

Demo Evaluation Decision Card

Ask for evidence before treating a convincing demo as a production system.

Ask during the demonstration

1. Which real users and workflows does this support today? Distinguish a demonstration from live use.
2. Name three difficult inputs or edge cases. Show what happens when each arrives.
3. What happens when a dependency is unavailable, slow, or returns conflicting data?
4. How are duplicate requests and conflicting records handled?
5. Who owns this system, and who can explain its data flow end to end?
6. What incidents or recovery exercises have tested it? Ask for dates and evidence; a new system may have exercises rather than operating history.
7. What remains before the intended use is safe: access controls, monitoring, recovery, scale testing, or operational ownership?

Ask for a recovery demonstration

1. Use a safe test environment with agreed limits. Do not break a live customer system to prove a point.
2. Record each unanswered question, its potential consequence, the owner, and the evidence needed. A polished screen is not that evidence.

Decision: proceed to a controlled trial / request evidence / stop. Explain the conditions before proceeding.