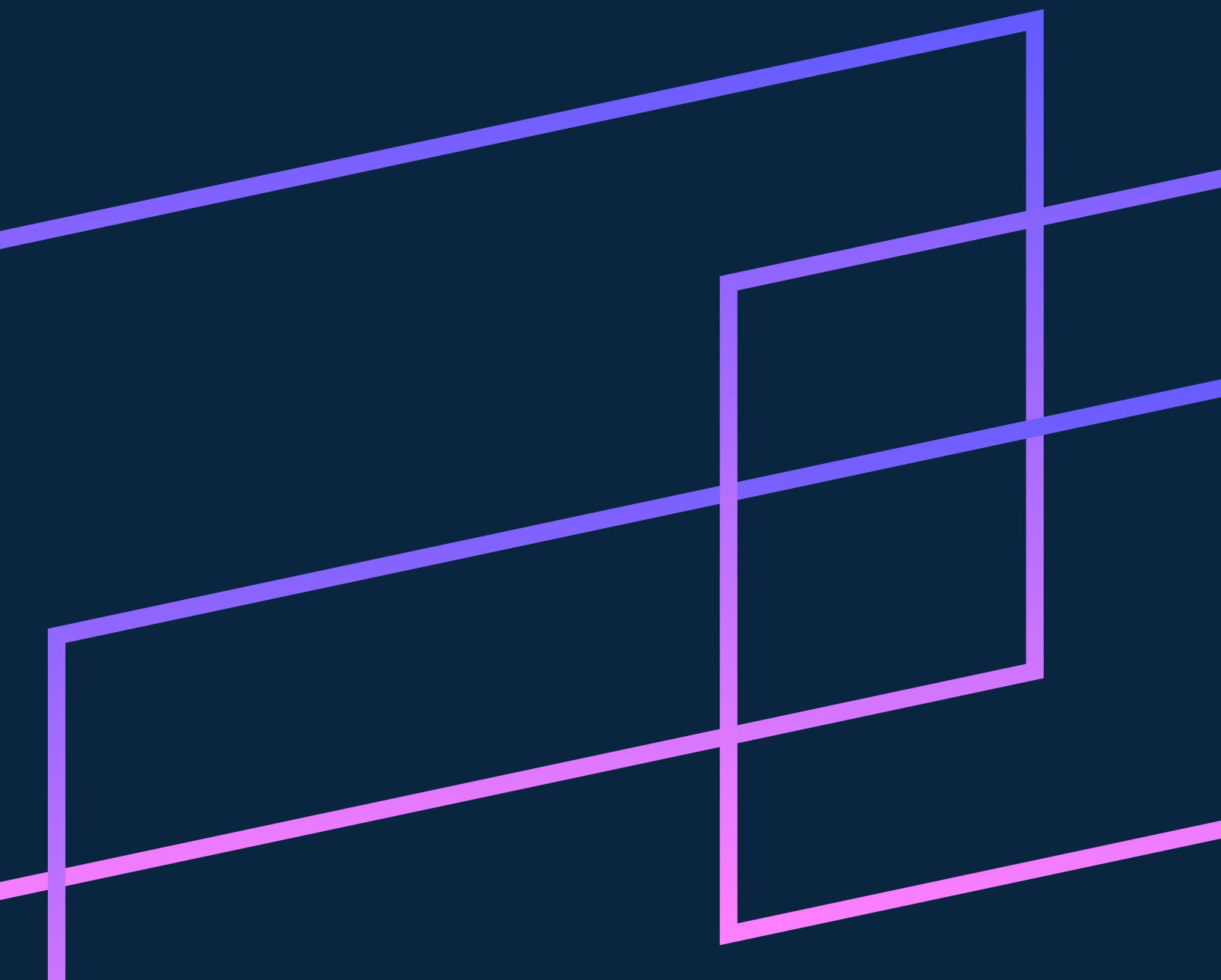


stripe

A guide to payments provider RFPs



Introduction

The breadth of Stripe's platform reflects our underlying philosophy: payment processing, as it's been traditionally thought of, is too narrow an offering to address what most businesses are trying to solve for when they're looking for a payments provider. Over the last decade, payments has evolved from a cost center to a strategic lever for innovation, revenue growth, and business transformation. Buyers are right to expect more than just a low-cost utility.

