

The Payments Advantage

How payments create retention, commercial value and competitive advantage



About Ezidebit

Ezidebit is a trusted payments provider that has helped over 60,000 businesses across Australia and New Zealand manage payments with confidence. Powered by Global Payments since 2014, its secure Level 1 Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) certified platform supports direct debit, BPAY, PayTo, phone, online and in-person payments through a single, scalable payments layer.

Designed with software platforms in mind, Ezidebit works closely with integrated software vendors (ISVs) to embed payments into their products in a way that reduces complexity, supports growth and protects customer experience. With 100 software integrations across industries including health, fitness, education, childcare and real estate, Ezidebit enables software companies and their merchants to streamline workflows, improve cash flow, lower administration and deliver consistent, trusted payment experiences at scale.



About Global Payments

Global Payments (NYSE: GPN) is a leading payment technology and software company that powers commerce for businesses of all sizes worldwide. We help businesses grow with confidence by delivering innovative solutions that enable seamless payment acceptance, smarter operations and exceptional client experiences — online, in store and everywhere in between. With its global reach, local expertise and scale, Global Payments manages trillions in payments volume and billions of transactions across more than 175 countries. Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, Global Payments is a Fortune 500® company and a member of the S&P 500. Learn more at company.globalpayments.com.

Acknowledgement

Ezidebit acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Sources

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What this guide gives you

This guide helps software companies understand how payments are shifting from an operational feature to a source of competitive advantage.

It builds on the Customer Experience (CX) foundation in the **Ezidebit Payment Playbook** and dives deeper into how unified payments shape retention, differentiation and long-term value.

Why payments matter beyond CX

This guide helps software companies understand how payments are shifting from an operational feature to a source of competitive advantage.

How to use this guide

Each section builds from insight to implication, helping you:

- Understand the structural shift
- See where advantage forms
- Identify where to act

You can read end to end, pick out the sections most relevant to your priorities, or jump straight to the **Payment Advantage Path** to identify your next move.

Section 1

Why software advantage is getting harder to defend

Feature advantage is no longer durable

For years, software and Software as a Service (SaaS) platforms built an advantage by adding more features, faster than competitors. That model is becoming harder to sustain. Feature sets can be replicated. Interfaces can be improved. Pricing can be matched. What is much harder to replicate is how deeply a platform supports the day-to-day workflows of a business.

Advantage is no longer defined by what a product can do. It's defined by how effectively it becomes part of how work gets done.

Software is now part of how businesses operate

Software has shifted from a supporting tool to the environment where work happens. In Australia, businesses report that management software is more important today than it was 3–5 years ago. This reinforces the growing reliance on platforms to support core operational processes. Yet despite this growing reliance, satisfaction with payments remains low — with only 18% of Australian businesses highly satisfied with their payments experience.

At the same time, operating environments are becoming more complex with businesses now using an average of around 16 SaaS applications, fragmenting workflows and data across systems. This fragmentation increases operational effort and slows platform evolution — particularly where payments sit across disconnected systems, a pattern explored in our analysis of how fragmented payments systems slow delivery and scale.

Payments-related capabilities are already among the top drivers of software switching, with businesses seeking better visibility, control and integration within their financial workflows.

Value is shifting from features to operations

As complexity increases, expectations shift. Businesses are no longer prioritising feature depth alone. They value platforms that improve visibility and simplify how work flows across systems.

Merchant behaviour reflects this shift: 82% prioritise integrated functionality and 76% prioritise reconciliation and reporting — while only 31% prioritise fees and pricing. More significantly, 58% of businesses would accept higher fees for a better payment experience.

This signals a change in how value is assessed.

What this means for ISVs

Differentiation is no longer feature-driven. It's built by embedding into operational workflows — where transactions, decisions and reporting happen.

This is where payments become strategically important.

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“Paying bills isn't sexy and it's not exciting - but it should be easy. If [childcare] operators don't have comprehensive visibility over their bookings, billing and cash flow - they're going to run into [some] efficiency problems.”



FullyBooked

Businesses prioritise operational capabilities over price



Integrated
functionality

82%



Reconciliation
and reporting

76%



Customer
experience

71%



Fees and
pricing

31%

Source: [Worldpay Merchant Payment Experience report](#)



Section 2

Why payments behave differently

Payments sit at the centre of financial operations

Most software features are relatively easy to adopt — and relatively easy to replace. Payments are different. When a business chooses how it accepts and manages payments, it's not just selecting functionality. It's putting in place the system that controls how revenue flows, how cash is received and how financial data is captured and reported.

