

NAVIGATING THE SMART BUILDINGS MARKETPLACE



WRITTEN BY:



James Dice, PE, CEM, CMVP is the founder and CEO of Nexus Labs and has over 12 years of experience in the North American Smart Building Industry. James created and teaches the Nexus Foundations course, an unparalleled introduction to smart buildings.



Brad Bonavida, PE, is the Head of Product at Nexus Labs, where he leads the creation of The Nexus Marketplace, an online platform to support buyers of smart building technology. With a decade of prior experience at Siemens Building Technologies and Turntide Technologies, Brad has held various roles in project management, product management, and business leadership.



Nexus Labs is a media and education company striving to create digital and decarbonized buildings. Starting in 2019, the Nexus community has grown rapidly and sees new members each month from across the industry. With regular gatherings and daily online discussions, players from organizations all around the world are working together towards digital, decarbonized buildings.



Introduction

For years, we've been trying to make the [vendor swamp](#), AKA the smart buildings marketplace, less murky.

We've been tracking the marketplace for many years and sharing insights with the Nexus Pro Community. We've taught over 400 students to ask the right questions to vendors in our [Smart Building Strategist course](#). We've written and podcasted and interviewed dozens of buyers about this problem.

To bring all of this content together, we've crafted this white paper on how to navigate the smart buildings marketplace. We'll cover:

- The pain for buyers—why this is so difficult
- The buyer's homework—what you need to know before you engage the marketplace
- Thinking in categories—how to compare vendors apples to apples
- Thinking in layers—how to think about constructing your tech stack
- Thinking in properties—simple filters to narrow down your options
- When to go full stack—simplifying the process for 98% of our buildings
- A case study and what we're building

If you're a buyer, this white paper contains our best advice on how to make sense of the marketplace. If you're a vendor, this doubles as a way to explain what you do and stand out from the competition.

Let's dive in!

Part 1: The Pain for Buyers (and Sellers)

There are over 750 smart building vendors in our database. Within that group, the fragmentation is dizzying—there's a different vendor for every problem. (And many for imaginary problems... but that's a different white paper.)

On their websites, there are so many acronyms and buzzwords you could play bingo. When you talk to vendors, many say they do far more than they're actually qualified for. I won't mention names, but I just came across a vendor who claims to be 'your one-stop shop for digital operations'. Does that help you understand what they do? Me neither.

Despite the fragmentation, vendors have overlapping capabilities and overlapping technology stacks. Telling them apart is also a huge lift—let alone assessing whether they fit what you're looking for.

The murkiness of the swamp isn't abnormal—it's simply a reflection of several confounding factors:

1. Where our industry sits on the adoption curve—Despite how long some of us have been doing this (cue the "I've been doing this for over 30 years" crowd), it's still the early days. Most buildings have very little technology deployed.

2. How fragmented the buildings industry itself is—We don't have one industry with one type of buyer, we have dozens across the different building types, ownership structures, and stakeholder types.

3. Hype and innovation cycles—Each new wave of technology advancement begets a new wave of startups built on that innovation.

Regardless, from the buyer's perspective, the smart building technology marketplace needs more clarity for the technologies within it to cross the coveted chasm.

Today, there aren't any viable and scalable resources for wading through the vendor swamp. Google search results in apples-to-oranges comparisons. Consultants are vital in this process, but there aren't enough of them and they're too expensive for most of the market. Asking your peers is great, unless you're ahead of them or until they hold back details because you're their competition.

In our interviews with buyers, we've heard how this results in frustration and stagnation. Here are some quotes from them:

"Vendor research could be a full time job. But I have lots of other responsibilities on my plate."

"I've learned that the vendor with the best search engine optimization (SEO) wasn't necessarily the best at solving my problem."

"We've wasted a lot of time and money going down the path with the wrong vendors."

