



VENTANA RESEARCH

# VALUE INDEX

## Product Information Management 2015

Vendor Report

Prepared for

**Agility**   
Multichannel



## **San Ramon, California June 2015**

Ventana Research performed this research and analysis independently. Our goals were to determine the Value Index for Product Information Management and to evaluate vendors and products in accordance with the Ventana Research product information management blueprint and specific operational and performance activities and processes. We charged no fees for this research and invited to participate all vendors that are delivering applications to enable product information management. This report includes vendors and products generally available as of March 2015.

Our purpose in conducting this research was to evaluate the maturity of software vendors and products and their appropriateness for the methodology and processes of product information management. This research and report are not intended to imply that one vendor or product is the right choice for any particular organization. Rather, they provide a baseline of knowledge that organizations can use to evaluate vendors and products to manage and improve product information management by aligning business and IT. Unlike IT analyst firm reports that use subjective influences to score vendors, our research is based on thorough analysis of customer assurance and product categories that best represent how an organization should evaluate its technology supplier.

The full 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 benchmark 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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## Product Information Management

Ventana Research defines product information management (PIM) as the practice of using information, applications and other technology to effectively support product-related processes across the customer, commerce and supply chain. As organizations increase the number and diversity of products and services they offer to customers and partners, they increasingly need to address limitations in the ways they manage and distribute product information, including how related

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attributes and content that describes the products is managed. At the same time, competitive pressures require that they be able to incorporate large amounts of new content – video and images, for example – quickly while ensuring that the information presented to customers is accurate, operational processes run uninterrupted and timely data is available for business analysis. In an environment in which consumers, suppliers and partners use multiple channels to get to product information – websites, kiosks, smartphones, tablets – it is essential that the organization always be able to present complete and up-to-date product information to inspire interest and facilitate purchases.

Product information management and the applications and technology that enable it are designed to help businesses provide the best possible product information to their departments and partners. To accomplish this, PIM software must support multiple business roles, from product managers and marketers to operations and manufacturing teams and to suppliers and those in the supply chain. It must enable manufacturers, for example, to share product information with distributors and with direct retailers or digital commerce providers on the Internet

Effectively managed information about products is also essential to support a range of decision-making processes about products and services. Analytics applied to product information can yield a variety of metrics; they can indicate where product information is missing, where



it needs to be improved, what the patterns are of product usage and the meaning of feedback about them. In the preparation of product information, analytics can help profile and improve the quality of data and associated attributes to determine where action must be taken.

Product information management is not the same as master data management (MDM), although the two sometimes are confused. This misunderstanding can distract businesses from focusing on what they need in a PIM application. MDM technology can ensure a single definition of data across the enterprise and improve the quality and integration of data across information systems. Many PIM systems have built-in MDM and more recently data integration and data quality processes to ensure there is only one defined master record for any given product. But product information encompasses more than just the defined name and attributes of a product in a database; it includes all related information needed for reference or compliance purposes. Organizations should take care to understand the differences between PIM and MDM as well as how they can complement each other to inform decisions. PIM is essential to enable business units to manage their product-related processes themselves just as IT staff need MDM and integration tools to enable them to manage data throughout the enterprise.

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Ventana Research used the benchmark research we have conducted on PIM to design this Value Index assessment. This approach – using research to focus assessments of vendors and their products to guide deployment decisions in areas such as PIM – is unique, blending our firm’s experience, research and comprehensive vendor and product framework to produce the only reliable research-based tool to help organizations determine what technology they need and which products to consider.

We believe this approach is essential to maximize competitiveness; to improve the performance of your organization’s people, process, information and technology components, it is critical to select the right vendor and product. Many need to improve in this regard: Our



research analysis placed fewer than one in seven organizations (14%) at the highest Innovative level of performance in their use of PIM.

However, a caution is appropriate here: Technology improvements alone are not enough to improve the use of PIM in an organization. Doing so requires applying a balanced set of upgrades that include efforts to improve processes and information as well. The research

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finds that such improvements are not only necessary but desired, as fewer than one-fifth (19%) of organizations are very satisfied with their PIM processes.

The goal of PIM is to establish a reliable single source of product information that can be shared across channels. Getting it right is not easy; more than one-quarter of organizations have more than 10 sources of product information that they must integrate and manage efficiently. Half of participants in our research acknowledged

that standardizing product information requires substantial effort, and only 27 percent said they completely trust their product information.