Many businesses that come to Stripe are looking to switch from an inflexible legacy system to one that is easier and less costly to maintain. They want a modern provider with a breadth of capabilities that can unify transaction data across systems, unlock the innovation potential of their business, and fit into their existing technology stack. In response to these needs, Stripe's platform has evolved to become more modular and interoperable, while offering both core payment processing as well as checkout optimization, fraud detection, billing, revenue recognition, reporting, and more.

In this guide to a payments processor Request for Proposal (RFP), we've captured the most essential, as well as overlooked, capabilities you should consider in a payments provider. These are the questions our customers have told us they wish they had asked their previous providers. This isn't an exhaustive list of RFP criteria, but rather, questions that you may want to consider in addition to core payment processing and gateway questions.

To get started quickly, you can also access an RFP template at the end of this guide with questions mapped to the most important areas to consider:

- 1 Business model requirements
- 2 Integration experience
- 3 Architecture
- 4 Payments performance
- 5 Global coverage and checkout optimization
- 6 Risk management
- 7 Reporting and analytics
- 8 Reconciliation
- 9 Privacy and security
- 10 Professional services and account management

Business model requirements

Before kicking off an official RFP process, the first question to ask yourself is, “What is our business model today, and how might it evolve in the next 5 to 10 years?”

You may want to look for a provider that can partner with you to achieve strategic, long-term goals beyond meeting your basic payments acceptance needs. This requires a thought leader that stays ahead of the constantly evolving payments landscape and supports a wide range of business models with an integrated platform.

For example, if you're a retailer looking to launch a consumer marketplace to attract a new type of customer, you'll need to consider if your payments provider can support a multiparty business model to split and route funds, onboard sellers and service providers compliantly, and make payouts around the world. If you are looking to increase recurring revenue and retention by launching a membership program, you'll need to consider if your payments provider can support your desired pricing and subscription billing model, including capabilities like churn reduction, revenue recognition, and reporting. As the lines between commerce channels blur, you should also consider whether your payments provider supports a holistic omnichannel offering, with robust in-person capabilities integrated with online solutions.

Questions to ask providers

In addition to evaluating the ecommerce payments capabilities outlined in this guide, you may want to consider the following factors based on your specific business model.

For a recurring revenue business:

Companies as diverse as [SaaS businesses](#), digital content providers, on-demand delivery services, ecommerce brands, and many more offer subscriptions, paid memberships, or loyalty programs where they need to collect payments on a recurring basis. If this describes your business, you will want to consider these questions:

- Does the payments provider also offer an in-house billing solution?
 - If not, does the payments provider integrate directly with your billing provider of choice?
Can they unify billing and payments logic to reduce costs and complexity?
- How do they reduce involuntary churn, and can they demonstrate the effectiveness of these methods?
- What pricing models does your billing provider support (e.g., usage-based or metered billing, per-seat pricing, tiered pricing, flat-rate plus overage pricing, free trials, discounts)?
- Do they help you stay compliant by automatically calculating and collecting sales tax and VAT on subscriptions or invoices?

- What kind of payment flexibility does the solution offer out of the box (e.g., prepay for a subscription before it starts, schedule a subscription for a future start date, backdate a subscription, bill in installments)?
- Does the online checkout flow allow customers to start a subscription and encourage upgrades from monthly to annual plans?
- Is there a dedicated portal for your customers to manage their subscriptions and invoices and view and update payment details?
- Are transactions automatically pulled into revenue recognition tables and charts (e.g., a revenue waterfall) and account reports (e.g., balance sheets, income statements, debit and credit journals)?
- Does your billing provider integrate easily with your existing CRM or ERP?
- How long does it take to integrate the billing provider, and once integrated, how quickly can you launch new pricing?

For additional billing criteria, refer to Stripe's [Billing RFP guide](#).

