



## Here's to the Problem Solvers

**CGT'S READERS AGAIN SELECT THEIR FAVORITE IT SOLUTION PROVIDERS**

“**T**hey are key partners and critical to our success.”

That comment was made by a consumer goods professional about the technology solution provider he considered to be the most valuable to his business. It came as part of his response to *CGT's* Readers' Choice Survey, which we will present to you over the next 20 pages. (See page 12 to find out which company he meant.)

But they are the words that all solution providers should relentlessly strive to hear, because that is the level of service that consumer goods companies now need from their technology partners. Because the word “partner” can no longer be nothing more than lip service used to fill marketing sells sheets; it has to be a literal part of the solution that tech companies are bringing to the table — along with, of course, the

innovative tools and unparalleled service that will help CGs solve their business objectives.

With the goal of helping CGs identify the solution providers who might best fill this role of partner, *CGT* undertook its 19th annual Readers' Choice Survey, which spotlights the industry's preferred solution and service vendors across 16 vital business functions, from Artificial Intelligence to Trade Promotion Management and everything in between (alphabetically, not functionally).

We made some changes to the categories this year. In addition to the aforementioned AI, we've added Cloud Architecture. We think you'll agree that both technologies have become critical for the industry. On the flip side, since mobility has become required (perhaps even commonplace) functionality for all business tools, we've eliminated it as a distinct category.

The resulting Top Providers lists can serve as a valuable first-step guide for helping your company make future decisions about your business solution and IT needs. In recent years, we've supplemented the Readers' Choice results with editorial commentary about general trends within each category. Since that's something we strive to do all year round, we decided last year to instead place greater emphasis on the solution providers themselves by profiling four "notables" in each category (which we'll explain below).

As usual, *CGT* also presents "Editors' Picks," an overview of intriguing technology and service providers that aren't represented on any of the lists (many missed out by only a few votes) but which should be on the industry's radar nonetheless.

### Survey Methodology

The Top Providers list for each category showcases the companies that received the best "Total Scores" for the solutions and/or services they deliver in that area. Although the goal is to present 10 solution providers in each category, we always rely on the results to determine the final number of worthy designees.

The lists are determined by responses from hundreds of professionals who work with these tools on a daily basis or evaluate their performance within the organization. Because we often encounter outright ties and "too close to call" vote totals or satisfaction ratings, we present these solution providers in alphabetical order.

To ensure the integrity of the survey, only employees of consumer goods companies — the clients of these providers — are eligible to vote, and only once. (*CGT* has internal checks in place to detect fraudulent voting activity.) We also ask respondents to vote only in the categories that match their areas of expertise, whether that's in supply chain, product development, sales and marketing, or general IT.

In each relevant category, respondents are asked to identify the provider whose tools or services they currently use. They're then asked to rank their level of satisfaction with that provider on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being "extremely dissatisfied" and 5 being "extremely satisfied").

A company's "Total Score" is then computed by multiplying the number of votes it receives in the category by its average customer satisfaction rating in that same category.

In addition to listing all of the Top Providers in each category, *CGT* recognizes three companies for special recognition:

**Best in Category:** The provider that received the highest total score in its category.

**Customer Satisfaction Leader:** The provider that earned the highest average user satisfaction rating in the category (after qualifying by receiving an acceptable number of votes).

**SMB Market Leader:** The provider that received the highest total score in the category from respondents whose companies generate annual revenue of \$1 billion or less (small or mid-sized business).

## SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

### Company Size

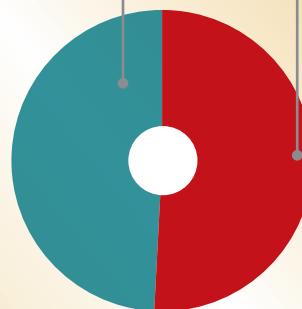
[by annual revenue]

Greater than \$1 billion

51%

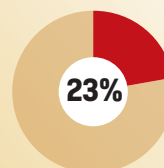
Less than \$1 billion

49%

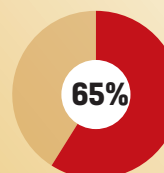


### Areas of Expertise

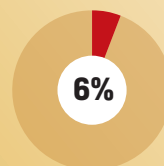
[all companies]



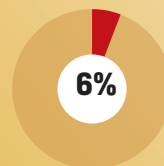
General IT



Sales & Marketing



Supply Chain



Product Development



# Artificial Intelligence

The *CGT* community's preferred providers of solutions leveraging artificial intelligence/machine learning software and services, either as a stand-alone tool or as an enhanced component of an existing technology.

