

Rent the Capability

Companion Toolkit

Book 3 of Rentable Expertise by Alex Tran

Choose a defensible access model for one real job, then define the evidence, authority, and exit conditions it needs.

For owner operators and accountable business or department leaders comparing how to obtain a capability.

How to use this toolkit

Choose one real decision and one relevant worksheet. Print the PDF or type into the Word version. Keep your working copy private and use fictional or redacted information when asking others for feedback. No book purchase or paid membership is required.

These exercises adapt the book into working records. They are not a reproduction of every chapter or a test with a total score. Chapter references identify the basis; the worked example is fictional. Use Sources and Notes to review the chapter map and further reading.

Choose a worksheet

- 01 Define the capability
- 02 Capability economics comparison
- 03 Work through the four gates
- 04 Write the operating boundary
- 05 Qualify on the real job
- 06 Monitor and respond
- 07 Promote learning deliberately
- 08 Test the way out
- 09 Compare offers and authority
- 10 Review the capability portfolio

Write unknown when evidence is missing. Finish with a decision, a named owner, and a review point. A completed worksheet does not itself grant permission to act.

Define the capability

Describe the finished business job before comparing providers, people, or software.

Compare equivalent outcomes. Access to a model or tool is not automatically access to the complete capability.

1. What must the business be able to do, and for whom?

2. What triggers the job and what usable result ends it?

3. What is the current pain, baseline, and frequency of use?

4. Which inputs, context, and handoffs make the result possible?

5. Which realistic access options could deliver the same result?

6. Which uncertainty must be resolved before comparing options?

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Capability economics comparison

Compare two realistic options using the seven economic lenses. Use a separate copy for each option.

The seven lenses are Money, Time, Delay, Utilization, Risk, Compounding, and Reversibility. Do not combine them into a weighted total that hides an unacceptable condition.

1. Option and scope; cash cost, recurring cost, and alternative use of capital

2. Time: whose hours are used, including integration, supervision, and rework?

3. Delay: when does useful value arrive, and what is lost while waiting?

4. Utilization: how much capacity will actually be used?

5. Risk and compounding: what can fail, and what becomes more valuable with use?

6. Reversibility: what would changing course cost, and which assumptions have low confidence?

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Work through the four gates

Ask the Human, Ownership, Build, and Rent questions in sequence.

These are sequential questions, not four mutually exclusive boxes. Economic attractiveness does not approve a provider or authorize access.

- 1. Human: what must remain human controlled, and who can stop or override?**

- 2. Ownership: which context, learning, or advantage should remain under company control?**

- 3. Build: can the team operate and maintain what it proposes to build?**

- 4. Rent: can controlled access deliver better economics under current conditions?**

- 5. What combined arrangement fits the gates, including human or hybrid options?**

- 6. Choose proceed to evaluation, test first, revise, or stop; state the decisive reason**

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Write the operating boundary

Make one external capability legible and limit what it may access and do.

Authentication identifies the caller. Authorization limits what that caller may do. Avoid broad permissions such as access to all company data.

1. Job, required inputs, expected output, and excluded adjacent work

2. Named caller and the identity used to invoke the capability

3. Specific data categories and systems it may read or use

4. Actions allowed under standing authority and actions explicitly forbidden

5. Named human approval or escalation gate and its trigger

6. Stop right, access revocation owner, and evidence to retain

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Qualify on the real job

Design a bounded evaluation before relying on a capability in ongoing work.

A demonstration or reputation can justify looking closer. Qualification must match the particular job and environment, and evidence ages.

- 1. Exact capability, version, environment, job, and scope being evaluated**

- 2. Representative normal case, edge case, and mandatory stop case**

- 3. Expected output or refusal for each case and evidence of a pass**

- 4. Qualified reviewer and the limits of available test evidence**

- 5. Allowed test inputs, exposure, human review, and stop condition**

- 6. Result and decision: restrict, revise, reject, or allow only the tested scope**

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Monitor and respond

Keep an operating record that connects observations to an accountable response.

A dashboard does not make the decision. Record what changed, who acted, and whether the live capability still matches what was qualified.

1. Capability version and current approved operating boundary

2. Outcome evidence, exceptions, and changes to observe

3. Where the receipt or reviewable record is kept

4. Threshold that triggers review, restriction, or immediate stop

5. Named person who responds and what they can change

6. Latest observation, response, and next review date

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Promote learning deliberately

Separate a local observation from a rule the company is prepared to trust.

Observation is not learning, and a candidate lesson is not company truth. Preserve the reason and the boundary when a change is approved.

1. Observation or correction, its case, and preserved evidence

2. Proposed lesson and alternative explanations still possible

3. Scope in which the lesson may apply and where it may fail

4. Test or review needed before changing the approved method

5. Human owner who may approve the change and affected version

6. Decision: retain as a candidate, promote within bounds, reject, or roll back

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Test the way out

Find out whether the business can change providers without losing useful company state.

An export button is not proof of a usable exit. Check meaning, dependencies, replacement, and requalification as well as files.

1. What company context, records, corrections, and evidence must survive?

2. Who controls each item and what export or access right is confirmed?

3. What dependencies, formats, meanings, or permissions would a replacement need?

4. Small authorized exit test and what would count as usable continuity

5. Switching cost, disruption, deletion or retention obligations, and fallback

6. Unresolved obstacle, accountable owner, and next decision

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Compare offers and authority

Make the market offer and the right to choose or commit explicit.

Discovery, selection, invocation, and commitment are different permissions. A low quoted unit price does not establish the total cost of the job.

1. Searchable economic job, fit, limits, and evidence needed

2. Provider reputation: what does it apply to, and what remains unproven?

3. Priced unit, included work, exclusions, and likely usage

4. How the unit changes incentives, variability, and total cost

5. Who may find, compare, select, invoke, replace, or financially commit?

6. Required approval, commitment limit, stop rule, and review owner

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Review the capability portfolio

Revisit the current posture of one consequential capability in the wider company.

The portfolio is a management view, not an instruction to rent everything. Keep the state whose value should accumulate for the business.

1. Capability, beneficiary, human owner, and current access model

2. What remains human and what should compound for the company?

3. Current outcome evidence, dependence, and management burden

4. What changed in economics, utilization, performance, or alternatives?

5. Decision: retain, change, narrow, test, or retire; what are we giving up?

6. What would change our mind, and when or on what trigger will we review?

Decision owner _____ Review date or trigger _____

Worked example

A support queue with uneven demand

Fictional example: Northstar Parts has a small support team and seasonal demand. It is considering an external service that drafts replies to routine order status questions.

Job and baseline

Draft a response from approved order status data. A team lead measures current handling time and correction rate before comparing options.

Gate decision

Keep refunds, policy exceptions, and customer commitments with staff. Company policies, correction records, and evaluation cases remain under company control.

Economics

Compare a rented draft service with the existing process, including integration, reviewer time, peak usage, and switching effort. Cost estimates remain ranges until observed.

Bounded evaluation

Use 20 synthetic cases, including missing data and a refund request. No messages are sent and no order records are changed. The team lead records correctness and required escalations.

Next decision

Test first. Reject automatic sending at this stage. Review after the synthetic evaluation and require a usable export of correction records before any wider commitment.

Use the example to understand the method. Choose evidence, limits, and review points that fit your own situation.

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