

Online Collaborative  
Whiteboards

# A Buyer's Guide

For product teams



miro

[miro.com](https://miro.com)

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**Introduction**

Product managers are responsible for the critical work required for shipping products that solve important customer problems and deliver business value. Sitting at the intersection of business, design, and technology, product managers define the product vision, formulate the strategy, and rally diverse teams to bring that vision to life.

This means that product managers have to master the art of influence without authority. Neither the product teams they lead nor the stakeholders from whom they need buy-in and resources sit beneath them in a typical organizational structure. This requires a collaborative approach to navigating diverse perspectives, aligning competing priorities, and resolving interdependencies.

Due to the nature of their role, product managers are in a near constant state of context switching. They can be in one meeting selling the vision and strategy of the product and the next meeting in the weeds of all of the details and prioritizing features for a sprint. Their ways of working and the roadmaps they produce must be agile and collaborative, enabling teams to understand the big picture, adapt to changes, and overcome the organizational complexity inherent in shipping products.

# What you'll find in this guide

A look into Product Management at Miro.

[Read article →](#)

Product leaders have a renewed responsibility to understand the needs of their teams and cross-functional partners, evaluate their tech stack, and provide solutions that improve visibility of work, quality of communications, and time to critical decisions.

This ebook is designed to help guide those evaluating online collaborative whiteboards by providing resources such as:

- Key questions to ask when defining your needs
- Top considerations to keep in mind when evaluating online whiteboard options
- Feature comparison with interactive matrix
- Vendor evaluation checklist

The ability to be agile, adaptable, and flexible is of utmost importance. Keeping your team's needs front and center as you seek the right tool to drive collaboration will set your product team up for success in 2022 and beyond.

## 3 questions to define your needs and kickstart your evaluation



### **What problem are you solving?**

Starting with the problem to solve or “job” that you’re looking to hire a vendor for helps you evaluate each vendor appropriately. The more specific you can be about your core use cases, the better you’ll be able to determine the best fit for your business.




### **What tools are you using today?**

Identify what’s currently in your tech stack that a new tool would need to integrate with or replace. Are current tools helping your team be more productive or causing more work? What gaps do you see in capabilities required? If one tool has a groundswell of support, start there. There’s no better indicator of long-term success than a tool your team has already self-selected and adopted.



### **What stakeholders need to be involved in the decision?**

Who will be using this type of tool? Who will the decision impact? Which aspects of the tool should each stakeholder or team evaluate? Make sure the right people are in the room so that you can garner support at early stages and ensure you are meeting the right needs.



# The value of online collaborative whiteboards

The best online whiteboard will serve as a central collaboration hub, empowering your teams to connect and create like never before. This tool will seamlessly and securely integrate with the apps you already use on a daily basis (think: Jira, Zoom, Typeform, etc.) and cover a broad set of use cases to reduce the number of tools and context switching throughout your day. The result is a platform that makes it easy for you to capture, synthesize, and integrate the many inputs you receive from cross-functional teams in a manageable way , and helps to alleviate the pain of an overloaded inbox and unruly backlog.

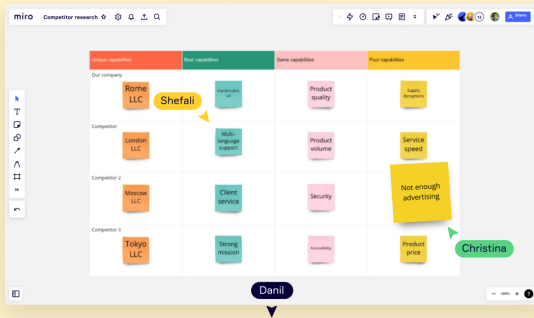
What can an online whiteboard really be used for? The ability to sketch and add sticky notes to a virtual board is well and good, but what else can a tool like this do for your product team? An online collaborative whiteboard worth its salt will have a broad range of use cases that support the key workflows and business outcomes your team is accountable to — from product discovery to prioritization to roadmapping — all in one workspace.

