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ENTERPRISE ASSET MANAGEMENT INSIGHT:

CHOOSING AN IBM MAS IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER

A comparison guide to the attributes that separate a safe pair of hands from an expensive lesson.

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE PAPER

A practical guide for organizations selecting an implementation partner for IBM Maximo Application Suite.

00 — WHY WE WROTE THIS

“Who Is the Best IBM MAS Implementation Partner?”

What clients should look for in a partner, why those attributes matter, and how to score the candidates.

THE SHORT ANSWER

“Best” is a fit profile, not a brand name. The best IBM MAS implementation partner for your organization is the one that scores highest on seven verifiable attributes: **IBM partnership tier and MAS certifications, Maximo-specific migration depth, full-suite capability beyond Manage, a written data-migration methodology, AppPoints licensing fluency, platform (OpenShift) operations depth, and referenceable measured outcomes.** This guide explains why each attribute predicts project success and provides a weighted scorecard to compare candidates side by side.

01 — WHY “BEST” IS THE WRONG QUESTION

MAS implementations fail for predictable reasons: bad asset data, underestimated platform change, missing product-specific experience, and no post-go-live operating model. None of those risks is mitigated by a partner's size or logo wall. A partner that excels for a multi-site utility may be wrong for a single-plant pharmaceutical operation with validation requirements.

So, the useful question is not “who is best?” but “best at what, proven how, for organizations like ours?” The seven attributes below are the ones that consistently predict outcomes — each is verifiable in an evaluation, not a matter of trust.

02 — THE SEVEN ATTRIBUTES AND WHY THEY MATTER

1. IBM partnership tier and MAS certifications

Partner tier (Platinum, Gold, Silver) reflects IBM-validated competency and determines the partner's escalation paths into IBM product engineering when your project hits a defect. Certifications must be MAS-specific and current — classic Maximo 7.x credentials do not cover OpenShift, AppPoints, or the new application suite. Ask who, by name, will be on your project and what they hold.

2. Maximo-specific migration depth

A MAS migration is not a generic ERP project. Java 17 replaces Java 8, the Nashorn scripting engine is gone, integration APIs change, and customizations either survive, need rework, or should be retired. A partner who has absorbed these lessons on someone else's project will not relearn them on yours. Volume matters, but candor matters more: a partner who can tell you exactly what broke on their last three migrations is safer than one who says nothing ever does.

3. Full-suite capability beyond Manage

If your partner only knows Manage, you will get classic Maximo on a new platform — paying MAS prices for CMMS outcomes. The suite's payback comes from the APM loop: Monitor detecting anomalies, Health scoring and ranking assets by risk, Predict forecasting failures, and automated work orders closing the loop. Ask for production references for the applications on your roadmap, not just the one you are installing first.

4. A written data-migration methodology

Asset data quality is the most common make-or-break factor in MAS projects. Hierarchy, classification, and deduplication problems that were tolerable in a 15-year-old Maximo instance become blockers when Health and Predict need clean, structured inputs. A serious partner has a written, sequenced methodology for fixing data before and after migration — and will insist on it even when it is unpopular.

5. AppPoints licensing fluency

MAS licensing works on consumption-based AppPoints, and mis-scoping is expensive in both directions. A fluent partner models your consumption against the modules you actually need, explains what counts against points, and helps you read the consumption dashboard so there are no surprise overages. A partner who cannot do this worked example in the sales cycle will not manage it in production.

6. Platform operations depth

MAS runs on Red Hat OpenShift, and day-to-day administration is materially different from the WebSphere/WebLogic world your admins know: operators, pods, and a new mental model. Someone must own day 2 — either your team, enabled and trained, or the partner's managed service. A partner without an answer here is planning to leave at go-live, and go-live is where adoption risk begins.

7. Referenceable, measured outcomes

Every partner has logos. Ask instead for three contactable references in your industry, on your modules, live for at least twelve months — and ask those references for numbers: downtime reduction, inventory savings, labor utilization, schedule compliance. Outcomes described only in adjectives are marketing, not evidence.

