TurnKey Lender

GUIDE

# Loan Origination System (LOS) Buyer's Guide

# Introduction

Choosing a loan origination system means choosing how applications will be captured, underwritten, decisioned, documented, and funded for years to come.

Most lending teams start this search for familiar reasons: applicants abandon the buying process while waiting for a decision. Underwriters manually enter the same information into multiple systems. Credit policy changes collect dust in a vendor queue. And launching a new product means a full-on development project rather than a configuration change.

As application volume and product lines grow, those gaps turn into lost applications and slower time to market. They also produce decisions nobody can fully explain a year later.

A strong LOS should resolve those problems rather than add another system on top of them.

This guide is built for lending leaders and teams creating a shortlist. It walks through the criteria that separate a platform built for growth from one you'll outgrow. It also covers the red flags worth catching before signature, the questions to bring to an RFI or demo, and how to think about total cost of ownership and vendor fit.



## 5 Signs You'll Outgrow Your LOS

1. **Launching a new credit product** requires a development project
2. **Underwriting rules can't be changed or tested** without vendor involvement and disruptive development
3. **Applicants wait too long** for a decision or a document request
4. **Decisions can't quickly be** explained, reproduced, or audited after the fact
5. **Origination and servicing** run as separate systems with manual handoffs and fragmented data

# What To Look For in A Loan Origination Platform

Before comparing vendors feature by feature, define what your origination operation needs to accomplish today and what it needs to support as your products, channels, and volume evolve.

## Automation Across The Origination Lifecycle

A strong LOS connects application intake, verification, underwriting, decisioning, documentation, and funding instead of leaving staff to move applications between steps by hand.

**Look for:**

- Multi-channel intake across online, mobile, in-branch, partner, and embedded channels
- Automated data and document collection, verification, and e-signature
- Automated document generation and funding workflows
- Staff control over manual review, overrides, and escalations

Automation should shorten the path from application to decision. Staff should stay in control of the files that need judgment. Ask vendors where an application can still sit and wait, and what happens when one needs more information.

## AI in Underwriting and Decisioning

AI-assisted scoring brings more data and more consistency into credit decisions. It can also surface risk a static rule set might miss. Used well, it makes underwriting faster without losing control.

**Look for:**

- Rules-based decisioning that reflects your credit policies
- AI-assisted scoring with configurable criteria and thresholds
- Visibility into the factors contributing to a decision
- Monitoring and governance for changes to models and criteria

Ask vendors where AI is used today, what data feeds an automated decision, whether your team can adjust the criteria behind it, and how a decision gets explained to a borrower, auditor, or examiner.

