AI Agents Buyers Guide

Software Provider and Product Assessment

ISG Research

AI Agents

The shift toward artificial intelligence (AI)-driven software in enterprises and workforce processes has generated a rising demand for more intelligent applications and systems across enterprises. However, integrating and utilizing decades of accumulated knowledge and data presents a significant challenge due to the complexity of legacy systems and existing business practices. Embedding intelligence through AI necessitates software components—known as agents—that can operate autonomously without constant human interaction or oversight. With the emergence of AI platforms that integrate agentic design, generative AI (GenAI) and conversational interfaces for worker engagement, the foundation has been established for the rise and adoption of AI agents.

ISG Research defines AI agents as autonomous software entities that perceive their environment, make context-aware decisions and take actions based on perception and reasoning. While many AI agents rely on simple rule-based logic and are primarily reactive, agentic AI expands on more advanced platforms that enable self-directed behavior. These agents can operate across multiple processes and systems, focusing on specific goals without requiring constant oversight. In many instances, AI agents can run independently or coordinate across different software providers and enterprise environments. Although workers can initiate or interact with these agents, they are designed to function autonomously and engage only as needed to achieve desired outcomes.

AI agents have evolved from simple rule-based programs into intelligent, autonomous components capable of reasoning, decision-making and acting within complex business and digital environments. Initially characterized by reactive behavior, they progressed to multi-agent systems, leveraging machine learning (ML) to operate more independently and interactively with both workers and machines. Today, with the power of large language models (LLMs) and GenAI, software-based AI agents can perform a wide range of tasks across departments and teams, from retrieving knowledge to orchestrating actions across enterprise systems. Consequently, AI agents are emerging as a foundational layer in modern software architecture, driving new levels of productivity, adaptability and intelligence in enterprise applications. By 2028, software providers will blend agentic AI with collaboration and communications software to provide digital assistants that increase productivity by guiding actions.

Enterprises need AI agents that can reliably support a wide range of activities and tasks, understand context, operate independently and integrate seamlessly with existing systems.

These AI agents should function autonomously across workflows, engage with humans as necessary and adapt based on situational context and knowledge so that it can take appropriate actions while efficiently utilizing context and data. Key requirements include operating in a secure and governed manner, with clear limits on their functionality. Most importantly, AI agents must deliver tangible business value by improving efficiency, reducing manual effort and continuously learning in order to enhance performance over time. Ultimately, AI agents save time and resources, reducing costs associated with tasks that would otherwise require manual intervention from workers.

To succeed with AI agents, enterprises must have both the necessary skills and resources to support agentic AI platforms and autonomous capabilities that can be invoked by applications or through conversational AI software. Thorough ingestion and preparation of data from existing applications is critical, as decades of customized systems and "dirty cores" can pose significant challenges in terms of resources and time. The AI agent software must also integrate and interoperate with other applications and systems to achieve intended goals, unless they operate exclusively within the environment and data of the software providers. Additionally, there is a growing need to address privacy and security concerns associated with AI operating autonomously, as well as ensuring compliance with digital sovereignty regulations across different countries and regions.

The rapidly evolving GenAI market is increasingly focusing on agentic AI as enterprises aim to incorporate generative capabilities into business processes and workflow automation. While LLMs excel at generating content such as text, images and videos, they are not inherently designed to generate actions. To address this limitation, foundation models need to be trained on specific actions and outcomes to foster goal-oriented behavior. This has given rise to large action models (LAMs) in some agentic AI systems, while in others, LLMs are being enhanced with training data that includes actions and results. Consequently, modeling and evaluation tools must evolve to support agents and their associated behaviors. Effective AI agents need to perceive their environment, reason about goals and determine appropriate actions—operating across both pre-built and custom applications. Unlike traditional GenAI, which is prompt-driven, AI agents must also be capable of executing tasks autonomously.