As a result, payments sit much closer to the core of the business than most other product capabilities, shaping how revenue flows and financial processes are managed. They don't just support operations — they create switching gravity and retention durability, making customer relationships harder to displace over time.

This creates a different level of dependency

Because payments underpin revenue collection and financial processes, they introduce a different level of dependency on the platform. Reliability becomes critical. Data handling must be secure and accurate. Performance must be consistent across multiple parts of the business.

Replacing a feature might involve configuration changes. Replacing a payments setup requires reworking how money moves through the organisation – increasing switching effort and reinforcing long-term retention once embedded.

This difference is reflected in switching behaviour and these are not incremental changes. They indicate that payments materially alter how long and how tightly customers remain connected to a platform. Creating a structural dynamic where switching becomes progressively harder over time.

Despite this, switching pressure is building with payment capabilities playing a central role in why businesses reassess their software providers.

Payments introduce operational trust

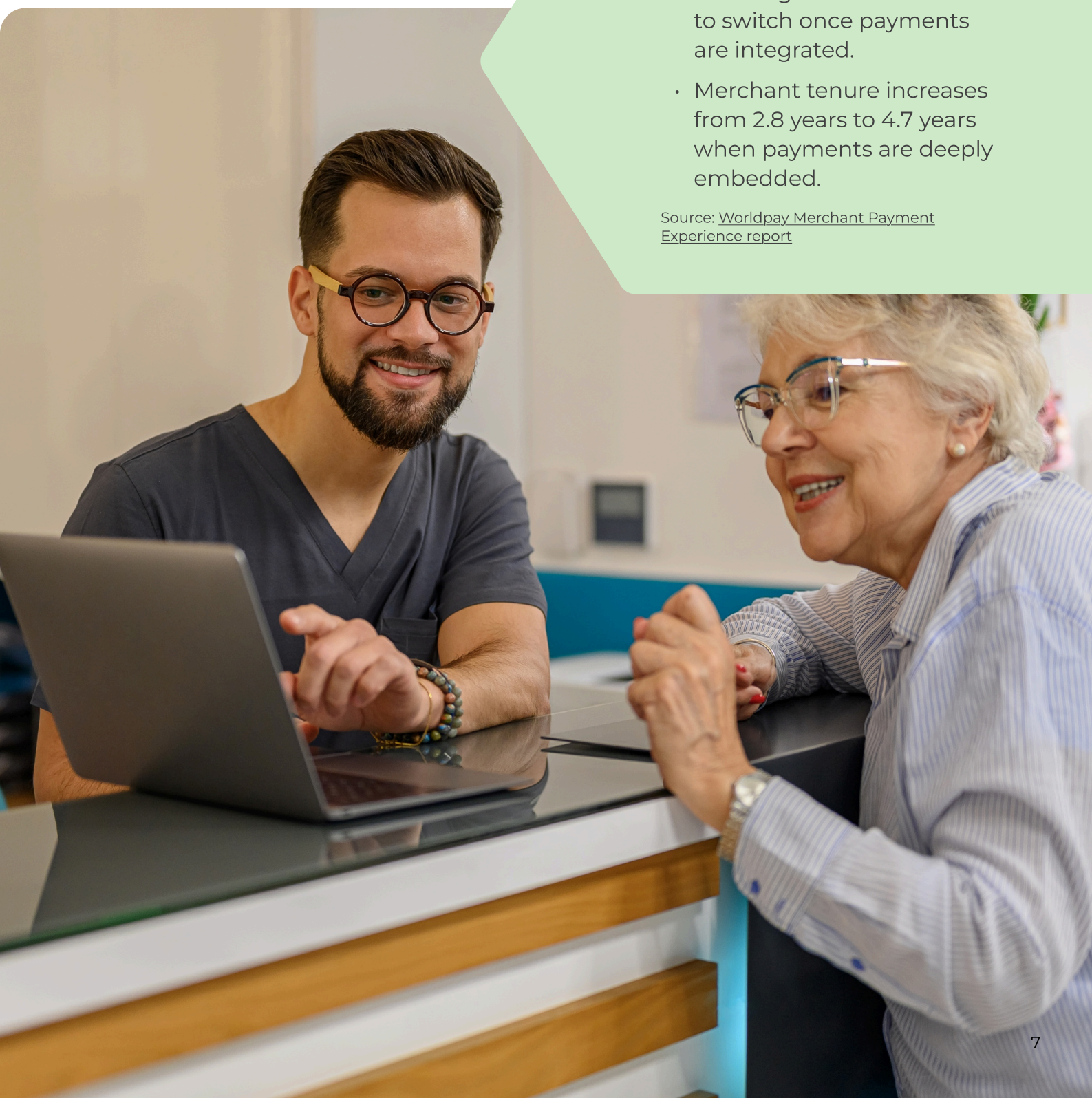
Payments are not just functional. They require reliability, consistency and confidence across multiple workflows. They influence:

- Revenue collection
- Cash flow timing
- Customer experience
- Financial reporting

This makes them more deeply embedded in how businesses operate — increasing reliance and reducing willingness to change.

What this means for ISVs

Embedded payments increase switching effort and risk, extend customer lifespan and elevate the importance of experience and reliability. This is a structural advantage rather than a feature advantage.

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop. The man, on the left, has a beard and glasses and is wearing a dark blue V-neck shirt. The woman, on the right, is older with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a light blue and white striped shirt. They are both smiling and looking at the laptop screen. The background is a blurred office or retail environment.

Integration creates measurable operational value

- 78% of merchants would need 'significant incentives' to switch once payments are integrated.
- Merchant tenure increases from 2.8 years to 4.7 years when payments are deeply embedded.

Source: [Worldpay Merchant Payment Experience report](#)

Section 3

Payments as an anchor capability

Advantage forms where workflows connect

If payments behave differently, where does that difference show up inside a product? It's not at the feature level — it's in how workflows connect. Once integrated, payments link the activities at the centre of how a business operates — from onboarding and transaction processing through to settlement, reconciliation, reporting and exception handling.

This level of connection addresses a common gap where businesses report fragmented workflows, limited visibility into payment data and low confidence in using available capabilities. As these connections deepen, payments begin to anchor multiple workflows together — increasing reliance on the platform and strengthening switching resistance over time.

What begins as a way to enable transactions quickly becomes part of a connected operational system.

Payments reshape how systems operate

Most software capabilities operate within a single workflow. Payments don't. Because they sit across multiple processes, they introduce dependencies between systems, data and day-to-day operations. Over time, this changes how those workflows are designed and managed.

Instead of adding isolated functionality, payments begin to coordinate how information flows, how actions are triggered and how outcomes are tracked across the platform. This is what elevates payments beyond a feature. They start to influence how work is structured.

Integration creates measurable operational value

- 82% of merchants prioritise unified reporting.
- 67% will pay more to reduce reconciliation efforts.

Source: [Worldpay Merchant Payment Experience report](#)

Platforms become the system of record

As these workflows become more connected, the role of the platform expands. It's no longer a tool used alongside other systems — it becomes the environment where operational activity, financial processes and reporting are managed together — reinforcing its role as a system of record and increasing long-term operational dependence.

This shift is increasingly visible across vertical SaaS, where platforms are becoming central systems that bring workflows and financial activity into a single experience. At this point, competitive advantage is no longer about adding more features. It's about how effectively the platform brings together the processes that businesses rely on to operate.

What this means for ISVs

Payments create advantage not by expanding what your product can do, but by strengthening how your product is used. Platforms that embed payments effectively:

- Connect high-value workflows across the customer lifecycle.
- Reduce operational friction between systems, data and processes.
- Become more central to how day-to-day work is managed.

This is where structural advantage begins to form — through operational reliance rather than feature expansion.

To understand how fragmented your current payment workflows are, you can assess your platform using the [Payment Fragmentation & Risk Scorecard](#).

How competitive advantage evolves

Competitive position	Feature provider	Workflow enabler	Payments connected	System of record
Primary value	Completes individual tasks	Connects activities	Coordinates operational and financial activity	Runs critical business operations
Customer relationship	Transactional	Regular use	Embedded into daily flows	Operational dependence
Differentiation	Feature-led	Workflow efficiency	Higher reliances and visibility	Platform becomes central to how work gets done
Risk	Easy to replace	Moderate switching friction	Growing switching resistance	High switching friction

Section 4

Retention dynamics

Retention is built through usage

Customer retention is often treated as a commercial outcome — something influenced by pricing, contracts, or customer success. The reality is it is shaped much earlier. Retention can be built through how consistently a platform is used inside daily operations. The more broadly it's used to complete critical tasks, the more embedded it becomes in how work gets done.