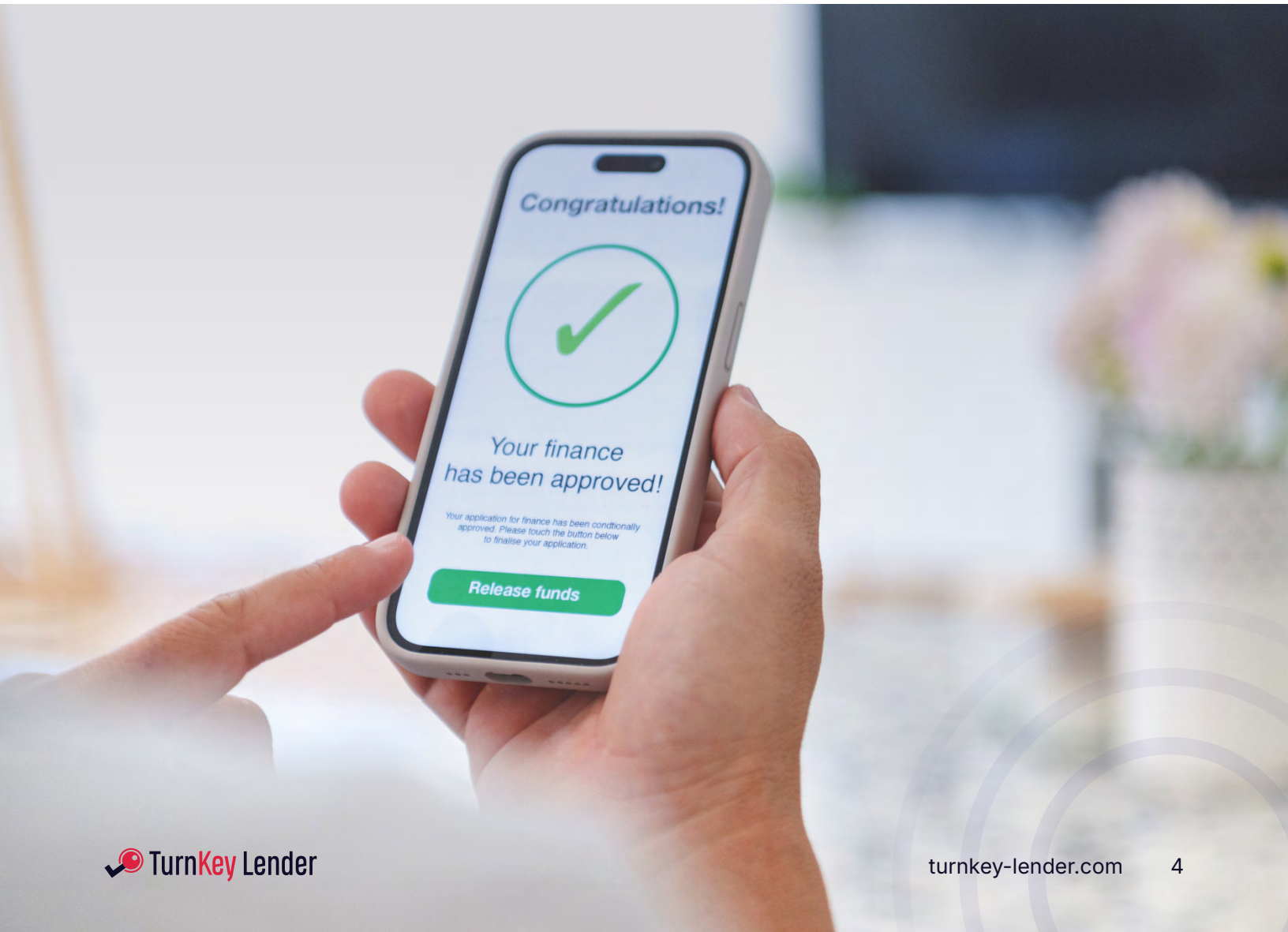
# Borrower Experience and Conversion

The application experience is part of your lending strategy. Borrowers compare you to every other app on their phone. A capable back office does little good if people give up before they purchase.

**Look for:**

- Simple, mobile-friendly applications that applicants can save and resume
- Clear, automated requests for missing information and documents
- Fast decisioning and transparent application status
- White-labeled digital offers, acceptance, and document signing

Ask how the platform reduces abandonment, how applicants are notified when action is required, and what someone sees when they leave the process and come back.



## Configurability Without Custom Development

Growth requires change. An LOS exchanges data with credit bureaus, KYC and fraud providers, core banking or accounting systems, CRM, payment providers, and open banking (like Plaid). But it doesn't have to mean a development overhaul.

**Look for:**

- Business users able to build and modify application flows directly
- Configurable products, business rules, terms, fees, scoring criteria and approval hierarchies
- Support for multiple lending models and regions within one platform
- Role-based controls and the ability to test changes before production

Most vendors will say they're configurable. Ask how long it typically takes a business user to launch a new credit product, adjust a scoring rule, or change an application flow without vendor assistance.

## Integration and Fit With The Rest Of The Lending Lifecycle

No LOS operates in isolation, so its value depends as much on the quality of its integrations as on its own functionality. An LOS exchanges data with credit bureaus, KYC and fraud providers, core banking or accounting systems, CRM, and payment providers. Then it has to hand the loan off once it's funded.




**Look for:**

- Ready-made integrations to the data sources and systems you rely on
- Reliable data exchange rather than the presence of an API
- Clear ownership of integration maintenance after go-live
- A defined path from funded application into servicing, native or integrated

Ask which integrations are live today, which need building, who maintains them, and what the handoff into servicing involves in practice rather than on a diagram.