In their efforts to produce a reliable product record, most organizations use laborious, time-consuming methods: 37 percent develop custom code, and 45 percent rely on manual effort. One-third of all participants still depend heavily on spreadsheets to create their product records, and almost half (46%) depend on them somewhat. And nearly all (94%) spreadsheet users find major or minor errors in their records.

Processes and tools are available that can automate much of this work. If properly deployed, PIM systems can synchronize all attributes and definitions used in the identification, description, sales and fulfillment of products across all channels that customers, suppliers, trading partners and employees use. Some businesses are implementing PIM that has master data management embedded within it while others connect PIM to their IT organization's MDM, which can help improve the consistency and quality of data across the enterprise.



PIM and MDM projects typically incorporate tools for data discovery, profiling and quality verification to deepen understanding of the data, including relationships and associations among data items. This knowledge can be essential for integrating data from multiple sources and defining master data.

The benefits of using dedicated PIM technology can be significant. More than 40 percent of organizations said it can help eliminate data errors, improve cross-sell and up-sell opportunities and improve the customer experience through consistent product information. Yet our research indicates that most organizations have not adopted more capable systems: Only 27 percent use commercial software dedicated to PIM, although more than half (57%) said they will change their PIM system within 12 to 18 months.

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More than 40 percent of organizations said it can help eliminate data errors, improve cross-sell and up-sell opportunities and improve the customer experience through consistent product information. Yet our research indicates that most organizations have not adopted more capable systems: Only 27 percent use commercial software dedicated to PIM, although more than half (57%) said they will change their PIM system within 12 to 18 months. This latter finding in particular underscores the importance of having a reliable guide such as our Value Index for PIM.

Relying on this research and our years of benchmarking, we have developed a blueprint designed to guide organizations to manage and improve product information.

Using this approach enables companies to more effectively align and link their activities and processes. Achieving effectiveness of course also requires applications that make it possible for an organization to manage product information and performance to the degree required. We have developed and regularly update this Value Index to enable companies to evaluate applications' suitability for use as elements of this approach.

The Value Index for Product Information 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 address key elements of product information management as we define it: ADAM Software, Agility Multichannel, Enterworks, IBM, Informatica, Oracle, Riversand, SAP, Stibo Systems and WebOn.

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

Unlike many IT analyst firms that rank vendors from an IT-only perspective, 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 product information management.



## Value Index Overview

The Ventana Research Value Index: Product Information Management in 2015 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 12 years of business and technology research, this unbiased, fact-based index is the first

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such industry undertaking to assess the value of software designed specifically for enabling product information 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 product information management. The Index evaluates the software in seven key categories. Five are product-related: Usability, Manageability, Reliability, Capability and Adaptability. In addition, we considered two customer assurance categories: Vendor Validation and Total Cost of Ownership and Return on Investment (TCO/ROI). To assess function-

ality, one of the components of capability, we applied the Ventana Research product information management methodology and blueprint, which links the business process of product information management to an organization's information technology.

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 temperature charts. In these indicators the colors reflect our assessment of the value to you, the potential buyer, on a scale from minimally valuable, or Frigid (blue), to very valuable, or Hot (red). Thus, we present the Value Index in both analytic and graphic form, each depicting the value of a specific vendor's offering based on an evaluation of what it can deliver that is relevant to your product information management needs.





The Value Index is not an abstraction; Ventana Research used a carefully crafted best practices-based methodology to represent how organizations actually will assess vendors. We believe it is important to take this approach, since making the wrong decision can raise the total cost of ownership, lower the return on investment and hamper your organization's ability to reach its performance potential.

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cost of ownership, lower the return on investment and hamper your 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 placing on your short list vendors that are wrong for your organization.

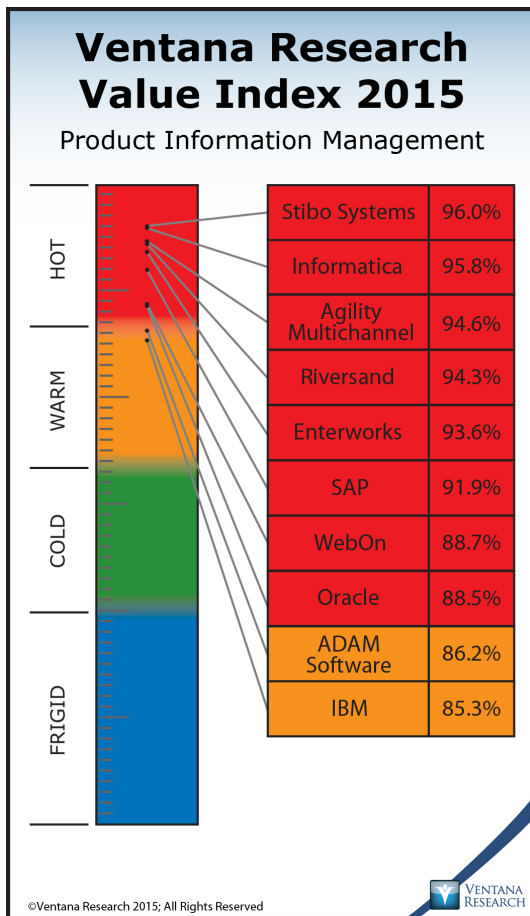
To ensure the accuracy of the information we collected, we required participating vendors to provide evaluation data across seven categories designed to reflect the concerns of a well-crafted RFP. Ventana Research then validated the information, first independently through our database of product information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





