

The Five-Question Filter

Ask in order. A “no” at any step means stop — you don't owe a tool a chance.

1

Does it solve a problem I actually have?

Not a problem the ad says you have.

2

Can I try it free in under an hour?

Long setup or a required sales call = walk away.

3

Does it save more time than it costs?

Count learning, fixing, and reviewing time — net minutes per week.

4

What happens to my data?

Where does it go, who sees it, can you export and leave?

5

Will I still use it in 90 days?

Does it fit a routine you already have?

SKIP IT — SIX RED FLAGS IN ANY TOOL PITCH

✗ Guaranteed results

“Double your revenue in 30 days.” Real tools promise time saved, not miracles.

✗ Opaque pricing

If a sales call is required to learn the price, the price is more than you want.

✗ Wants your customer list up front

Your data is the product being bought.

✗ Long contracts for unproven tools

Annual lock-in before a free trial is a confession about churn.

✗ “Replaces your staff” pitches

Tools that market to your fears usually can't deliver to your needs.

✗ No export, no exit

If you can't take your data and leave, you're a hostage, not a customer.