For a marketplace or platform business:

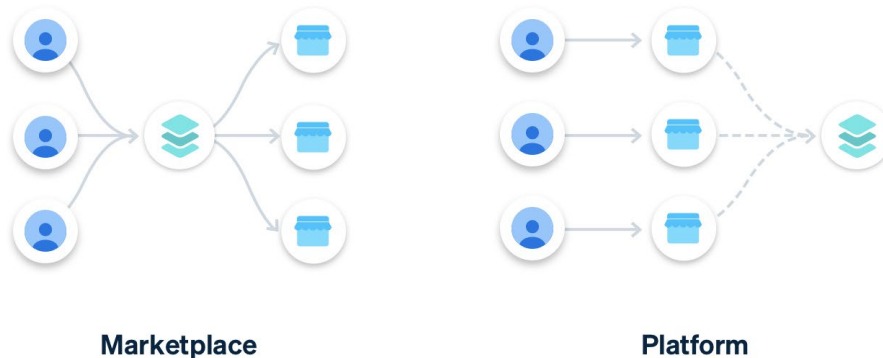
- Does the provider offer progressive onboarding capabilities, allowing customers (merchants, sellers, and service providers) to provide the minimum compliance details at initial account creation and fill out additional information later?
- Which tools are offered to support seller identity verification? Is verification done programmatically or manually?
- Does the provider offer prebuilt dashboards and reports for your platform or marketplace as well as for your customers?
 - Can you analyze your volume, revenue, and costs and see how pricing changes impact your margins?
- Does the product support the ability to fully white-label the solution, allowing you to customize branding and own the end-to-end customer experience?
 - How much flexibility do you have in choosing which capabilities to own and which to offload to the provider?
- What kind of payout schedules are available? Do they offer instant payouts?
- What tools does the provider offer to manage risk, refunds, and disputes?
- Can you onboard sellers or service providers internationally?
- On what timeline does their typical marketplace or platform user launch? Can the provider offer customer references similar to your business size and complexity?

- What payment methods are available to sellers and service providers, in terms of digital wallets and local payment methods (including buy now, pay later)?
- Does the provider offer in-person, recurring, or invoicing payments?
- Do they offer multicurrency settlement to better manage foreign exchange liabilities?
- Does the provider enable you to embed and monetize additional payments and financial services like in-person payments, instant payouts, and financing?
- Does the provider allow you to monetize payments with a revenue share or a buy-rate?

Multiparty business models exist in many forms, most notably **marketplaces** and **platforms**.

A **marketplace** is an online business that connects sellers or service providers with consumers who purchase goods or services like Lyft or DoorDash.

A **platform** is a business that enables other businesses to sell products and services on top of their infrastructure like Shopify or Mindbody.



For a business that accepts in-person payments:

If your business takes payments both online and in store, providing a **unified commerce** experience should be a key consideration.

- Can you manage online and in-person payments in one place for simplified reporting and a unified customer view?
 - Does the provider incorporate cross-channel customer activity and insights to inform personalization, marketing strategies, and loyalty programs?
- Does the provider enable you to offer a consistent experience across channels?
- Can you build a custom checkout with your own POS integration or select from third-party POS integrations?

- Does the provider enable seamless customer service, like tableside payments or in-store pickup for online orders?
- Do they enable you to accept popular payment methods like Apple Pay, Google Pay, and other digital wallets?
- Is the provider's card reader cellular-enabled, or does it offer an offline mode, so that you can accept payments even in environments with poor internet connection?
- Is there a central dashboard where you can manage and monitor your card readers?
- Can you easily expand to new channels and markets with minimal additional engineering effort?

Integration experience

When you make the decision to invest time and resources to select a new provider, there is almost always an underlying business-critical reason. It could be that your current provider's performance in authorization rates or relationship management deteriorated, their technical limitations hindered innovation, or, in the worst case, they experienced an outage. In other cases, you could be adding a new provider to maximize performance, reduce fraud rates, expand to new countries, or add new payment methods.

Consider whether a provider has the tools, technology, and services to support a successful integration and deployment on a timeline that works for your needs. The clarity of [API documentation](#) and the steps required provide a good starting point to gauge technical sophistication. Ensure that the provider offers the integration interfaces you require, including prebuilt integrations or connectors with the business operations, ecommerce, and IT systems you currently use. There is an added benefit if the provider works with integration and consulting partners you may have existing relationships with. A potential provider should also have the technical wherewithal to accommodate bespoke requirements and create custom solutions that improve your payments stack.

Questions to ask providers

- Are you able to use the provider's payment processing and software services through a multiprocessor setup with your existing payment service providers?
 - Does the provider only process payments, or do they offer supplementary products and services such as fraud prevention, authorization optimizations, checkout optimization tools, billing, tax, invoicing, revenue reconciliation, and analytics and reporting?
- What types of apps and connectors does the provider offer to help you integrate important workflows?
- Does the provider have a network of certified consulting, Global System Integrator (GSI), and technology partners to help you launch quickly and make the most out of your integration?

