Sales Performance Management
Value Index

2019 Vendor and Product Assessment

Prepared for:

VENTANA RESEARCH

Prepared for:

ORACLE
Bend, Oregon  
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Ventana Research performed this research and analysis independently. Our goals were to determine the Value Index for Sales Performance Management and to evaluate vendors and products in accordance with the Ventana Research sales performance management blueprint. We charged no fees for this research and invited to participate all vendors that are delivering relevant applications to enable sales performance management. This report includes products generally available as of August 2019.

Our purpose in conducting this research was to evaluate the maturity of software vendors and products and their value for enterprise use in sales performance management. Nothing in this report of our research is intended to imply that one vendor or product is the right choice for any particular organization. Rather, it provides a baseline of knowledge that organizations can use to evaluate vendors and products to manage and improve sales performance management. Unlike IT analyst firm reports that use subjective factors to rate vendors, our findings are drawn from thorough research-based analysis of customer assurance and product categories that best represent how an organization should evaluate its technology supplier.

The full Value Index report with detailed analysis is available for purchase. We can provide detailed insights on this Value Index and advice on its relevance to an organization through the Ventana On-Demand research and advisory service. Assessment services based on this research also are available.

We certify that Ventana Research performed the research to the best of our ability; that the analysis is a faithful representation of our knowledge of vendors and products; and that the analysis and scoring are our own.

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Sales Performance Management

Ensuring that the sales organization contributes as fully as possible to the success of the organization — to revenue, growth, profitability and the overall customer experience — requires not only dedication but effective strategy and planning. A well-developed strategy and plan to utilize current and future sales talent is essential for the best possible sales performance. To carry out this mission, organizations need a set of coordinated sales-related activities, processes and systems that enable the sales organization, from leadership and operations to the manager and sellers, to operate in a coordinated and collaborative manner. We call this sales performance management.

Sales is a business unit designed to deliver the most effective return on the company’s products and services. It must ensure that selling is done efficiently and intelligently. Sales organizations typically are complex entities, often with cultures and histories that can inadvertently sabotage their performance. And many in leadership believe a sales organization can adapt and change its behavior without seeking out and using best practices.

In our view, effective management of sales performance requires well-designed and continuously optimized territories and accounts for which quotas are designed to capitalize on the organization’s full potential. This foundation must be established through modeling and planning that will provide analytics and metrics to guide sales leadership and operations in planning for the coming month, quarter and year.

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This is an approach that focuses on sales compensation and how commissions and incentives can be used to influence sales behavior and priorities. In order to optimize sales performance, organizations thus must be able to design and apply incentives that motivate sales reps to reach their targets. To evaluate whether sales plans and incentives are effective, sales leadership and operations personnel need tools to help them assess the relationship between compensation plans and actual performance. Comparing compensation and incentive plans among all sales personnel and with other parts of the organization, for example, can help managers determine whether what they offer is appropriate. Goals and objectives must be defined, established, tracked and then linked to incentives and rewards to help guide sales performance. Moreover, organizations need to be able to know whether their sales compensation is competitive in their market. Using
benchmarks to compare compensation to that of others in the industry can provide this information.

Organizations often lack expertise in sales compensation and planning and sometimes don’t understand the importance of commissions and compensation in sales. Our research finds that only 57 percent of participants from small companies view those factors as very important, substantially fewer than those from very large organizations (73%). Nearly half (47%) of all research participants said their sales organization has impediments that are motivating them to invest in sales analytics, which can produce the benchmarks needed for market comparisons. Among the five impediments they cited most often are inconsistent execution (47%) and lack of sales effectiveness (38%), which can directly impact results and sales revenue.

Using spreadsheets to manage aspects of sales, including compensation and incentives, is ineffective and can be problematic. Spreadsheets are not designed for serious benchmarking. They waste valuable time and cannot scale as a company grows, which a dedicated sales performance management tool can do. The use of multiple spreadsheets, often stored on users’ local drives, is a factor in producing scattered sales information, which organizations cited most often (52%) among impediments in the systems they use to assess plans and incentives. Incomplete or inconsistent information can undercut the ability to assess compensation plans accurately.

