

Conversational Automation Buyers Guide

Software Provider and Product Assessment

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

***ISG** Research™



Conversational Automation

Enterprises face a perfect storm of challenges and opportunities. The pace of digital transformation, coupled with increasing customer expectations for personalized experiences, has applied pressure on enterprises to innovate and optimize. Simultaneously, the rapid expansion of data from diverse sources presents an opportunity for insight-driven decision-making and a challenge in processing and analysis. Enterprises that are grappling with legacy systems struggle to keep up with today's demands while navigating complex regulatory environments that require detailed compliance and reporting. The global talent shortage, particularly in technology and IT-related fields, makes it difficult for enterprises to scale operations effectively. Moreover, the need for business agility and resilience, along with these converging factors, has created an urgency to automate routine tasks, but also enhance decision-making capabilities, improve customer interactions and accelerate continuous process improvement. In this context, intelligent automation has emerged as a transformative force.

ISG Research defines intelligent automation as an advanced approach to business process optimization that utilizes artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML) and automation technologies. Intelligent automation enhances efficiency, reduces errors and improves decision-making across the enterprise. It shifts human resources from simple, repetitive tasks to more complex problem-solving activities while augmenting their capabilities through human-AI collaboration that embraces continuous learning systems and improves over time. ISG Research segments intelligent automation into four areas: Process Automation Platforms, Conversational Automation, Intelligent Document Processing and Process Discovery and Mining.

Conversational automation uses AI-powered agents, chatbots and virtual assistants to automate customer interactions and internal processes. These systems can understand natural language, sentiment and intent, producing relevant responses and execute actions based on user input. Regardless of external or internal use cases, ISG Research believes that in the coming years, conversation automation will have greater integration with process orchestration and management platforms. By integrating with existing systems and software tools and accessing large repositories of structured, semi-structured and unstructured data, intelligent automation can lead to business process insights that contribute to innovation and competitive advantage. Through 2027, enterprises that have not embraced voice and chat conversational computing to simplify business application interactions will be at a competitive disadvantage.

Intelligent Automation
Market Assertion

Through 2027, enterprises that have not embraced voice and chat conversational computing to simplify business application interactions will be at a competitive disadvantage.

Jeff Orr
Director of Research, Digital Technology



ISG Research™



For chief information officers and IT leaders, intelligent automation represents a strategic investment in digital transformation, offering the potential to enhance customer engagement, reduce the workload on human agents and gather insights from customer interactions to drive efficiency, agility and innovation.

Conversational automation has become a focal point in enterprise technology discussions, driven by the convergence of several critical factors. The acceleration of digital transformation, catalyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic, has increased the need for operational agility and modernization of legacy systems. This urgency, combined with advancements in AI and ML, has expanded conversational automation capabilities to handle complex cognitive tasks that benefit both the workforce and customer engagement.

The explosion of data across enterprises has further amplified the importance of this technology, as it offers powerful tools for processing and deriving insights from vast amounts of information, enabling data-driven decision-making at scale. Additionally, conversational automation addresses the evolving workforce landscape by automating routine tasks and augmenting human capabilities, allowing workers to focus on higher-value, strategic activities.

When an enterprise CIO or IT leader considers conversational automation software, the choice should correlate to the organization's specific objectives, goals and desired outcomes. Conversational automation supports enhanced customer and worker experiences, provides 24/7 support and reduces the workload on customer service teams. This technology is particularly useful for enterprises with high customer interaction volumes, those looking to scale customer service operations without proportionally increasing costs or organizations aiming to provide personalized interactions at scale. It is also valuable for enterprises seeking to improve internal support functions such as IT helpdesks or HR services.

The choice of intelligent automation software should align with the enterprise's strategic objectives and operational needs. It is also important to consider factors such as the current process landscape, compatibility and integration with the technology infrastructure, data availability and quality, ROI and financial impact and organizational readiness. A well-chosen automation strategy can drive operational excellence, improved customer experiences and enhanced decision-making.

GenAI and large language model (LLM) technologies offer valuable capabilities in natural language understanding and processing, content generation and task automation, potentially streamlining operations and enhancing decision-making processes. It is crucial to understand the potential and challenges of these technologies.