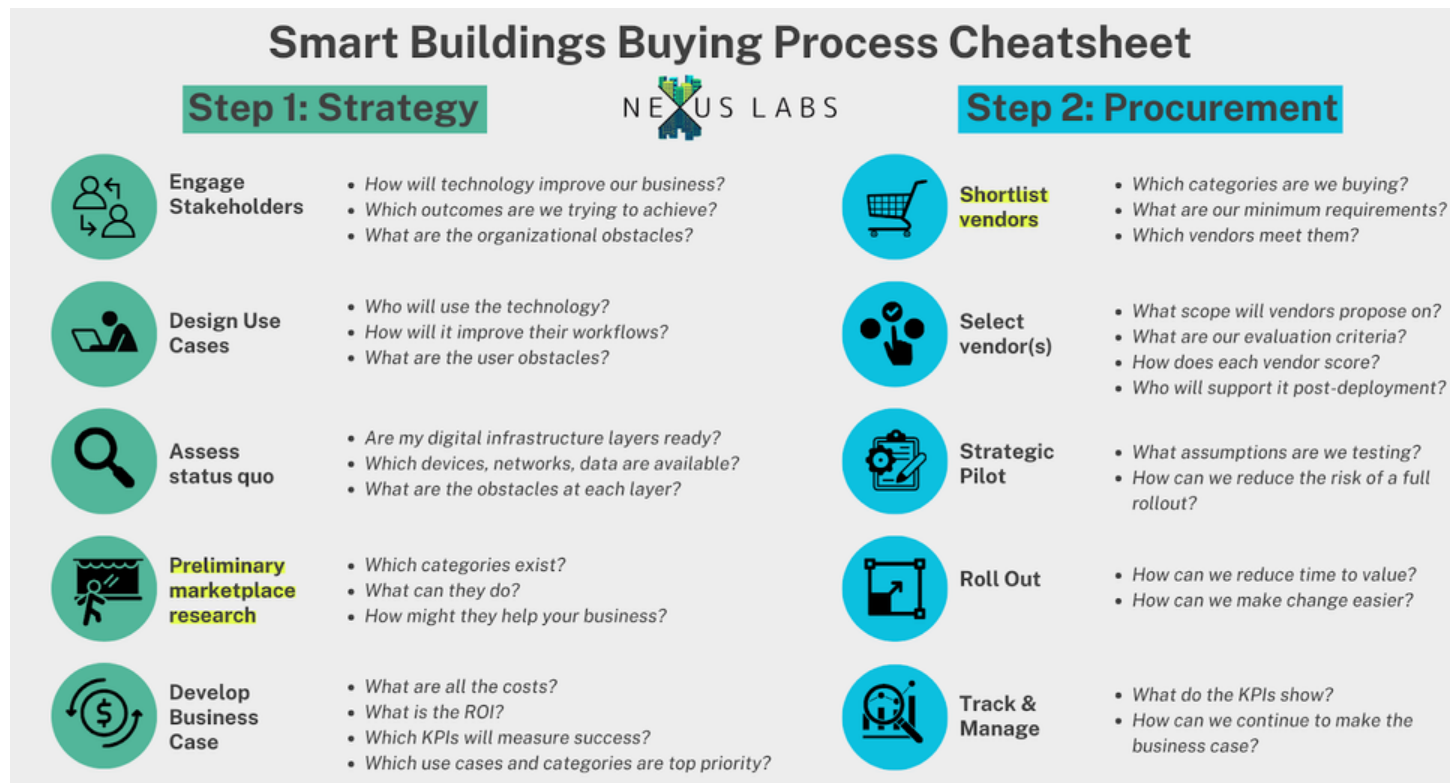
"There's no way to learn more info without signing up for a bombardment of biz dev calls and email follow ups."

As a buyer, you need a strategy for how to engage with vendors.

Part 2: Do Your Homework

The first step in navigating the marketplace is to know where you're at in the buying process. Or maybe, step 0 is to have a buying process in the first place!

Based on all of our interviews with buyers (across diverse verticals, geographies, and roles), a solid buying process (whether it's documented or not) looks something like this:



As shown on the left, the first step in any buying process is to develop a Smart Building Strategy. The strategy determines your smart buildings program's why, who, where, what, and how. Only after answering those questions does it make sense to move on to step 2: Procurement.

As shown with the yellow highlighter, there are two stages when a buyer actually engages with the vendors in the marketplace. During Strategy development, they need to do **Preliminary Market Research**. And during Procurement, they need to **Shortlist Vendors**. It's vital for buyers to know which stage they're in because each stage has different goals and requires different homework. For vendors, it's equally important to understand what stage their prospects are in. Let's walk through both of these stages.

Why are you engaging the marketplace?

Strategy development?



Preliminary marketplace research

- Which categories exist?
- What can they do?
- How might they help your business?
- What does it cost?
- How does the pricing model work?
- Which of our peers are using this already?

or

Procurement?



Shortlisting vendors

- Which categories are we buying?
- What are our minimum requirements?
- Which vendors meet our requirements?



Preliminary Marketplace Research is essentially “kicking the tires.” In formal procurement processes, it’s done using an RFI or RFQ. If you were shopping in a retail store, you’d tell the sales associate you’re “just looking.” You’re just trying to understand what technology exists and what it’s capable of. You’re filling in gaps in your smart building strategy by answering questions like:

- Which categories exist?
- What can they do?
- How might they help our business?
- Which of our peers are using this technology already?

As a vendor, you’re trying to educate the buyer, validate your category, and show you’re a leader that should be included if and when procurement happens. Being salesy at this point is detrimental to your chances—they’re not buying yet!

Vendor Shortlisting, on the other hand, is much more advanced than Preliminary Marketplace Research—you need to do more homework to progress to that stage. If you were shopping in a retail store, this stage is analogous to taking a few items to the dressing room. You need to know your sizes, the colors you like, and, if you’re like me, which of your clothes need to be replaced because your wife says so.

Similarly, a strategic smart buildings buyer will answer all the questions required to create a Smart Building Strategy before moving on to Procurement. Questions like:

- Which outcomes are we trying to achieve with smart building technology?
- Who will use the technology and how will it improve their workflows?
- Are my digital infrastructure layers ready? Which devices, networks, and data are available and what are the obstacles?
- Which use cases are the highest priority based on ROI?

Once you answer these questions, you'll find that you can navigate the vendor swamp with ease—it's like having a compass and a map and sitting in an airboat gliding on top of the murky waters.



We know this because we see it happen every day. During a recent vendor shortlisting process, we filtered the murky list of vendors from 44 to 2, just by asking two vital questions that came from interviewing the buyer on their strategy.

Part 3: Thinking in Categories

In Part 2, we provided an overview of the “Preliminary Marketplace Research” and “Vendor Shortlisting” stages in the buying process. These are the two times when buyers engage with the vendor swamp.

In both stages, we shared the concept of a “category.” Moving from window shopping to tire kicking to vendor shortlisting to vendor selection first requires prioritizing one or more categories. But what is a category?

Categories are groups of at least 3 (or more) vendors with the capabilities required to fulfill the same use cases. In short, they do mostly the same sh*t for similar types of users.

Look at an example category: fault detection & diagnostics (FDD). All the vendors in this category have the following capabilities:

- Detect problems and opportunities to improve performance (a “fault”)
- Fault diagnosis and explanation
- Fault prioritization
- Data and fault visualization
- Workflow features to track fault resolution

These technical capabilities allow similar users to improve similar workflows in their energy management and maintenance programs.