## Decision Traceability, Compliance, and Controls

If your team cannot explain how a decision was reached, a single audit question can turn into weeks of reconstructing files by hand. Origination decisions must hold up under internal review and external examination, sometimes years after a loan was funded.



**Look for:**

- Decision records that can be reproduced, including adverse action handling
- A record of the data, rules, and criteria behind each decision
- Built-in AML/KYC and identity verification inside the application flow
- Role-based permissions and audit trails covering rule changes and overrides

Ask how quickly your team can produce a complete decision record when someone requests one, and whether they can do it without opening a ticket.

## Scalability As Products, Channels, and Volume Grow

True scalability means more than processing more applications. It also means supporting new products, channels, and lending models without adding parallel systems or more staff.

**Look for:**

- Multiple loan products and lending models on one platform
- Infrastructure built for growing application and decisioning volume
- Support for embedded and partner-originated channels alongside direct lending
- Configurable workflows that reduce the need for separate systems

Ask whether growth in products or volume introduces new systems, new manual steps, or pricing constraints you haven't accounted for. More offerings shouldn't mean more operational overhead.

## Vendor Support and Implementation Experience

The buying and onboarding process is just the beginning, and it's usually a preview of ongoing support. Slow answers and unclear ownership during evaluation usually turn into missed go-live dates and unresolved tickets after launch.

**Look for:**

- Responsive, knowledgeable support through sales and implementation
- An implementation plan with named owners, milestones, and dates
- A realistic approach to data migration from your current system
- Defined support tiers, response times, escalation paths, and a committed uptime figure

Ask who you'll work with day to day after go-live, what your team can manage independently, and how quickly issues typically get resolved.

## Red Flags to Watch For

Most LOS buyers' remorse traces back to something that was visible during evaluation and easy to talk past. Watch for these potential red flags before you shortlist:

- The demo only ever shows a perfect application, never a messy one
- Key answers come back as "that's on the roadmap"
- Every change your team wants routes through professional services
- The integration list is a wall of logos rather than live, maintained connections
- Nobody can tell you what a change costs, in dollars or in weeks
- The story stops at funding, with no clear path into servicing
- A decision gets shown without the data, rules, and thresholds behind it
- The implementation plan has no named owners or dates on it
- Reference customers run different products at a different scale
- Pricing gets higher exactly where your growth plan gets better

None of these are automatic disqualifiers. Each one just deserves a straight answer before signature, since all of them get more expensive to discover afterward.

# Questions To Ask Vendors During Evaluation

**Bring the same core questions to every vendor conversation so you can compare responses consistently.**

## Automation and Decisioning

- Which parts of origination are automated end to end?
- Where is manual intervention still required?
- How are exceptions and referrals identified and routed to staff?
- Can we see and adjust the criteria behind an automated decision?

## Borrower Experience

- What does the application look like across mobile, web, partner, and embedded channels?
- How does the platform reduce application abandonment?
- How quickly can an applicant get a decision and complete acceptance?

## Configurability

- What can business users change without coding or vendor support?
- How long does it take to launch a new credit product?
- How are rule and workflow changes tested, tracked, and controlled?

## Integration and Data

- Which of our required integrations are running in production today?
- Which require additional implementation work, and on whose timeline?
- How does the platform connect origination with servicing and collections?

## Compliance and Controls

- How are decisions documented for audit and examination?
- Can we reconstruct the inputs, rules, and actions behind a decision?
- What actions are captured in the audit trail?
- How does the platform handle adverse action requirements?

## Scalability

- Can we add products, channels, or regions without implementing another platform?
- How does the platform handle increases in application volume?
- Are there architectural or pricing limits we should understand before scaling?

## Implementation and Support

- What does a typical implementation include?
- How do you approach data migration from our current system?
- What training is provided before go-live?
- What does day-to-day support look like after go-live, including response times and escalation paths?

# Total Cost Of Ownership

**Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) extends well beyond the license fee. When comparing vendors, account for:**

- Subscription or licensing costs, and what drives them as you grow
- Implementation and configuration
- Data migration
- Integrations, including third-party data costs
- Training and support
- Ongoing maintenance or professional services
- Internal IT resources
- Manual work that remains after implementation

Also consider the cost of change. How much effort does it take to launch a credit product, adjust a scoring rule, add a data provider, revise an application flow, or open a new channel?

