

BUYER'S GUIDE

Digital experience analytics:
8 critical criteria.



Introduction.

An infinite and evolving digital landscape.

The digital world is ever-changing and expanding. Brand touchpoints are multiplying, experiences are becoming more dynamic, and the data used to inform these scenarios has ballooned beyond anything we could have dreamed. Clicks, pageviews, new visitors—the old generation of web analytics simply aren't enough.

Analytics have matured and categories like application performance management (APM) and voice of the customer (VOC) are now table stakes. Session replay technology is more prevalent and product analytics have emerged.

But with this data explosion, teams still struggle to answer what happened in the digital experience and why in a timely manner.

Data rich, answer poor.

Even with all of this data, why is it so hard to answer basic questions about how customers engage with our digital applications?

Teams responsible for the digital experience find themselves left in the dark when it comes to learning crucial details about the customer experience quickly and effectively.

Digital experience questions that teams struggle to answer.



CX

Why did my customer leave negative feedback? What happened in their digital experience?	How do I know if this feedback is representative of more customers, including those that don't leave feedback?	How do I prioritize the feedback I get from my voice of customer program?
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------



Product

Are customers experiencing confusing design or technical friction? Who else is having that experience?	How are customers navigating through my website or mobile app? Why are they taking particular paths?	Why did my test win or fail? What can I learn from that and apply going forward?
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------



Engineering or IT


How do I reproduce a reported issue? Should I put this at the top of my list?	How can I understand the business impact of technical issues?	How do I prioritize which performance issues to tackle first?
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------

What is digital experience analytics?


Digital experience analytics is a dynamic space with rapidly evolving criteria and use cases.

[Gartner](#) defines digital experience analytics as “diagnostic insights into visitor activity and the CX...enabled by advanced analytics and machine learning, session replay and heat map technology.” Meanwhile, [Forrester](#) focuses on the capabilities that allow “experience design pros to log and analyze users’ interactions with interfaces, which may be high fidelity prototypes or in production.”


We define digital experience analytics as a solution that helps organizations with three primary functions, across any digital asset (web, mobile app, in-location kiosks, etc.):



