

Every vendor says yes. Ask this instead.

Written from the other side of the RFP table — years of vendor evaluations, demos and the post-go-live conversations that follow when the wrong question got asked. The feature matrix was never the problem. What it hides is.

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Almost every established IGA vendor will say yes to almost any feature question you ask in a demo. Role mining — yes. Non-human identity governance — yes. A unique-identifier generator — yes. That "yes" tells you almost nothing. What it hides is how much effort it takes to actually stand the feature up, and how far it bends to the rules your organisation actually runs on. This document is about asking differently — not about a better twenty-question list.

01 Why "yes" means almost nothing

Feature questions are answerable in the abstract, so vendors answer them in the abstract. The gap between "yes, we support that" and "yes, here's exactly how, on your data, and here's the effort" is where most implementation pain actually lives — and it never shows up on a feature matrix.

weak question: "Can your platform generate a unique identifier?" — every vendor says yes.

the question that matters: "Can it generate a UID that checks for collisions against both our AD and our SAP HR system, built from a specific field combination, and re-checks on every hire, rehire and transfer?" — that's the question that separates a config from a project.

The fix isn't a cleverer feature question. It's refusing to accept a feature name as an answer — ask for the mechanism, on screen, against your own rule, not a slide.

02 The same trap, one layer down: connectors

"We have a connector for that" is not proof the connector covers your use case. A connector can genuinely support LDAP, SCIM or SAP and still not support your specific combination of write-back attributes, cross-system correlation keys, or account-type routing — that detail lives entirely in the implementation, not in the connector's existence.

ASK THIS WAY INSTEAD

For every connector that matters to you, ask the vendor to demo *your* specific field-mapping, correlation, or write scenario live — not their canned demo tenant. If they can't show it live, "we have a connector" was never the real answer.

03 Scope for where you are — and ask why the gap exists

Most RFPs are stuffed with capabilities the organisation won't touch for years — and the uncomfortable truth is that most IGA projects never even get through the fundamentals to reach them. A clean joiner/mover/leaver flow, reliable reconciliation, and a working first access review are still where most implementations stall.

STAGE	WHAT'S ACTUALLY IN SCOPE	WHY IT USUALLY STALLS THERE
Foundational	JML, reconciliation, provisioning, a first access review	where most projects stall — often for years
Governance	role mining, SoD, certification campaigns, ownership	in most tooling: a second, hand-built project layered on a foundation that's already live
Advanced	JIT/PAM depth, adjacent extensibility, AI-assisted analytics	rarely touched inside the first year, regardless of vendor

Don't read that as a reason to deprioritise governance capabilities in the evaluation. The reason most projects stall before they reach them isn't that governance is inherently a later phase — it's that in most tooling, someone has to hand-author every role, every ownership rule and every review policy from scratch, on top of a foundation that's already consuming the budget and the calendar. That's a property of the tooling, not a law of IGA projects.

THE QUESTION THAT ACTUALLY SEPARATES VENDORS HERE

Does reaching the foundation already come with a proposed access model — mining that suggests roles from the access you just synced, classification that correlates and owns accounts without a rule being written, review triggers that fire on the outliers automatically? Or is governance a second project needing a fresh budget line and calendar slot, months after the foundation went live? A foundation that arrives with its own governance proposal isn't an advanced feature — it just made the basics faster to reach.

Score vendors hardest on the foundational row, done cleanly and fast — but weigh the Governance row by how much of it shows up unprompted on day one, not by whether it exists somewhere in the feature list. Treat "Advanced" as a tie-breaker, not a gate — a longer feature list there is not evidence you'll ever use it.

04 Bring the business case, not the technical spec

This is the single most common failure we see in IGA implementations, ours included when we let it happen: a customer doesn't bring the real business problem to the table. They ask a partner or vendor to build a specific technical mechanism — without explaining why. Again and again, it turns out afterward that what

was asked for wasn't the best way to solve it with the chosen platform, or it was far more complex than the problem needed, or — worst — it never addressed the real use case at all.

the wrong ask: "Build us a 4-step sequential approval workflow with a Slack notification at every step."

the right ask: "Finance access needs a second pair of eyes before it's granted, and Finance's manager wants visibility even when they're not the approver."

The first ask hands the vendor a component to build blind. The second hands them a problem — and lets them show you the mechanism they'd actually use and what it costs to stand up. Only one of those lets you judge whether the platform fits, because only one describes what you're actually trying to achieve.

A RULE OF THUMB

If you can't state the business outcome in one sentence without naming your intended solution, you're spec'ing a component — not describing a problem. Rewrite it until you can.

05 Running the evaluation this way

☐ List your top business cases, not your feature wishlist.

Five to ten real scenarios your organisation actually needs to solve — not a spec sheet.

☐ Ask every vendor to build or demo each one live.

Against a real or representative dataset, on screen — never a slide.

☐ Ask for the effort estimate, in writing, per case.

Not "is this possible" — how long, and by whom: the platform, or an integrator.

☐ Ask what's genuinely hard to change later.

Every platform has rigid edges. The vendor who names theirs unprompted will likely be honest after the contract too.

HOW WE'D RATHER BE EVALUATED

Bring us your actual business cases — not a feature list, ours or anyone else's. We'll build them against your own data inside a two-week POC and show you exactly what it took, live. Where something is genuinely a multi-day integrator effort, we'll say so before you sign anything.



Bring us your business cases. A POC on your own data inside two weeks — agent installed in five minutes, walk-away clean. www.rapidvalue.eu · hello@rapidvalue.eu