Thinking in categories means you don’t buy into vendors’ claims of standing apart from all competition. *“We’re the only decarbonization digital twin operating system in the marketplace!”* There are 97+ categories in the marketplace, each with at least 3 vendors to choose from. Some categories have 25+ competitors. That’s the reality.

For Buyers, the philosophy behind thinking in categories is to find the best-in-class vendor to fulfill the use cases you’re looking for. This style of buying will lead to better competition between vendors, making it more likely to select the best in the category—or at least the best for you.

It’s also the best way to reduce the risk of engaging with the vendor swamp. These risks include:

- Doing a project that doesn’t move the needle for your business
- Paying too much because you don’t have competitive bids
- Trying to compare vendors that don’t do the same thing
- Wasting the time and opportunity cost of selecting the wrong vendor
- Delaying benefits of the project (e.g. carbon reduction) as a result of selecting the wrong vendor

And of course, your smart building program itself is at risk after too many unstrategic, unsuccessful pilot projects.

For vendors, the philosophy behind thinking in categories is to work with other vendors to validate the category (terminology, capabilities, users, best practices, value, ROI, etc) before worrying about standing out in it. When a buyer is evaluating your category, your competition is not other vendors—it’s the status quo.

How to Think in Categories as a Buyer

Thinking in categories is clearly the best way to buy, but most buyers don't have time to filter through all the noise in the marketplace. They shouldn't need to do this on their own—buyers need a shared and crowdsourced resource. An easy button.

That's why we're building [The Nexus Marketplace](#)—the first and only resource designed to simplify the buying process for smart buildings.

We're building **The Nexus Marketplace** for category-first buying



Splitting the marketplace into categories of vendors with similar capabilities



Defining those categories by the minimum capabilities required to qualify



Tagging vendors so buyers can filter on the properties that matter to them



We've spent years tracking vendors and their capabilities and engaging with them to learn what they do and what distinguishes them. We're painstakingly splitting the marketplace up into categories of vendors with similar capabilities. We're building consensus in defining those categories using the minimum capabilities that vendors must have to qualify. With vendor participation, we're allowing buyers to filter the vendor properties that matter to them.

Part 4: Thinking in Layers

In Part 3, we covered how to identify a technology or service category and use it to find similar vendors to compete for your business. For buyers who are just buying one technology category, that process is all they need. The selected vendor will provide the full stack (i.e. the devices, integration, networking, data infrastructure, and software application) required to fulfill the outcome they're looking for.

However, most buyers will want to buy multiple categories because many different technology categories can move the needle. There are technologies designed for different outcomes: reducing operating expenses, improving sustainability, enhancing occupant experience, and reducing risk. There are technologies designed for different stakeholders: engineers, operators, energy managers, network managers, service providers, technicians, and more.

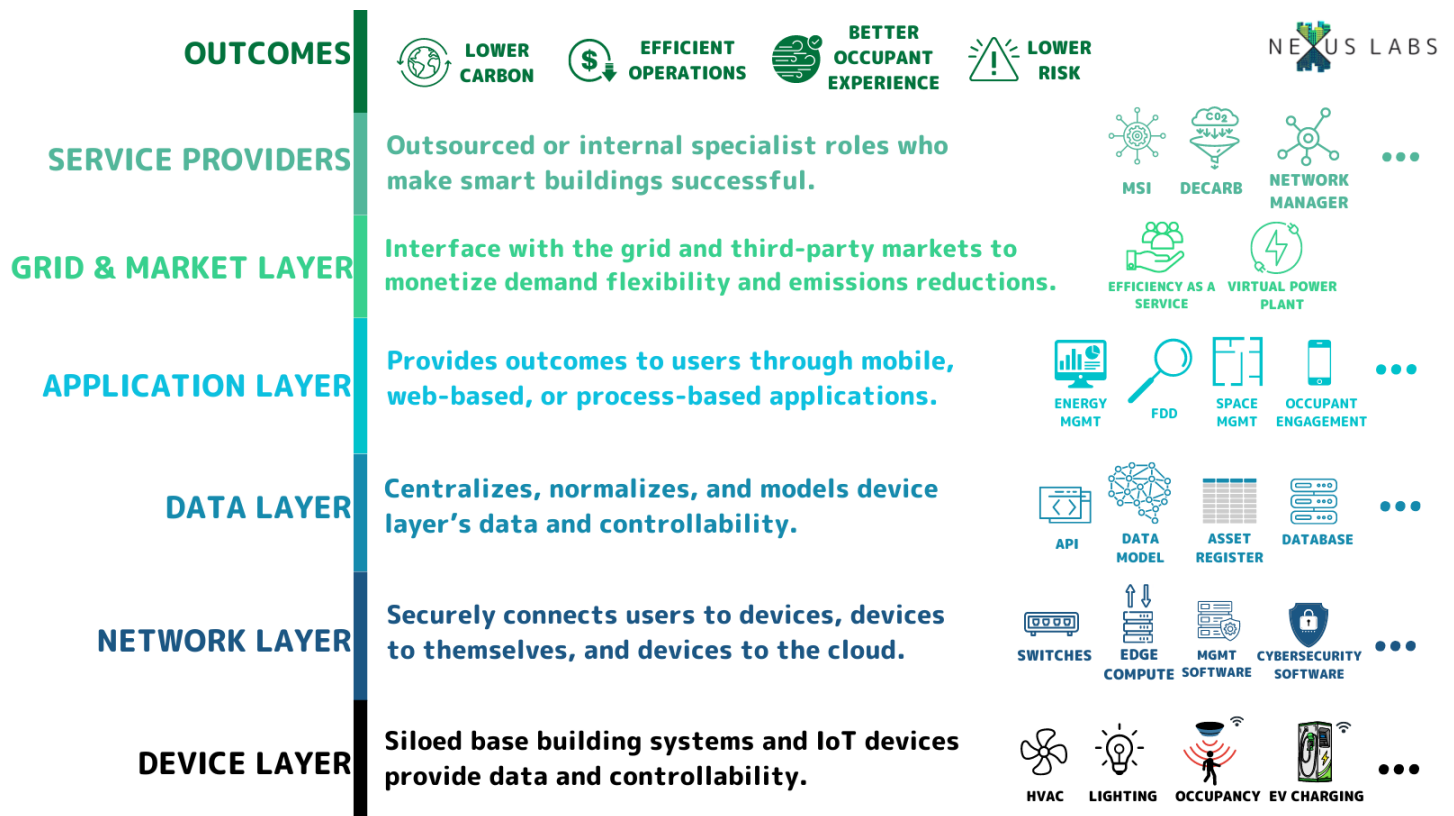
With increased ambition, scope, stakeholder engagement, and scale comes the need to think more comprehensively about the smart building stack. **This means thinking of a smart building not as one technology, but as a unified stack with different technologies enabling different outcomes for different stakeholders.**