- What is the average time to go live, what development resources are you expected to provide, and what implementation support does the payments provider offer?
 - What is the quality of that support, and how long does it take to implement technical resources when requested?
- Which programming languages are supported by the API, and are additional tools (code samples, SDKs, and clear, usable documentation) available?
- Does their documentation include code snippets, detailed steps, and easy-to-follow recipes?
- Does the provider offer low-code or no-code solutions to help you save time?
- Do they offer a test environment or sandbox as well as test cards and bank accounts that capture your unique payments needs?
- How much engineering time and cost can your provider help you save?

Architecture

When considering a provider, it is important to find companies with a unified platform, which avoids the need to stitch together disparate systems. A provider with unified **payments, billing, and fraud capabilities**, for example, can give you a holistic view of your business performance and save you time and resources over integrating and managing multiple suppliers. Consider the level of ongoing maintenance your team will need to engage in. Look for providers that invest in developers so that your limited engineering resources can focus on projects that drive business value, rather than keep systems running. At the most fundamental level, ensure that a provider meets your needs when it comes to stability, flexibility, scalability, and your future roadmap.

Stability

When you process millions of transactions every day, any downtime creates substantial costs. A common industry standard uptime of 99.95% still equates to 263 minutes of downtime a year. Industry-leading availability of 99.999% brings this down to 5 minutes and 15 seconds. Processor downtime does not just impact that lost window of sales, but also negatively impacts the lifetime value of that customer. Customers that experience a decline caused by outages may opt to take their business elsewhere, which may damage brand equity. When considering a payments provider, ensure they have a strong record in minimizing downtime and a strong commitment to **transparency around platform health metrics**. Query their historical uptime. The ideal provider will also have failover procedures in place for any unplanned outages and conduct maintenance without the need for downtime.

Flexibility

A global, unified, API-based payments infrastructure enables rapid development, giving you the flexibility to drive innovations, add new payment types, expand to new markets, and build new payment experiences and financial services offerings. The ideal partner will offer full optionality so you can choose which modular capabilities to add today versus in the future, all while minimizing engineering effort and lead times required for adding new functionality. Plus, a payments provider with reliable infrastructure built on a single global platform from the outset will have fewer points of failure, require less maintenance, and free up your developer resources to concentrate on business-critical initiatives.

Scalability

In cases of peak events, you want confidence your provider can handle the influx of volume. It is important to understand both standard transaction processing volume and the extent to which the provider can scale. Consider spikes in volume you experienced in the past around sales, holidays, or viral moments to set a baseline. If a sale results in a 70% jump in processing volume, ensure the providers under consideration can scale load to that level. Query how the payments providers run load tests and historical performance managing similar surges in traffic.

Building for the future

Your payments provider must invest in an active development team to ship new features, respond to changing market dynamics, and stay ahead of the curve in the ever-changing payments landscape. A technical payments provider with a solid foundation to support continuous change and innovations should preclude the need for a costly re-platform, and re-RFP, in the future. It is important that roadmaps align, and, in the ideal state, you can influence the roadmap of a payments provider to address your requirements.

Questions to ask providers

- Does the provider publish their uptime and offer a transparent view of real-time platform health metrics?
- What are their stated SLAs for API availability? What is the actual historical uptime for the last 12-month period?
- Will the payments provider's technology complement and improve your existing systems, reducing complexity and future-proofing your payments stack?
- How quickly can they turn on new payment methods?
- How reliable and scalable is their infrastructure? Can it maintain consistently high uptime during peak seasons like the holidays and Black Friday and Cyber Monday?
- Are they able to scale to your volume and handle peak events?

Payments performance

Your vendor ultimately must allow you to accept payments in the manner required by your businesses. Given the nuances of the card payments industry and the unique requirements of enterprises, this is not always as simple as submitting an authorization message through the networks to issuers. Look for a payments provider that offers core payments functionality to support your business model, specifically the ability to alter the “ergonomics” of authorizations and captures to fit your needs. For example, businesses that offer a service where the total transaction amount can change after authorization, such as ride-hailing, on-demand delivery, or those that support tipping, may need incremental authorizations or over-captures (or both). Other businesses, such as those in the travel industry, may leverage extended authorizations to capture funds after services are rendered. These show a provider’s ability to manage payments to support a wide range of use cases.