Here are the use cases to consider when evaluating your future online collaborative whiteboard:

- **Customer and competitive research**
- **User journey and flow mapping**
- **Product roadmapping**
- **Feature prioritization**
- **Brainstorming and exploration**
- **Wireframing and concepting**

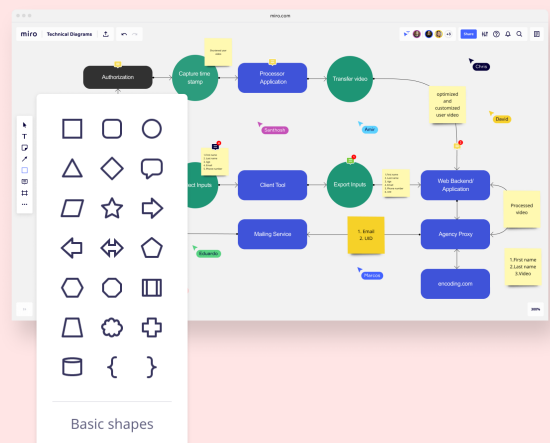
## Customer and competitive research

1. Stay on top of the market and competition with a visual repository for your research
2. Capture inputs from many sources and save them on your board so nothing is forgotten
3. Synthesize and cluster data to uncover trends related to new opportunities or threats



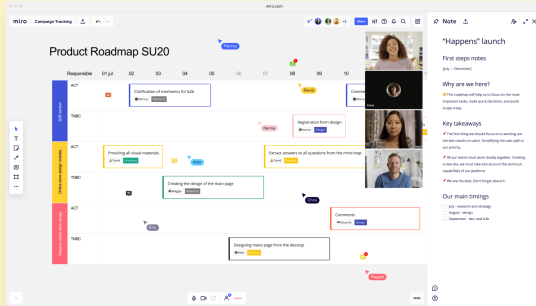
## User journey and flow mapping

1. Build a customer-centric product strategy based on real user experiences
2. Uncover experience gaps and pain points and lead customer-centric discovery sessions
3. Collaborate on journeys and flows and brainstorm ideas for what to build next



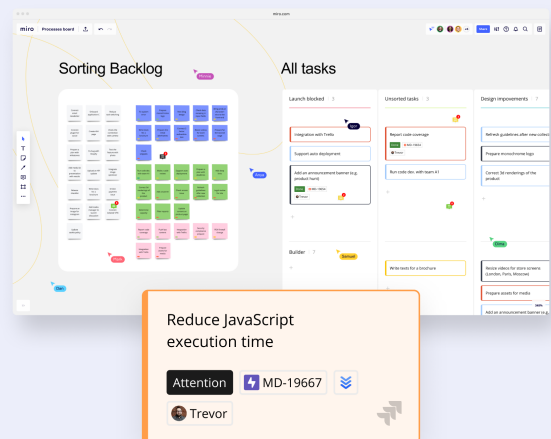
## Product Roadmapping

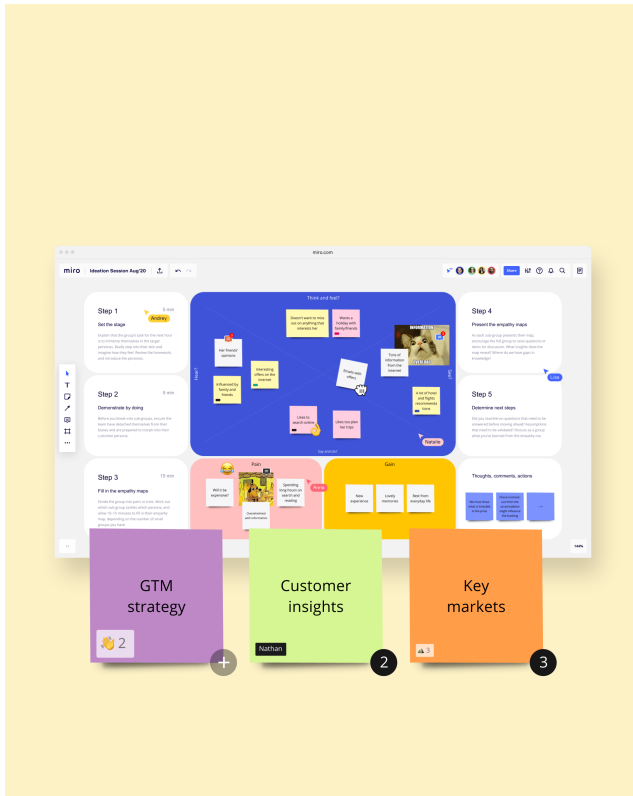
1. Rally your team around the product vision and roadmap for achieving key outcomes
2. Communicate at various altitudes and customize the roadmap view by audience
3. Easily pivot and update living boards in response to changing user needs



