Sales and Operations Planning Buyers Guide

Software Provider and Product Assessment

ISG Research

Sales and Operations Planning

ISG Software Research defines sales and operations planning (S&OP) as a management process designed to align an enterprise's sales and marketing objectives with its operating environment while respecting financial constraints. The operating environment includes production and distribution assets and capabilities as well as its supplier ecosystem. S&OP is similar to supply chain planning (SCP) but with a broader, strategic focus: Creating a unified approach to achieve more optimal results in handling the trade-offs in planning production, inventory and resource allocation while considering customer satisfaction and financial and corporate strategy objectives. This process ensures that all departments within an organization are working towards the same objectives, balancing supply and demand, and optimizing overall business performance. The result is a plan that coordinates sales, production, inventory, product, customer or channel lead time, and financial plans.

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The frequency of S&OP planning cycles and the plan's time horizons reflect an enterprise's business model. For example, those with short product lives (for example, consumer fashion or technology) and relatively high demand volatility.

Sales and operations planning is a relatively new field of business activity that is an outgrowth of SCP. The latter began in a rudimentary form in the early 20th century as the scope and complexity of industrial enterprises and their products grew to a point where a casual approach was no longer competitive. World War II spurred the need for better coordination of supply chain activities in the creation of complex armaments such as aircraft and ships. Operations research and the mathematical modeling required to solve complex logistical problems across the vast distances of the theaters of war laid the groundwork for modern SCP. The use of techniques such as linear programming and inventory management models became increasingly common in the 1950s and 1960s. Faster and more interconnected methods of communication expanded the geographical scope of suppliers and markets and, as a result, the need to deal with more complex logistical webs. The rapid evolution of technical innovations led to faster product cycles and a greater cost of obsolescence that could only be managed with better forecasting and planning techniques.

Business computing capabilities evolved significantly in the 1970s and 1980s, spurring their use in SCP. For example, Material Requirements Planning (MRP) systems allowed enterprises

to better manage their inventory and production schedules. MRP systems used computer algorithms to determine the materials needed for production and the timing of their purchase. This marked a significant step forward in SCP, as it enabled more accurate and efficient planning processes. Inventory turnover rates in enterprises that used MRP increased steadily in the second half of the 20th century.

In its current context, the term sales and operations planning was first promulgated in the 1980s by Oliver Wight, a consultancy. S&OP initially aimed to balance demand and supply, integrate financial planning and link high-level strategic plans with day-to-day operations. In the 1990s, the scope expanded to a tighter integration of financial planning, sales planning, purchasing and production planning. In the 1990s, more robust and cost-effective computing and analytical systems broadened and deepened the capabilities of S&OP software. The development of online analytical processing (OLAP) data processing systems made more sophisticated analysis and planning of complex systems like supply and demand chains feasible. The rapidly improving performance-cost characteristics of these computing systems pushed the boundaries of the scope and complexity of S&OP while making these systems increasingly affordable for smaller enterprises.

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Accelerating trade integration, supported by more efficient transportation methods and the rapid adoption of the internet, caused enterprises to source and sell materials and manufacture products globally, leading to more complex and extended supply chains. The internet facilitated real-time communication and data exchange, enabling better coordination and collaboration among supply chain partners. As this happened, more capable planning and optimization tools became essential. Advanced Planning and Scheduling (APS) systems emerged, offering sophisticated algorithms and models to optimize various aspects of the supply chain, such as demand forecasting, production scheduling, and transportation planning. These tools helped companies make more informed decisions and respond more quickly to changes in demand and supply.

Over the past decade, advances in application programming interfaces (APIs) have made rapid integration of data from source systems feasible, heightening situational awareness and allowing for faster response times. Meanwhile, the speed and scope of data processing continued to rise, enabling enterprises to analyze and plan in near real time rather than performing work in batches. And rather than having to plan in iterative steps

to arrive at an optimal or even acceptable solution, results could be calculated concurrently. This shortens cycle times, potentially increasing agility in responding to market developments.