Digital Technology
Market Assertion

Through 2026, only 1 in 5 enterprises will analyze patterns and generate insights from GenAI software that empower data-driven decision-making and lead to improved business outcomes.

Jeff Orr
Director of Research, Digital Technology

ISG Research™



We assert that through 2026, only 1 in 5 enterprises will analyze patterns and generate insights from GenAI software that empower data-driven decision-making and lead to improved business outcomes.

GenAI and LLMs are elevating conversational automation through:

- More natural and context-aware interactions. LLMs enable chatbots and virtual assistants to understand and respond to queries, maintaining context over longer, multi-turn conversations.
- Dynamic response generation. Instead of relying on pre-scripted responses, systems can generate unique, contextually appropriate responses in real time, including contact summaries for customer engagement emails and knowledge management.
- Multilingual support. LLMs provide interactions across multiple languages without the need for separate models for each language.

CIOs and IT leaders should approach intelligent automation software incorporating GenAI and LLMs with enthusiasm and caution. While these technologies offer significant benefits, they also come with unique challenges and prerequisites. A holistic evaluation must include technical aspects and also business, ethical and strategic considerations. Other areas of focus



CIOs and IT leaders should approach intelligent automation software incorporating GenAI and LLMs with enthusiasm and caution.

include risk awareness, critical infrastructure, organizational readiness, governance and compliance and a long-term perspective on sustainability and scalability of AI approaches.

Our Conversational Automation Buyers Guide is designed to provide a 360-degree view of a software provider's ability to use enterprise data to standardize and optimize a variety of customer and workforce interactions. ISG believes a methodical approach is essential to maximize competitiveness. It is critical to select the right software provider and product to improve the performance of your enterprise's people, process, information and technology components.

This Conversational Automation Buyers Guide evaluates products based on capabilities including natural language processing, natural language understanding, artificial intelligence and machine learning, dialogue management, channel integration, back-end system integration, access controls for platform users, life cycle management, implementation of no-code/low-code/code-first principles for citizen developers and traditional coders, analytics tools, intent and entity tuning, A/B flow testing tools, flexibility of intent models across industries and use cases, multilingual support, business customization options, voice enablement, omnichannel abilities beyond websites and mobile applications, and demonstrated investment in functionality. To be included in this Buyers Guide, software



providers must meet or exceed the inclusion criteria and have commercially available products in conversational automation.

This Buyers Guide report evaluates the following software providers that offer products addressing key elements of conversational automation: [24]7.ai, Amelia, AWS, Engageware, Google Cloud, HCLSoftware, IBM, Kore.ai, LivePerson, Microsoft, Pegasystems, ServiceNow, Sinch, Sprinklr, Uniphore, Verint and Yellow.ai. Software providers that provide process automation platforms, intelligent document processing or process discovery capabilities are represented in separate Buyers Guide research reports.



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



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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.

The ISG Buyers Guide™ for conversational automation 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 conversational automation 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 conversational automation 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 conversational automation 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 conversational automation 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 intelligent automation 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