Capture and analyze data about customer digital behaviors



Identify friction points impacting customers



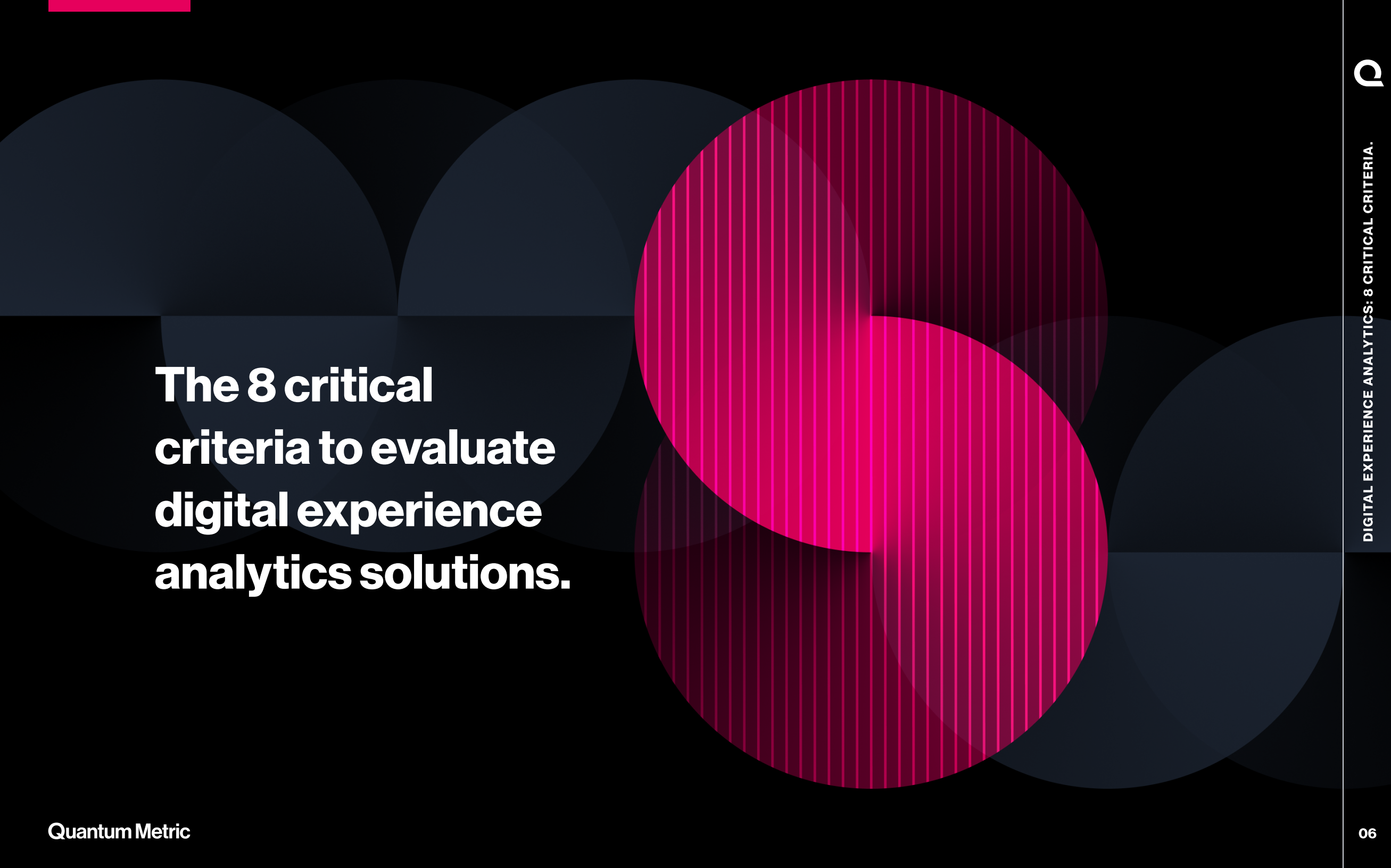
Uncover journey optimization opportunities

With shifting definitions of digital experience analytics, how can you ensure you are evaluating the best of breed?

This guide provides everything you need to ask the right questions, so that your chosen solution helps you to get the digital experience answers you need, quickly. Because it's not just about analytics—it's about the rapid design, development, and iteration of your digital applications and experiences. To do that, we need to give every team the customer data they need.

Here are 8 critical criteria to focus your evaluation and ensure you find the right solution for your organization.

- 1** Rich behavioral and technical capture without dozens of engineers. [page 7 ▶](#)
- 2** An equivalent and unified solution for mobile app and web. [page 9 ▶](#)
- 3** Fast and easy to understand the scope and business impact of an issue. [page 11 ▶](#)
- 4** Automated and aggregated UX analytics. [page 13 ▶](#)
- 5** Automated and predictive alerting for both UX and technical friction. [page 15 ▶](#)
- 6** 100% of data captured without performance impact on the customer experience. [page 17 ▶](#)
- 7** Enterprise capabilities that support scale across multiple teams and use cases. [page 19 ▶](#)
- 8** Detailed industry based analysis built directly into the platform. [page 21 ▶](#)

The background features several overlapping circles in dark blue and grey. A prominent circle on the right is filled with a pink-to-red gradient and contains vertical pink lines. A solid pink rectangle is located in the top-left corner.

The 8 critical criteria to evaluate digital experience analytics solutions.



Rich behavioral and technical capture without dozens of engineers.

Digital assets are now the face of a brand, and the teams who manage these assets need the insights to improve the customer experience and the business metrics they own. Without proper depth and breadth of data capture, teams turn to point solutions or lack overall visibility. Issues and opportunities go unnoticed, executive escalations jump to the front of the list, and prioritization is nearly impossible. Worst of all, the customer doesn't have the great brand experience you planned and they deserved.

Depending on analytics or engineering resources, taking the time to tag all new page elements, features, etc. slows down time to market or results in "flying blind" when skipped.