Even sales-related applications such as sales force automation (SFA) and customer relationship management (CRM) that are designed to capture data about accounts, contacts and opportunities cannot deliver optimal visibility and sales performance management. Reports from SFA systems typically look only at historical performance, but backward-looking reports can’t provide timely guidance on the current state of quotas and incentives for individual sales reps and are not flexible enough to provide information on or credits to others involved in deals. Only one-fifth (21%) of all research participants and 19 percent of those with less than $100 million in revenue said they are satisfied with the use of SFA or CRM for sales analytics.

The good news is that small sales organizations can have access to the same technology available to larger ones. The best systems can help them level the playing field for sales competition by providing tools for comparative analysis.
For example, sales compensation benchmarks enable direct comparisons with others’ pay internally and across the industry. Benchmarks are built by applying analytics to sales compensation and performance-related data; comparing the compensation and performance analyses can provide the insights needed to make sales force decisions.

Used properly in sales performance management, sales analytics can yield important benefits. Two-thirds of organizations that use dedicated sales analytics tools said they have improved the outcomes of their sales activities and processes significantly (20%) or slightly (47%). The top-ranked benefits of having sales-related analytics capabilities are being able to align the sales force to business strategy and goals (for 38%) and better managing and tracking progress of product and sales initiatives (24%).

Ventana Research has over almost two decades conducted market research in a spectrum of related areas including sales performance management as well as broader sales areas ranging from sales force automation (SFA) and CRM to sales analytics and planning. We also have done research on digital commerce and subscription management applications. Recently we have examined the expansion of sales performance management through applications that help address the needs of managers and sellers, in some instances through the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Our continuous research and analysis of the market for business applications and technologies guide our comprehensive approach to this Value Index.

The Value Index for Sales Performance Management uses the Ventana Research methodology, a framework that evaluates application vendors and their products in seven categories of requirements. Five are product-related, assessing usability, manageability, reliability, capability and adaptability, while two quantify the customer assurance issues of vendor validation and total cost of ownership and return on investment (TCO/ROI).

This Value Index report evaluates the following vendors that offer products that deliver sales performance management as we define it: Anaplan, beqom, IBM, Incentives Solutions, NICE, Optymyze, Oracle, SAP and Xactly.

We urge organizations to do a thorough job of evaluating sales performance management systems and tools and offer this Value Index as both the results of our in-depth analysis of these vendors and as an evaluation methodology.
Value Index can be used to evaluate existing suppliers and also provides evaluation criteria for new projects; applying it can shorten the cycle time for an RFP.

Unlike many IT analyst firms that rank vendors from an IT-only perspective or consider futures or vision over what is available in the products today, Ventana Research has designed the Value Index to provide a balanced perspective of vendors and products that is rooted in an understanding of business drivers and needs. This approach not only reduces cost and time but also minimizes the risk of making a decision that is bad for the business. Using the Value Index will enable your organization to achieve the levels of efficiency and effectiveness needed to optimize sales performance management.

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Value Index Overview

This report on the Ventana Research Value Index: Sales Performance Management in 2019 is the distillation of a year of market and product research efforts by Ventana Research, the premier benchmark research and advisory services firm. Built on a foundation of almost two decades of business and technology research, this unbiased, fact-based index is the first such industry undertaking to assess the value of software designed specifically for enabling sales performance management.

This Ventana Research Value Index is an analytic representation of our assessment of how well vendors’ offerings meet buyers’ requirements for software that enables and supports sales performance management. The Index evaluates the software in seven key categories that are weighted to reflect buyers’ needs based on our expertise and research. Five are product-related: usability, manageability, reliability, capability and adaptability. In addition, we consider two customer assurance categories: vendor validation and total cost of ownership and return on investment (TCO/ROI). To assess functionality, one of the components of capability, we applied the Ventana Research sales performance management methodology and blueprint, which links the personas and processes for sales performance management to an organization’s requirements.

