the full commitment

Include data preparation, integration, training, review and support in the business case. Establish who owns each activity. Ask what the supplier will still provide if the model becomes more capable or your platform adds a similar feature.

Test whether you can change course

Ask to export source references, recommendations, corrections, approvals and outcomes. Check that another team can use the export. Agree how work continues if the service changes, and avoid making a pilot harder to unwind than it needs to be.

Revisit the decision as the technology changes

Review the value case before renewal and after significant product or model changes. Keep what improves the operation. Simplify what has become unnecessary. Expand when the results justify the additional commitment.

The approval question is straightforward: **what operational value are we buying, what must we do to realise it, and why should that value hold as AI improves?**

Bring these people into the decision

Maintenance

Tests the quality and usefulness of recommendations.

Operations

Checks the effect on daily work and continuity.

IT and engineering

Assess data, integration, controls and support.

Leadership

Reviews the return and the scale of the commitment.

Evidence behind the argument.

This whitepaper draws on Mohanbir Sawhney's working paper and company or founder accounts. The research provides a framework for thinking about competitive advantage. The application to maintenance and operations is NextGenMaint's interpretation.

[1] Mohanbir Sawhney

Shallow and Deep: A Theory of Competitive Advantage in the AI Economy. Working paper, 24 July 2026. Sections 3, 9, 11-13. [Read source](#)

Research framework; Jasper, Chegg, Abridge and Rilla interpretations.

[2] Henry & Flowise Team

The Future of Flowise. Official sunset notice, 2026. [Read source](#)

Reasoning models, coding agents and the announced wind-down schedule.

[3] Reforged Labs

Reforged Labs has closed. Official closure notice, 2026. [Read source](#)

Market size, in-house substitution and service closure in July 2026.

[4] Nikita Sorokin

Founder account of the Loki Build sunset and company pivot. LinkedIn, 2026. [Read source](#)

Customer response to Claude Design; product closure distinguished from company closure.

[5] Adithya Narayanan

About, section 03: Building. Founder website. [Read source](#)

Hushl user loss after ChatGPT and transition to a services business.

[6] Stella Alexandrova

Founder account of Mave's pivot following ChatGPT and category crowding. LinkedIn. [Read source](#)

Trip-planning proposition and shift toward experiences.

Sources and interpretation.

[7] Samuel Brashears

Founder post on ChatGPT Agent and DryMerge's earlier CRM pivot. LinkedIn. [Read source](#)

The pivot preceded the model-platform announcement discussed in the post.

[8] Y Combinator / DryMerge

DryMerge company profile and product launch description. [Read source](#)

The CRM-focused product proposition.

[9] Dave Rogenmoser / Jasper

A difficult decision today to set Jasper up for the future. 10 July 2023. [Read source](#)

Restructuring and focus on mid-size and enterprise marketing teams.

[10] Chegg

Chegg Announces First Quarter 2023 Earnings. 1 May 2023; prepared remarks. [Read source](#)

Management's account of ChatGPT interest, new-customer growth and CheggMate.

[11] Databricks

Unity Catalog: Open and Universal Governance for the Lakehouse and Beyond. 2025. [Read source](#)

Governance, access control, auditing and data/AI asset management.

How to read the cases

Company accounts establish what their authors reported. They do not isolate every cause of a closure, pivot or change in demand. The paper distinguishes those outcomes and does not treat every affected company as a business failure.

The maintenance scenarios are illustrative, not measured customer results. Abridge and Rilla are discussed through the research paper. None of the examples is a vendor endorsement, a prediction of company performance or a substitute for evaluating your own use case.

Source review: 20-21 September 2026. Editorial revision: 24 September 2026. Historical company statements are not assurances of current service availability. This guide does not reproduce the research paper's formal diagnostic or assign vendor scores.