Authorization optimizations

When mere basis points of network authorization uplift can generate millions in additional revenue, it is paramount that your payments provider helps you accept more good transactions, maximizing conversion and authorization rates without a corresponding increase in chargeback and fraud rates. To accomplish this, your provider should act as a strategic partner, responding to payments industry changes to optimize your payment operations and performance. Best-in-class providers will use machine learning to optimize authorizations to match issuer and network preferences, both on the initial authorization and with real-time retries. Direct integrations with the networks and strong partnerships with issuers improve machine learning models and overall authorization performance through ongoing communication and data sharing, as well as opening channels for payments provider advocacy on behalf of businesses.

The payments providers you work with should understand your need for insights into declines and deeper understanding of successful authorizations. This is another area where a payments provider with direct connections to the card networks and a unified platform can outperform others. This type of provider can return the most granular decline codes and enhanced data fields, such as raw response codes, both of which help you understand your authorization rates, the benefits generated from optimizations, and root causes of declines. Your payments provider should be proactive in taking this data and recommending improvement strategies, working with issuers to address problems, and optimizing to improve authorization rates in ways specific to your business model.

There are multiple ways a payments provider engaged in the issuing space can improve authorization rates. First, payments providers that also act as issuers enjoy a higher degree of fidelity around the data needed to optimize authorizations. They have access to real-time ISO messages and retry activity by every acquirer that accepts their cards. The larger the portfolio of credit and debit cards issued, the more unique insights the payments provider generates on end-to-end transaction performance. This helps inform ongoing optimization efforts. Additionally, payments providers with a depth and breadth of issuer relationships can act as a strategic advocate for businesses. For

example, a payments provider that observes a spike in declines should use its relationships to better understand issuer behavior and build optimization strategies to address root causes. A proactive payments provider will optimize payments performance in partnership with issuers and with deep understanding of their decision models.

Subscription and card on file

For subscription and card-on-file businesses, a top-tier provider can increase transaction success. A basic provider will allow for tokenizing and storing card details for repeat purchases or recurring payments. Many payments providers will offer network tokens, but industry leaders dynamically use network tokens or primary account numbers (PANs) to maximize transaction success and use other tools, such as card account updater when necessary, to keep information fresh. Going a step further, top providers will apply smart retry logic, powered by machine learning, to recover failed subscription payments. Granular decline codes generated by direct network connections allow for the optimal retry strategy and data treatment to minimize payment failures.

Costs

In optimizing around cost, a provider should ensure that your acceptance costs are as low as possible. The best way to do this is to provide the most accurate transaction-level data, including network and interchange costs. With data in hand, your provider should guide you to the proper strategies to minimize costs and ensure you are paying the appropriate, but lowest possible, interchange rates. Your payments provider should offer tools and strategies to avoid downgrades. For example, they should help your business optimize checkout flows to capture the information necessary to avoid downgrades while minimizing friction.

Strong Customer Authentication (SCA)

For businesses with operations in Europe, the full rollout of SCA requirements makes a robust solution a business-critical necessity. Your provider should offer a sophisticated and frictionless SCA offering, with dynamic 3DS, for example. In practice, the provider should optimize between 3DS1.0 and 3DS2.x when necessary and maximize the use of exemptions wherever possible. Pay particular attention to the exemptions supported and whether they are requested automatically, as well as the payments provider's transaction risk assessment (TRA) threshold, especially for high average ticket-value businesses.

Questions to ask providers

- Can they support additional authorization and capture use cases, such as incremental authorizations, extended authorization windows, and over-captures?
- How do they optimize conversions and authorization rates?

- Are machine learning and AI utilized in optimization efforts?
- Do they help you understand and improve performance based on the nuances of your business, offering a transparent view into authorization rate uplift?
- What partnerships does the provider have with issuers to improve acceptance rates?
- Can they give you a high degree of transparency into your payments costs, including detailed interchange and scheme fees associated with each transaction and surfacing opportunities to reduce costs?
- How do they keep payment details up-to-date to maximize successful transactions?
 - Do they offer batch and real-time card account updater? In which markets?
- Can they offer network tokens, and can they optimize their use by dynamically routing tokens or PANs to maximize uplift? In which markets?
- Do they support appropriate dunning logic to recover failed payments, such as automatic retries based on custom retry rules or machine learning–powered smart retry logic?
 - Is this logic customizable without additional development effort?