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AI agents research is designed to assist enterprises in navigating the new era of agentic and conversational AI, which is driving innovation in intelligent business operations across the workforce and business processes. This comprehensive research evaluates the full spectrum of AI agent offerings and can be used in conjunction with studies on collaborative AI platforms, suites and conversational AI. Unlike separate evaluations that

focus on individual categories, this research specifically examines how these technologies integrate to create a unified AI ecosystem—spanning conversations to agents—that enhances productivity and employee engagement.

To prepare for AI agent software, enterprises should first ensure that their data infrastructure is well-governed, high-quality and seamlessly integrated across systems. This data needs to be accessible to LLMs and capable of supporting large-scale, action-oriented systems, often referred to as foundational models. Organizations should identify a portfolio of high-impact use cases where autonomy and intelligent decision-making can create value, such as in customer service, sales and marketing, finance, supply chain management and IT operations. Establishing strong AI governance frameworks for security, transparency and accountability is essential, as is equipping teams to collaborate effectively with AI agents. Finally, enterprises should adopt flexible platforms and methodologies that support stable operations while allowing for continuous experimentation to evolve AI agent capabilities over time.

The ISG Buyers Guide™ for AI Agents evaluates software providers and products in key areas: platform support, intelligence and workflow, analytic and insights, AI overall, communication administration and specific AI support with agentic AI.

This research evaluates the following software providers that offer products that address key elements of AI Agents: Appian, Automation Anywhere, AWS, C3.ai, Fractal, Google, Gupshup, IBM, Microsoft, Newgen, Oracle, Pega, Salesforce, SAP, ServiceNow, SS&C Blue Prism, UiPath, Verint, Zendesk and Zenvia.

Buyers Guide Overview

For over two decades, ISG Research has conducted market research in a spectrum of areas across business applications, tools and technologies. We have designed the Buyers Guide to provide a balanced perspective of software providers and products that is rooted in an understanding of the business requirements in any enterprise. Utilization of our research methodology and decades of experience enables our Buyers Guide to be an effective method to assess and select software providers and products. The findings of this research undertaking contribute to our comprehensive approach to rating software providers in a manner that is based on the assessments completed by an enterprise.

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The ISG Buyers Guide™ for AI Agents is the distillation of over a year of market and product research efforts. It is an assessment of how well software providers' offerings address enterprises' requirements for AI agent software. The index is structured to support a request for information (RFI) that could be used in the request for proposal (RFP) process by incorporating all criteria needed to evaluate, select, utilize and maintain relationships with software providers. An effective product and customer experience with a provider can ensure the best long-term relationship and value achieved from a resource and financial investment.

In this Buyers Guide, ISG Research evaluates the software in seven key categories that are weighted to reflect buyers' needs based on our expertise and research. Five are product-experience related: Adaptability, Capability, Manageability, Reliability, and Usability. In addition, we consider two customer-experience categories: Validation, and Total Cost of Ownership/Return on Investment (TCO/ROI). To assess functionality, one of the components of Capability, we applied the ISG Research Value Index methodology and blueprint, which links the personas and processes for AI agents to an enterprise's requirements.

The structure of the research reflects our understanding that the effective evaluation of software providers and products involves far more than just examining product features, potential revenue or customers generated from a provider's marketing and sales efforts. We believe it is important to take a comprehensive, research-based approach, since making the wrong choice of AI agent technology can raise the total cost of ownership, lower the return on investment and hamper an enterprise's ability to reach its full performance potential. In addition, this approach can reduce the project's development and deployment time and eliminate the risk of relying on a short list of software providers that does not represent a best fit for your enterprise.

ISG Research believes that an objective review of software providers and products is a critical business strategy for the adoption and implementation of AI agent software and applications. An enterprise's review should include a thorough analysis of both what is possible and what is relevant. We urge enterprises to do a thorough job of evaluating AI agent systems and tools and offer this Buyers Guide as both the results of our in-depth analysis of these providers and as an evaluation methodology.

