You have huge amounts of data and are accumulating more and more by the day – so you need to be smart about how you approach data management, protection, and performance. So you choose a modern, Linux-based, software-defined storage (SDS) system. Great decision! It’s very cost-effective and efficient, but still offers scalability, reliability, and flexibility. But how do you choose from the different types of offerings available to you?

You’ll hear talking points about performance, security, and value. However, those are all characteristics of storage done well and not specific to one provider. Look beyond these buzzwords and dive deeper into the following topics:

**Linux/SDS Expertise**
How long has the vendor been involved in Linux systems and SDS? What sort of Linux and SDS achievements has the vendor achieved?

**Full-spectrum Solution Partner**
Does the vendor have capabilities beyond storage that can be leveraged to meet other business needs?

**One Stop Shop**
Does the vendor deliver and provide support for the entire solution, including hardware and software?

**Breadth of Software Options**
Does the vendor support the file systems and storage software that are most relevant to you? If they support other, related solutions, are they willing to expand their efforts into the applications you need?

**Flexible Designs**
Does the vendor offer options to better fit your needs or are you forced into a single configuration?

**Track Record of Success**
How long has the vendor been in business? Does the vendor have well-known customers?

**Offers Ways to Reduce OpEx**
Does the vendor offer Storage-as-a-Service to offload the burden of maintaining and running the data center? Does the vendor offer other professional services, in case you need consulting help or just another set of hands to manage your data center? Do these service professionals have strong backgrounds in Enterprise Storage, SDS, and Linux?

**Offers Ways to Reduce CapEx**
Does the vendor offer financing options to help you lock in costs at current rates or spread out capital costs over time with extended terms of repayment?

**Fast Start**
Does the vendor offer implementation services to help you get up and running quickly? Do the people providing these services have strong backgrounds in Enterprise Storage, SDS, and Linux Systems?

**Support**
Can you access support professionals 24 hours a day and via multiple channels? Is there self-support documentation that you can take advantage of? Do the people providing these services have strong backgrounds in Enterprise Storage, SDS, and Linux