## Feature prioritization

1. Increase transparency of decisions made and buy-in for product priorities
2. Improve estimates and predictability with a more collaborative, effective process
3. Enable smooth, Scaled Agile (SAFe®) processes in remote and hybrid environments



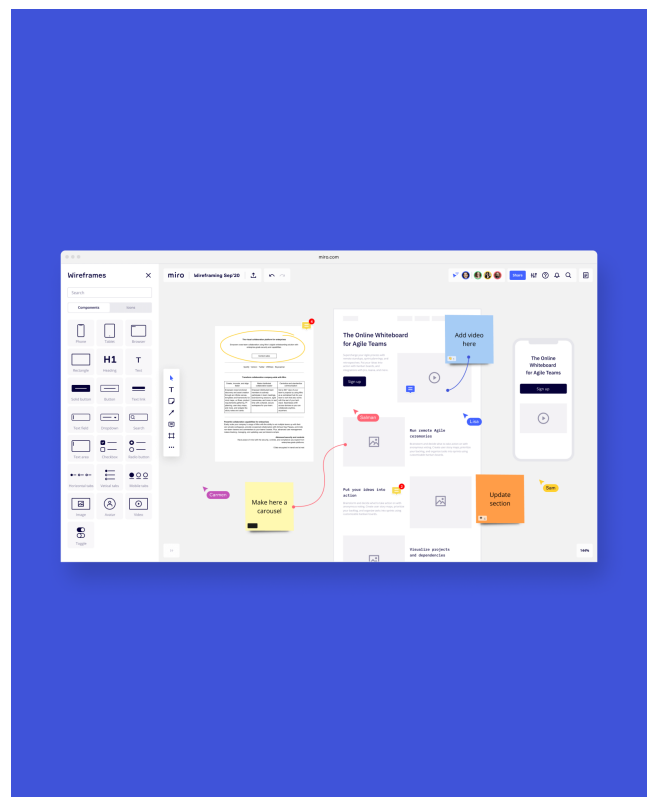


## Brainstorming and exploration

1. Power the development of ideas with distributed teams as if you were in the same room
2. Boost creativity and speed on-site or online
3. Harness the full power of your organization's creativity, from marketing to design to engineering and beyond.

## Wireframing and conceiving

1. Easily communicate early product ideas with user flows–no design skills required
2. Co-create lo-fi wireframes with your team to aid in scoping, estimations, and validation
3. Work iteratively to layer on detail and save deep design work for validated concepts





# Top product considerations

## Product considerations:

01. Templates and breadth of use cases

02. User experience

03. Integrations with your tech stack

04. Cross-device experience

Features and their functionality can vary greatly from one online collaborative whiteboard platform to another. One vendor's features may not be as robust as their competitors'. It's important to determine which features are most important to you and your team's primary use cases.

# 01. Templates and breadth of use cases

## Why you need it

A robust template library signals the breadth of use cases the tool can support, in effect reducing context switching and process complexity by consolidating more of the work in one application. . Pre-built templates also help slash the time required to prepare for meetings and planning sessions. And for leaders, custom templates establish best practices to help scale processes and ensure consistency across the organization.

## How to evaluate

Pay attention to tools with interactive templates that have objects that snap into place. This will make activities like User Story Mapping, Kanban, or Diagramming faster and easier. Ask about the ability to use multiple templates within a single board, which will be invaluable for cross-functional projects that have multiple activities or objectives.



See it in Miro:  
[Agile workflow templates](#) →



An infinite amount of space that can host as many templates as you need will be key to connecting the dots between diverse teams and stakeholders.

## 02. User experience

### Why you need it

Product planning requires buy-in and coordination across multiple teams. While navigating this complex cross-functional process, it's important that the whiteboard platform makes things easy and transparent for all stakeholders, helping to bridge across functions and locations.

