Overview of the Five Options

Option 1 - Packaged IR Solutions (e.g. Trax)

Packaged IR platforms offer a turnkey approach to automating in-store execution, but they operate within closed ecosystems that limit integration, customisation, and innovation. You're bound to the vendor's release cycles and development priorities, making it difficult to adapt to enterprise-specific needs or evolve quickly as your strategy changes.

Option 2 - IR Integrated within SFA Providers

Some SFA platforms bundle IR as a built-in feature, offering convenience for existing users. However, these solutions are typically generic, inflexible, and driven by the SFA vendor's roadmap—leaving little room for custom rules, AI experimentation, or scalable innovation. The result is long-term rigidity as your needs grow more complex.

Option 3 - Image Recognition as a Service (e.g. Neurolabs)

IR-as-a-Service is a modular, API-native model that plugs into any tech stack—whether in-house or third-party—giving enterprises full control over how IR connects with CRM, product catalogues, or AI engines. Like Lego blocks, each component can evolve independently, enabling long-term flexibility, customisation, and future-proof integration of AI or LLM-based intelligence.

Option 4 - Custom IR Built In-House

Building IR capabilities internally using cloud platforms offers complete control and tailoring to specific business needs, but comes with high development, maintenance, and resourcing costs. These projects often move slowly, stretch internal teams thin, and risk falling behind advances made by dedicated IR providers.

Option 5 - Hybrid Distributed IR Capture with Central Brain

This emerging architecture separates distributed IR capture (via reps, crowd, or customers) from centralised intelligence housed in data lakes or LLMs. It offers maximum flexibility and scalability for organisations looking to build adaptive, AI-powered systems—but demands careful orchestration, cross-team alignment, and a long-term vision to execute effectively.