Global coverage and checkout optimization

If you operate a business in multiple countries, you may want to consider how well your provider can support your needs in each country. It is especially important to consider how easily new **payment methods** can be turned on without additional integration work or the need to register as a local entity. This drastically improves your ability to quickly bring your products to market and increase conversions. Your provider should be able to help you increase revenue and reduce operational costs with powerful payment method management tools. You should also be able to choose the best payment method ordering solution for your business, including options for ML-based optimizations and for writing custom logic.

Ideally, your provider should have local expertise in your priority markets so that they can help your business navigate changing rules and regulations. Local acquiring can generate both authorization rate benefits and cost savings. If you operate a marketplace or platform, you should consider whether your provider can settle business funds locally and cover foreign exchange rate changes between the time of the charge and time of settlement.

Questions to ask providers

Checkout experience

- Does the provider offer an **accelerated checkout**, such as the ability to store card or bank information and subsequently check out with one click?
- Does the provider offer the ability to process bank payments with the same benefits as credit cards by offering instant transaction confirmation, protection from common ACH failures, and faster settlement at a rate that's cheaper than processing a credit card?
- Does the provider offer the ability to customize the styling of the payments form to match your website?
- Does the provider handle payment method eligibility logic to reduce payment method failures?
- Do they offer the ability to autofill addresses?
- Can the provider automatically calculate, display, and collect tax on applicable transactions?
- Can they provide automated transaction failure error messages?
- Can they automatically detect invalid card numbers, expired card dates, incorrect CVC/CVV, or incorrect months before submitting the transaction?

Global coverage and localization

- Can the provider help you navigate local regulations to maximize authorization rates and minimize compliance?
- Can they dynamically optimize your checkout flow based on the customer's location, including displaying local currency?
- In which languages are their products localized? Which languages can the customer support staff manage?
- In which markets are their products available?
- In which markets does the provider offer local acquiring?
- In which markets is the provider directly connected to the card networks?
- Which presentment currencies are offered and in which markets? Which settlement currencies?

Local payment methods

- What are the steps to set up payment methods, and how quickly can new payment methods be turned on?
 - Is additional development effort required on your end to support a new payment method?

- Do they provide the ability to configure payment methods and write custom rules for when they appear?
- Do you need to register as a local entity to onboard onto a local payment method?
- How do they optimize the performance of these payment methods?
 - Do they provide the ability to A/B test payment methods?
- Do they offer a unified view of all payments, including diverse payment methods, to improve reporting and reconciliation?
- Does the provider give you the ability to display financing options such as buy now, pay later payment methods to reduce friction and improve conversions at checkout?

Cross-border settlements

- Do you need to register as a local entity to enable local settlements?
- In which countries and currencies can the provider settle funds?
- Can they take on the risk of foreign exchange rate fluctuations between the charge and settlement?

Risk management

Fraud

Given the substantial negative consequences of high fraud rates, it is important that your payments provider exposes a top-tier fraud solution. The most sophisticated will be directly integrated into the payments flow and use machine learning models, trained on billions of transactions, to keep bad transactions out. These adaptive algorithms should continuously learn in order to respond to new fraud vectors, minimizing false positives as well as true fraud. By using a provider with a well-rounded fraud solution, you should be able to increase authorization rates without a subsequent jump in chargebacks. Understanding that enterprises have unique needs, your provider's fraud tool should offer a degree of flexibility. This is achieved with custom written rules and business logic for different responses to a range of risk scores. Given the rapidly and continuously changing nature of fraud, industry-leading providers will let you change and backtest fraud rules without the need for custom development. Finally, you should have the ability to review transactions flagged as high risk by your provider.

Disputes

As businesses well know, disputes represent a necessary burden in the payments acceptance space. However, that does not mean they need to create undue operational strain or diminish your customer experience. A strong provider can offer tools and expertise to reduce the work required to mitigate and respond to disputes. First, payments providers should offer ways to prevent a dispute from ever happening, such as using dynamic descriptors and integrating directly with Visa claims management and Mastercard. When disputes inevitably do happen, your provider should reduce your manual work by automatically submitting and formatting evidence and responding to disputes where possible. For disputes that do require manual intervention, the top providers will offer tools and strategies to maximize win rates. Most providers will allow you to respond to disputes within a portal or dashboard, but the most technologically advanced will allow for programmatic dispute management via APIs.

