



Technology

Using AI to Transform the Software Buying Process

How IDC Leveraged 60 Years of Market Research with A.Team

Overview

Every established company sits on a goldmine of proprietary data—customer insights, market intelligence and institutional knowledge. Yet most of that data goes untapped, trapped in siloed reports, aging databases, or locked behind expert interpretation. That makes it nearly impossible to access in real time or apply at scale.

IDC TechMatch, IDC's AI-powered, self-service software sourcing platform, disrupted the software buying landscape by transforming 60 years of market research into instant, personalized recommendations for software buyers.

IDC's analyst reports (MarketScapes), vendor assessments, and automated RFPs now power an AI that delivers "decision-grade information", insights reliable enough for board-level presentations. Generic AI tools give generic answers. IDC built something only they could build, using data only they possess.

The results: One enterprise replaced their five-week consultant-led evaluation with IDC TechMatch, completing the same analysis in hours while cutting costs by 64%. With 10 customers signed in the first month, IDC demonstrated what custom AI built for proprietary assets can achieve.

To execute rapidly, IDC partnered with A.Team for critical product leadership. Unlike traditional consultants who bring lengthy timelines and generalist teams, A.Team embedded senior product leaders within weeks who had the experience needed to drive IDC's AI vision forward—from a rapid two-month prototype to market launch. Multiple placements proved such strong fits that IDC converted them to permanent employees.

Proprietary data is your competitive moat. IDC TechMatch turned its moat into new client value. Here's how IDC did it.

The Challenge: Finding a Fast Path to Execute IDC's AI Vision Without Sacrificing Quality

Since 1964, IDC has accumulated terabytes of research on software trends, vendor capabilities, and market behavior. This analyst-vetted database required significant manual effort to access and leverage, as generic AI tools couldn't tap into IDC's unique intelligence. IDC saw the opportunity: leverage GenAI to transform this repository into easily queryable insights that could deliver board-ready recommendations instantly. But the usual paths wouldn't work:



The AI skills gap loomed large. Like 63% of leaders who cite the AI skills shortage as their top adoption barrier, IDC struggled to find the right expertise. They needed seasoned leaders who had hands-on experience building quality AI systems in production.



Consulting firms excel at strategy, not building. The typical consulting model delivers assessments, roadmaps, and recommendations over multi-month engagements. But IDC had already identified the opportunity—they needed leaders who could rapidly ship AI.



The speed of AI innovation outpaces hiring. Finding and onboarding senior product leaders would take 3–6 months minimum. With the speed of AI tech evolution outpacing hiring timelines and competitors already implementing AI solutions, IDC couldn't afford that timeline.

The Solution: A.Team's Model for Rapid AI Transformation

IDC found what they needed in A.Team: a pre-vetted network of AI-first leaders who had successfully shipped AI products at Fortune 500s and high-growth startups. Unlike traditional options, A.Team could embed proven experts into IDC's team within weeks, not months.

Speed with quality. Within weeks, A.Team placed two key leaders: a project-specific CEO (Jim Spare) and a Head of Product. Together, they hit the ground running, building the strategy and roadmap for what would become IDC TechMatch.

Embedded, not external. Spare and their Head of Product operated as part of IDC's team from day one. They attended daily standups, made strategic decisions, and took ownership of outcomes. This embedded model meant faster decision-making and real accountability for results.

Proof before scale. The team built a working prototype in two months, proving IDC's research could be presented in an intuitive and easily referenceable format. This rapid validation lets IDC prove the concept before committing major resources.

The rapid success of the prototype validated IDC's AI strategy and laid the foundation for full platform development. That momentum translated into leadership continuity: both embedded leaders proved such strong fits that IDC converted them to full-time roles, with Spare stepping in as Senior Vice President to lead the product to market.

“This was *nothing short* of launching a major business line”



— Jim Spare, F. Chief Product Officer, IDC

Building the Complete AI Solution

The prototype's success created momentum—and revealed a key strength in A.Team's engagement model. Where traditional consultancies often bring large teams, long timelines, and static strategy decks, A.Team builds fast-moving teams drawn from a vetted network of AI product leaders and practitioners who have done it before. Every team is custom-assembled to fit the project's needs, helping companies move faster without compromising on quality or strategic alignment.