Key Takeaways

AI agents are emerging as a core part of today's enterprise software, enabling systems to make decisions and take actions independently using technologies such as generative AI and large language models. Unlike traditional, rule-based tools, these agents understand context, reason about goals and operate across workflows with minimal human input. As businesses adopt AI agents, they must overcome challenges like legacy systems, data quality and integration. Success depends on secure, well-governed AI and data platforms with strong agentic and generative AI support, where agents can boost efficiency. With the right strategy, AI agents can drive smarter, faster and more adaptive business operations.

Software Provider Summary

The evaluation finds Oracle, ServiceNow and Salesforce as top-performing software providers, with Oracle leading across seven categories and others showing strength in both Product and Customer Experience. The Value Index categorizes providers into four groups—Exemplary, Innovative, Assurance and Merit—based on weighted scores in Product and Customer Experience. Exemplary providers deliver the most balanced performance. It's important to note that proximity in ranking does not imply identical capabilities.

Product Experience Insights

Product Experience accounts for 80% of the total evaluation and is assessed across Usability, Capability, Reliability, Adaptability and Manageability. Leaders like Oracle, ServiceNow and Salesforce demonstrate strength in core platforms and capabilities. Adaptability reflects how well software integrates and customizes to enterprise needs, while Capability focuses on AI agent depth, workflow, analytics and administration. Providers strong in Manageability and Usability stand out for governance and AI interface support. Together, these metrics identify platforms that perform across the product lifecycle—from onboarding to operations.

Customer Experience Value

Customer Experience comprises 20% of the evaluation, equally weighted between Validation and TCO/ROI. Leaders in this area, such as ServiceNow, Verint and Oracle, demonstrate strong customer commitment, documented case studies and tools to support business case development. Validation assesses a provider's ability to support the customer journey across sales, onboarding, support and services. Meanwhile, TCO/ROI reflects how well providers help customers understand product value, investment returns and long-term support. Poor performance in this area often reflects a lack of transparency or inadequate information.

Strategic Recommendations

Enterprises evaluating AI agent software should focus not only on feature lists but on how the platform aligns with internal workflows and agentic and generative software. Choose providers with proven support in foundational categories like Adaptability and Reliability. Look for those offering actionable TCO/ROI tools and investing in continuous improvement with transparent customer engagement. Select an application that delivers measurable business value while supporting long-term innovation.

How To Use This Buyers Guide

Evaluating Software Providers: The Process

We recommend using the Buyers Guide to assess and evaluate new or existing software providers for your enterprise. The market research can be used as an evaluation framework to establish a formal request for information from providers on products and customer experience and will shorten the cycle time when creating an RFI. The steps listed below provide a process that can facilitate best possible outcomes.

1. Define the business case and goals.
   Define the mission and business case for investment and the expected outcomes from your organizational and technological efforts.
2. Specify the business needs.
   Defining the business requirements helps identify what specific capabilities are required with respect to people, processes, information and technology.
3. Assess the required roles and responsibilities.
   Identify the individuals required for success at every level of the enterprise from executives to frontline workers and determine the needs of each.
4. Outline the project's critical path.
   What needs to be done, in what order and who will do it? This outline should make clear the prior dependencies at each step of the project plan.
5. Ascertain the technology approach.
   Determine the business and technology approach that most closely aligns to your enterprise's requirements.
6. Establish software provider evaluation criteria.
   Utilize the product experience: Adaptability, Capability, Manageability, Reliability and Usability, and the customer experience in TCO/ROI and Validation.
7. Evaluate and select the technology properly.
   Weight the categories in the technology evaluation criteria to reflect your enterprise's priorities to determine the short list of software providers and products.
8. Establish the business initiative team to start the project.
   Identify who will lead the project and the members of the team needed to plan and execute it with timelines, priorities and resources.

The Findings

All of the products we evaluated are feature-rich, but not all the capabilities offered by a software provider are equally valuable to types of workers or support everything needed to manage products on a continuous basis. Moreover, the existence of too many capabilities may be a negative factor for an enterprise if it introduces unnecessary complexity. Nonetheless, you may decide that a larger number of features in the product is a plus, especially if some of them match your enterprise's established practices or support an initiative that is driving the purchase of new software.