Enterprises benefit from S&OP software in multiple ways. The most important is through improved demand forecast accuracy. Increasingly, this software uses advanced algorithms and machine learning (ML) to achieve greater accuracy, which helps companies better anticipate customer needs and reduce the risk of overstocking or stock-outs. Achieving superior order fulfillment promotes customer satisfaction. Another is better collaboration, which is critical because of the cross-functional and geographically distributed nature of organizations and their physical resources. The software helps ensure that everyone is aligned and working towards common goals. Because these tools provide real-time data and insights, it enables enterprises to make informed decisions faster, allowing them to respond quickly to changes in markets, economies or any factor that can disrupt conditions. Similarly, the software can help identify potential risks and disruptions in the supply chain. By simulating various scenarios and planning for contingencies, companies can mitigate risks and ensure business continuity. All of which promotes enhanced efficiency and productivity, thereby reducing costs, especially for inventory holding costs, transportation, logistics and production.

We stand at a watershed in enterprise planning activities as a result of the availability of AI and GenAI.

We stand at a watershed in enterprise planning activities as a result of the availability of artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI (GenAI). AI can facilitate the process of continuous S&OP through better cross-functional coordination, significantly shortening the time it takes to iteratively juggle and resolve supply and demand chain objectives and constraints across multiple time horizons. It will significantly reduce the manual steps of supply and demand planning under dynamic business conditions, which occupies much of the time of the people involved in planning and execution management. AI and GenAI have the potential to substantially reduce the time required to perform these steps, shortening planning and execution cycle times to make enterprises more agile and efficient. Rather than having to focus almost all their time on mechanical tasks, analysts and managers will have time to consider multiple scenarios and their impacts. In ultimate form, systems should be able to apply event-driven analysis and suggestions that trigger actions to stay ahead of events.

AI will have an increasingly profound impact on enterprises that adopt the technology through the end of the decade. For most companies, the process of embedding AI in their supply chain activities will be gradual, starting with the easiest, most obvious and least risky aspects of planning and execution. As a first step, investments into data capture, orchestration and management will provide a foundation for more rapid analysis and reporting that promotes agility and deeper insight.

While it is common to hear that the pace of business has never been faster, business challenges remain essentially the same. Enterprises must be able to create products and services that meet market requirements, market and sell those products effectively, operate efficiently and profitably, as well as attract and retain the human capital necessary to sustainably achieve those aims. What has changed are the tools for doing business, providing those enterprises that successfully adapt and learn how to use these tools with a competitive advantage. AI is a powerful tool that will separate winners from also-rans. Enterprises with even moderately complex and lengthy supply chains must have a strategy and an evolving timeline for applying AI and GenAI to their planning processes. Those that do will have a cumulative strategic advantage over rivals that do not. Choosing the right software provider with the ability to provide AI-enabled tools will be important to facilitating adoption of this technology.

The ISG Buyers Guide™ for Sales and Operations Planning evaluates products based on their support for capability model including sales & operations planning, supply chain planning including AI/GenAI, demand planning, demand sensing, planning analytics, production planning, replenishment planning, supply planning and planning platform. The software must be able to manage and reconcile demand and supply plans, manage the planning process, support cross-functional collaboration, model data for analysis, analyze data using a variety of techniques and communicate the results in a variety of ways in support of data and analytical processes.

This research evaluates the following 22 software providers that offer products that address key elements of S&OP as we define it: Anaplan, Blue Ridge, Blue Yonder, Board, Dassault Systems, e2open, FuturMaster, ICRON, Infor, John Galt Solutions, Kinaxis, Logility, Manhattan Associates, o9 Solutions, OMP, Oracle, Pigment, QAD, RELEX, SAP, Slimstock and ToolsGroup.

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 Sales and Operations Planning 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 S&OP 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 S&OP 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 S&OP 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 S&OP 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 S&OP 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 Anaplan atop the list, followed by Kinaxis and Oracle. Companies that place in the top three of a category earn the designation of Leader. Anaplan has done so in six categories; Board in five; Oracle and Kinaxis in four; and SAP and o9 Solutions in one category.