Requirement	Questions to ask	What to listen for and assess
Out-of-the-box errors, events, and dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many events, errors and dimensions are captured out-of-the-box?• Do these span behavioral and technical data?• Do they require configuration?• Can I see the data schema?	<p>You don't want just clicks and taps. Out-of-the-box data capture should start with a host of dimensions that make it easy to identify different cohorts of users. It needs to automatically track everything on every page: every behavior, frustration indicator (such as rapid scrolling or rage click), technical error, transaction.</p> <p>Technical issues should encapsulate commonly reported issues like API errors and slow pages, but also include indicators of technical issues (such as forced reloads and app restarts).</p> <p>This breadth of data allows you to understand the “what” and the “why.” For example, you can identify a cohort of users repeatedly clicking on the “pick up in store” option but it’s not loading any options due to a failed API response and this is leading to a lack of conversion.</p> <p>Ask to see the out of the box data schema (for web and native), and look for <i>hundreds</i> of data points across the aforementioned categories.</p>
Autocapture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is data captured when new pages or experiences are released?• Do I have to manually tag?• Does that require engineering resources, or is it an automatic capture approach?	<p>Listen for an “autocaptured” data set as this approach is the future of analytics. Teams don’t have the time to manually tag every potential behavior or user action in their application, especially as applications become increasingly complex and release cycles grow in frequency.</p> <p>Without a base of autocapture, analytics teams will struggle to keep up with stakeholder needs (product teams, marketing teams, etc.) Manually tagging every possible user interaction isn’t a sustainable option.</p>
Custom events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you approach custom events?• Do I need to make changes at the code level?• Can you show me how you create a custom event?	<p>With an extensive autocaptured data set and powerful segmentation, you won’t need to rely as heavily on custom events. However, every digital experience is different and sometimes custom tracking is needed for unique experiences. This doesn’t mean it should be laborious.</p> <p>Listen for a UI based custom eventing approach for both web and mobile applications. The wizard It should allow for eventing via API calls, JS, cookie presence, CSS methods, etc. with a point a click approach or via a wizard.</p>



An equivalent and unified solution for mobile app and web.

The world is only becoming more omnichannel and digitally connected. Yet, web and mobile teams are often still siloed, even as the customer experience becomes increasingly intertwined. This is why it's critical for web and native mobile capture to have enough depth to serve both teams.

Many analytics providers have focused on the web and added mobile tracking as somewhat of an afterthought. Other times, vendors will over-index on mobile. This can make it feel like you are using two different solutions, even if they are housed in the same tool. You should be evaluating a vendor who has similar levels of fidelity across both—allowing your teams to speak the same language.

Requirement	Questions to ask	What to listen for and assess
Session replay for web, mobile, and kiosk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much configuration is required for session replays to be fully captured? Can you send me a replay of my site and/or app this week, even if we are not deployed? What type of data is included in session replay? Which teams typically leverage your session replay? 	<p>For a web or native application, there should be fairly minimal configuration for the session replays to capture a lot of data, render in high fidelity, and be immediately useful.</p> <p>It shouldn't simply be a visual recreation of the experience, but should also include a lot of data. Clicks, taps, friction points, API requests and response, network performance, and dozens of other indicators.</p> <p>The replay should be easy to navigate via a timeline and be useful to UX teams that want to understand specific behaviors, or engineers who want to diagnose which API error caused an issue.</p>
Unified UI for web and mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is data from web, native app, and/or kiosk available in one solution? 	<p>The solution should have the ability to capture data across devices including web, mobile, and kiosk. 80% of the data capture may be the same between devices, but browser specific nuances (DOM timings, etc.) and native app specific items (device rotation, app closes, etc.) are acceptable and expected. Furthermore, all of this data should be segmentable in a single unified UI.</p> <p>In a single sitting (before you finish your first cup of coffee), you should be able to track conversion rate, frustration, or anything else you want on the native application, the web application, and both applications.</p>
Parity in web and mobile capture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the tracking method similar across different platforms? How does implementation vary across web and mobile? 	<p>If the web based tag takes a “deploy once, autocapture everything” approach, so should the SDK. Best-in-class tags and SDKs have a robust out-of-the-box data set, automatically capture interactions and views, and allow for custom tracking via the UI—no need to dig around in code base implementing tracking.</p>
Parity in web and mobile session replay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is session replay, is there a similar level of replay quality across devices? How long does it take to deploy and capture a data rich replay on mobile? 	<p>There should be good parity between the level of data captured between devices. This means for session replay too. For example, replay on web and native should be rendered in the same engine and have a nearly identical look and feel.</p>



Fast and easy to understand the scope and business impact of an issue.

