

A woman in a blue uniform, yellow hard hat, and safety glasses is working on a computer. She is looking at the screen and has her hand on the mouse. The image is split diagonally, with the left side showing her and the right side being white with text.

Guide

Build vs. Buy

Why Creating Your
Solution In-House Delivers
Risk Without Reward



Introduction

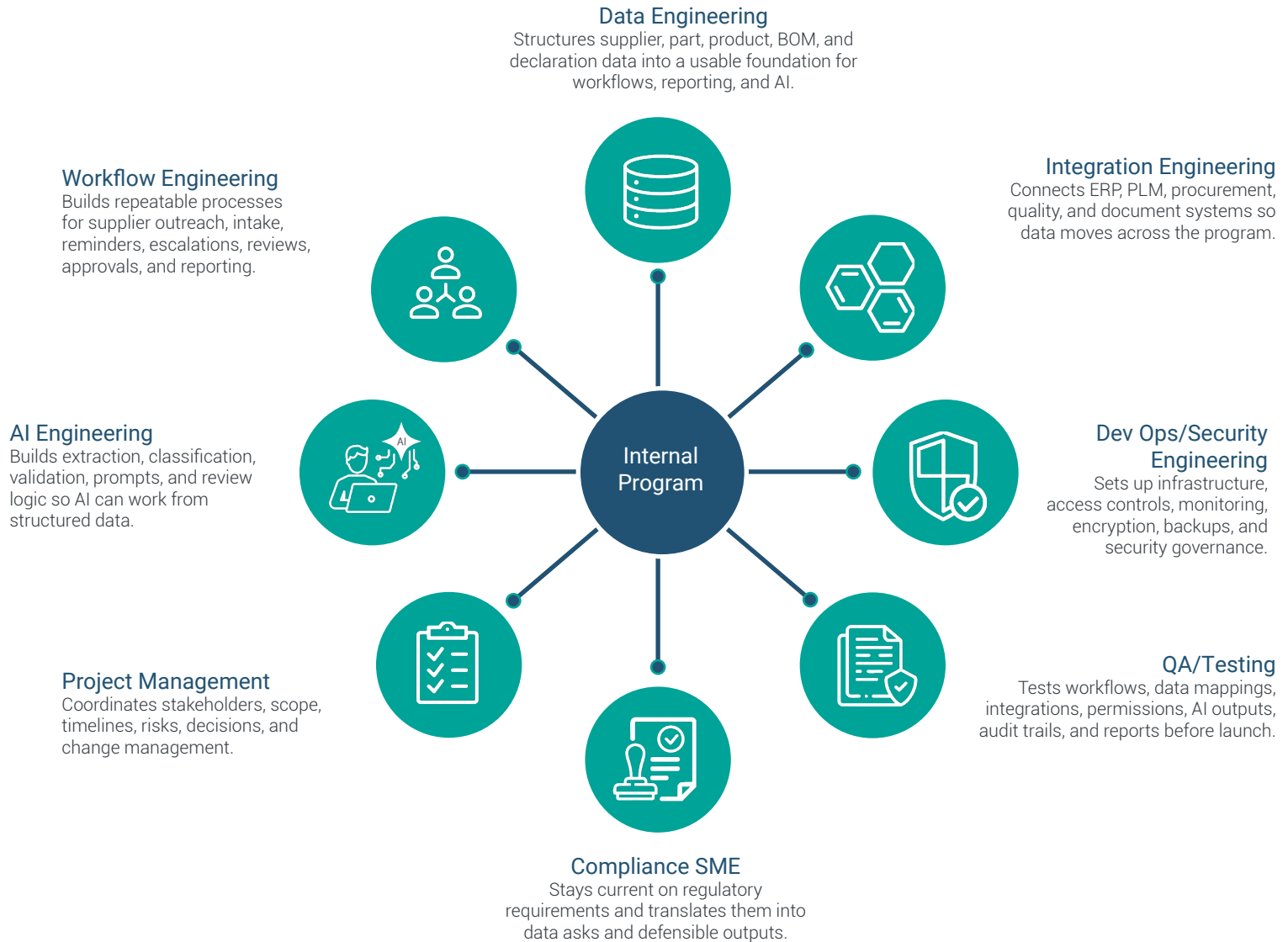
Building your own compliance solution, even in the age of AI, does not reduce supply chain complexity or risk. It transfers the burden of managing both onto your team permanently.

AI only optimizes what already exists. If your tools rely on incomplete data, disconnected systems, and insights limited to your own business, they're built on a weak foundation. Workflow automation may help teams move faster at first, but generic AI cannot provide the network intelligence, regulatory expertise, supplier engagement, or support needed to eliminate risk at the source and at scale.

This guide breaks down what it takes to build and maintain an internal compliance program, and why that path is costly, risky, and difficult to sustain. It also demonstrates how Assent brings together AI-native software, a global supplier data network, dedicated regulatory expertise, and a supplier engagement engine to deliver risk reduction at scale for manufacturers and distributors with complex supply chains



Build Internally: Initial FTE Responsibilities



Note: This chart details the responsibilities required to build an internal compliance program. It does not factor in long-term operational burden, annual run costs, or ongoing updates required to keep pace with changing requirements.



