Configure, Price, Quote Buyers Guide

Software Provider and Product Assessment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

iSG Research

Configure, Price, Quote

The fact that many enterprises have already begun or are in the process of digital modernization is a testament to the rapid rise of digital products and services, new direct online engagement channels and mixed pricing models such as subscription and consumption. One of the biggest changes is that the economics of business using these newer models is very different. And this is giving rise to new software categories, such as Revenue Lifecycle Management.

With additional sales models other than one-time sales, the revenue from a sale is spread over the lifetime of the engagement rather than received as an upfront lump sum. This requires sustained engagement with customers beyond the break-even point in order to have a profitable business model. This sustained engagement can also be referred to as the customer lifecycle and, in this case, the processes and people supported by technology to ensure that a provider is doing all it can to encourage the customer to engage with the seller. Often starting at the quote stage of a qualified sales engagement, the revenue lifecycle follows the buyer's journey through to contract negotiation and agreement, provisioning and fulfillment as required, invoicing, payment, and on to renewal or contract and potential amendments to the initial order or additions in terms of new product and services.

> **ISG Research defines revenue lifecycle management as a unified platform approach that connects customer-facing teams to boost revenue and margin through consistent, long-term customer engagement.**

ISG Research defines revenue lifecycle management as a unified platform approach that connects customer-facing teams to boost revenue and margin through consistent, long-term customer engagement. We define Configure, Price, Quote (CPQ) applications as those that support CPQ activities within revenue lifecycle management. This includes supporting multiple pricing models including subscriptions and usage, providing the ability to select and configure products and services from over 1,000 items, creating quotes in various digital formats, offering guided selling and approval and workflow support, and featuring analytics and reporting.

More broadly, revenue lifecycle management can start with an initial quotation and move through contract negotiations to fulfillment and invoicing and on to renewal and expansion. Individual applications that could be used as part of this process are Configure, Price, Quote (CPQ), contract lifecycle management (CLM), billing, revenue recognition, and revenue lifecycle platform services. As this quote-to-cash process touches many different internal processes, to avoid common issues with handover from one team to another, a true revenue lifecycle management system not only manages digital documents but also extracts, digitizes and

stores all the important terms from within the documents. In this way, errors are minimized, and all necessary terms and information is made available to all who are involved with the customer at every part of the lifecycle.

Likewise, with digitized billing schedules and calendars, key events can trigger automatic activity such as renewal outreach. With digitized terms, there is no need for one team to input data to pass on to the next team as the key data persists in the relevant platform data store. Likewise, analysis of repeated steps within the overall process can identify areas for process improvements; for example, a particular type of contract for a particular type of customer often requires responses from the customer's legal counsel. In fact, all areas of the process are open to analysis if the overall process is represented within the revenue lifecycle platform. Analytics can be used to better understand what the ideal or expected intervals between processes are, or where certain characteristics of a customer, region or product cause processes to take longer or require additional steps. In this way, the revenue lifecycle management system and process can be continually analyzed and improved to the benefit of the customer experience and ultimately contribute to sustained customer engagement.

As has been previously mentioned, the overall revenue lifecycle management process has, at its core, clearly defined activities spread across different departments and teams. These activities have been, and continue to be, executed across many industries and companies of all sizes, but historically these have been mostly performed as discrete separate tasks. These tasks can include creating and getting approval for a quote for a prospective customer, embedding the quoted terms into a contract used to sign the deal, triggering fulfillment as well as invoicing for the sale, and generating billing schedules that help project when revenue can be recognized. When most sales were one-time sales, there was less focus on the overall customer experience as being an economic imperative. However, for the modern enterprise, embracing subscription and usage as part of adopting more responsive pricing models requires a different approach. As sustained (customer) engagement is a necessity to achieve profitability with these types of pricing models, enterprises will need to pay attention to all active touch points with the customer.

Subscription Management
Market Assertion

Through 2026, more than one-half of enterprises will still be using manual processes to integrate quotes and contracts, leading to billing and delivery errors and poor customer experience.

Stephen Hurrell
Director of Research, Office of Revenue

iSG Research

Despite the business imperative, we assert that through 2026, more than one-half of enterprises will still be using manual processes to integrate quotes and contracts, leading to billing and delivery errors and poor customer experience.