Since 2021, we (and many notable others) have been educating the marketplace on the virtues of organizing their stack in a horizontal architecture, rather than blindly buying the full vertical stack from each vendor.

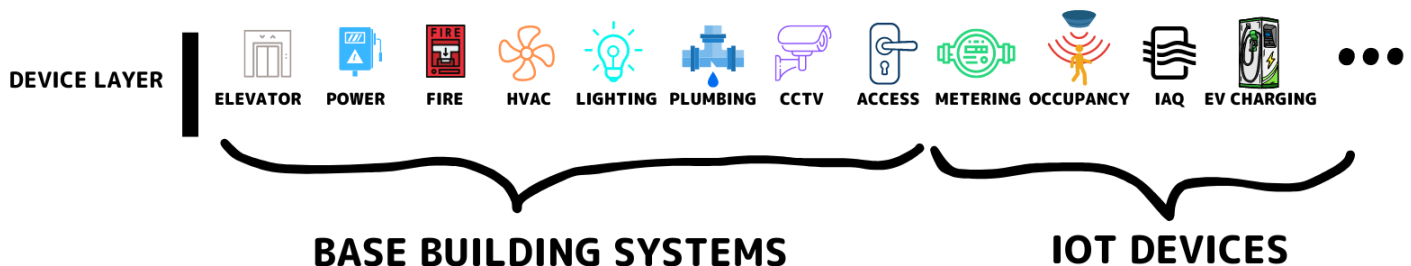
Those virtues are described in our whitepaper [Nexus Lore](#), but it's worth summarizing the philosophical principles behind the horizontal architecture. Why do we organize the marketplace this way?

- **Principle #1: Don't pay for things twice (or more)**—Reduce costs by reusing digital infrastructure components for many different outcomes. Avoid redundant integration, data storage, and data modeling vendors that don't easily communicate outside of each vendor's stack.
- **Principle #2: Reduce vendor lock-in as much as possible**—Increase flexibility by making each layer interchangeable and replaceable without needing to start over.
- **Principle #3: Enforce standards and control at each layer**—Minimize complexity and maximize control by ensuring each layer meets the owner's standards for how each layer is set up, how each layer is maintained, and how new technologies are introduced.
- **Principle #4: Robust infrastructure enables better outcomes**—As Jon Clarke says, we needed to build the smartphone before we could put applications on it. The same goes for our buildings.
- **Principle #5: The right panes of glass**—It's [unreasonable](#) to have a "single" pane of glass, and it's [also unreasonable](#) to have dozens. A consolidated application layer forces you to determine which applications are needed for which users.

With that context, let's start from the bottom and work our way up the rungs of the horizontal architecture.



The Device Layer

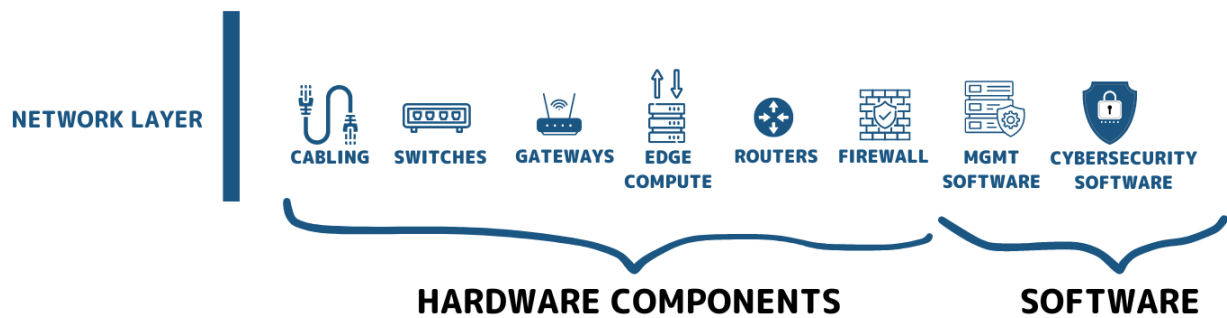


HVAC, Lighting, Metering, Smart window shades, IAQ sensors, connected solar arrays, EV chargers, Peloton bikes, and even coffee makers.