## The Findings

The Value Index for Product Information Management in 2015 reveals insights into the state of the software market for PIM. It investigates the divide between vendors that are independently focused on this



category – Agility Multichannel, Enterworks, Informatica, Riversand and Stibo Systems – and larger ones that embed it in a business application suite – IBM, Oracle and SAP. A third group including ADAM Software and WebOn specializes in a departmental approach to PIM; these companies also are expanding from their European bases to market and sell in North America.

The Value Index analysis identifies two companies, Stibo Systems and Informatica, as the current leaders in PIM; Stibo Systems outscored Informatica by only 0.2 percent. Stibo Systems is rated Hot and ranks first in four of the seven evaluation categories (Usability, Capability, Validation and TCO/ROI); Informatica, also Hot overall, leads in the other three categories (Manageability, Reliability and Adaptability). A primary distinction between the two is that Stibo Systems focuses on this particular

business process and applications while Informatica through its acquisition of Heiler Software has integrated PIM software with its own data infrastructure including master data management, data integration, data quality and other key tools. One of the insights resulting from our PIM Value Index analysis is that each of these vendors would benefit from paying attention to the other’s strengths.

Agility Multichannel is the third-ranked vendor for PIM, also rated Hot overall. Making advances in Usability, Reliability, Capability, Validation and TCO/ROI and also in Adaptability through an OEM agreement with Pentaho for integration and analytics, it has dramatically improved its



offering in the market. Deeper support for commerce also strengthens its independent approach to PIM. A close fourth is Riversand, another Hot vendor, which continues to advance in many of the categories, particularly Usability and TCO/ROI.

Enterworks finished a strong fifth and is rated Hot overall. Its recent acquisition by Black Dragon Capital and appointment of a new CEO should bring renewed vigor to its market efforts. SAP, ranked sixth and rated Hot, acquired PIM vendor hybris software and entered the market with new marketing and commerce applications that have embedded product content management. SAP also provides data management and related tools to support PIM. Seventh-place WebOn improved from Warm to Hot overall. It has expanded its efforts to North America and made improvements in Usability; its specialty areas are sales and commerce where PIM is not as easily available or integrated with existing processes and systems.

Oracle moved up to eighth place and now is rated Hot. It has improved its PIM offering, particularly in how it supports existing customers and with an interface to applications through its Product Hub and data management technology. Offering PIM independently is its largest challenge, and the Warm rating for Validation and TCO/ROI make it more difficult for potential customers to consider its offering. ADAM Software here makes its initial entry into the Value Index; though it is rated Warm overall, it earned the Hot rating in three categories. It focuses on marketing departments, which often need help in managing product information. Finally, IBM struggles to support PIM as a business application. Its focus is on master data management and associated data integration and quality, and it is rated Warm in support for PIM.