We use our research-based analytics and methodology to generate the Value Index percentages. We then build them into a set of indicators that we present
graphically as pie charts that express levels of performance. The extent to which each pie chart is full reflects our assessment of value to you, the potential buyer. Thus, we present the Value Index in both analytic and graphic form, each depicting the value of a specific vendor’s offering in terms of what it can deliver that is relevant to your sales performance management needs.

The Value Index is not an abstraction; Ventana Research uses a carefully crafted best practices-based methodology to represent how organizations actually assess vendors and products. We have designed the Value Index to ensure that it provides objective research and guidance to organizations looking to assess and evaluate their applications for business and IT needs.

The structure of the Value Index reflects our understanding that the proper evaluation of vendors and products involves far more than just examining product features or potential revenue or customers generated from marketing and sales. We believe it is important to take this comprehensive research-based approach, since making the wrong choice of a sales performance management system can raise the total cost of ownership, lower the return on investment and hamper an organization’s ability to reach its 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 vendors that does not represent a best fit for your organization.

To ensure the accuracy of the information we collected, we asked participating vendors to provide product and company data across the seven categories that taken together reflect the concerns of a well-crafted RFP. Ventana Research then validated the information, first independently through our database of product information and extensive web-based research, and then in consultation with the vendors. The majority of selected vendors also participated in one-on-one consultative sessions, after which we requested them to provide additional documentation to support any new input.
The Findings

The Value Index for Sales Performance Management in 2019 finds Oracle first on the list with Xactly in second place and IBM in third. Companies that rank in the top three in any category earn the designation Value Index Leader. Oracle has done so in all seven categories; IBM and Xactly are Value Index Leaders in four of the seven evaluation categories; Optymyze is in two categories; and Anaplan, beqom and SAP are in one.

Our Value Index methodology assigns the weighting for each of the seven categories to best represent the needs of buyers. Here is our specific analysis for each of the categories.

The Capability category makes up 25 percent of this Value Index rating. The relatively significant weighting is due to the breadth of requirements for effectively managing sales performance; not just one application but many are required to assist sales organizations at all levels. This Value Index assesses how well the vendor supports the overall needs of sales performance management, examining the specific applications (more than two dozen) that help manage sales performance across all levels and types of professionals in the sales organization. It also assesses the support for mobile devices and for collaboration across roles and sales processes. It examines ease of integration between the platform and applications and the rest of the enterprise, as the product needs to receive and publish data from accounting, compensation, ERP, learning management, sales force automation and payroll systems. We examined specific support for the following roles in sales: management, manager, account manager or sales professional, sales operations, analyst, administration and IT support. In this category Oracle, Optymyze and SAP are Value Index Leaders.

Usability is also important to address a wide range of the business needs of executives, line managers, sales professionals, sales operations, analysts and those responsible for the administration of sales performance management. The weighting for this category, in which Oracle, Xactly and IBM are the top three vendors, is 20 percent of the Value Index rating. Vendors’ products are
evaluated in this category on the user experience provided for the range of roles in sales performance management. The research examined the level of intelligence provided in the user experience, including notifications and the use of AI and machine learning. It also examined the accessibility of the user experience across a range of channels and devices including mobile, web and conversational experiences via voice and chat.

Adaptability is weighted at 10 percent. This category assesses the degree to which the application can respond to enterprise requirements with respect to configurability, customization and integration. This evaluation includes assessing how well integrity is maintained as the platform and applications integrate across the people, business, processes, application and data needs of the organization. Adaptability also involves the ability to readily integrate with other systems — for example, commission and incentives need to easily connect with payroll and accounting processes and systems, and closed deals must be integrated with SFA or order management systems. Oracle, Optymyze and Xactly are the highest-rated vendors in this category.

Manageability, which encompasses administration, privacy, security and licensing, is weighted at 15 percent of this Value Index. The vendor rankings in this evaluation category are tightly grouped together, reflecting vendors’ emphasis on investment in this aspect of the technology. This category is essential for SPM as the breadth of applications and support for processes these systems must provide can make effective management difficult. Oracle, IBM and beqom are the Value Index Leaders in this category.