Over time, this creates a reinforcing effect: usage builds familiarity, processes become more efficient and the platform becomes part of the everyday workflow. This is where payments create retention durability — by embedding the platform into high-frequency, high-value workflows that are difficult to unwind.

Payment experience determines durability

Usage alone does not guarantee retention. The quality of the experience determines whether reliance strengthens or erodes. When payment experiences reduce friction — by improving visibility, simplifying reconciliation and supporting day-to-day activity — confidence builds. When they introduce complexity or inconsistency, friction accumulates.

Payment experience directly impacts retention

- Poor payment experiences are associated with 3.2x higher merchant churn rates.
- Every 10-point improvement in satisfaction reduces churn by 12%.

Source: [Worldpay Merchant Payment Experience report](#)

Retention strengthens over time

As usage increases and experience improves, reliance deepens. The platform is used more frequently, supports more processes and becomes more central to how the business operates. This compounds. More consistent usage strengthens reliance, greater reliance reduces churn risk and lower churn increases lifetime value. This reinforces a retention model that strengthens over time as reliance deepens. This progression is not driven by contracts or incentives. It's driven by how effectively the platform supports ongoing work.

What this means for ISVs

Payments don't just contribute to retention — they shape how it builds over time. Platforms that get this right:

- Increase usage by supporting high-frequency, high-value workflows.
- Reduce friction through consistent, reliable experiences.
- Strengthen customer relationships by improving day-to-day operations.

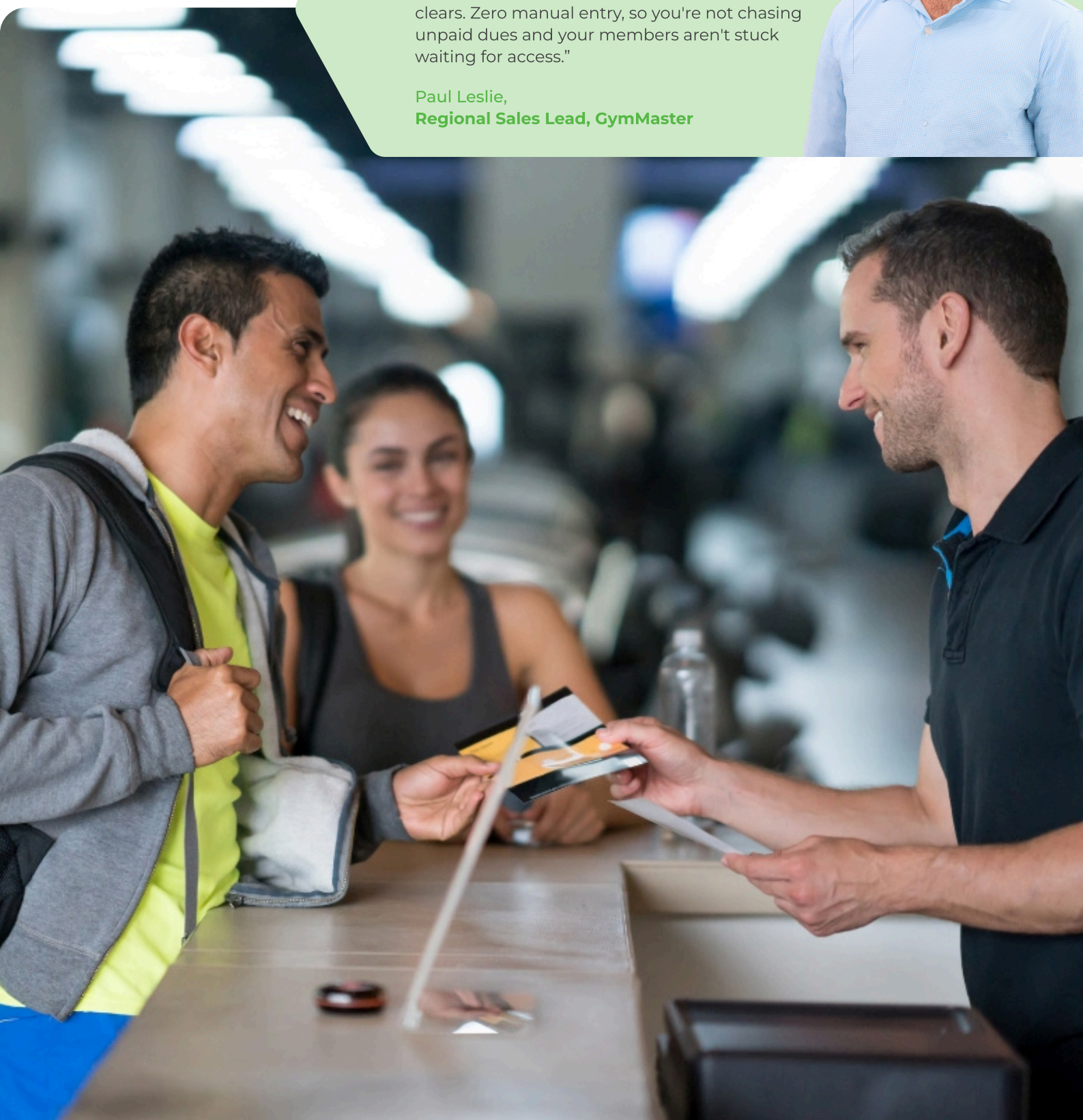
This is where long-term value is created — by turning consistent usage into sustained retention.

