

Five questions to ask any planning vendor. Including us.

For any apparel manufacturer evaluating any production planning system. Every one of these is answerable in a live session, on your own order book, in under an hour. None of them can be answered with a slide.

- 1** Score the plan you just generated against the plan I brought in. What is the number?
Ask it about the plan in front of you, not about the product.
- 2** How much manual correction does this plan need before I could actually run it?
The answer is a quantity of work, not a quality of software.
- 3** Will your system ever take an order that is on time today and make it late? Show me what stops that.
Listen for a mechanism you can point at, not a reassurance.
- 4** Plan across my three plants at once, in one run. Not one plant at a time.
Watch the run, not the dashboard.
- 5** Change one order and re-run. Tell me exactly what moved, and why.
Ask what the change did to the plan, not just what it moved.

We are an AI solutions company arguing that we plan better than tools you have used for years. You have no reason to believe that, and claiming it louder will not help. The only thing that settles it is you running the same test on everyone, and reading the answers yourself.

Some of those answers will not flatter us. We would still rather you asked.

What a weak answer sounds like

None of these are trick questions, and a good vendor will welcome all five. What you are listening for is whether the answer is a thing you can check. Write down what you actually hear, while you are still in the room.

1 What is the number?

Weak answer: An adjective. Any adjective.

WHAT THEY ACTUALLY SAID

2 How much correction?

Weak answer: It depends on your data.

WHAT THEY ACTUALLY SAID

3 Can it make a good order late?

Weak answer: It optimises across the whole plan. That is not a no.

WHAT THEY ACTUALLY SAID

4 All plants, one run.

Weak answer: Multi-site access control described as multi-site planning.

WHAT THEY ACTUALLY SAID

5 What moved, and why?

Weak answer: A screen that shows the new state without showing the change.

WHAT THEY ACTUALLY SAID