In addition to the overall Revenue Lifecycle Management Buyers Guide, there are sub-guides covering the individual components of revenue lifecycle management, including CPQ. For

many enterprises, both as part of the initial sale as well as subsequent adjustments to orders and subscription plans, the CPQ application is typically one of the first significant touchpoints with a customer or serious prospect.

Historically, the configuration part of the CPQ process was restricted to certain industries such as manufacturing and chemicals. For other types of businesses, it was like using a hammer to crack a nut. But, as different digital products and bundles become commonplace, more industries are transforming the CPQ process. CPQ applications are more closely integrated with pricing and margin details; some enable salespeople to see the commissions they might get for the deal. More advanced systems identify the implications for competitiveness based on buyer propensity for a given discount and the implications for margin. Still others offer a shared digital space for live, on-demand interaction with prospective buyers rather than a slow, back-and-forth via email or a deal desk function. Increasingly, as reflects today's expectations, speed of response is important, making performance a priority for long and complex efforts via a conversational interface.

The traditional deployment approach for CPQ applications is a waterfall-style IT project, with the implementation team trying to capture every edge case they can document. The result is a project that takes too long to implement, along with the recognition that not every use case can be captured or that it is necessary to support a long tail of permutations. Given the impact on time to value, the Buyers Guide examines how CPQ providers use technology to improve implementation. We also assess innovative ways providers digitize the process to exchange and approve quotes electronically, ensuring that the terms persist as actionable values and not just as an electronic document. Since many configuration rules are set up by hand, providers are tapping into a combination of AI, innovative data model designs and extensive integrations to improve the implementation process.

> **Enterprises are focusing on ways to speed up the quote-to-cash process, as delays and the need to walk back information can lessen the all-important customer experience.**

Evaluations also rate the innovative use of predictive analytics and generative AI. Enterprises are focusing on ways to speed up the quote-to-cash process, as delays and the need to walk back information can lessen the all-important customer experience. Some providers use advanced analytics that enable guardrails as part of the CPQ process, guiding pricing and configuration discussions with detailed information and recommendations on prices, discounts, margins and the impact on sales commissions. Although the typical deal desk is needed for larger and more complex deals, the more guardrails can work at the point of sale, the less back-and-forth that delays the process.

Like many areas of B2B software, user expectations for simplicity of screen design and responsiveness have increased. Users need a performant response when configuring and quoting from potentially tens of thousands of products and service line SKUs. Software providers are reimagining how the user interacts with the application and the benefits of an AI-assisted text interface to replace the current method of choosing from pick lists. Expectations for communication focus on digital engagement, where the quote becomes interactive and adjustable by the customer with real-time responses rather than the typical back-and-forth of email communication.

Although revenue lifecycle management is a relatively new term, the need for such an approach has been around far longer. As hybrid pricing models extend into the broader

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economy, many of the existing systems enterprises are using will be unable to accommodate the challenges of a shift to more complex pricing and revenue models and, more importantly, are not platforms that support rapid change and innovation. The danger, as highlighted in this overview, is that by not modernizing processes and systems that support the revenue lifecycle of customers, there exists the potential for mistakes across teams as one group hands over to another. As part of the need to maintain sustained engagement with customers, meeting the customers' expectations in terms of responsiveness and accuracy is essential. These platforms and applications are an important set of functions and capabilities to ensure that changes to business models, necessary for competitiveness, are not held back by process or technology. And whether you are looking for a single supplier or a series of applications that work in conjunction with a core platform, this Buyers Guide will help identify providers that represent a relevant set of suppliers to seek out and evaluate.

The ISG Buyers Guide™ for Configure, Price, Quote evaluates software providers and products in key areas that support the CPQ aspects of the customer revenue lifecycle. This Buyers Guide evaluates products based on capabilities that facilitate the use of an integrated and extensible platform to orchestrate activities across all teams involved in sales, finance, legal and operations. The data and data model should be accessible using a set of standard reporting and analytic methods. The revenue lifecycle management platform supports these distinct activities with applications for CPQ.

This research evaluates the following software providers that offer products that address key elements of CPQ within revenue lifecycle management as we define it: Conga, DealHub,

Epicor, Experlogix, GleanQuote, Logik.ai, NetSuite, Oracle, Paperless Parts, Pricefx, PROS, Salesforce, SAP, Tacton, Vendavo, Zilliant, Zoho and Zuora.