Session replay is a key component of a digital experience analytics solution. It allows for easy reproduction and sometimes instant diagnosis of a customer experience. But session replay without being able to understand the broader impact from an individual issue makes it challenging to actually act on. It often becomes just “more data.” You don’t need a library of replays.

But it’s not enough to know “customers impacted.” What if 95% percent of users are seeing an API error, but still converting at a normal rate? Sure, it’s an issue to fix, but not one to prioritize immediately. The context matters.

Requirement	Questions to ask	What to listen for and assess
Fast business impact analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How easy is it to quantify an issue? Can you show me an example?• Can I quantify from an individual replay?	Quantifying the impact of an individual issue from a replay should take seconds, not minutes or days. You should be able to surface a friction or error and see how many others are impacted. The workflow should be a few clicks and be easy for anyone to do. If there is discussion of building a look-alike segment or pivoting into different parts of the tool to recreate the issue, it's not easy enough.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does the impact analysis include?• Does it span 100% of my audience?	The impact analysis should tell you the present impact on the number of customers and conversion rate. The analysis should also have a "cost of doing nothing" portion which helps you prioritize. This is the conversion impact for the segment experiencing the error and the estimated financial impact that would take place over the course of a year if nothing changed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does it include monetary impact?• How does this work across teams with different funnels?	It should be easy to set up the conversion tracking and therefore easy to calculate monetary impact. For larger teams, it's not as helpful to look at one main funnel. So listen for the ability to conduct business impact analysis across multiple different funnels and teams.



4

Automated and aggregated UX analytics.

Session replay and heat maps will only get you so far with UX analysis. The real value comes when you can take those detailed behaviors and aggregate them. This allows you to visualize large amounts of rich data across the pages and experiences you care about.

This data serves as the basis for the core analysis work that UX teams perform. They need to both generate better testing candidates and prove the business impact of any experiments. They should be able to accomplish both of those workflows in a single solution.

Requirement	Questions to ask	What to listen for and assess
Automated and aggregated UX analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What types of UX analysis are included?• Do they require configuration?• Do I get the same features/capabilities for web and native mobile?	<p>There should be tools to conduct journey analysis or journey flows. They should automatically capture the entire user journey and then allow you to easily analyze portions of it (e.g. show me people who started on the search page, experienced frustration, landed on the cart page and then didn't convert).</p> <p>There should also be detailed page analysis, which is less focused on flows across pages but detailed engagement at the page level. Things like heatmaps, attention maps, clickmaps, and interaction, or content analysis maps help you understand behavior at the page level, allowing you to optimize for critical micro conversions. All of these should be present at the session level as well as aggregate for any cohort in your audience.</p> <p>The functionality should work the same across web and native applications.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you make it easy to conduct UX analysis across key segments?• Do you have interactive UX analysis tools?• Where can I access the UX data? Just in the solution?	<p>Segmentation should be visual and intuitive but powerful. 'And,' 'or,' and 'where' clauses should allow for anyone to build very detailed segments for analysis.</p> <p>UX leads, marketers, and executives may want to consume experience data in a more visual or intuitive format. So ensure the tools are easy to use and access. Ideally, they are even available outside of the solution, for example a browser based tool that allows you to analyze your site, while actively browsing your site.</p> <p>The solution should contain all of these facets because everyone in the organization cares about the user experience, they just want to analyze in different ways.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does the UX analysis work with A/B testing tools?	<p>You should look for side by side UX analysis capabilities. It should be easy to compare test and control segments, side by side. It should also be simple to pivot from aggregate comparisons (like heatmaps) to individual session replays from each cohort.</p>



Automated and accurate alerting for both UX and technical friction.

Alerts should be incredibly flexible and configurable. Let's start with a broad focus: you want to be alerted when conversion rate is down. Also, you want the solution to surface possible issues related to that conversion rate drop.

