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What to Look for in a CIS Benchmarks Automation Solution Before You Buy

CIS Benchmarks provide a powerful framework for securing your systems, but implementing and maintaining them manually can drain resources and slow down teams. The right automation solution should simplify that process.

Here's a checklist to help you evaluate CIS Benchmarks automation solutions before making an investment:

- ☑ 1. Native CIS Benchmarks Support
- ☑ 2. Agentless, Scalable Architecture
- ☑ 3. Integration with Existing Tools
- ☑ 4. Time-to-Value
- ☑ 5. Reduction in Manual Work
- ☑ 6. Real-Time Visibility and Reporting
- ☑ 7. Security, Auditability, and Traceability
- ☑ 8. Cost-Effectiveness
- ☑ 9. Vendor Expertise and Support
- ☑ 10. Clear Roadmap for Adoption

1. Native CIS Benchmarks Support

- Does the solution include built-in content for the full range of CIS Benchmarks (OS such as Windows and Linux, applications, databases, etc.)?
- Is the content updated in sync with the latest CIS Benchmarks releases?
- Can you easily customize or tailor policies to your environment?

2. Agentless, Scalable Architecture

- Does the solution require endpoint agents or complex installs?
- Is it designed to scale across hybrid, multi-cloud, and on-premise environments?
- Can it handle air-gapped or disconnected environments (especially important for regulated industries)?

3. Integration with Existing Solutions

- Does it integrate with your SIEM, ticketing, asset management, or CMDB solutions?
- Can it export results into formats used by your compliance or auditing teams?
- Does it support integrations with ServiceNow, Splunk, Xacta, or Tenable?

4. Time-to-Value

- How long does it take to go from deployment to measurable compliance?
- Is there a "Day 1" experience that allows teams to start remediating immediately?
- Can you test the solution in a sandbox or limited environment before full rollout?

5. Reduction in Manual Work

- Does the platform automate both assessment and remediation?
- Can it show side-by-side comparisons of before/after compliance states?
- Will it eliminate or reduce reliance on manual scripts, checklists, or SMEs?

6. Real-Time Visibility and Reporting

- Does it provide dashboards with real-time compliance status?
- Can reports be customized for auditors, leadership, and technical staff?
- Is there a centralized console to monitor remediation progress and drift?

7. Security, Auditability, and Traceability

- Is every change tracked and auditable?
- Does it help you maintain a provable chain of compliance for regulators?
- Can you schedule recurring scans or auto-remediation to ensure continuous compliance?

8. Cost-Effectiveness

- How does the price of the solution compare to the cost of hiring outside CIS experts or consultants?
- Does the licensing model fit your organization's size and deployment footprint?
- Can the vendor demonstrate ROI (time savings, audit prep, staffing reduction)?

9. Vendor Expertise and Support

- Does the vendor specialize in CIS Benchmarks or broader compliance automation?
- Do they offer expert onboarding, customer success support, and knowledge resources?
- Are they recognized by organizations like CIS or industry analysts?

10. Clear Roadmap for Adoption

- Is there a step-by-step path for implementing automation quickly and safely?
- Does the vendor provide documentation, templates, or guides to accelerate rollout?
- For example, does the company offer a "100 Days to CIS Benchmarks Implementation" guide to help structure your rollout?

The right CIS Benchmarks automation solution is about making compliance sustainable, efficient, and audit-ready every single day. Use this checklist to guide your evaluation process and choose a solution that sets you up for long-term security success.

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