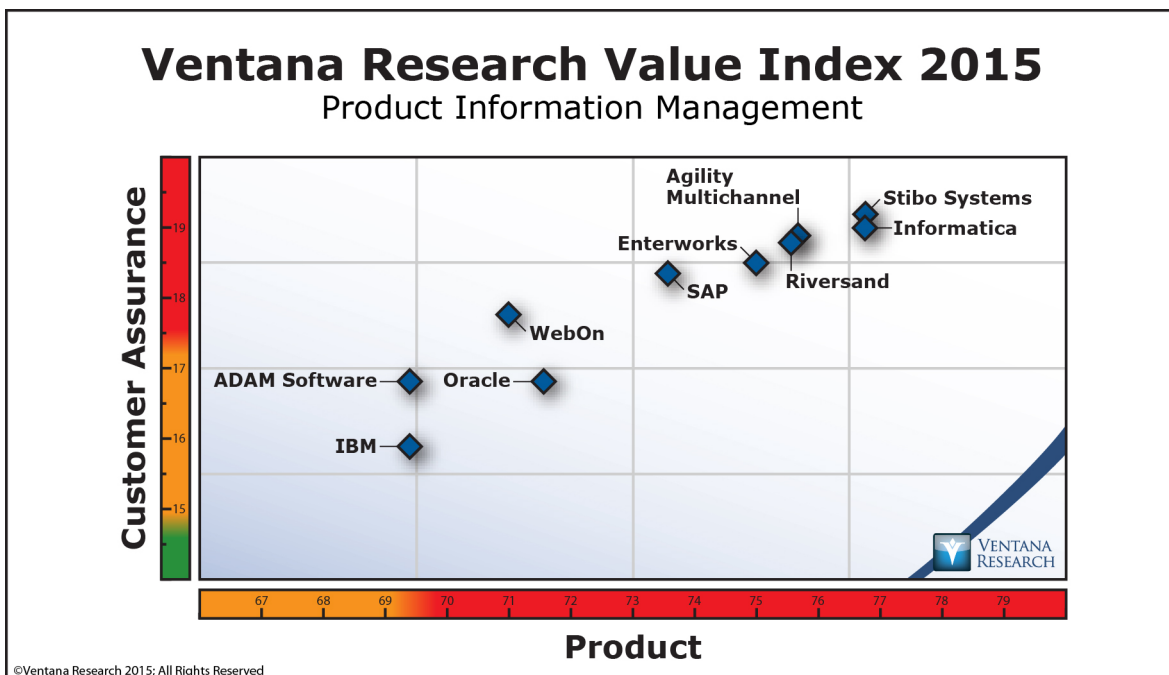
Oracle and SAP were the only two vendors that did not actively participate in the Value Index process, so we evaluated them based on product information available on the Internet and through customer conferences and related information.

As noted above, this Ventana Research Value Index evaluates the software in seven key categories. Five are product-related: Usability, Manageability, Reliability, Capability and Adaptability. In addition, we considered two customer assurance categories: Vendor Validation and



Total Cost of Ownership and Return on Investment (TCO/ROI). The chart below places the product-related and customer assurance scores on the X and Y axes respectively to provide a visual representation of our Value Index scores. Those vendors whose products scored higher in aggregate in the five product categories place higher, to the right, with their standing shown by the color-coding of the horizontal axis; the combination of scores for the two customer assurance categories determine their placement on the vertical access and the corresponding color-coded standing in that area.

Based on their scores, the top two vendors, Stibo Systems and Informatica, fall in the upper right corner and the last finisher, IBM, in the lower left. These positions reflect stark differences among vendors not only in the efficacy of their approaches to product information management but in the approaches themselves. The close placement of Agility Multichannel, Riversand and Enterworks at the upper right further reflects our high estimation of vendors that have a dedicated focus on PIM.



We warn that close vendor scores 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 address the component tasks of product information 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 an 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 every business role. 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.

The 2015 Product Information Management Value Index has advanced from the previous version in two major respects. First, we increased the specificity of the characteristics we evaluated in Usability, Manageability, Reliability and Adaptability to be able to differentiate the products better. Second, we increased the number of items in the Capabilities section to reflect the growing need for PIM to provide more depth for both business and IT users. This resulted in lower scores for some vendors in some categories, but others made improvements to their products in the past two years. For example, Agility Multichannel's score rose significantly, but IBM, which has not made much investment to PIM, remained in last place. Other vendors such as Tibco were invited multiple times but did not respond and were left out of the analysis. Other specialized and vertical application providers such as JDA were left out because they did not meet the evaluation criteria. Other vendors were acquired, such as GXS by OpenText, and became more focused on providing integration technology; lacking a dedicated focus on PIM they were excluded.