Recognizing they had found the right model, IDC expanded the A.Team engagement to build out the full product team:

- **Product Marketing Manager** to position and message the new platform
- **Product Manager** to support rapid development cycles
- **Two Designers** to create an intuitive interface for AI-driven insights

The Product Marketing Manager, like Spare before them, made such an impact that IDC hired them full-time as well. Through A.Team, IDC had assembled their core product team.

¹ Accenture, 2025

"I can see the striking difference between the speed of finding *great candidates through A.Team* versus what we're able to do in the open market."



— Jim Spare, F. Chief Product Officer, IDC

IDC TechMatch: From AI Aspirations to Production Reality

With the team in place, IDC TechMatch evolved from prototype to full platform. To process and understand IDC's 60 years of research, TechMatch initially uses OpenAI's GPT-4o and continues to adapt as model updates emerge.

The platform's AI goes beyond simple search. Users can interact with an AI chatbot that understands context and explains its reasoning—for example, when asked "Why is this vendor ranked lower than expected?", the AI can point to specific capability gaps or requirement mismatches based on IDC's research. This transparency builds trust in the AI's recommendations.

The platform transforms how companies approach technology decisions:



Faster vendor evaluation: What traditionally took weeks of manual research and consultant analysis now completes in hours. Users input requirements and receive personalized, stack-ranked vendor recommendations based on IDC's data.



Dynamic requirement adjustment: Teams can modify criteria in real-time and immediately see how changes impact vendor rankings.



Trusted insights: Unlike generic AI tools, IDC TechMatch draws exclusively from IDC's validated research, delivering "decision-grade information"—analysis reliable enough for board-level presentations.

IDC TechMatch covers 30+ software categories, synthesizing market positioning, peer experiences, and analyst assessments into actionable recommendations.

Measurable Impact: Early IDC Client Results and Adoption

One early adopter's experience with IDC TechMatch demonstrates the platform's transformative effect. Using the platform for their ERP evaluation, they achieved:

- **67% faster** ERP selection and recommendation process
- **64% cost reduction** compared to traditional consultant-led evaluation
- **55% fewer vendor evaluations** needed due to better initial filtering

The customer replaced their five-week consultant-driven process with IDC TechMatch's data-driven evaluation completed in hours. They could model scenarios, change requirements, and see immediate impact—something that would have required significant manual effort with traditional methods.

These results showcase what happens when companies build AI designed for their proprietary intelligence. The improvements came from AI that could leverage IDC's unique data in ways generic tools never could.

Market reception validated the approach. IDC met their initial goal of signing 10 customers by launch month's end, with targets set for 50 customers by year-end 2025.

Lessons from IDC's AI Journey

IDC's experience building TechMatch offers insights for established companies looking to leverage their proprietary data through AI:



Speed through embedded expertise.

A.Team's ability to quickly integrate senior leaders allowed IDC to move from concept to market in months.



AI requires transparency.

TechMatch's ability to explain its recommendations and allow dynamic adjustment proved crucial for enterprise adoption.



Proprietary data creates

differentiation. IDC's 60 years of validated research gave TechMatch a unique advantage over generic AI tools.



Custom AI amplifies proprietary

advantages. Generic AI gives generic answers. Custom AI built on your unique data creates unreplicable value.



Minimize risk, maximize learning.

The two-month prototype proved value before larger investments, building organizational confidence while minimizing risk, a core tenet of A.Team's approach.

Building for the Next 60 Years

For IDC, TechMatch represents an important evolution in how they deliver value to customers. The platform makes their decades of expertise accessible in a format that matches how modern enterprises make decisions.

"A.Team has up-leveled" the general acumen and understanding of SaaS business for our broader executive team," Spare reflected. "We're building the muscle that's setting up a tech-forward foundation... this project will be the foundation for the *next 60 years*."



— Jim Spare, F. Chief Product Officer, IDC

For established companies sitting on valuable data but struggling with AI implementation, IDC's success reveals a proven path: embed experienced leaders who understand how to ship AI, validate quickly through working prototypes, and scale based on real customer results.

About A.Team

A.Team is the AI-Native Systems Integrator transforming business realities. Our platform precisely assembles elite tech talent and agentic systems that deliver real value before traditional SIs finish their slide decks. Drawing from our network of 11,000+ pre-vetted builders, we've helped over 500 organizations such as Lyft, McGraw Hill, and Grindr achieve exceptional results with less.

Visit [a.team](#) to learn more.

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