Factors beyond features and functions or software provider assessments may become a deciding factor. For example, an enterprise may face budget constraints such that the TCO evaluation can tip the balance to one provider or another. This is where the Value Index methodology and the appropriate category weighting can be applied to determine the best fit of software providers and products to your specific needs.

Overall Scoring of Software Providers Across Categories

The research finds Oracle atop the list, followed by ServiceNow and Salesforce. Providers that place in the top three of a category earn the designation of Leader. Oracle has done so in seven categories; ServiceNow in six categories; Salesforce and Verint in two categories; and AWS, IBM, Microsoft and UiPath in one category.

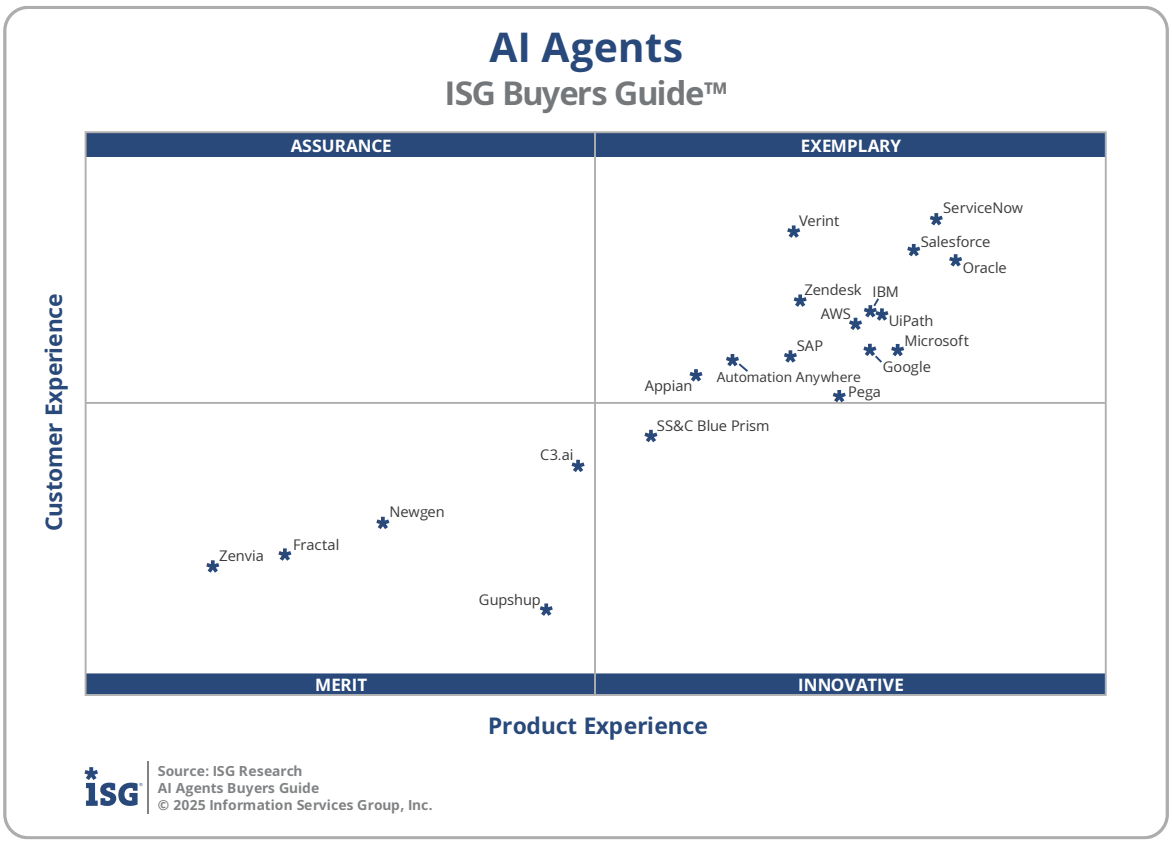
The overall representation of the research below places the rating of the Product Experience and Customer Experience on the *x* and *y* axes, respectively, to provide a visual representation and classification of the software providers. Those providers whose Product Experience have a higher weighted performance to the axis in aggregate of the five product categories place farther to the right, while the performance and weighting for the two Customer Experience categories determines placement on the vertical axis. In short, software providers that place closer to the upper-right on this chart performed better than those closer to the lower-left.