At the Device Layer, we have siloed systems—each with their unique purpose, inputs & outputs, key stakeholders, and life safety functions. Each with their separate stacks, including networking, asset registers, data models, data storage, user interface, and devices.

From a smart buildings perspective, the Device Layer provides data and controllability to the application layer. However, as covered in another Nexus Labs [whitepaper](#), 87% of commercial buildings don't have any digital systems. We still need to install a lot more digital devices to enable everything higher up the stack.

The Network Layer



Moving up to the network layer. The network allows users to access devices remotely, connects devices to each other, and connects devices to the cloud (which is often the catchall nickname for the data and application layers).

Buyers want a dedicated layer with its own hardware, management software, standard operating procedures, and key stakeholders who take responsibility for doing it right. Generally, they want one network, they want it to be monitored, maintained, and reliable.

The Data Layer



Next up is the data layer. A robust data layer decouples a user interface at the application layer from physical hardware at the device layer. You may also see it referred to as a data lake or middleware. Whatever you call it, it's valuable because it provides a standard interface or API to each application AND gives each of those applications a standardized interface to each downstream device (it creates a two-way street for information flow).

The data layer enables the application layer by unlocking and modeling the data that are currently locked away in proprietary and siloed systems.

The Application Layer



The Application Layer sits "on top" of the data layer and provides outcomes to users through mobile apps, web apps, or process-based applications. We're talking utility bill analytics, sustainability reporting, carbon accounting, fault detection & diagnostics or FDD, facility service tracking, advanced supervisory control, and more.

The Nexus Marketplace categorizes applications in terms of the Capabilities they provide and the Use Cases they enable. Apps in our industry have five general types of capabilities: centralize/visualize data, analyze data, control underlying systems at the device layer, optimize workflows, and engage stakeholders.

The Grid & Market Layer



These are vendors that sit at the building<>grid nexus. They provide energy and grid services but don't necessarily have software or consulting business models, like the service provider layer does, which we'll discuss next.

Efficiency as a service (EaaS) providers are contractors that package together hardware, software, and engineering and project management services to execute decarbonization projects, typically partnering with the local utility and financing providers to remove the upfront costs for buyers. Virtual power plant (VPP) vendors integrate their tech stack directly with the utility AND directly with their customers' buildings in order to monetize the building's ability to curtail demand during times when utilities will pay for that curtailment.

The Service Provider Layer

Finally, we're at the top of the stack. These are the vendors who sell their time and expertise to augment the buyer's staff and advise buyers on all the facets of the smart buildings journey. To go deeper on each type, check out our [5 Vital Roles](#) whitepaper.

Buyers can choose to hire their own experts, which happens often with owners of large portfolios. They can also choose to hire independent external consultants, meaning they have no affiliation with vendors of any sort. Finally, they can often get the services from the vendors in the other layers as part of those vendors' offerings.

Part 5: Thinking in Properties

Remember: at this point on our journey, you should have a list of vendors that meet the minimum capabilities of the **Category** you're looking for. And those vendors' tech stacks should match the **Layers** you're looking for.

You're almost there, but not quite. You're most likely still going to have too many vendors on your hands. Any number over 5 is likely too many for buyers to manage.

So despite all your good work, you still need a simple way to filter the list down to the ones you should interview. Luckily, you're not concerned about whether they can solve your problem... it's more about **how** they'll do it.

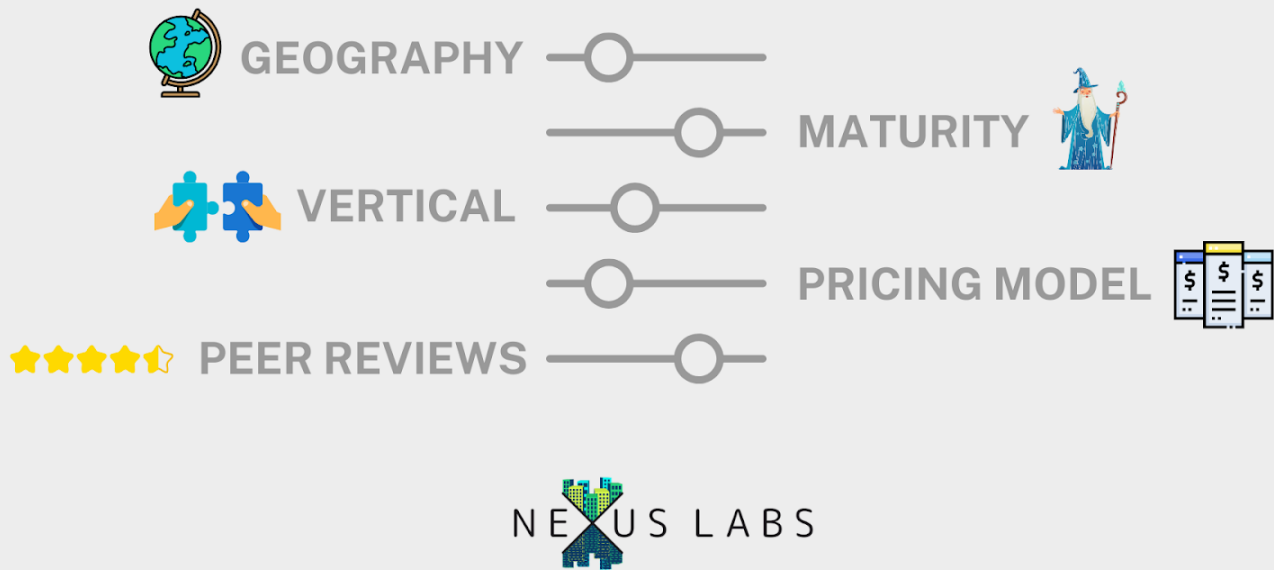
You need to understand how much confidence you should have in them. In other words, you need to filter out the risky vendors. We call this filtering by each vendor's **Properties**.