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 Configure, Price, Quote 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 CPQ 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 CPQ 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 CPQ 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 CPQ 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 CPQ 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.

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 Conga atop the list, followed by Oracle and PROS. Providers that place in the top three of a category earn the designation of Leader. Conga has done so in seven categories; Oracle in six; Zuora in three; PROS in two; and Salesforce, Tacton and Zoho 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.

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Overall

Providers	Grade	Performance	
Conga	B++	*Leader*	80.1%
Oracle	B++	*Leader*	79.9%
PROS	B++	*Leader*	76.5%
Zuora	B+		74.8%
Salesforce	B+		71.3%
Zoho	B		68.6%
Epicor	B		67.0%
SAP	B		66.7%
NetSuite	B		64.7%
Vendavo	B		63.6%
Tacton	B-		62.5%
Pricefx	B-		62.4%
Logik.ai	B-		61.3%
Zilliant	B-		61.0%
DealHub	B-		58.8%
Paperless Parts	B-		57.7%
Experlogix	C++		55.4%
GleanQuote	C+		49.1%

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

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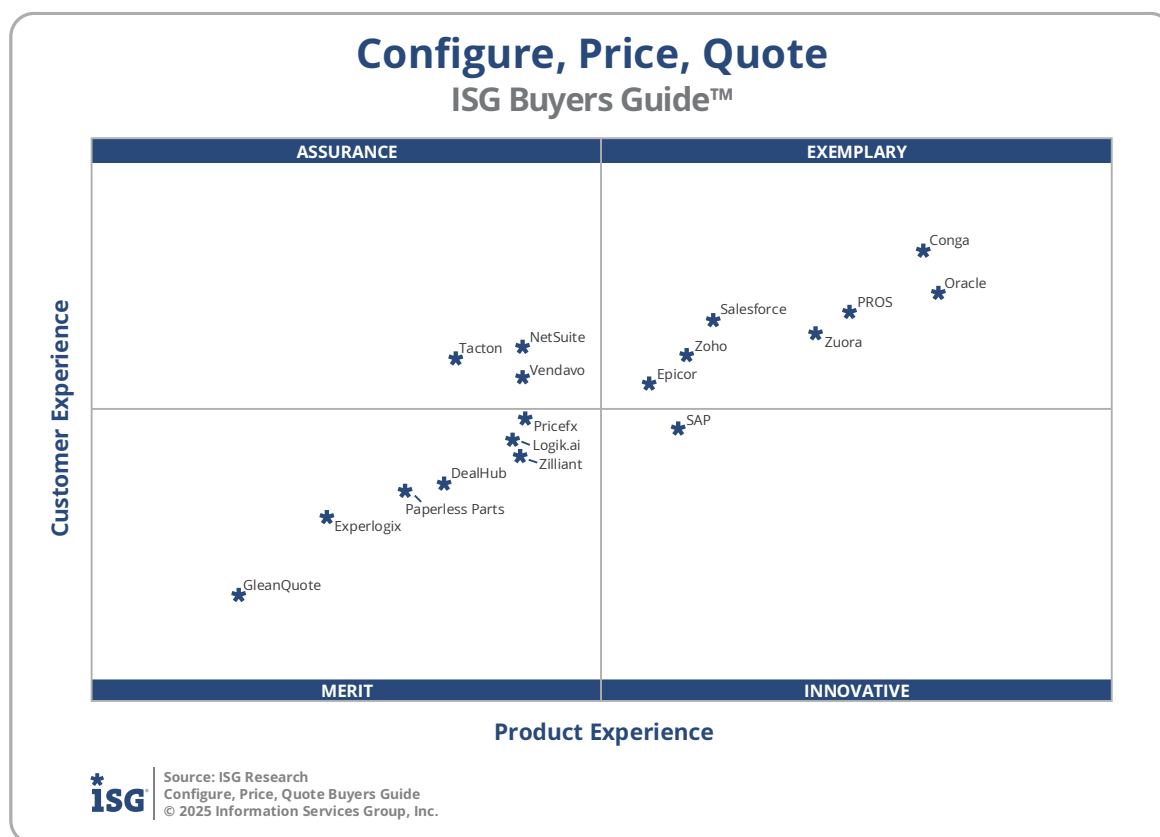
Exemplary: The categorization and placement of software providers in Exemplary (upper right) represent those that performed the best in meeting the overall Product and Customer Experience requirements. The providers rated Exemplary are: Conga, Epicor, Oracle, PROS, Salesforce, Zoho and Zuora.