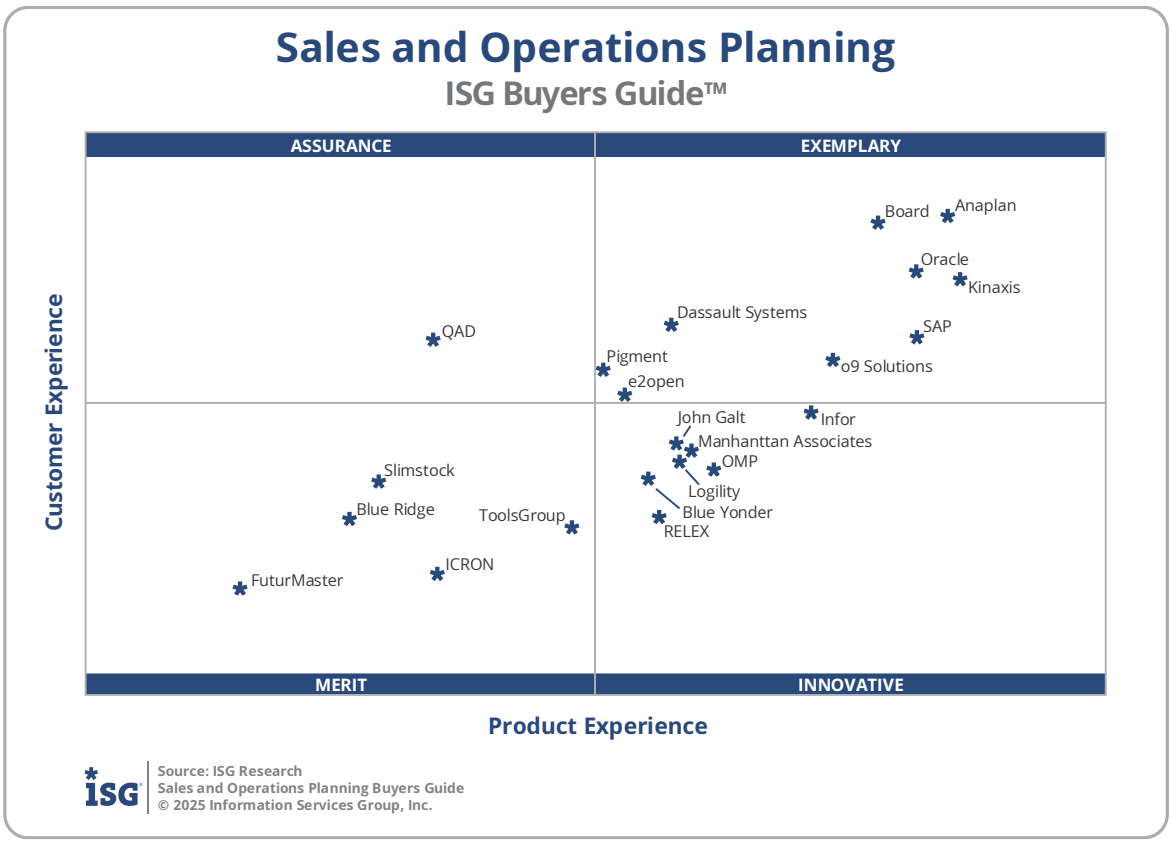
The overall representation of the research below places the rating of the Product Experience and Customer Experience on the *x* and *y* axes, respectively, to provide a visual representation and classification of the software providers. Those providers whose Product Experience have a higher weighted 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.

Sales & Operations Planning
Overall

Providers	Grade	Performance
Anaplan	A-	*Leader* 81.9%
Kinaxis	A-	*Leader* 81.6%
Oracle	B++	*Leader* 79.0%
SAP	B++	78.5%
Board	B++	78.5%
o9 Solutions	B+	73.6%
Infor	B+	71.8%
Dassault Systems	B+	69.2%
OMP	B	66.6%
John Galt	B	66.6%
Manhattan Associates	B	66.1%
Logility	B	65.6%
e2open	B	65.5%
Blue Yonder	B	63.8%
RELEX	B	63.7%
Pigment	B-	59.3%
QAD	B-	58.8%
ToolsGroup	B-	58.3%
Slimstock	C++	53.2%
ICRON	C++	52.6%
Blue Ridge	C++	50.3%
FuturMaster	C	43.2%

Source: ISG Research
Sales and Operations Planning 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: Anaplan, Board, Dassault Systems, e2open, Kinaxis, o9 Solutions, Oracle, Pigment and SAP.

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: Blue Yonder, Infor, John Galt Solutions, Logility, Manhattan Associates, OMP and RELEX.

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 provider rated Assurance is: QAD.

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: Blue Ridge, FuturMaster, ICRON, Slimstock and ToolsGroup.

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 S&OP, 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 (20%), Capability (20%), Reliability (15%), Adaptability (10%) and Manageability (15%). This weighting impacted the resulting overall ratings in this research. Kinaxis, Anaplan and Oracle were designated Product Experience Leaders. While not a Leader, SAP was also found to meet a broad range of enterprise product experience requirements.