For sales performance management to operate efficiently and for sellers and managers to engage with the applications, the software on which they run must be able to scale and perform reliably to support an array of processes, including commission calculation, analytical computation and real-time access to sales performance by anyone at any level. This is the Reliability category and it is weighted at 10 percent of this Value Index. Oracle, IBM and NICE are the Value Index Leaders in this category, providing the highest level of confidence they can operate reliably as needed 24 hours a day.

The Validation category contributes 10 percent to the overall Value Index rating. The leaders here are Oracle, Xactly and Anaplan. This assessment finds wide variation in the level of detail that vendors provide regarding many areas including the product roadmap, customer success references and case studies, services and support. A lack of information about a vendor’s product support and services is a challenge that an organization looking to evaluate and select software simply should not have to face. After all, a vendor’s success is about not just technology but also its relationship with the customer and the overall experience it provides.
TCO/ROI, a category that addresses vendor support for a buyer’s investment evaluation by providing information, tools and services to help with the business case (including the benefits and costs) makes up 10 percent of the Value Index rating. Value Leaders IBM, Oracle and Xactly currently do the best job providing potential prospects and customers with this information along with services to help organizations effectively get funding for sales performance management. However, our research finds that some vendors struggle significantly in this category and are ill prepared to help organizations effectively in the evaluation and buying process.

As noted above, this Ventana Research Value Index evaluates the software in seven key categories. The chart below places the product-related and customer assurance ratings on the X and Y axes respectively to provide a visual representation of our Value Index evaluation. Vendors whose products performed higher in aggregate in the five product categories place farther to the right; the combination of ratings for the two customer assurance categories determines their placement on the vertical axis. In short, vendors that place closer to the upper-right on this chart rated higher than those closer to the lower-left.
The vendors that rank the highest overall on the aggregated product axis, which has a maximum value of 80 percent, are Value Index Leaders Oracle, Optymyze and Xactly. The vendors that rank the highest overall on the customer assurance axis, which has a maximum value of 20 percent, are Value Index Leaders IBM, Oracle and Xactly. These vendors represent best-in-class approaches to sales performance management in these aggregated categories of product and customer assurance.

We warn that close vendor performance ratings should not be taken to imply that the packages evaluated are functionally identical or equally well suited for use by every organization or for a specific process. Although there is a high degree of commonality in how organizations handle sales performance management, there are many idiosyncrasies and differences in how they do these functions that can make one vendor’s offering a better fit than another’s with a particular organization’s needs.

After more than a decade of technology advances, all the products we evaluated are feature-rich, but not all the capabilities they offer are equally valuable to users. Moreover, the existence of too many capabilities may be a negative factor for an organization if it introduces unnecessary complexity. Nonetheless, one company may decide that a larger number of options is a plus, especially if some of them match its established practices or better support a new initiative that is driving the purchase of new software.

Other factors besides features and functions or assessments about the vendor can turn out to be a deciding factor. For example, a company may face budget constraints such that the TCO evaluation can tip the balance to one vendor or another. This is where the Value Index methodology and the appropriate weighting can be applied to determine the best fit of vendors and products to your specific needs.
### Products Evaluated

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<tr>
<th>Vendor</th>
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How To Use This Value Index

The Ventana Research Value Index assesses how well vendors’ offerings meet buyers’ requirements for software that enables and supports a particular aspect of business. Built on a foundation of almost two decades of business and technology research, the Value Index evaluates a focused category of business software by scoring it in two major areas: Product and Customer Assurance. We consider seven evaluation categories that are weighted to reflect buyers’ needs based on our market research and subject matter expertise. The five product-related areas are Usability, Manageability, Reliability, Capability and Adaptability. The two customer assurance categories are Vendor Validation and Total Cost of Ownership and Return on Investment (TCO/ROI).

To prepare the Value Index, Ventana Research uses a carefully crafted best practices-based methodology that draws data and insights from our benchmark research to represent how organizations actually assess vendors and products. We have designed this Value Index as a tool to provide objective guidance to organizations looking to deploy applications and tools to address their sales performance management needs.