Consider the cost of speed – or lack thereof. Applications lost to slow decisions are a real expense that never appears on an invoice.

The lowest initial software price rarely produces the lowest long-term operating cost.



# Vendor Comparison Scorecard

Compare vendors against the requirements that matter most to your organization.

Score each vendor from 1 to 5, where 1 does not meet requirements and 5 strongly exceeds them.

| Criteria | Weight | Vendor 1 | Vendor 2 | TurnKey Lender |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| End-to-end origination automation | 15% | | | ✓ |
| Underwriting and decisioning control | 15% | | | ✓ |
| Configurability and product launch speed | 15% | | | ✓ |
| Integration and lifecycle fit | 15% | | | ✓ |
| Borrower experience and conversion | 10% | | | ✓ |
| Compliance, audit, and controls | 10% | | | ✓ |
| Implementation and migration | 10% | | | ✓ |
| Total cost of ownership | 5% | | | ✓ |
| Scalability and growth support | 5% | | | ✓ |
| **Total** | **100%** | | | ✓ |

Adjust the weights before vendor evaluations begin, so the score reflects your actual priorities rather than whichever vendor gives the strongest demo.

# How TurnKey Lender Approaches Loan Origination

Most LOS vendors can list intake, underwriting, decisioning, documentation, and funding, but they're often separate capabilities. With TurnKey Lender, those pieces run as one configurable platform. There are no separate modules to stitch together and rebuild every time a product, policy, or requirement changes.

That means lending teams can launch a product, adjust a credit rule, or open a new channel by reconfiguring the platform they already have, instead of commissioning a new one.

## Key Capabilities + Outcomes Include:

- Configurable application flows across online, mobile, in-branch, partner, and embedded channels, so new borrower journeys don't require a separate intake build
- Advanced collection scoring with adjustable criteria and rules, so credit teams can see how decisions are made and keep control of lending policy
- Automated verification and documentation, including document collection, e-signature, and KYC/AML checks inside the application flow, so applicants get an answer while they still care
- Business-user configuration of products, terms, fees, scoring criteria, and approval hierarchies, so a new product takes weeks instead of quarters
- Decision records and audit trails covering the data, rules, and approvals behind each outcome, so examiner questions get answered in minutes rather than rebuilt from screenshots
- Connected origination, servicing, and collections on one borrower record, so nobody rekeys a funded loan and balances don't drift between systems
- Consumer and commercial lending on one platform, so growth doesn't mean standing up a parallel origination system
- REST-based APIs and integrations across credit bureaus, KYC, fraud, payments, accounting, CRM, e-signature providers, and open banking (like Plaid) so data moves without manual reconciliation
- Tiered technical support with defined response times, an escalation path, and a 99% uptime SLA, so issues get resolved instead of stalling originations

**The all-in-one platform is designed to automate routine work while keeping credit policy, exceptions, and business rules under the lender's control as requirements change. We call it our human-in-the-loop approach.**

## Customer Example: SAMBAT Finance

As application volume increased, SAMBAT Finance needed a way to scale lending operations without expanding manual processes. Existing workflows created delays that limited how quickly applications could be reviewed and funded.

After implementing TurnKey Lender, the company automated key origination and decisioning processes and streamlined the path from application to approval, **doubled loan volume and reduced processing time by 75%.**




**Read the full case study →**

## Next Steps

Choosing a loan origination system is ultimately a decision about how your lending operation will work tomorrow, not just which features you need today. The right platform should help you move faster without giving up control, automate routine work, give your team visibility into every decision, adapt as products and policies change, and connect origination to the rest of the lending lifecycle

Use the criteria and questions in this guide to pressure-test each vendor. Look beyond the demo to understand what your team can change, where manual work remains, how decisions are documented, and what growth will really cost.

## See how TurnKey Lender puts these principles into practice.

Schedule a time to learn how TurnKey Lender connects application intake, underwriting, decisioning, documentation, funding, servicing, and collections on one configurable platform.

**Schedule a Demo**

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