Questions to ask providers

Fraud

- Do they offer a built-in fraud solution? If not, what does the integration process look like, and how long would it take? Does it need monitoring and updates?
- How do the tools available mitigate false positives?
- Does the provider's fraud tool calculate risk scores? Is there flexibility in the treatment of risk scores?
- What inputs are utilized to determine risk scores and make a fraud risk assessment?
 - Does the fraud tool use machine learning? If so, what is the scale of transaction data used to train fraud models?
- Can you create custom fraud rules to manage how your business handles incoming payments and block suspicious activity?
- Does the fraud prevention tool allow for manual review of suspicious transactions?
- Do they offer machine learning-based personalized recommendations for charges to refund based on the likelihood they will result in disputes?
- Can you backtest your rules to see what would have been blocked? Do you need to manually label disputed transactions?
- How does the fraud solution work with new fraud types like card testing?
- Can you customize how the machine learning algorithm works for your business?
- Do they provide fraud analytics, including trends and proactive recommendations and alerts, to identify and mitigate unusual fraud patterns before they become real issues?
- Do they provide risk scores for transactions processed with other payment processors?

Disputes

- What tools or services are offered to minimize chargebacks?
- How does the provider optimize and automate dispute responses to maximize chances of success?
- Can they calculate win rate probabilities for individual disputes to help triage priorities for response?
- Do they allow you to programmatically manage disputes using an API, with functionality to upload evidence, respond to disputes, and receive dispute events using webhooks?
- Do they provide recommendations for evidence to submit for individual disputes?
- Do they integrate with network solutions like Verifi and Ethoca to help mitigate the risk of disputes, or would those require a separate integration?
- Do they offer ways to help you reduce your dispute rate and automatically refund specific transactions?

Reporting and analytics

Ensure that your payments provider can present a unified view of all payments-related data to the appropriate level of detail and in the format and interface you require. Once again, a payments provider with a unified platform and direct integrations to the card networks performs well here. A data-driven provider will offer transaction-level details, available in the requisite formats and with the possibility for [custom reports](#), [ad hoc queries](#), and [integration to your existing systems](#). A provider should offer a range of options that fit with the needs of all levels of your organization. For example, prebuilt reports in a dashboard can be updated in a timely manner for executive summaries; custom reports ensure your payments team tracks your unique KPIs; and data integrated with your accounting ledger, ERP, or other business intelligence tools ensures teams throughout the organization can get access to the necessary payments data.

Questions to ask providers

- Do they allow for custom data fields that can be associated with any object (e.g., a unique transaction ID traced throughout its lifecycle)?
- What key metrics and KPIs are provided as standard via the dashboard? What prebuilt reports are offered?
 - Is the reporting system updated in real time?

- Can they support ingesting data in a continuous way and integrating into existing flows or monitoring tools?
 - Are APIs offered to import data into existing infrastructure?
- What tools are available for analyzing and visualizing data on an ad hoc basis?
- Do they offer prebuilt pipelines that connect your payment data to your data storage provider?

Reconciliation

While related to reporting, reconciliation stands separate and distinct as an important task to ensure accurate financial metrics and a unified view of your business, as well as remaining above board for compliance checks and audits. While a vital business function, reconciliation can be needlessly complex, highly manual, and prone to errors. Your payments provider should ease your operational burdens and improve back-office functions with automation, consistency, and control. The end result should be accurate reconciliation, completed quickly with minimal lag time between settlement and data availability. A sophisticated provider will offer both aggregate and individual transaction reports, with clear information on refunds, chargebacks, offsets, and fees. If discrepancies occur and an exception is generated, the provider should assist with the reconciliation and provide the requisite information in a timely manner. If you accept payment methods beyond credit cards and debit cards, ensure a provider will consolidate all payment methods (cards, bank transfers, and others) to ease the reconciliation process. Finally, a provider should pipe data into your systems of choice, such as your CRM, ERP, and even custom systems with custom reporting requirements to fit your needs.