The structure of the Value Index reflects our understanding that proper evaluation involves far more than just examining product features, potential revenue or customers gained. We believe it is important to take this comprehensive research-based approach, since making the wrong choice of technology can raise the total cost of ownership, lower return on investment and hamper an organization’s ability to reach its 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 vendors that does not represent a best fit for your organization.

In our view, business improvement efforts should be based on best practices that research indicates deliver value quickly. Our Value Index evaluates sales performance management business systems and tools in accordance with that belief. We advocate using the Value Index as part of a structured approach that begins by incorporating these steps into a program document that will both summarize and detail your initiative or project. Then consult the Value Index to ensure you make choices that will yield the results you want.

The steps listed below provide a framework for a technology-driven business improvement project.

1. Define the business goal and purpose.

2. Define the business requirements.
3. Define the user community and usage requirements.

4. Establish the functional requirements and capabilities.

5. Evaluate the organizational maturity.

6. Determine the technology approach and master list.

7. Define the business and technology evaluation criteria.

8. Evaluate and select a vendor.
Vendor Profile

Oracle Corporation https://www.oracle.com

**Company and Product Profile**

“Master your sales planning process by ditching the spreadsheets and using connected data across finance, sales, partner, and service operations. Drive revenue optimization with Oracle’s advanced incentive compensation, quota, and territory management tools that help sales managers and sales operations staff align individual sales rep goals with the overall sales strategy.”

“Embedded incentive compensation capabilities enable you to model, roll out, and manage compensation plans efficiently, reducing operational costs while optimizing for increased revenue. Compensation dashboards show reps how they are performing, while managers gain visibility into their team’s performance against goals.”

**Ventana Research Evaluation**

Oracle’s SPM offering dominated this Value Index evaluation; the vendor achieved the status of Value Index Leader in each of the seven categories we consider, never scoring below 92 percent and leading the field in all categories except TCO-ROI. This enabled it to also be a Value Index Leader in both Product and Customer Assurance.

Its products, Engagement Cloud Sales and Service, Sales Performance Management and Sales and Service Premium Cloud, bring a portfolio of support for the applications and needs of a sales organization. Its strongest performance was in Capability, providing best-in-class depth for a broad set of roles, from sales operations to managers and sellers. The level of mobile technology support was also best in class. The platform’s performance in Manageability and Adaptability was excellent due to easy configuration and strong support for analytics and planning, quotas and territories.

Our assessment finds room for improvement in TCO-ROI; though it was ranked second overall it could improve its tools and services for its customers. Oracle is a clear leader in sales performance management, bringing breadth and depth to connect sales applications to performance. Oracle’s challenges are less overall in the product and technology than in its effectiveness in marketing and sales.
Appendix: Vendor Inclusion

All vendors that offer relevant sales performance management products and meet the inclusion requirements were invited to actively participate in the evaluation process, at no cost to them. We design inclusion criteria to ensure we include in our evaluation all vendors with geographic operations, customer base and revenue as well as all relevant aspects of the products’ fit for the particular category being evaluated.

For inclusion in the Ventana Research Sales Performance Management Value Index for 2019, a vendor had to be in good standing financially and ethically and have more than 50 dedicated workers, at least $5 million in annual or projected revenue and at least 25 customers. The principal source of the relevant business unit’s revenue had to be software related and there must have been at least one major software release in the last 18 months. The product needed to be able to manage including modeling and measuring sales performance through quotas; manage and optimize sales compensation and incentives plans; support sales reps or sellers, managers, operations and executives; enable management and optimization of territories by quotas and reps; and perform sales planning, analytics and reporting.

If a vendor is actively marketing, selling and developing a product as reflected on its website that is within the scope of the Value Index, it is automatically evaluated for inclusion. We have adopted this approach because we view it as our responsibility to assess all relevant vendors whether or not they choose to actively participate. Seven of the nine suppliers responded positively to our requests for information and provided completed questionnaires and demonstrations to help in our analysis of their sales performance management products. SAP and Optymyze declined to fully participate in our assessment. To organizations evaluating this vendor, we recommend extra scrutiny as part of the software assessment because it did not make its technology or complete information available for the Value Index evaluation process; online material that was generally available was used for the analysis along with briefings and information provided. This report includes products generally available as of August 2019. We did not include a number of other vendors in this Value Index evaluation because they did not satisfy the criteria that our methodology for this research requires.