Filtering by Properties means finding:

- Vendors with local resources and experience serving **your geography**
- Vendors with the traction and **maturity you're looking for**, e.g.:
 - Number of buildings
 - Number of employees
 - Funding and stage of funding
 - How long they've been in business
- Vendors with experience in **your vertical**
- Vendors with a pricing model that meets **your procurement requirements**
- Vendors with **good reviews from your peers**

It's like the Hunger Games of Smart Buildings. Which vendor is left standing?

Filter by Properties to find the lowest risk vendor

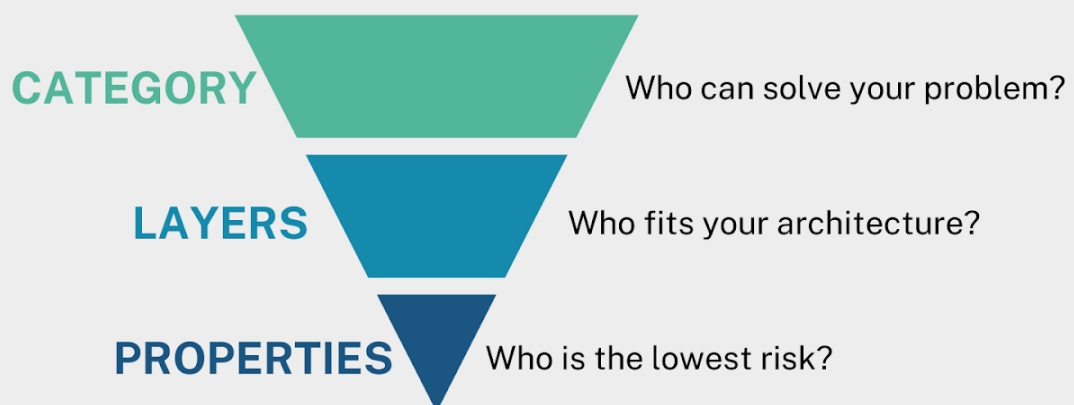


This isn't just useful for narrowing down the list. You're basically using Properties as a proxy to answer the question: can they deliver what they're promising?

This concludes our method for filtering the marketplace from 750+ vendors down to a shortlist you can count on one hand. To summarize:

1. Filtering by Layers finds the type of categories that fit your stack
2. Filtering by Category finds the vendors that have built a solution to solve your problem
3. Filtering by Properties finds the vendors with the lowest delivery risk

How to find the best 3-5 vendors for you



Part 6: When to go Full Stack

So far in this series, we've been operating using a paradigm that's designed for our most complex commercial buildings and organizations.

As we described previously, these sophisticated buyers have almost all standardized on buying "smart buildings" from different vendors rather than one that does it all. This approach compromises simplicity but prioritizes the values we've explored for years at Nexus Labs, including:

- Leveraging existing connected devices
- Maximizing flexibility and minimizing vendor lock-in
- Enterprise- and portfolio-wide standardization
- Extensibility to many different use cases for different user personas looking for different outcomes

But this series wouldn't be complete without acknowledging that these values are only best for a relatively small subset of the market. They're held by enterprise buyers who own large portfolios of complex facilities, which is only about 2% of commercial buildings.

As you can see by driving around any town in America that doesn't end in "-anhattan", the commercial building landscape isn't ONLY comprised of large portfolios of complex buildings (despite our industry's focus on them).

The vast majority of commercial buildings are simple. They have very few connected devices, the majority of which aren't complex, digital, or connected. The organizations managing them aren't set up to buy or maintain a complex tech stack. They generally can't afford a smart buildings consultant. They've likely never considered the possibility of their building being "smart."

As we shared in our whitepaper [The Untapped 87%](#), there's a spectrum of complexity in the market. On one end, you have large portfolios of complex buildings where horizontal layers are typically prioritized. These are in the upper right corner of the graphic below.

In the lower-left corner of the graphic below, I've included two buildings in Boulder I've visited lately: Boulder Indoor Soccer (yes, my team won) and Repair Masters Automotive. Your town has hundreds or thousands of these buildings that we never talk about. These are simple buildings where buyers need to buy a simple widget in a simple transaction with a simple installation and simple maintenance requirements.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING TECHNOLOGY BUYING COMPLEXITY COMPLEXITY MAP



Logos included as representative examples only

Since we've promoted Thinking in Layers for the most complex Buyers, we also need to introduce Full-Stack Thinking for buyers looking for simplicity. Each Buyer is looking for a different degree of solution complexity.

Full Stack Thinking prioritizes reducing the time to value, lowering the cost, and simplicity of installation and maintenance. It accepts that the solution is going to be configurable, not customizable... you have to make the available features work for you.

Full Stack Thinking acknowledges the likelihood of vendor lock-in and accepts that switching costs will be higher. It acknowledges that you might not be getting the best solution at each layer and that your stack might not be so flexible for future use cases.

So when should Buyers consider going Full Stack? Here's a handy checklist:

- ☐ When just a few types of devices will be connected
- ☐ When just a few smart building use cases are applicable to them
- ☐ When just a few user personas will be using the data or application
- ☐ When there is very little existing digital infrastructure (devices aren't digital, no established network and data layers)
- ☐ When you need to produce an outcome quickly to prove the business case

Buyers need to examine themselves and determine whether this is the right approach or just a tempting shortcut. As we've discussed many times, continuing to add new full-stack solutions adds unnecessary SaaS costs and complicates the number of screens and clouds your data exists in.