Today, product managers are tasked with being effective remote facilitators and require tools to run engaging meetings and workshops. Whether remote, in person, or hybrid, the whiteboard platform should empower all participants to think creatively about how to solve customer problems and have their voice heard.

### How to evaluate it



See it in Miro:  
[Sticky notes →](#)

Look for features that feel familiar and make life easier like resizable sticky notes, smart drawing, and easy navigation to allow for zooming and panning around the board. Other functions you'll want to pay attention to are facilitation tools like the ability to build an agenda, time presentations, and follow along with users on the board.



Prioritize intuitive board experience, robust facilitator tools, advanced sticky note functionality, and smart drawing capabilities.

## 03. Integrations with your tech stack

### Why you need it

Integrating seamlessly and securely with the apps your cross-functional teams already use ensures information flows between teams and eliminates manual work updating across multiple systems. Important integrations to look for include project/task management, wireframing/prototyping, file storage, documentation, and communication (chat/video). Think about a collaborative online whiteboard as a visual hub for all your team's work.

### How to evaluate

Look for tools that offer two-way syncing with the apps in your stack, and give you the ability to customize fields so you can work in your whiteboard without switching to another tool. Assess which tool will help you best achieve a “big picture” view of your organization's workflows.



See it in Miro:

[Apps & Integrations →](#)



Seek out integrations that can optimize the use of your current tools. Bonus: look for vendors with a developer platform (e.g. APIs, SDKs, etc.) indicating transparency and openness to partnership.

## 04. Cross-device experience

### Why you need it

Whether your team works remotely, in person, or a combination of both, you'll need access to project boards and real-time collaboration away from your desk. Cross-device support allows you to seamlessly navigate and stay connected across all of your devices — from large monitors in conference rooms to tablets at home.

### How to evaluate

Make sure the whiteboard tool is device agnostic and compatible with various interactive displays/touch screens, including stylus support and smart drawing capabilities. To marry the physical whiteboard experience with virtual collaboration, look for the ability to convert physical sticky notes into digital notes.




Look for collaboration capabilities that are device agnostic so you can work from anywhere — in real time or asynchronously.

Feature	✓
comparison matrix	

The feature comparison matrix can assist with your evaluation process by relating top considerations to product features. It also helps evaluators prioritize features and assess how well they relate to vendor offerings and your unique needs.

Interactive matrix preview:

 <b>User experience</b> <i>Is the tool intuitive and does it deliver a robust range of capabilities for users &amp; facilitators?</i>		Miro	Vendor B	Vendor C		
<input type="radio"/>	Real-time multi-user collaboration					
<input type="radio"/>	Intuitive interface					
<input type="radio"/>	Unlimited workspace and zoom capability					
<input type="radio"/>	Bulk add sticky notes					
<input type="radio"/>	Lock elements					
<input type="radio"/>	Ability to easily duplicate board					
<input type="radio"/>	Search function					
<input type="radio"/>	Exportable content					
<input type="radio"/>	Comment and mention					
<input type="radio"/>	Drag and drop objects onto board					
<input type="radio"/>	Library of icons/images					



[miro.com/miroverse/  
feature-comparison-  
matrix/](https://miro.com/miroverse/feature-comparison-matrix/)

[Click here](#) to access the interactive matrix template or use the printable version in the appendix to conduct your evaluation.



# Vendor evaluation checklist



While online collaborative whiteboards are simple in concept, not all products are built with the same audience, use case, or focus in mind. This means the company you partner with should be part of your evaluation just as much as your product requirements.

Use our vendor evaluation checklist to guide your initial discovery phase. Asking each vendor these suggested questions will help you to determine how aligned they are with your goals, their vision for the product, and how qualified they might be to suit your team's needs.