This Vendor Report is drawn from the full Ventana Research Value Index report, which lays out in detail the analysis underlying the Value Index, lists the products evaluated, and suggests a methodology for preparing a related RFP. The full report is available for purchase. For more information about the full Value Index report or an assessment of your organization using the Value Index, please contact us at sales@ventanaresearch.com.
About Ventana Research

Ventana Research is the leading benchmark research and business technology advisory services firm. We provide insight and expert guidance on trends and mainstream and disruptive technologies. Our unparalleled insights and best practices guidance are based on our rigorous research-based benchmarking of people, processes, information and technology across business and IT functions worldwide. The combination we offer of benchmark research, market coverage and in-depth knowledge of hundreds of technology providers means we can deliver business and technology education and expertise to our clients where and when needed to reduce the time requirements, cost and risk of technology investments. The Ventana Research Indexes — the Value Index and the Benchmark Index family — have redefined the research industry by providing accessible, easy-to-use research-based business and technology guidance to businesses. Ventana Research provides the most comprehensive analyst and research coverage in the industry; the many business and IT professionals worldwide who are members of our community benefit from Ventana Research’s insights, as do highly regarded media and association partners around the globe. Our views and analyses are distributed daily through blogs and social media channels including Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Ventana Research was ranked the #1 analyst firm you can trust in enterprise software for 2009 for its relevance to the industry. To learn how Ventana Research advances the maturity of organizations use of information and technology through benchmark research, education and advisory services, visit www.ventanaresearch.com.

We offer a variety of customizable services to meet your specific needs including workshops, assessments and advisory services. Our education service, led by analysts with more than 20 years of experience, provides a great starting point to learn about important business and technology topics from compliance to business intelligence to building a strategy and driving adoption of best practices. We also offer tailored Value Index Assessment Services to help you define your strategy, build a business case and connect the business and technology phases of your project. And we can provide Ventana On-Demand access to our analysts on an as-needed basis to help you keep up with market trends, technologies and best practices.

Everything at Ventana Research begins with our focused research, of which this Value Index is a part. We work with thousands of organizations worldwide, conducting research and analyzing market trends, best practices and technologies to help our clients improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their organizations.

Through the Ventana Research community we also provide opportunities for professionals to share challenges, best practices and methodologies. Sign up for Individual membership at www.ventanaresearch.com to gain access to our
weekly insights and learn about upcoming educational and collaboration events — webinars, conferences and opportunities for social collaboration on the Internet. We offer the following membership levels:

**Individual membership:** For business and IT professionals* interested in full access to our website and analyst team for themselves. The membership includes access to our library of hundreds of white papers and research notes, briefings and telephone or email consulting sessions to provide input and feedback.

**Team membership:** For business and IT professionals* interested in full access to our Web site and analysts for a five-member team. The membership includes access to our library of hundreds of white papers and research notes, briefings, telephone/e-mail consulting sessions to provide input and feedback and the use of Ventana Research materials for business purposes.

**Business membership:** For business and IT professionals* interested in full access to our website and analyst team for their larger team or small business unit. The membership includes access to our library of hundreds of white papers and research notes, briefings, telephone or email consulting sessions to provide input and feedback, use of Ventana Research materials for business purposes and additional analyst availability.

**Business Plus membership:** For business and IT professionals* interested in full access to our website and analyst team for larger numbers of company employees. The membership includes access to our library of hundreds of white papers and research notes, briefings, telephone or email consulting sessions to provide input and feedback, quotes and validation for media, use of Ventana Research materials for business purposes, additional analyst availability and access to our team for scheduled strategy consulting sessions.

This Value Index report is one of a series that are available for purchase. Also available are any of our extensive library of Benchmark Research reports. To purchase a report or learn more about Ventana Research services — including workshops, assessments and advice — please contact sales@ventanaresearch.com.

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