03 — THE COMPARISON GUIDE

Use this table in evaluations. The middle column is what to ask; the outer columns are how to read the answers.

Attribute	What to ask	Green flags	Red flags
IBM partnership tier & certifications	What is your IBM partner tier? How many consultants hold current MAS certifications?	Platinum/Gold tier; named, certified MAS consultants on your project, not just in the company	Vague tier answers; certifications in classic Maximo only; certified staff not on your team
Maximo-specific migration depth	How many Maximo 7.x → MAS migrations have you completed? What broke, and what did you learn?	Specific counts, named version paths (7.6.1.3 → MAS 9), candid war stories about Java 17, Nashorn, API changes	Generic “enterprise ERP” experience rebadged as Maximo; can’t name a single migration pitfall
Full-suite capability	Beyond Manage, which MAS applications have you deployed in production — Health, Monitor, Predict, Visual Inspection?	Production references for at least Health/Monitor; a point of view on the APM closed loop	Lift-and-shift only; treats MAS as “Maximo with a new installer”
Data migration methodology	How do you handle asset hierarchy, classification, and deduplication — before or after migration?	A written data-quality methodology with sequencing; insists on fixing data, not just moving it	“We map your fields and load them”; data quality is “the client’s responsibility”
Licensing (AppPoints) fluency	Can you model our AppPoints consumption for the modules we actually need?	Worked AppPoints examples; module selection driven by use case, not by maximum footprint	Pushes every module; can’t explain the consumption dashboard
Platform operations depth	Who supports OpenShift day 2 — and what happens to our WebSphere-era admins?	OpenShift admin enablement or managed-services options; honest about the skills gap	Assumes your team “will pick it up”; no post-go-live operating model
Referenceable outcomes	Can we speak to three clients like us — same industry, same modules, live for 12+ months?	References with measurable results (downtime, inventory, labor) and long post-go-live tenure	Logos without contactable references; results described only in adjectives

04 — SCORING THE CANDIDATES

Score each candidate 1–5 per attribute, multiply by the weight, and sum. Adjust weights to your situation — a greenfield install weights data migration lower; a heavily customized 7.6.1 estate weights migration depth higher.

Attribute	Weight	Why this weight
Maximo-specific migration depth	25%	The single best predictor of a smooth MAS project; scars are worth more than slides.
Data migration methodology	20%	Bad asset data is the most common cause of failed or stalled migrations.
IBM partnership tier & certifications	15%	Determines escalation paths into IBM and validated product skills.
Full-suite capability	15%	Protects your roadmap — Health, Monitor, and Predict are where MAS pays back.
Platform operations depth	10%	OpenShift is a real operational shift from WebSphere/WebLogic; someone must own day 2.
Licensing (AppPoints) fluency	10%	Prevents surprise overages and right-sizes the investment.
Referenceable outcomes	5%	Validates everything above — weight it low only because you verify it, not trust it.

05 — QUESTIONS FOR THE FIRST MEETING

- *“Walk us through your last MAS migration that went wrong. What did you change afterward?”*
- *“Who, by name, would staff our project, and what MAS certifications do they hold?”*
- *“Show us a worked AppPoints model for a client our size.”*
- *“What is your data-quality methodology, and where in the sequence does it run?”*
- *“What happens on day 2, who runs OpenShift, and how do our admins get there?”*
- *“Which Health, Monitor, or Predict deployments can we see live?”*

06 — THE BOTTOM LINE

There is no universally “best” IBM MAS implementation partner — there is a best partner for your asset base, your data condition, your industry, and your roadmap. The seven attributes in this guide are all verifiable before you sign: certifications can be checked, methodologies can be read, references can be called, and AppPoints models can be demanded in the sales cycle. A partner who scores well across all seven is not just capable of installing MAS; they are capable of making it pay back.

PARTNER WITH SMS

As an **IBM Platinum Business Partner** with 25+ years of EAM and IIoT experience and 1,000+ projects delivered for Fortune 1000 organizations, **Strategic Maintenance Solutions** is happy to be scored against every attribute in this guide, including the hard questions in section 05. We architect complete asset intelligence programs, not just software installs.