## Best in Category: **Microsoft**

Microsoft is leveraging its Azure cloud platform to enable CG companies to extend their artificial intelligence capabilities beyond supply chain. Clients call it "user friendly" with "good customer service." Among major customers is Walmart, which is leveraging cloud-based machine learning, artificial intelligence and data platform solutions for both shopper-facing services and internal business applications. Partners are a key to Microsoft's AI go-to-market strategy: Alliances forged in 2018 include one with JDA Software, which will leverage Azure to increase the AI/ML capabilities of its supply chain solutions. A major deal with Nielsen intends to "democratize" the vast Nielsen Connect data set, integrating assets to help brands spot emerging trends more easily, diagnose performance gaps, and act faster.

## SMB Market Leader: **Google**

AI is working its way into the industry from production through consumer engagement, and Google is helping lead the way. Its efforts have been particularly beneficial to startups and other small businesses without the resources needed for more intensive tech implementations. New developments in 2018 included an array of Google Assistant-connected appliances, as well as Google Duplex, a tool for conducting natural conversations to carry out "real world" tasks by

phone. Elsewhere, Google acquired AI startup Onward and announced a solution that lets companies with limited machine learning expertise deploy AI in their contact centers.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader: **IBM**

The company that first made AI popular with the masses by unleashing IBM Watson on the entertainment world made some major investments in its business-focused AI services in 2018, including a new data science and machine learning platform for data-driven decision making and a no-charge consultancy to advise clients on adoption and roadmapping. IBM also enhanced its partnership with Salesforce to produce AI-driven predictive analytics that can drive personalized, customer-triggered interactions based on the latest call or chat. One *CGT* survey respondent reports, "We already have a successful analytics garage with IBM," and another said, "They are the main partner in our AI/digital enterprise journey." Computer maker Lenovo has tapped IBM for AI in its call centers.

## Noteworthy: **Fractal Analytics**

The importance of preparing for a new era of man-machine collaboration has been a key theme over the past year for data science, analytics and artificial intelligence firm Fractal Analytics, which is employed by leading CG companies including Kimberly-Clark. In support of that theme, the company

acquired its former partner, Final Mile, a leader in the application of behavioral sciences to understand decision-making and influence consumer and social behavior. According to Fractal Analytics chief executive officer Srikanth Velamakanni, the combination of data science and behavioral science can bolster client outcomes as well as advance the human-machine interface going forward.

## Artificial Intelligence

Best in Category: **Microsoft**  
SMB Market Leader: **Google**  
Customer Satisfaction Leader: **IBM**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Alloy
Fractal Analytics
E2open
Google
IBM
Infosys
Microsoft
Prevedere
Salesforce
SAP

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.75**



# Business Intelligence

The CGT community's preferred solution providers for business intelligence applications including reporting, analytics and data mining/warehousing.

## Best in Category: **SAP**

SAP continues its dominance of the Business Intelligence category with products that one CGT survey taker called "easy to use." But its list of BI products had become pretty lengthy, so over the past several years the company has been driving toward convergence, with an eye toward reducing complexity and focusing on BI use cases across industries. The result is SAP Analytics Cloud, a platform that enables companies to discover, analyze, plan, predict, and collaborate. The solutions integrate with both on-premise and cloud-based data sources and applications, and are designed around ease of use and faster delivery of innovation.

## SMB Market Leader: **Microsoft**

Microsoft repeats as SMB Market Leader for BI this year, praised by satisfied clients for being "low cost, effective, easy to implement and access" and providing "good customer service." "We are a mixed BI company, but focusing efforts toward Microsoft Power BI and [top 10 provider] Tableau, both of which deserve a 5-star rating," one survey taker said. Another remarked, "We use the full suite of Microsoft products and they are great." In fact, 10 respondents cited Microsoft as their most valuable partner across all tech providers. In news, Microsoft released updates to Power BI, including premium multi-geo aggregations for databases and new landing page and dashboard commenting that better

facilitates collaboration. Columbia Sportswear is among Power BI users.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader: **MicroStrategy**

Last year's "Noteworthy" BI vendor captured the Customer Satisfaction title this year, thanks not only to a high rating (4.67/5) but to client comments such as, "Great partner providing a product that meets multiple needs." MicroStrategy provides analytics capabilities for sales and marketing, operations, finance, supply chain and orders and shipment reporting. In 2018, the company announced the availability of three new gateways in its 10.11 release, which will enable users to easily visualize, analyze and distribute data using Microsoft Azure. Clients include Chiquita Brands International, McCain Foods and Campbell Soup Co. Marketing for a product upgrade unveiled at last month's NRF Show boasts of providing "a new category of analytics" dubbed "Hyperintelligence" that automatically provides contextual insights from a vast mix of web content, screens, walls, devices and applications "with no clicks required."

