

## 43 Service Virtualization Questions that Take You Beyond the Marketing Hype



Since service virtualization is a capability that becomes part of your core architecture, selecting the vendor and product that's the best fit for your organization's process and culture is crucial to your long-term success and return on investment. The vendor that's most prominent in the marketplace may or may not deliver the best results in your environment...but how can you determine this before you've already committed considerable resources to the initiative?

This guide is designed to help you move beyond the marketing hype to gain a clear understanding of each vendor's approach to service virtualization—and how that will impact your organization's productivity, costs, and success if you ultimately commit to working with this vendor. We've aggregated a set of 43 questions you can ask to determine whether a particular vendor will meet your needs in terms of innovation, enterprise scalability, process fit, support, productivity, and total cost of ownership.

The most critical red flag to beware of is that many service virtualization solutions bring hidden costs associated with services. In many cases, the ratio of service costs to technology costs can be quite high and should be considered as a significant part of the total cost of ownership. Although services might be required to jumpstart your process, in the long run, the technology's architecture, flexibility, and suitability to your evolving needs will dictate costs—whether direct OpEx associated with your staff, or indirect OpEx associated with a system integrator.

Before you begin asking vendors the following questions, we strongly recommend that you ask yourself some questions about your implementation strategy. Once you know what plan of action makes sense for your needs, you're in a much better position to determine if a particular vendor will help you get there. Parasoft's [Service Virtualization Implementation Strategies paper](#) outlines a number of key considerations, ranging from general decision criteria (your risk tolerance, access to dependent systems, etc.), to the expected implementation focus (environment-based, project-based, demand-based, or hybrid), to the anticipated team structure (distributed, center of excellence, or hybrid).

Please note that this guide was developed for the enterprise evaluation of a service virtualization solution. It is NOT recommended for individual actors who are looking for advanced stubbing. A service virtualization solution, by design, enables the SDLC process as a whole rather than an individual actor.

## Company Focus

	Question	Purpose
1	Is SV a component of a larger product suite?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the vendor trying to lock you into a larger contract?</li> </ul>
2	How long has the vendor been in the SV marketplace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the vendor serious about SV or is it a late responder?</li> </ul>
3	Did the vendor acquire to enter the SV market or innovate themselves?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the vendor possess the right technical DNA to continue support for SV?</li> </ul>
4	Describe the organization's journey towards having an SV offering—how/why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is this product a line item in an enterprise license agreement or a strategic asset?</li> </ul>
5	Is the organization focused on the technology of SV or is it the latest "fad" for the larger holding company?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a larger holding company that will simply shift focus to the next fad?</li> </ul>
6	Is the organization leading or trailing in terms of technical capability? What do the analysts say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the vendor innovate or just market?</li> </ul>
7	Is there a dedicated SV team or is the SV solution managed as part of a larger suite?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there sufficient dedicated resources for SV?</li> </ul>
8	Where are the developers for the SV solution physically located? Is it easy to communicate with them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you access the technical team, or will you be separated by layers of staff?</li> </ul>

## Internal Expertise

	Question	Purpose
1	Does the vendor have internal SV technical thought leaders or primarily marketing people?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will you be trapped with a lack of innovation?</li> </ul>
2	How many staff members are dedicated to marketing SV?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the vendor replaced innovation with marketing hype?</li> </ul>
3	How are new SV ideas implemented into the SV product offering?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the vendor investing in new features/functionality or did this stop after an acquisition?</li> </ul>
4	Does the development staff work directly for the vendor or are they outsourced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the vendor have direct control over the application direction and development?</li> </ul>

Question		Purpose
5	What is the average tenure of the development staff working on the SV offering?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the vendor shifted costs associated with SV to another team?</li> </ul>
6	Can I access these resources if needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you speak directly to the people contributing to the product?</li> </ul>
7	Does the vendor have strategic/thought leadership materials about SV on their website or do they have only marketing documents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the vendor shifted to marketing and divested from innovating the product?</li> </ul>
8	Can you access the thought leaders? Can the thought leaders participate in your deployment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the core product influencers available to support your team?</li> </ul>
9	How many layers do you have to pass through to reach a SV specialist?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you lost in a support queue?</li> </ul>
10	What department do the SV specialists work in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If specialists are in Professional Services, is this an attempt to sell you more services?</li> </ul>
11	Given your expectations about support, can the vendor meet these demands without hindering your process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you a number in the system or a real customer?</li> </ul>