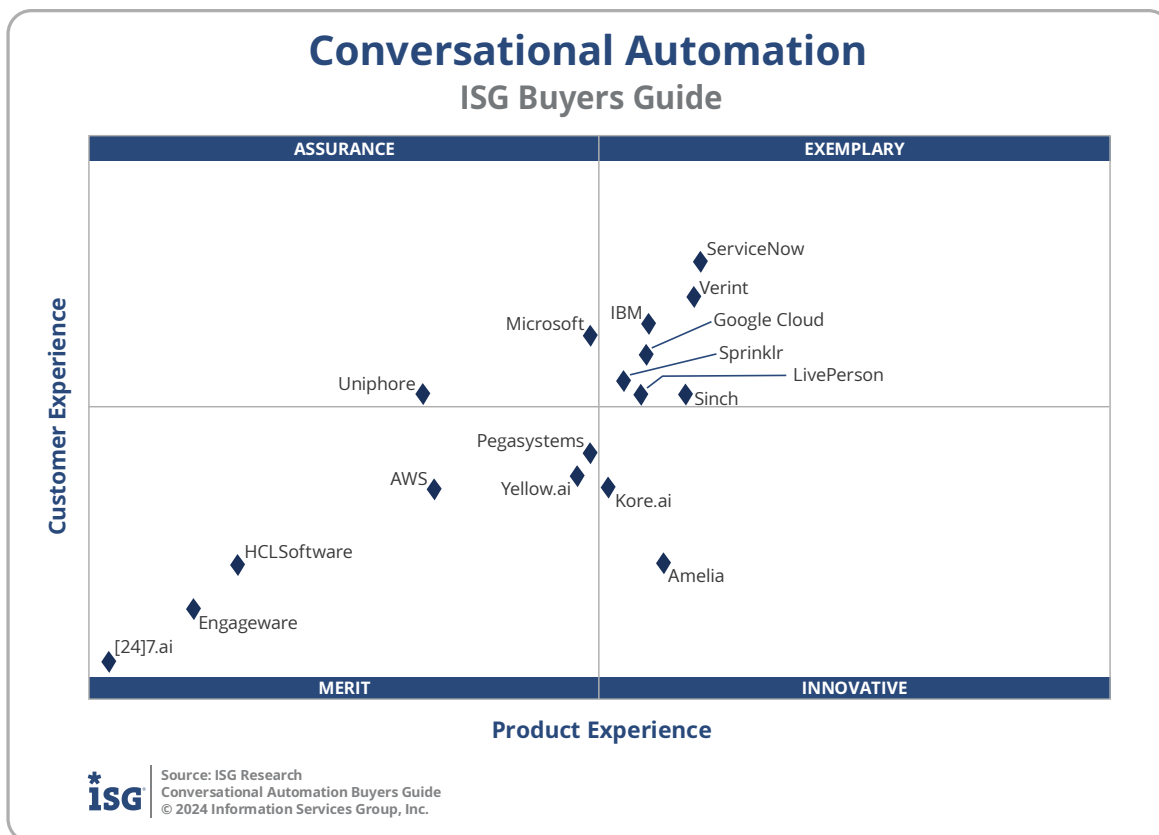
The research finds ServiceNow atop the list, followed by Verint and IBM. Companies that place in the top three of a category earn the designation of Leader. ServiceNow has done so in six categories; Pegasystems in three; Sinch, Amelia, Google Cloud and Verint in two; and LivePerson, Kore.ai, Microsoft and IBM 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.

Conversational Automation			
Overall			
Providers	Grade	Performance	
ServiceNow	B++	Leader	78.5%
Verint	B++	Leader	77.6%
IBM	B++	Leader	76.0%
Google Cloud	B++		75.5%
Sinch	B+		75.0%
Amelia	B+		74.9%
LivePerson	B+		74.3%
Microsoft	B+		73.3%
Sprinklr	B+		73.1%
Kore.ai	B+		71.7%
Pegasystems	B+		70.7%
Yellow.ai	B+		70.4%
AWS	B		65.9%
Uniphore	B		65.4%
HCLSoftware	B-		57.4%
Engageware	C++		51.2%
[24]7.ai	C+		46.7%

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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.



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: Google Cloud, IBM, LivePerson, ServiceNow, Sinch, Sprinklr and Verint.

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 providers rated Innovative are: Amelia and Kore.ai.

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: Microsoft and Uniphore.

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: [24]7.ai, AWS, Engageware, HCLSoftware, Pegasystems and Yellow.ai.

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 conversational automation, 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 (25%), Capability (25%), Reliability (10%), Adaptability (10%) and Manageability (10%). This weighting impacted the resulting overall ratings in this research. ServiceNow, Verint and Sinch were designated Product Experience Leaders.

Providers	Grade	Performance
ServiceNow	B++	Leader 61.6%
Verint	B++	Leader 61.3%
Sinch	B++	Leader 61.0%
Amelia	B++	60.1%
IBM	B+	59.5%
Google Cloud	B+	59.4%
LivePerson	B+	59.3%
Sprinklr	B+	58.7%
Kore.ai	B+	58.2%
Pegasystems	B+	58.2%
Microsoft	B+	57.5%
Yellow.ai	B+	57.4%
AWS	B	51.1%
Uniphore	B	50.7%
HCLSoftware	C++	43.4%
Engageware	C++	41.7%
[24]7.ai	C+	38.4%

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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 ServiceNow, Verint and IBM. These category leaders best communicate commitment and dedication to customer needs.