## Products Evaluated

Vendor	Product Name	Version	Release Year
<b>ADAM Software</b>	ADAM Products	4.1	2014
<b>Agility Multichannel</b>	Agility	6.3	2014
<b>Enterworks</b>	Enterworks Enable	7.4	2015
<b>IBM</b>	IBM InfoSphere Master Data Management Collaborative Edition	11.4	2014
	IBM InfoSphere Master Data Management Reference Data Hub	11.4	2014
	IBM InfoSphere Master Data Management Enterprise Edition	11.4	2014
<b>Informatica</b>	Informatica PIM	7.1.03	2015
	Informatica Data Quality	9.6.1	2015
	Informatica Master Data Management	9.5.1	2015
	Informatica PowerCenter	9.6.1	2015
<b>Oracle</b>	Oracle Product Hub	12.1.3	2014
	Oracle Fusion Product Hub	11.1.8	2014
	Oracle Product Value Chain Cloud	9	2014
	Oracle Data Integrator Enterprise Edition 12c	12.1.3	2014
	Oracle Data Integrator 12c	12.1.3	2014
	Oracle Enterprise Data Quality 12c	12.1.3	2014
<b>Riversand</b>	Riversand MDM Center	7.6.5	2015
<b>SAP</b>	SAP hybris Marketing	1502	2015
	SAP hybris Commerce	1502	2015
	SAP hybris Product Content Management	5.5	2015
	SAP NetWeaver	7.4	2015
	SAP NetWeaver Master Data Management	7.1	2015
		Support Package 13	
	SAP Master Data Governance	7.0	2014
		Support/Feature Pack 2	
<b>Stibo Systems</b>	STEP Trailblazer	7.2	2015
<b>WebOn</b>	WebOn Product Information Management	7.7	2015



## How To Use This Value Index

This research on tools and systems can provide you with insight into the value of your existing and new investments and a framework to assess your initiatives and programs. Business and IT improvement efforts should be based on best practices and research that deliver value quickly. Ventana Research recommends that you organize your efforts around our blueprint for this topic and use the Value Index to determine which vendors will best satisfy your needs for workforce management.

Be sure to define both business and IT requirements as part of an improvement process based on these research results. We advocate a structured approach such as our DecisionCycle™, an eight-step process for enabling workforce management. Using this framework, you can incorporate 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.

Using the DecisionCycle™ steps detailed below, you can build a framework for assessing the maturity of your business and IT efforts and determining how to align your people, processes and IT investments.

- 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

### Agility Multichannel

<http://www.agilitymultichannel.com/>

Agility Multichannel		
	Ranking	Score
<b>Overall Ranking</b>	<b>Third</b>	<b>94.6%</b>
Usability		92.5%
Manageability		93.2%
Reliability	Third	94.6%
Capability	Third	96.0%
Adaptability	Third	96.1%
Validation	Third	94.5%
TCO/ROI	Third	94.6%

### **Company and Product Profile**

(Provided by Agility Multichannel)

“Agility Multichannel’s software features the Agility Modular Interface, which is fully configurable for business-wide acceptance and ease of use, as well as seamless integration with all channels and touch points, letting companies deliver their product data everywhere it needs to go, instantly, with integrity and quality.

“Agility is a simple-to-use but highly sophisticated product information management and master data management solution that puts your most valuable data at the stable core of a robust multichannel commerce strategy.”

### **Ventana Research Evaluation**

Agility Multichannel ranks third overall and is rated Hot in all categories. It has made the most improvement of any vendor, increasing its score by 6.1 percent since our last analysis, in which it ranked seventh. Its largest improvement is in Adaptability; previously it was rated Warm but now is Hot through its investment in the Agility Modular Interface, which adds flexibility, and in embedding Pentaho Data Integration in its product. Its improvement in Capability also should be noted, especially its work to become a key part of commerce





applications and systems that require high-quality product information. Growth in customers and use cases increased its Validation score. Agility's lowest scores are in Usability and Manageability, although it is still rated Hot in both. There is room for improvement in its support of cloud computing and interaction with other business applications, especially ones that operate in the cloud. Overall Agility Multichannel has demonstrated commitment to its products, customers and partners and has become a stronger contender in the PIM market.



## Appendix: Vendor Inclusion

We invited all vendors with relevant product information management offerings to participate in the Value Index evaluation process, at no cost to them. If the vendor did not respond to the invitation, we made a determination whether to include it in our analysis based on our knowledge of the company, its products and customers. We have adopted this approach because we view it as our responsibility to assess all relevant vendors whether or not they choose to invest the time and effort to participate.

Eight of the 10 suppliers evaluated above responded positively to our requests for information to help in our analysis of their product information management products; those that did not are Oracle and SAP. For these vendors we based our evaluations on reviews of their products and customers and on information available on the Internet and through briefings and demonstrations from them.

We did not include a number of other vendors in this Value Index evaluation because they did not satisfy a sufficient number of 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 for a related RFP. The full report is available for purchase, payable by check or credit card. For more information about the full Value Index report or assessment of your organization using the Value Index, please contact us at [sales@ventanaresearch.com](mailto: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](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Google+](#). 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](http://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](http://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.

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