However, if you are a product manager for a specific area of the site, you also want to be able to be alerted when frustration is higher than average on the payment page for your particular funnel. This is when alerts should operate like a scalpel.

Flexibility in alerting allows everyone to proactively monitor the experiences they care about.

Requirement	Questions to ask	What to listen for and assess
Automated alerting and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of alerts can you set up? • When do they fire? • Are they real-time? 	<p>There should be pre-configured alerts, but you should also be able to do detailed customization of metrics, segments, threshold adjustment, and different types of anomaly detection.</p> <p>Ask questions about the type of anomaly detection. Firstly, if there is anomaly detection or if it merely alerts on defined thresholds. With an anomaly detection model, explore if the solution alerts against a sampled user base or 100% of traffic, as that significantly affects accuracy.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of ML or AI monitoring do you have? • How is it set up to ensure accuracy? 	<p>You should see intelligence throughout the solution. Look for anomaly detection using historical data at a segment level. Ask about sensitivity and if there is a way to adjust it for noise.</p> <p>Look for historical baselining (dashboards, journeys, etc) that doesn't just report on the number, but the number in comparison to the norm.</p> <p>You should also look for correlation models. If there is a funnel analysis, see if the solution surfaces errors impacting the funnel and performs some predictive analysis to help inform prioritization.</p>



**100% of data captured
without performance
impact on the customer
experience.**

Many experience analytics solutions will try to get around capturing 100% of data (analytics AND replay) and speak to the value of sampling. This is typically a way to hide a performance deficiency and should be evaluated.

With 100% data capture, business impact analysis is more accurate, anomaly detection is stronger, and support use cases are strengthened. For example, you can only investigate an executive escalation if the replay was captured.

Requirement	Questions to ask	What to listen for and assess
Scale real-time data capture year round	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you capturing 100% of analytics data and session replay all of the time?• Are you able to capture all replays during large spikes (e.g. the holiday season)?	Listen for examples from large organizations. Ideally ones who have peak traffic levels (holiday season etc). There shouldn't be discussion of throttling up or down during these peak seasons as well. For e-commerce, these are peak revenue generating times, so you need complete visibility into any areas of friction.
Performance impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the tag/SDK performant?• Can I test the tag or SDK?	There should be no hesitation around performance. A tag or SDK that significantly impacts performance is a non-starter. The vendor should be willing to have you try out the tag or SDK at 100% capture (analytics and replay where applicable.) If they are confident, they will be insistent that you try it out. The proof is in the pudding.
Real-time data capture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the data captured in real-time?• How can I use this type of real-time data?	Listen for use cases like real-time war room style environments, e.g. during black Friday.



**Enterprise capabilities
that support scale
across multiple teams
and use cases.**

Digital products are becoming the face of the brand in many ways. This means digital isn't just a "channel" anymore. Everyone is involved, so the solution should make it easy for everyone to see the data that matters to them.

Simpler tools often have the same exact view for everyone. This can work for smaller organizations or if it's just a limited number of teams using the solution, but if you want hundreds or even thousands of users adopting the solution, it's critical to have the ability to customize views, security permissions, data access, and more.