Software providers that performed well in this category provided sufficient customer case studies to demonstrate success and have articulated 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 of any provider must include examination of support for the customer experience.

Conversational Automation Customer Experience			
Providers	Grade	Performance	
ServiceNow	A-	Leader	17.3%
Verint	A-	Leader	16.7%
IBM	B++	Leader	16.1%
Microsoft	B++		15.9%
Google Cloud	B++		15.5%
Sprinklr	B++		15.1%
Uniphore	B+		14.9%
LivePerson	B+		14.8%
Sinch	B+		14.8%
Pegasystems	B+		13.9%
Yellow.ai	B		13.7%
AWS	B		13.4%
Kore.ai	B		13.3%
Amelia	B-		12.1%
HCLSoftware	B-		12.1%
Engageware	B-		11.3%
[24]7.ai	C++		10.3%

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Appendix: Software Provider Inclusion

For inclusion in the ISG Buyers Guide™ for conversational automation in 2024, a software provider must be in good standing financially and ethically, have at least \$30 million in annual or projected revenue verified using independent sources, sell products and provide support on at least two continents and have at least 100 workers. 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 last 18 months.

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 conversational automation 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
[24]7.ai	AI Virtual Agent (AIVA)	V.2024	March 2024
Amelia	Conversational AI Platform	V.2024	March 2024
AWS	Lex	V2	July 2024
Engageware	Conversational AI Engagement	V.2024	2024
Google Cloud	Dialogflow	V.2024	September 2024
HCLSoftware	Clara	V.2.0.0.3	June 2024
IBM	watsonx Assistant	V.5.0.1	August 2024
Kore.ai	XO Platform	V.10.2.1	May 2024
LivePerson	Conversational Cloud	V.2024	September 2024
Microsoft	Azure AI Bot Service	V.4.0	August 2024
Pegasystems	Pega Platform Chatbot	V.24.1.1	July 2024
ServiceNow	Now Assist for Creator	V.Xanadu	August 2024
Sinch	Chatlayer	V.2024	August 2024
Sprinklr	Conversational AI Platform	V.19.8	September 2024
Uniphore	X-Platform	V.2024	2024
Verint	Verint IVA	V.2024	September 2024
Yellow.ai	Yellow.ai Platform	V.2024	August 2024



Providers of Promise

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

Provider	Product	Annual Revenue Over \$30M	Operates in Two Continents	At Least 100 Employees	Sufficient Public Information to Evaluate
ada	ada Platform	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
AISERA	Conversational AI Platform	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Artificial Solutions	Teneo.ai	No	Yes	No	
AutomationEdge	Conversational IT Process Automation	No	Yes	Yes	
Avaamo	Intelligent Virtual Assistant Platform	No	Yes	Yes	
Boost.ai	Conversational AI Platform	No	Yes	Yes	
Cognigy	Cognigy NLU	No	Yes	Yes	
Creative Virtual	V-Person Conversational AI	No	Yes	Yes	
DRUID	Conversational AI Platform	No	Yes	Yes	
Inbenta	Inbenta Chatbot	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Laiye	Conversational AI	No	Yes	Yes	
NICE	Enlighten Autopilot	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Omilia	Omilia Cloud Platform	No	Yes	Yes	
OneReach.AI	GSX Platform	No	Yes	Yes	
Openstream Inc	Enterprise Virtual Assistant	No	Yes	No	
Pypestream	Pypestream Platform	No	Yes	No	



SearchUnify	SUVA Virtual Assistant	No	Yes	No
Senseforth.ai	A.ware	No	Yes	No



About ISG Software Research

ISG Software Research provides authoritative market research and coverage on the business and IT aspects of the software industry. We distribute research and insights daily through our [community](#), and we provide a portfolio of consulting, advisory, research and education services for enterprises, software and service providers, and investment firms. Our premier service, ISG Software Research On-Demand, provides structured education and advisory support with subject-matter expertise and experience in the software industry. ISG Research Buyers Guides support the RFI/RFP process and help enterprises assess, evaluate and select software providers through tailored [Assessment Services](#) and our Value Index methodology. Visit www.ventanaresearch.com to sign up for free community membership with access to our research and insights.

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