You can use the [Payment Experience Score diagnostic tool](#) to assess how your current experience is impacting retention and churn risk.

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"Ezidebit handles the friction points our customers struggle with: manual reconciliation, delayed member access, billing admin. With real-time payments and fast onboarding, members get immediate access after payment clears. Zero manual entry, so you're not chasing unpaid dues and your members aren't stuck waiting for access."

Paul Leslie,
Regional Sales Lead, GymMaster



Section 5

Where advantage shows up

Advantage becomes measurable

The impact of integrated payments is not limited to product experience or retention. At this point, payments-driven advantage becomes measurable — not just in experience, but in revenue quality, predictability and enterprise value.

It shows up in commercial performance, competitive positioning and enterprise value — making it visible at both product and board level.

Enterprise value increases

As payments become embedded within SaaS platforms, they change the quality of revenue those platforms generate. Platforms with integrated payments can command higher valuation multiples, reflecting more predictable revenue streams, stronger retention and deeper integration into customer operations.

And payments introduce a recurring, usage-linked revenue stream that scales as customers transact. Embedded payments can generate 2–5x more revenue per customer, shifting revenue from fixed SaaS fees to activity-driven income that grows alongside usage.

Platforms win more often

Payment experience is an increasingly deciding factor in competitive selection. Platforms that integrate payments effectively — reducing friction across workflows and improving visibility — are more likely to win in competitive situations. With superior payment experiences associated with higher win rates in competitive sales environments.

Market behaviour reinforces this shift

The importance of payments is reflected in how businesses evaluate and switch software providers. In Australia, switching decisions are increasingly shaped by gaps in payment experience and operational capability. Payment-related challenges — such as time spent managing systems, limited integration and gaps in visibility — play a central role in driving switching behaviour.

Payment-related challenges — including integration gaps, time spent managing systems and limited reporting visibility — are consistently cited as key drivers behind these decisions.

What this means for ISVs

Payments do more than improve experience — they reshape how value is created and measured. They:

- Increase revenue per customer
- Strengthen competitive positioning
- Improve revenue quality and predictability
- Contribute to higher enterprise value

This is where competitive advantage becomes visible — not just in how the product works, but in how the business performs.

Payments-driven advantage is measurable:

- 3–5x higher valuation multiples
- 2–5x more revenue per customer
- 41% higher win rates in competitive deals

Source: Worldpay Merchant Payment Experience report



Section 6

Map your payments advantage path

Turning insight into action

The pattern is clear. Payments behave differently to other software capabilities. When embedded well, they connect workflows, strengthen retention and contribute to measurable commercial outcomes. The question is no longer whether payments matter, but how to translate those capabilities into sustainable competitive advantage.

Building integrated payment functionality remains challenging. Research shows 64% of platforms lack the technical resources required to develop comprehensive payment capabilities, with delivery often requiring 8-14 developer months across onboarding, compliance, reporting and management.

The choice is no longer whether to embed payments. It is where to create differentiation and where to leverage specialist expertise.