Running Your Program After the Initial Build

Building your program internally isn't a one-time expense. It is an ongoing cost center and operational burden for your business, and every gap becomes a risk that could escalate. Your business must be prepared to shoulder the costs and resources required to maintain your program's data foundation, workflows, integrations, security model, regulatory logic, AI tools, and testing process. Your internal team needs to be prepared to handle these additional tasks to keep your program running year-over-year:

- **Cloud Storage:** Stores supplier submissions, declarations, evidence, audit history, reports, and system data. You need to manage capacity, retention, access, backups, and cost controls.
- **AI/OCR/Token Usage:** Powers document extraction, classification, summarization, and workflow automation. You need to monitor usage, tune prompts/models, validate outputs, and control spend.
- **Security Monitoring/Tooling/Usage:** Protects sensitive supplier, product, and compliance data. You need to manage permissions, alerts, logging, vulnerability reviews, uptime, and incident response.
- **Integration/Middleware/Connectors:** Keeps ERP, PLM, procurement, quality, and reporting systems connected. You need to maintain APIs, troubleshoot failures, update mappings, and manage system changes.

Building vs. Partnering With Assent

As requirements from customers and regulators continue to grow, organizations also need programs that deliver deep risk reduction, stronger supplier engagement, and the confidence to stay ahead of complexity. That's where Assent comes in.

"One of the biggest challenges for any company is collecting data from the supply chain. Assent automatically does that for us. We barely need to lift a finger."

—Austin Robinson, Global Corporate Sustainability Manager, Essex Solutions





Program Need	Internal Program Risk	Partnering With Assent
Trusted data foundation	AI built on weak internal data provides answers that aren't reliable and still require heavy review before teams can use or defend them.	Assent helps collect, structure, validate, and maintain supplier, part, product, and BOM data for stronger program decisions.
Actionable risk insights	Data visibility that is limited to your business results in missed early risk signals across suppliers, parts, products, and regulations.	The Assent Sustainability Network is the largest part, product, and supplier data network in the world, giving you access to current, reliable information that cannot be obtained anywhere else.
Supplier engagement and education	If internal teams own every request and follow-up, supplier fatigue grows, response rates slow, and data gaps become harder to close.	Assent provides structured outreach, multilingual supplier support, education, and response reuse to improve participation and data quality.
Regulatory expertise	If teams miss or misinterpret a changing requirement, they could send the wrong supplier request, produce weak reporting, or delay a customer response.	Assent provides regulatory and program expertise across 100+ topics to help teams keep pace with changing requirements.
Centralized data access	If program data lives across spreadsheets, inboxes, and disconnected systems, teams cannot easily validate it or identify gaps. This also makes it difficult to maintain your data as internal owners leave or priorities shift.	Assent centralizes program data, supplier activity, declaration history, and reporting, and delivers audit-ready outputs your whole team can access.




Assent's AI Gives You a Competitive Edge

AI needs data that is current, accurate, and reliable to deliver meaningful value.

In order for AI to become a strategic advantage, it needs to be able to leverage network intelligence to identify patterns, surface risks, and generate recommendations that are applicable to your business. Assent's AI is trained on a decade of validated supplier declarations, regulatory and program best-practices, and real-time audit trails. It doesn't just extract — it knows when something looks wrong, can fill in gaps, and recommends the right course of action based on patterns across thousands of similar businesses.

"[Assent's] AI helps me with the data that I've put into the platform. With the newer declarations that come up, it ... tells me a new SVHC chemical has been added. Do you want to comply now? And I just do it even before the customer asks me to do it."

—Jessica Adams, Quality Technician, Durex Industries



Learn how to leverage AI to mitigate your supply chain risk in our guide, *Accelerating Risk Reduction With Artificial Intelligence*.

[Download Guide](#)



Technical Considerations for IT Leaders

Your team may be able to stand up an internal system, but do you have the data foundation, regulatory expertise, and capacity to keep it accurate, secure, current, and defensible at scale? And the budget to maintain this?

Your team will need to address the following considerations in addition to the program build:

- **Data architecture:** Bad data models create bad workflows, reports, and AI outputs.
- **Integration stability:** ERP, PLM, procurement, quality, and reporting connections need constant maintenance.
- **AI cost and governance:** Token usage, model behavior, extraction accuracy, and review rules need active oversight.
- **Security and access:** Supplier, product, and compliance data requires enterprise-grade controls.
- **Scalability:** Supplier volume, customer requests, documents, users, and reporting needs will keep growing.
- **Auditability:** Every output needs source data, version history, decision logic, and user activity behind it.
- **Technical debt:** Every custom workflow, connector, rule, and AI process becomes IT's problem to support.



The Assent ROI

Your business needs a scalable compliance solution that fits your needs, protecting you from risk today and quickly delivering ROI. Assent is the only AI-native supply chain data management solution that delivers the data foundation and network intelligence needed to reduce risk, cut your overall costs, and support long-term program success.

With implementation averaging less than three months, our customers start seeing value on day one through access to network intelligence, regulatory and program expertise, and supplier engagement and support for stronger data.

The Assent Sustainability Platform:

- Centralizes and validates your supply chain data, improving completeness and accuracy over time
- Supports audit readiness and program scalability
- Reduces manual rework and increases efficiency
- Delivers regulatory and program expertise
- Engages suppliers at scale with structured workflows and multilingual support
- Offers managed services and support tailored to your program
- And more

With Assent, GE Appliances saw:

- 55% reduction in time spent on manual due diligence
- 90% reduction in time spent reporting
- \$400,000 saved annually

[Read the Case Study](#)

Your organization can't sustain the complexity, risk, and long-term costs associated with building your own program, and you shouldn't have to. As requirements evolve and supply chains expand, Assent is the solution that helps you meet requirements and eliminate risk.

[Book a Demo](#)





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