Vendors are in constant flux trying to figure out how to serve more and more of the map above. This is reflected in their product and go-to-market updates as they grow, such as:

- Simplifying their product
- Going through channel partners (such as property managers, contractors, system integrators, and manufacturer's reps) who serve local and less sophisticated building owners
- Offering differing architecture options and pricing models to suit different needs

Recent Full(er) Stack examples from our Partners include:

- Verdigris has meter analytics software that is paired with their simple-to-install electric meters.
- 75F redesigned the HVAC Control stack for simple install and better software.
- Several FDD partners go through channel partners. Clockworks Analytics' [case study with LONG Building Technologies](#) explains one such journey.

And this is just a quick sampling!

Part 7: Case Study and Unveiling the Nexus Marketplace

The Nexus Marketplace started two years ago as a big ass spreadsheet. We began organizing technology companies into a huge database to sort through everything we knew about them. One of the first things we realized is how difficult it can be to tell what a company actually sells or does. Along the way, we began manually helping buyers with their real-world buying needs and subsequently built this playbook around how to do it.

To show how this process works in the real world, let's conclude this whitepaper by providing a real case study of a buyer who followed the process and survived the swamp. Let's dive in.

We were approached by a US-based real estate developer and landlord with millions of square feet of workspace in major metropolitan cities. Being a sophisticated buyer, they had started by **doing their homework** (see part 2). The buyer had already “kicked the tires” of multiple technologies to see what could best support them.

The buyer identified a significant opportunity to improve operational efficiency and reduce their risks as a landlord. The way their tenants used workspace was highly dynamic, and the buyer needed to better understand how each building was being utilized to make better decisions. Using the buyer's words, they described it as a game of “Commercial Building Tetris”: slot the right tenant into the right spot to utilize the most space and keep tenants happy.

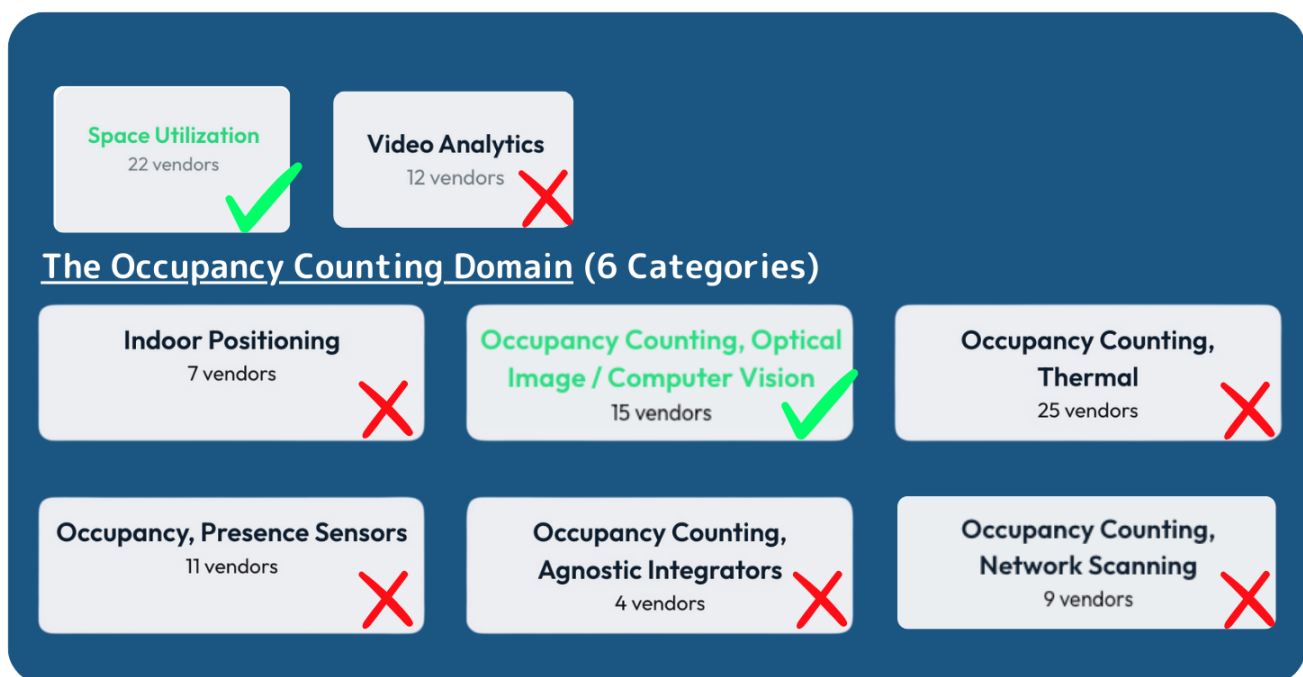


With a desired outcome in mind (you must start with outcomes!), the buyer was able to identify space utilization and occupancy counting technology as a business opportunity. However, they were now wading through the vendor swamp, with too many options and little clarity between them. If you've been following along in this series, the buyer had completed **preliminary market research** and was ready to **shortlist vendors**. That's where Nexus Labs came in to support.

After we understood the goal, our work began by helping the buyer **think in categories** (see part 3).

The buyer knew they wanted a solution in the space utilization software category, and they were considering devices from several different categories for the physical sensing technology. They considered optical and non-optical people counters, network scanning, RF badges for indoor positioning, and CCTV analytic software.