The research places software providers into one of four overall categories: Assurance, Exemplary, Merit or Innovative. This representation classifies providers' overall weighted performance.

AI Agents
Overall

Providers	Grade	Performance
Oracle	A-	*Leader* 86.7%
ServiceNow	A-	*Leader* 86.2%
Salesforce	A-	*Leader* 84.5%
UiPath	A-	82.8%
IBM	A-	82.6%
Microsoft	A-	82.1%
Google	A-	81.8%
Verint	A-	81.7%
AWS	A-	81.5%
Zendesk	B++	80.6%
Pega	B++	80.1%
SAP	B++	77.9%
Automation Anywhere	B++	77.6%
Appian	B++	76.5%
SS&C Blue Prism	B+	73.8%
C3.ai	B	68.5%
Gupshup	B	65.4%
Newgen	B-	60.7%
Fractal	B-	56.6%
Zenvia	C++	55.6%

Source: ISG Research
AI Agents Buyers Guide



Exemplary: The categorization and placement of software providers in Exemplary (upper right) represent those that performed the best in meeting the overall Product and Customer Experience requirements. The providers rated Exemplary are Appian, Automation Anywhere, AWS, Google, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, Pega, Salesforce, SAP, ServiceNow, UiPath, Verint and Zendesk.

Innovative: The categorization and placement of software providers in Innovative (lower right) represent those that performed the best in meeting the overall Product Experience requirements but did not achieve the highest levels of requirements in Customer Experience. The provider rated Innovative is SS&C Blue Prism.

Assurance: The categorization and placement of software providers in Assurance (upper left) represent those that achieved the highest levels in the overall Customer Experience requirements but did not achieve the highest levels of Product Experience.

Merit: The categorization of software providers in Merit (lower left) represents those that did not surpass the thresholds for the Assurance, Exemplary or Innovative categories in Customer or Product Experience. The providers rated Merit are C3.ai, Fractal, Gupshup, Newgen and Zenvia.

We warn that close provider placement proximity should not be taken to imply that the packages evaluated are functionally identical or equally well suited for use by every enterprise

or for a specific process. Although there is a high degree of commonality in how enterprises handle AI agents, there are many idiosyncrasies and differences in how they do these functions that can make one software provider's offering a better fit than another's for a particular enterprise's needs.

We advise enterprises to assess and evaluate software providers based on organizational requirements and use this research as a supplement to internal evaluation of a provider and products.

Product Experience

The process of researching products to address an enterprise's needs should be comprehensive. Our Value Index methodology examines Product Experience and how it aligns with an enterprise's life cycle of onboarding, configuration, operations, usage and maintenance. Too often, software providers are not evaluated for the entirety of the product; instead, they are evaluated on market execution and vision of the future, which are flawed since they do not represent an enterprise's requirements but how the provider operates. As more software providers orient to a complete product experience, evaluations will be more robust.

The research results in Product Experience are ranked at 80%, or four-fifths, of the overall rating using the specific underlying weighted category performance. Importance was placed on the categories as follows: Usability (5%), Capability (40%), Reliability (10%), Adaptability (15%) and Manageability (10%). This weighting impacted the resulting overall ratings in this research. Oracle, ServiceNow and Salesforce were designated Product Experience Leaders.