Requirement	Questions to ask	What to listen for and assess
Use cases, dashboards, and self-service access for multiple teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which teams typically use the solution? What are the different use cases by team? Which teams and use cases do customers typically start with and what do they expand to as they mature? How does the solution support adoption? How easily can teams self-service analytics? 	<p>For enterprises, you want a solution that can easily support the needs of multiple teams and their associated use cases, either now or in the future as your program matures.</p> <p>In addition, if the solution isn't easily administered to different teams, adoption will be an uphill battle. You may want each team to have a customized view of the solution or only analyze their segment of traffic, especially for large multi-brand organizations. Look for out-of-the-box and quick start dashboards and segmentation capabilities.</p> <p>The ability to create custom dashboards/charts should be easy so that different teams can self-serve analytics as they advance in their usage. The dashboards should be flexible enough to serve the needs of any team. This means the dashboards cards should be able to include comparative analysis (segments, time series), historical comparison, baseline, and more.</p>
Easy, configurable and automated security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is PII captured? How? How does that impact adoption from various teams? What is the process to protect PII as new changes are rolled out? Is there automation in place to ensure there are no security issues? 	<p>Best-in-breed solutions encrypt captured data at the device level and then have robust permissions/audit trails for PII decryption, which is helpful for customer look-up cases. This means that support agents, product managers, and executives can all have different ways to interact with replays containing encrypted PII.</p> <p>As your website changes and evolves, additional PII will enter the picture and need to be blocked or encrypted. Listen for some automated solutions or if everything has to happen at the code level.</p>
Integrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have out of the box integrations with [solutions in your tech stack]? Is your session replay embeddable anywhere? 	<p>Most digital experience analytics solutions will have a library of integrations, with the most common integration being with Adobe/Google Analytics, application performance monitoring, and customer feedback tools. These integrations should be near real-time rather than batch updates that happen every few hours.</p> <p>Some may even have integrations that allow embedded replay, so that CX and customer service agents can view the digital experience.</p>
Product training and customer success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What bespoke and on-demand education do you offer? Can you show me your product documentation? How does your team support our success? What is your customer retention rate? 	<p>In addition to product capabilities, you may want ongoing training and enablement in the form of live or on-demand product training, on-demand learning, documentation. Leading companies will even have certifications that users can achieve and put on their resumes.</p> <p>If you are an enterprise organization, having access to a support email and account manager isn't enough. Top vendors will also supply business consultants and dedicated technical resources or engineers.</p>



**Detailed industry
based analysis
built directly into
the platform.**

Digital experiences are rapidly growing in complexity. Technology leaders often have dozens of critical micro journeys (from checkout, to bill pay, or check in) that they need to constantly monitor and optimize.

The problem is that many analytics tools are still taking a one-size-fits-all approach—resulting in weeks of configuration, researching best practices and recruiting talent with specific industry knowledge. Leading platforms have distilled those best practices and industry specific configurations directly into the platform, greatly reducing the time to value for digital leaders across industries.

Requirement	Questions to ask	What to listen for and assess
Industry expertise across the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What industries do you typically work with?• How does that experience help us be successful with the tool?	<p>They should have a customer success team that is adept at working with large enterprises. In addition, it's ideal if they have former industry professionals on that team or in the organization.</p>
Out-of-the-box monitoring and analysis for top industry micro-journeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What functionality do you have to support my industry specific use cases?• How does the dashboard monitor performance?• If I am not in a top industry, can I leverage out-of-the-box analysis?	<p>Ideally there is a catalog of industry specific dashboards and/or templates that help you get started with understanding your most important micro-journeys like checkout, bill pay, or book a flight. These dashboards should be quick to set up and based on learned industry best practices.</p> <p>The monitoring and alerting should be built in upon setup. These alerts should be based on the specific KPIs for that specific micro journey.</p> <p>While most top industries should be covered, no vendor is an expert in every industry. However, you can look for expertise in digital. There still should be out-of-the-box analysis for micro-journeys that exist across industries. Things like search, homepage, or account login.</p>
Easy to use for industry pros and novices alike	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How easy is it to use the industry based dashboards?• Is the analysis guided?	<p>The dashboards should be easy to read and informative. Meaning they help you understand the questions to ask of the data and then show you the data. That way it's easy to drill into the data for answers even if you are not an expert.</p> <p>The analysis should feel like you are stepping through a process when diagnosing issues. It should be intuitive and simple without significant training.</p>

Summary.

Exploring new solutions inevitably takes time, energy, and willingness to battle internal politics. But with the eight criteria listed above, you are now armed to explore the critical considerations for finding the right digital experience analytics solution. Ready to take this into the field? Download your copy of the [Experience analytics workbook](#).



Evaluate Quantum Metric against these criteria.

We are more than happy to go over the above criteria, in detail, with you. The Quantum Metric solution supports global brands to find and resolve friction points as well as discover and optimize areas of opportunity in their customer experience. Through a process we call [Continuous Product Design \(CPD\)](#), Quantum Metric helps business and technology teams align faster on customer needs and prioritize the opportunities that will drive the most value.

Interested in learning more?

[Get a demo](#) and speak with our team.