Questions to ask providers

- Do they offer a unified view of payments across your organization?
- Can they support transaction-level reporting, including all relevant fees?
- Can unique transaction IDs be used to track payments from origination to settlement, regardless of the channel (POS and online)?
- Which reconciliation processes does the provider automate?
- Does the provider support gross or net settlement?
- How quickly after settlement is data available?

Privacy and security

The financial and reputational risk of a breach is impossible to overstate. Vulnerabilities are unacceptable, and gaps in a payments provider's security architecture could wreak havoc with your organization. Cybersecurity attacks grow in sophistication, and the global patchwork of personal data regulations requires nuanced navigation. At a bare minimum, payment card industry (PCI) compliance is a must. At the top tier, payments providers are certified as a PCI Level 1 Service Provider, the most stringent level of certification. Your provider should offer a PCI packet to reduce the PCI validation timeline. If you choose to store card data and work with a PCI Qualified Security Assessor (PCI QSA), your provider should make the audit process as smooth as possible. Sophisticated providers will have a security-focused layer with consistent and enforced protections to guard against common web vulnerabilities and new attack vectors. On the privacy front, your provider must keep you compliant with the multitude of regulations (e.g., the General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR]) and reduce your compliance and security burden.

Questions to ask providers

- Are the provider's services PCI Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) compliant and validated by a third party?
- Can the provider show audited SOC 1 and 2 and PCI reports?
- How does the system protect itself from denial-of-service (DoS) attacks?
- Does the provider offer tools to minimize or eliminate your PCI exposure, while giving flexibility and control over your checkout experience?
- Can your provider tokenize PANs at the point of customer interaction?
- How are data transfers managed to ensure that data is both secure and in compliance with PCI standards and relevant local regulations (e.g., GDPR)?

Professional services and account management

Choosing a payments vendor that offers robust professional services is necessary for implementation success and the future growth of your business. The best professional services teams provide technical expertise to guide your team through every stage of implementation, help you launch quickly, expand into new markets, and de-risk your setup so you maximize the value from the vendor. You want a vendor who is there throughout your journey, not just during implementation, and can offer timely, proactive consultation to help optimize your existing integration and advance your business goals.

Questions to ask providers

- Does the provider have consultants in each market to advise on local nuances and share lessons learned from companies operating in those markets?
- Can the provider offer customer references and in-depth case studies from companies that are trying to solve challenges similar to yours?
- Can the professional services team help you anticipate design considerations to build scalable solutions for future growth?
- Beyond the technical implementation, does the professional services team help you with change management across your product and engineering, finance, accounting, operations, and customer service teams?
- Can the implementation services team help you launch within your target timeline?
- Can the professional services team help you optimize your existing payments, fraud, and billing strategies to drive revenue and reduce costs?
- Can the team help you launch new business lines, expand into new markets, and anticipate regulatory changes and financial trends?
- Will the provider share regular updates on their roadmap?
 - Does the provider offer opportunities for you to share feedback and influence the roadmap?

How Stripe can help enterprises

Companies such as [Ford](#), [Amazon](#), [Lyft](#), and [Atlassian](#) partner with Stripe to solve payments challenges specific to their industries and build better customer experiences. Stripe offers a complete financial infrastructure platform to help enterprises transform their business models, convert more customers globally, and reduce time and resources spent on payments to focus on their core business.

Support new business models like direct-to-consumer, subscriptions, and marketplaces with Stripe's flexible infrastructure. Optimize funds flow across your business with split funds, global payment routing, and instant payouts—all with less operational overhead.

Build, launch, and scale quickly with technology-first solutions, including powerful APIs and detailed documentation, that allow you to build once and deploy everywhere. Access structured financial reporting, build custom queries, or pipe Stripe data into your data warehouse to close your books faster and unlock rich business insights.

Future-proof your payments infrastructure with reliable, scalable, and flexible payments architecture. Enjoy market-leading uptime, confidence in handling peak volumes, and modularity to add new payment types and build best-in-class customer experiences.

Maximize revenue and minimize costs with machine learning–powered authorization optimizations and smart retries, direct network integrations, and issuer-level insights. Stay at the leading edge of the payments industry with flexibility around authorizations and captures to fit your business needs.

Convert more customers globally with local acquiring in key markets to increase conversion and authorization rates. Turn on local payment methods with a single integration, and provide a fully localized checkout experience dynamically optimized to the customer's location.

[Contact our sales team](#) to learn more.