AI Agents
Product Experience

Providers	Grade	Performance
Oracle	A	*Leader* 70.0%
ServiceNow	A-	*Leader* 69.0%
Salesforce	A-	*Leader* 68.2%
Microsoft	A-	67.6%
UiPath	A-	67.1%
IBM	A-	66.8%
Google	A-	66.8%
AWS	A-	66.3%
Pega	A-	65.7%
Zendesk	B++	64.3%
Verint	B++	64.1%
SAP	B++	64.0%
Automation Anywhere	B++	62.2%
Appian	B++	60.9%
SS&C Blue Prism	B+	59.3%
C3.ai	B+	56.3%
Gupshup	B	54.8%
Newgen	B-	49.4%
Fractal	B-	45.6%
Zenvia	C++	43.0%

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Source: ISG Research
AI Agents Buyers Guide

Customer Experience

The importance of a customer relationship with a software provider is essential to the actual success of the products and technology. The advancement of the Customer Experience and the entire life cycle an enterprise has with its software provider is critical for ensuring satisfaction in working with that provider. Technology providers that have chief customer officers are more likely to have greater investments in the customer relationship and focus more on their success. These leaders also need to take responsibility for ensuring this commitment is made abundantly clear on the website and in the buying process and customer journey.

The research results in Customer Experience are ranked at 20%, or one-fifth, using the specific underlying weighted category performance as it relates to the framework of commitment and value to the software provider-customer relationship. The two evaluation categories are Validation (10%) and TCO/ROI (10%), which are weighted to represent their importance to the overall research.

The software providers that evaluated the highest overall in the aggregated and weighted Customer Experience categories are ServiceNow, Verint and Oracle. While not a Leader, Salesforce was found to meet a broad range of customer experience requirements. These category leaders best communicate commitment and dedication to customer needs.

AI Agents
Customer Experience

Providers	Grade	Performance
ServiceNow	A-	Leader 17.2%
Verint	A-	Leader 17.1%
Oracle	A-	Leader 16.9%
Salesforce	A-	16.7%
Zendesk	B++	15.9%
IBM	B++	15.7%
UiPath	B++	15.6%
AWS	B++	15.5%
Google	B++	15.1%
Microsoft	B++	15.1%
Automation Anywhere	B+	15.0%
SAP	B+	15.0%
Appian	B+	14.8%
Pega	B+	14.5%
SS&C Blue Prism	B+	13.9%
C3.ai	B	13.3%
Newgen	B-	12.2%
Fractal	B-	11.7%
Zenvia	B-	11.5%
Gupshup	C++	10.6%

Source: ISG Research
AI Agents Buyers Guide

Software providers that did not perform well in this category were unable to provide sufficient customer case studies to demonstrate success or articulate their commitment to customer experience and an enterprise's journey. The selection of a software provider means a continuous investment by the enterprise, so a holistic evaluation must include examination of how they support their customer experience.

Appendix: Software Provider Inclusion

For inclusion in the ISG Buyers Guide™ for AI Agents in 2025, a software provider must be in good standing financially and ethically, have at least $200 million in annual or projected revenue verified using independent sources, sell products and provide support on at least two continents and have at least 50 customers. The principal source of the relevant business unit's revenue must be software-related, and there must have been at least one major software release in the past 12 months.

The ISG Buyers Guide™ for AI Agents requires software providers and products to have a platform that supports intelligence and workflow, analytics and insights, AI overall, communication administration and specific AI support for agentic AI.

The research is designed to be independent of the specifics of software provider packaging and pricing. To represent the real-world environment in which businesses operate, we include providers that offer suites or packages of products that may include relevant individual modules or applications. If a software provider is actively marketing, selling and developing a product for the general market and it is reflected on the provider's website that the product is within the scope of the research, that provider is automatically evaluated for inclusion.

All software providers that offer relevant AI agent products and meet the inclusion requirements were invited to participate in the evaluation process at no cost to them.

Software providers that meet our inclusion criteria but did not completely participate in our Buyers Guide were assessed solely on publicly available information. As this could have a significant impact on classification and ratings, we recommend additional scrutiny when evaluating those providers.