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: SAP.

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. The providers rated Assurance are: NetSuite, Tacton and Vendavo.

Merit: The categorization of software providers in Merit (lower left) represents those that did not exceed the median of performance in Customer or Product Experience or surpass the threshold for the other three categories. The providers rated Merit are: DealHub, Experlogix, GleanQuote, Logik.ai, Paperless Parts, Pricefx and Zilliant.

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 CPQ, 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 (15%), Capability (35%), Reliability (10%), Adaptability (10%) and Manageability (10%). This weighting impacted the resulting overall ratings in this research. Oracle, Conga and PROS were designated Product Experience Leaders.

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Product Experience

Providers	Grade	Performance
Oracle	B++	Leader 64.2%
Conga	B++	Leader 63.7%
PROS	B++	Leader 61.2%
Zuora	B+	59.7%
Salesforce	B+	55.9%
Zoho	B	54.6%
SAP	B	54.3%
Epicor	B	53.4%
Vendavo	B-	49.8%
NetSuite	B-	49.7%
Pricefx	B-	49.6%
Zilliant	B-	49.0%
Logik.ai	B-	48.8%
Tacton	B-	48.0%
DealHub	B-	47.0%
Paperless Parts	B-	46.1%
Experlogix	C++	44.3%
GleanQuote	C+	39.6%

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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 Conga, Oracle and PROS. These category leaders best communicate commitment and dedication to customer needs.

Configure, Price, Quote
Customer Experience

Providers	Grade	Performance
Conga	A-	*Leader* 16.3%
Oracle	B++	*Leader* 15.4%
PROS	B++	*Leader* 15.1%
Salesforce	B+	14.8%
Zuora	B+	14.5%
NetSuite	B+	14.2%
Tacton	B+	14.0%
Zoho	B+	13.9%
Vendavo	B	13.5%
Epicor	B	13.4%
Pricefx	B	12.7%
SAP	B	12.5%
Logik.ai	B-	12.4%
Zilliant	B-	12.2%
DealHub	B-	11.5%
Paperless Parts	B-	11.4%
Experlogix	C++	10.7%
GleanQuote	C+	9.4%

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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 Configure, Price, Quote in 2025, a provider must be in good standing financially and ethically, have at least $10 million in annual or projected revenue, operate across at least two continents and have at least 25 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 provider must offer products that support the CPQ process and at least four of the functional areas that should be part of the provider products: multiple pricing models including subscriptions and usage, ability to configure in a performant manner over 1,000 items, quote creation in various digital formats, guided selling and approval and workflow support and insight, analytics and reporting.

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 CPQ 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
Conga	Conga CPQ	202504.1.0	April 2025
DealHub	CPQ	2025	April 2025
Epicor	Epicor CPQ	4.1.20.1	April 2025
Experlogix	Experlogix CPQ	NA	April 2025
Glean Quote	Configure-Price-Quote	NA	April 2025
Logik.ai	CPQ	NA	April 2025
NetSuite	NetSuite CPQ	2025.1	April 2025
Oracle	Oracle CPQ	25B	April 2025
Paperless Parts	Paperless Parts CPQ	NA	April 2025
Pricefx	Quoting (CPQ)	Caribou Lou 14	January 2025
PROS	PROS Smart CPQ	Spring '25	April 2025
Salesforce	Revenue Cloud Advanced	Spring '25	February 2025
SAP	SAP CPQ	Q1.2025	April 2025
Tacton	Tacton CPQ	10.0	March 2025
Vendavo	Intelligent CPQ	NA	April 2025
Zilliant	Zilliant CPQ	Spring 2025	April 2025
Zoho	Zoho CPQ	NA	May 2025
Zuora	Zuora CPQ	2025.Q1	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	Revenue	Capabilities	Customers	Geo
HubSpot	CPQ	No	Yes	No	Yes
PandaDoc	CPQ	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Salesbricks	Salesbricks	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

ISG Research provides subscription research, advisory, consulting and executive event services focused on market trends and disruptive technologies. ISG Research delivers guidance that helps businesses accelerate growth and create more value. For further information about ISG Research subscriptions, please visit research.isg-one.com.

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.