While sorting through the potential categories to choose from, the buyer determined areas of importance that were specific to their organization. Prioritizing the highest data accuracy over perceived privacy made optical sensors stand out compared to non-optical. The existing network and electrical infrastructure within the buyer's buildings led to a preference of PoE wiring over wireless sensors, which was also common among optical sensors. Video analytics relied on existing CCTV cameras which weren't implemented at all locations. RF badges made it more difficult to track space usage of infrequent or one-time visitors. Network scanning had higher upfront costs and felt difficult to develop a smaller scale pilot for. The list of 90 vendors suddenly sorted down to 35.



Thirty-five vendors was still far too many, but we were narrowing it down.

After narrowing down the categories of interest, we helped the buyer **think in layers** (see part 4). Since space utilization + occupancy sensing are categories that span from the device layer to the application layer, we had to sort through the different ways vendors offered solutions across the layers. There were four main go-to-market models that the vendors offered:

1. Some vendors led with proprietary occupancy sensing hardware and paired it with dashboards they had built out in open-source tools. In other words, these vendors led with device-layer technology but had application-layer solutions.
2. Some vendors led with advanced machine learning software applications they had developed and paired with white-labeled occupancy sensors. In other words, these vendors lead with the application layer technology with paired device layer solutions.
3. Some vendors led with a consultative approach, agnostic to all hardware and software solutions, and willing to act as the prime vendor for the building owner.
4. Some vendors only offered the device-level sensors with no paired application or services (i.e., the D.I.Y. approach).

Although the buyer had already developed a sophisticated Microsoft Azure-based data layer with custom applications in Power BI, they recognized the time and effort required to develop analytical dashboards within their own application. Therefore, they determined they were most interested in “full stack” vendors who could offer both the device layer occupancy sensors and the application layer analytics dashboard.

This isn't to say that the buyer was creating a new silo for their building. Interoperability and integration capabilities were paramount to ensure data was stored and normalized following standard procedures. However, the buyer had determined that highly capable analytical dashboards were an essential part of the solution for them, so they began sorting for companies who focused on more advanced application layer capabilities.

The list of 35 vendors dwindled to seven, which offered the full stack from optical sensor to application, focused on cutting-edge analytical dashboards, and had proven integration capabilities at the data layer.

With a manageable list of seven vendors remaining, the buyer was ready to start **thinking in properties** (see part 5).

- The buyer dreamed of further reducing energy consumption by optimizing HVAC setpoints and schedules based on real-time occupancy data, so we helped them seek out case studies to show each vendor's experience in that field.
- The buyer wanted to ensure they could switch providers in the future without ripping and replacing everything, so we flagged vendors with recurring fees that were heavily integrated into the functionality of installed hardware products.
- Being a large, well-established company, the buyer needed a vendor with a long enough track record of products deployed and stable enough funding to scale the implementation with the buyer's large portfolio.
- The buyer didn't need installation support or utility incentive filing support – they had these services well-established through other vendors.

By thinking in properties, the list of seven vendors became one, with one or two great alternative options.

Successful navigation from a start point to an endpoint should always be process oriented, and navigating the smart building marketplace is no different. By methodically breaking down your

organization's needs, buyers can improve their decision-making and find the right solutions to their unique needs.

Unveiling the Nexus Marketplace

The process above worked great, but still took a lot of support. Our industry has great buyer's consultants, but their work isn't exactly scalable to millions of commercial buildings. That's why we've built [The Nexus Marketplace](#) to be an online tool that buyers and their consultants can use to achieve all of the steps above with less time and expertise. The Nexus Marketplace is the tool to match the playbook:

Thinking in Categories: Within The Nexus Marketplace, we've defined 97 building technology and service categories, and counting. It all starts with the definition. As an industry, we must agree on the capabilities and features a solution must have to be in a particular category, or else we're not talking in the same language. We don't take vendors' words for it, we are using our industry expertise, as well as the support of unbiased buyer's consultants, to determine which vendors fit into which categories. Their product demos and feature sets must align with the category definition, or they won't be listed there.

Thinking in Layers: Each of the 97+ categories is nested within one of the six layers. This allows buyers to decipher which vendors have offers spanning multiple layers and helps them visualize how all their pieces fit together up and down the tech stack.

Thinking in Properties: We're continually adding vendor-specific information like verticals served, number of buildings deployed in, stage of funding, cybersecurity credentials, API documentation, integration paths, and more. Buyers don't need to worry too much about these properties until they've thought through the categories and layers, but in the end these are the metrics that separate the best option from the second and third best.

Buyer-to-Buyer Collaboration: We're encouraging buyers to share their experience through anonymous or named reviews of vendors they've worked with. Future versions of The Nexus Marketplace will allow buyers to share information about their current technology stack, and get connected to other buyers going through the same thing.

Imagine getting connected with a peer in another organization who is trying to buy the same technology as you. Imagine getting all the lessons learned from a technology implementation that your peer completed last year.

Today, The Nexus Marketplace is free to buyers, buyer's consultants, and Nexus Labs Partners. As we look forward to getting your feedback on the first version of this tool, we will be hard at work growing our database by relying on our community to crowdsource accurate data:

- Buyers will be asked to submit reviews and share information about the categories and vendors they have used in the past so they can get connected with like-minded buyers.
- Buyers Consultants will support us in vetting vendors for the minimum category requirements, and ensuring we're all defining each category and property with consensus.
- Vendors will always be listed for free, ensuring that buyers can see all available options. Vendors will be asked to validate how their company is listed so that buyers can more accurately understand what they do.

Welcome to The Nexus Marketplace, where simplifying the buying process will assist in the acceleration of digitized and decarbonized buildings.

[Click here to visit The Nexus Marketplace](#)