Products Evaluated

Provider	Product Names	Version	Release Month/Year
Appian	Appian Platform	25.2.3	June 2025
Automation Anywhere	Automation 360	37 Build 37411	June 2025
AWS	Amazon Q Amazon Bedrock Amazon Comprehend Amazon SageMaker	N/A	June 2025
C3.ai	C3 Agentic AI Platform	8.4.1	March 2025
Fractal	Cogentiq	N/A	June 2025
Google	Google Vertex AI Agent Workspace with Gemini Google AI Ultra	2.5	June 2025
Gupshup	Gupshup CPaaS Console AI Agents for Conversations AI Agent Library	N/A 19.0 N/A	June 2025
IBM	IBM Agent Connect IBM watson Orchestrate IBM Watson.ai	5.2	June 2025
Microsoft	Azure AI Foundry Agent Service Microsoft 365 Microsoft 365 Agents SDK Microsoft 365 Copilot Microsoft Teams	2505	June 2505
Newgen	NewgenONE AI Platform and Agentic AI	N/A	June 2025
Oracle	OCI Agent Platform and Development Kit Oracle Fusion Data Intelligence OCI Generative AI Agents OCI Data Science Oracle AI Agent Studio	N/A 25.R2 N/A 119 25c	May 2025 June 2025 June 2025 June 2025 June 2025
Pega	Pega Agent Experience Pega GenAI Suite Pega Infinity Platform	24.2.2	May 2025
Salesforce	Salesforce Slack Salesforce Agentforce 3 Salesforce Einstein Platform	4.44.65 Summer 25	June 2025

SAP	SAP AI Core Business AI (Joule) SAP Joule Studio	N/A	June 2025
ServiceNow	ServiceNow Platform AI Agent Studio Now Assist AI Agents	Yokohama	June 2025
SS&C Blue Prism	Agentic Automation AI Gateway	25.13	June 2025
UiPath	Maestro UiPath Agent Builder UiPath Agents UiPath Platform for Agentic Automation	N/A	June 2025
Verint	Verint Da Vinci AI Verint IVA Agent Copilot Bots	N/A	June 2025
Zendesk	Zendesk AI Zendesk AI Agents	N/A	June 2025
Zenvia	Zenvia Customer Cloud	N/A	June 2025

Providers of Promise

We did not include software providers that, as a result of our research and analysis, did not satisfy the criteria for inclusion in this Buyers Guide. These are listed below as "Providers of Promise."

Provider	Product	Capability	Revenue	Geography	Customers
Aisera	AI Agent Platform AiseraGPT	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Automation Edge	AutomationEdge Platform	No	No	Yes	Yes
Avaamo	Avaamo Agents	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Bizagi	Platform	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Botsmind.ai	Conversational AI	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cognigy	Cognigy.AI Cognigy Agentic AI and AI Agent Studio	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
DRUID	Enterprise AI Agent Platform	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Genesys	Genesys Cloud AI	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inbenta	SmartOps Agent	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Kore.ai	Agent Platform XO Platform	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Laiye	Work Execution Platform	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
NiCE	Enlighten AI	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nividous	Nividous Platform	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
OpenText	Aviator AI	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pypestream	Pypestream	Yes	No	No	No
Rezolve.ai	Platform	No	No	No	Yes

SearchUnify	SearchUnify	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Sema4.ai	Agents	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Teneo	Teneo Platform	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Zoom	Zoom Workplace Zoom AI Companion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

About ISG Software Research and Advisory

ISG Software Research and Advisory provides market research and coverage of the technology industry, informing enterprises, software and service providers, and investment firms. The ISG Buyers Guides provide insight on software categories and providers that can be used in the RFI/RFP process to assess, evaluate and select software providers.

About ISG Research

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About ISG

ISG (Nasdaq: III) is a global AI-centered technology research and advisory firm. A trusted partner to more than 900 clients, including 75 of the world's top 100 enterprises, ISG is a long-time leader in technology and business services sourcing that is now at the forefront of leveraging AI to help organizations achieve operational excellence and faster growth. The firm, founded in 2006, is known for its proprietary market data, in-depth knowledge of provider ecosystems, and the expertise of its 1,600 professionals worldwide working together to help clients maximize the value of their technology investments.