Sales & Operations Planning

Product Experience

Providers	Grade	Performance
Kinaxis	A-	*Leader* 65.0%
Anaplan	B++	*Leader* 64.6%
Oracle	B++	*Leader* 63.7%
SAP	B++	63.6%
Board	B++	62.2%
o9 Solutions	B++	60.1%
Infor	B+	58.9%
OMP	B	54.2%
Manhattan Associates	B	53.7%
Logility	B	53.4%
John Galt	B	53.3%
Dassault Systems	B	53.2%
RELEX	B	52.3%
Blue Yonder	B	52.0%
e2open	B	51.2%
Pigment	B	50.1%
ToolsGroup	B-	49.1%
ICRON	C++	43.5%
QAD	C++	43.3%
Slimstock	C++	41.0%
Blue Ridge	C+	39.8%
FuturMaster	C+	35.2%

Source: ISG Research
Sales and Operations Planning 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 Anaplan, Board and Oracle. These category Leaders best communicate commitment and dedication to customer needs. While not a Leader, Kinaxis was also found to meet a broad range of enterprise customer experience requirements.

Sales & Operations Planning
Customer Experience

Providers	Grade	Performance
Anaplan	A	*Leader* 17.6%
Board	A-	*Leader* 17.5%
Oracle	A-	*Leader* 16.4%
Kinaxis	B++	16.2%
Dassault Systems	B+	14.9%
SAP	B+	14.8%
QAD	B+	14.8%
o9 Solutions	B+	14.3%
Pigment	B+	14.1%
e2open	B	13.4%
Infor	B	13.1%
John Galt	B-	12.3%
Manhattan Associates	B-	12.2%
Logility	B-	12.0%
OMP	B-	11.9%
Blue Yonder	B-	11.7%
Slimstock	B-	11.5%
RELEX	C++	10.9%
Blue Ridge	C++	10.6%
ToolsGroup	C++	10.4%
ICRON	C+	9.3%
FuturMaster	C+	9.0%

Source: ISG Research
Sales and Operations Planning 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 Sales and Operations Planning in 2025, a software provider must be in good standing financially and ethically, have at least $35 million in annual or projected revenue verified using independent sources, sell products and provide support on 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 last 12 months.

To qualify for inclusion in the Sales and Operations Planning Buyers Guides, a provider's software must have the following capabilities: Support for Sales and Operations Planning, Demand Planning, Demand Sensing, Replenishment Planning, Supply Planning and Planning Analytics.

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 S&OP 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
Anaplan	Sales and Operations Planning	January 2025	January 2025
Blue Ridge	Integrated Business Planning (S&OP)	v.180	September 2020
Blue Yonder	Supply Chain Planning	December 2024	December 2024
Board	Supply Chain Planning	v.14.2	January 2025
Dassault Systems	Delmia Supply Chain Planning and Optimization (SCPO)	February 2025	February 2025
e2open	Planning Suites	March 2025	March 2025
FuturMaster	Sales & Operations Planning	November 2023	November 2023
ICRON	Customer Centric Supply Chain Planning	March 2025	March 2025
Infor	Integrated Business Planning	October 2024	October 2024
John Galt Solutions	Supply Chain Planning Platform	March 2025	March 2025
Kinaxis	Supply Chain Planning (Maestro Platform)	June 2024	June 2024
Logility	Supply Planning & Optimization	March 2025	March 2025
Manhattan Associates	Supply chain planning	March 2025	March 2025
o9 Solutions	Sales and Operations Planning	March 2025	March 2025
OMP	S&OP version	March 2025	March 2025
Oracle	Oracle Supply Chain Management (SCM)	v. 25D	December 2024
Pigment	Sales and Operations Planning	March 2025	March 2025
QAD	Digital Supply Chain Planning	v. 2024.3	February 2025
RELEX	Supply Chain Planning	March 2025	March 2025

SAP	Integrated Business Planning	v.2502	February 2025
Slimstock	Sales & Operations Planning	March 2025	March 2025
ToolsGroup	SO99+	March 2025	March 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	Geography	Customers	Software Release
Arkieva	Arkieva Enterprise	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Netstock	S&OP	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Remira	Integrated Business Planning	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Solvoyo	Solvoyo Platform	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.