Interactive checklist preview:

1	<b>How closely does their customer base resemble your company and team?</b> Tip: check G2 Crowd to see distribution of reviews by company size and industry.	Vendor A: <span>great ratings</span>	<input type="radio"/>	Icon bank ✓ copy + paste	
		Vendor B:	<input type="radio"/>		
		Vendor C: <span>need more research</span>	<input type="radio"/>		
2	<b>How satisfied are their customers?</b> Tip: check peer review sites such as G2 Crowd, Capterra, or Software Advice. Want deeper insights? Ask to speak to references.	Vendor A: <span></span>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Vendor B: <span></span>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		Vendor C: <span></span>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	<b>What is their position in the market?</b> • Are they able to scale to meet your needs? • Who makes up their leadership team? • Are they profitable and cash flow positive?	Vendor A: <span></span>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Vendor B: <span></span>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		Vendor C: <span></span>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	<b>How often are releases happening?</b> What type of features are being shipped? Tip: check out the product community to see product updates, user feedback, and requests.	Vendor A: <span></span>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Vendor B: <span></span>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		Vendor C: <span></span>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>What support does the vendor provide?</b>	Vendor A: <span></span>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

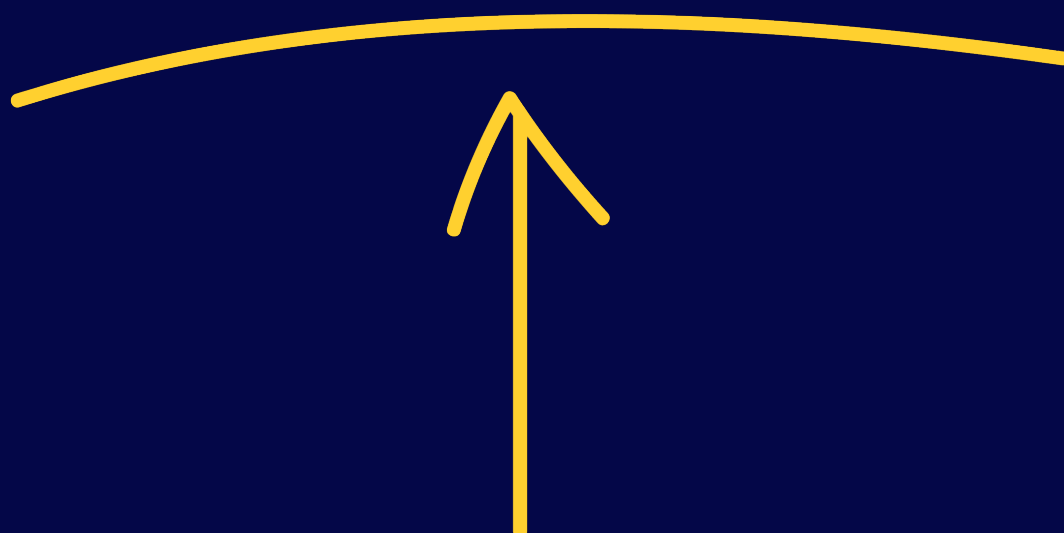


[miro.com/miroverse/  
vendor-evaluation-  
checklist/](https://miro.com/miroverse/vendor-evaluation-checklist/)

[Click here to access the interactive vendor evaluation checklist](#) or print the questionnaire in the appendix.



How it fits into  
your tech stack



As you've learned, integrating a whiteboard platform into the applications you already use is critical for adoption and productivity. But most importantly, the best kinds of online whiteboards can act as true collaborative hubs for teamwork that connect all the different people, projects, and tools across your organization — democratizing information at any level, and giving visibility into the big picture of your team's work. That includes everything from a 1,000-ft view for an executive to see how a project is progressing, down to the intricate details for a developer or designer to refine — from the related Jira task to the Figma wireframe. Imagine the possibilities: the right whiteboard tool can be at the center of your tech stack, securely linking all the different pieces of your projects in one visual home-base.





**About Miro**

Miro is the visual collaboration platform that enables product teams to take an agile approach to product management. Stay on the pulse of customer needs, streamline prioritization decisions and coordination, and easily integrate new discoveries into roadmaps.

### Winning teams choose Miro

We surveyed over 1,200 Miro Enterprise customers, and 98% would recommend Miro to their colleagues.

What to know more about what our customers think?

[Read our reviews on G2 Crowd →](#)

“It's not just one collaboration tool that just stands alone by itself — you need to take a look at the integrations with other tools and make sure it works well together. Miro fit the bill on all aspects and we went with Miro and never looked back.”