Competitive advantage is created in the experience layer, where platforms own the customer relationship and define how payments support customer workflows. Execution at scale, however, requires infrastructure, compliance, security and ongoing optimisation.

As embedded finance matures, leading platforms are increasingly defining participation choices early, balancing customer experience ownership with partner-led enablement across the payments stack and determining where they can create the most value.

Leading platforms are increasingly defining participation choices early, determining where they should own the experience and where specialist partners can enable scale more effectively.

You design the experience. Your payments partner enables it at scale

Working with the right payments partner allows ISVs to accelerate execution without sacrificing control. Platforms can focus internal resources on innovation and differentiation while leveraging partners to provide the infrastructure, compliance and operational capabilities required to scale. In practice, this approach can reduce time-to-market by 60-75%.

What to do next

Use the decision tree to identify your next opportunity for growth, then book an ISV Strategy Session to map where payments can create competitive advantage within your platform.



"It's the most genuine partnership I've had. Esidebit helps us understand each feature fully, how it will benefit our customers and ensures we follow best-practice methodology. Having them on our side truly enhances our capabilities."

Emily Smart
CEO, Clubworx



What next? Map your payments advantage path

Answer four simple questions to identify your next move. Each path leads to actions that can help you create stronger retention, higher revenue and long-term value

01. Operational Integration

Are payments part of your customers' everyday workflows?

Customers can invoice, collect, reconcile and manage payments without leaving your platform. Payments feel like a natural part of the product experience rather than a separate process.

YES

IF NO

Your priority: Eliminate payment friction and unify workflows.

ISV best practice

Embed payments directly into customer workflows to reduce manual effort, improve adoption and create a more unified and connected experience.

Recommended model

PARTNER-LED
Simplify & unify

Focus:

- Fast deployment
- Merchant onboarding
- Compliance management
- Payment operations

Next steps: Complete the [Payment Fragmentation & Risk Scorecard](#)

02. Customer adoption

Do payments increase platform adoption and customer loyalty?

Can customers rely on your platform more frequently because payments help simplify day-to-day operations, reduce admin burden and improve convenience?

YES

IF NO

Your priority: Increase customer stickiness through better payment experiences.

ISV best practice

Design payment experiences that reduce effort for users, strengthen engagement and increase reliance on the platform.

Recommended model

HYBRID
Adopt & integrate

Focus:

- Own key customer workflows
- Partner for infrastructure and compliance
- Design differentiated payment experience

Next steps: Check out the [CX Payment Playbook](#)

03. Commercial impact

Are payments contributing to growth and revenue?

Payments help improve customer retention, increase revenue per customer, strengthen monetisation opportunities or create measurable commercial outcomes.

YES

IF NO

Your priority: Turn payments into a growth driver.

ISV best practice

Align payments strategy with commercial objectives to create stronger retention and revenue opportunities and higher customer lifetime value.

Recommended model

HYBRID PLUS
Monetise & differentiate

Focus:

- Revenue optimisation
- Customer expansion
- Workflow-led differentiation

Next steps: Get your [Payment Experience Score](#)

04. Strategic ownership

Has your platform become the operational hub for your customers?

Payments, reporting and operational data are central to how your customers manage and run their business through your platform.

YES

IF NO

Your priority: Become central to how merchants operate.

ISV best practice

Create deeper workflow ownership by connecting payments, reporting and operational processes into a single experience.

Recommended model

HYBRID PLUS
Operational leadership

Focus:

- Scale efficiently
- Improve operational performance
- Expand payment capabilities

Next steps: Download the [90-Day Unified Payments Workbook](#)

05. Competitive advantage



Your platform has evolved beyond payment processing to become a strategic driver of customer retention, revenue growth and differentiation.

Primary value: Runs critical business operations.

✓ ISV best practice

Payments embedded in workflows, improved loyalty, measurable commercial contribution, and operational ownership.

Recommended model

BUILD & PARTNER
Lead & scale

Focus:

- ✓ Own customer experience
- ✓ Own strategic workflow design
- ✓ Leverage partner infrastructure and compliance to scale

Next steps: Book an [ISV Strategy Workshop](#)

Turn payments into a competitive advantage

Explore how unified payments can strengthen your platform, improve retention and unlock new revenue opportunities.

Next steps:

Explore the [ISV Customer Experience \(CX\) Payment Playbook](#) or download the [90-Day Unified Payments Workbook](#).

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