## SDLC Emphasis

Question		Purpose
1	Historically, at what phase of the SDLC has the vendor demonstrated innovation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the vendor's core capability?</li> </ul>
2	Given the vendor's core capability, does their vision of SV align with your organization's vision of SV?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The vendor needs to demonstrate that their vision aligns with yours.</li> </ul>
3	Can you leverage the vendor's SV solution in a best-of-breed solution stack or is it best leveraged within the vendor's solution stack?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will you and the organization be trapped with the vendor's solution or can you grow freely?</li> </ul>
4	What are the vendor's specific plans to expand functionality within the part of the SDLC that you are most interested in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Let the vendor demonstrate that they will innovate in the area of the SDLC you are most concerned with.</li> </ul>

## Architecture

Question		Purpose
1	What is the SV architecture?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can the vendor's solution scale to meet your needs?</li> </ul>
2	Why is the solution is architected this way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the vendor able to express specific logic in the architecture design?</li> </ul>
3	Is the solution architected for the individual or for the enterprise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the solution architected to meet your needs?</li> </ul>
4	Can both an individual actor as well as broader enterprise players take advantage of the SV solution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the solution optimized for enterprise adoption?</li> </ul>
5	Is the SV solution built as an individual tool (desktop), a server, or both?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the vendor offer a tool trying to be a solution?</li> </ul>
6	Are interfaces built in order to optimize the tasks for various roles in the organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the product matured to meet the needs of specific actors in the SDLC?</li> </ul>
7	Does artifact creation and artifact management happen in a single interface or multiple role-based interfaces?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the product matured to meet the needs of specific actors in the SDLC?</li> </ul>
8	Does the SV solution easily enable environment access or is it dependent on scripting or additional complex configuration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the solution evolved to meet the demands of initiatives like DevOps, Lean or Enterprise Agile?</li> </ul>

## Execution and Performance

Question		Purpose
1	What metrics can you share regarding the performance of SV assets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A simple metric that doesn't consider asset complexity / functionality indicates that they either don't understand the problem or are trying to hide the details.</li> </ul>
2	How easy is it to reconfigure the environment that the AUT is using (virtual asset data, performance, etc.)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideally, even novice users can configure and provision virtual assets for their needs—and changes can be made without risk of impacting other users.</li> </ul>

Question	Purpose
3 What visibility do you have into the environment where SV is deployed? Can you see the details of payloads and messages as they pass through the ecosystem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is important for validating deployment and debugging problems.</li> </ul>

## Enterprise and Process Integration

Question	Purpose
1 What's required to deploy the solution? What amount of professional services is required?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This influences the total cost of ownership.</li> </ul>
2 What's required to get the team up to speed (train the trainer, training classes, professional services...)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This influences the total cost of ownership.</li> </ul>
3 Does the solution support a Center of Excellence model as well as team-lead adoption?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It will be difficult to achieve the desired results if the solution doesn't suit your structure.</li> </ul>
4 Is the solution considered agile for flexible deployment scenarios?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It will be difficult to achieve the desired results if the solution doesn't suit your process.</li> </ul>
5 What do I need to know in order to build a basic virtual asset from scratch and how much time would it take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complexity would increase your TCO.</li> </ul>
6 Do I need a large team of experts to leverage service virtualization? Or are there different usage paths for different levels of users (e.g., advanced users can create and configure assets, novice users can access and self-provision assets)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling more team members to quickly gain value from the solution means a more rapid ROI.</li> </ul>
7 What's required to access the technology—a sophisticated environment on the desktop, login to a server via a web browser, is it in the cloud...?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling more team members to quickly gain value from the solution means a more rapid ROI.</li> </ul>
8 How are assets shared across and within teams?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A solution that does not promote reuse is siloed in use, focused on individual developers or teams rather than the enterprise level.</li> </ul>
9 Are there capabilities that help teams manage change and evolve the assets over time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to account for change indicates an immature solution.</li> </ul>



## About Parasoft

Parasoft researches and develops software solutions that help organizations deliver defect-free software efficiently. By integrating development testing, API testing, and service virtualization, we reduce the time, effort, and cost of delivering secure, reliable, and compliant software. Parasoft's enterprise and embedded development solutions are the industry's most comprehensive—including static analysis, unit testing, requirements traceability, coverage analysis, functional & load testing, dev/test environment management, and more. The majority of Fortune 500 companies rely on Parasoft in order to produce top-quality software consistently and efficiently as they pursue agile, lean, DevOps, compliance, and safety-critical development initiatives.

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