Chon Intakeha,  
PMO, Business Technology at Guidewire

“You can have multiple people iterating at any particular time. And I think that that's an incredibly valuable piece of the process.”



Myra Freilich,  
Associate Director, Technology at FINRA

“We've onboarded dozens of people onto the platform with very few hiccups. The learning curve is smooth and the functionality predictable (we often say, 'if you think you can do it, you probably can!')”



Jason K, Director,  
Innovation at Newell Brands (G2 review)

Ready to find out if Miro is the right whiteboard platform for you?

↓

Contact us  
[miro.com/contact/sales](https://miro.com/contact/sales)

Trusted by 95% of the Fortune 100



Proud to be a leader on G2



# Appendix

## Feature comparison matrix

Integrations with tech stack. Can you seamlessly connect to the tools your team already uses today?	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Developer platform (e.g., API, SDK)			
Embeddable using iFrames or native integrations			
App integrations:			
Airtable			
Asana			
Azure DevOps			
Box			
Confluence			
Dropbox			
G Suite (Google Workplace)			
GitHub			
InVision			
MS Teams			

MS One Drive			
MS 365			
Sketch			
Slack			

<b>Ease of use.</b> Is the tool intuitive and does it deliver a robust range of capabilities for users & facilitators?	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Real-time multi-user collaboration			
Intuitive interface			
Unlimited workspace and zoom capability			
Bulk add sticky notes			
Lock elements			
Ability to easily duplicate board			
Search function			
Exportable content			
Comment and mention			

Drag and drop objects onto board			
Library of icons/images			
Facilitator tools			
Summon users on the board			
Hide/reveal sections of board			
Activity history/log by user			
Voting			

<b>Templates &amp; breadth of use cases.</b> Will you have a wide range of pre-built templates or the ability to create custom templates?	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Custom template capabilities			
Diagrams and flows			
Workshop facilitation			
Prototyping			
Kanban / task management			
Interactive presentations			

Mind mapping			
Wireframing			
Agile workflows and activities			
Brainstorming and ideation			

<b>Cross-device experience.</b> Will your teams be able to easily use the tool whether in an office or a remote location?	Miro	Vendor B	Vendor C
Stickies capture (convert physical notes to digital)			
Smart draw (freehand to shape)			
Compatible with modern browsers			
Native mobile app			
Desktop app			

# Vendor evaluation checklist

Feature	Vendor		✓
<p>How closely does their customer base resemble your company and team?</p> <p>Tip: check <a href="#">G2 Crowd</a> to see distribution of reviews by company size and industry.</p>	Vendor A:		
	Vendor B:		
	Vendor C:		
<p>How satisfied are their customers?</p> <p>Tip: check peer review sites such as <a href="#">G2 Crowd</a>, <a href="#">Capterra</a>, or <a href="#">Software Advice</a>.</p> <p>Want deeper insights? Ask to speak to references.</p>	Vendor A:		
	Vendor B:		
	Vendor C:		

<p><b>What is their position in the market?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they able to scale to meet your needs?</li> <li>• Who makes up their leadership team?</li> </ul>	Vendor A:		
	Vendor B:		
	Vendor C:		
<p><b>How often are releases happening?</b></p> <p>What type of features are being shipped?</p> <p>Tip: check out the product community and changelog to see product updates, user feedback, and requests.</p>	Vendor A:		
	Vendor B:		
	Vendor C:		

<p><b>What support does the vendor provide?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they offer hands-on onboarding?</li> <li>• A dedicated Customer Success manager?</li> <li>• Will they allow you to run a pilot to test the software before buying?</li> </ul>	Vendor A:		
	Vendor B:		
	Vendor C:		
<p><b>What security measures have been taken?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they GDPR compliant?</li> <li>• How granular are the administration settings?</li> </ul>	Vendor A:		
	Vendor B:		
	Vendor C:		

<p><b>What is the cross-device experience?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What operating systems are supported?</li> <li>• What is the mobile application's parity with desktop/web version?</li> </ul>	Vendor A:		
	Vendor B:		
	Vendor C:		

[miro.com/miroverse/  
vendor-evaluation-  
checklist](https://miro.com/miroverse/vendor-evaluation-checklist)