## Noteworthy: **SAS**

Drawing more sophisticated, actionable insights from data about products, retail customers and consumers is a high priority for CG companies, as well as a key component of the industry-specific BI solution set at SAS. Clients including Nestlé, Harry & David and Levi Strauss & Co. turn to SAS to bring more advanced analytics tools

## Business Intelligence

Best in Category: **SAP**

SMB Market Leader: **Microsoft**

Customer Satisfaction Leader: **MicroStrategy**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Amazon AWS

Dunnhumby

IBM

Microsoft

MicroStrategy

Oracle

SAP

SAS

Sequoia

Tableau

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.79**

and technologies into their planning, marketing and sales processes. SAS also earned accolades from analysts including Forrester and IDC last year, which recognized the company's significant market share in advanced analytics. The company was even recognized by *People* as a "Great Place to Work" in 2018. Other clients include Honda, 1-800-Flowers and Konica Minolta, the last of which implemented an AI-driven platform that sped up its "plan-do-check-act" cycle by creating and deploying multiple analytical models that improved malfunction forecasts, management optimization and a range of other processes.



# Cloud Architecture

The *CGT* community's preferred providers of cloud computing platforms that allow companies to collaboratively store, share and develop business-critical data and other information.

## Best in Category, SMB Market

Leader: **Microsoft Azure**

Consumer goods companies of all sizes are fans of the Microsoft Azure cloud platform, leading to its success as both overall category leader and SMB vendor of choice. Survey respondents praise Azure as "a good platform" that is "pretty easy to use and stable," as well as "easy to integrate

## Cloud-Based Architecture

Best in Category:  
Leader: **Microsoft Azure**

SMB Market Leader:  
Leader: **Microsoft Azure**

Customer Satisfaction  
Leader: **Amazon AWS**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Amazon AWS

Google

Microsoft Azure

Oracle

Salesforce

SAP

Category Customer  
Satisfaction Score **3.97**

with our internal [internet download managers], since they [also] are Microsoft-based." One CG exec called Microsoft her most valuable partner "because we have been able to roll out cloud services (such as) Power BI and collaboration on SharePoint and Skype very quickly and economically."

In 2018, Campbell Soup Co. announced plans to modernize its information technology infrastructure by using Azure to streamline workflows and drive efficiencies. Beer maker Carlsberg Group and its partners will use Azure to accelerate innovation by leveraging artificial intelligence, DevOps and analytics. And Columbia Sportswear is leveraging Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Azure for its retail, call center, customer relationship management and merchandising operations.

Among a plethora of recent partnership news, JDA Software will build software-as-a-service solutions on Azure, which now also is powering Nielsen Connect, the media and retail insights giant's enterprise data solution.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader: **AWS (Amazon Web Services)**

In the second quarter of 2018, Synergy Research estimated that AWS enjoyed a 34% share of the cloud infrastructure market. While the solution's penetration of the consumer goods market isn't quite that high, it apparently has been satisfying the clients it does have: AWS scored a 4.4 rating overall. Among the companies who've chosen to run on AWS are Unilever, Dole, Ferrara Candy Co., Del Monte, Bose and McCormick & Co. "We've only begun to dabble, but pricing, scalability and management options are attractive," noted one *CGT* survey taker. AWS announced several enhancements to the platform in 2018, including three new services to help clients build more quickly, new database capabilities, and deeper integration of mission-critical SAP applications.

## Noteworthy: **Google**

A growing number of CG companies are choosing Google Cloud for its wide range of computing, storage, migration, database, networking, management and development products and services. Fans typically cite low costs and services that are "fast and easy to use, but data gravity plays a key role," as one survey taker stated. New announcements and releases in the last year included a new Global Partner Ecosystem structure, updates to the Cloud Spanner globally distributed relational database service, and the acquisition of DORA (DevOps Research and Assessment), a company specializing in exactly that. Clients include Barilla, Colgate-Palmolive and Johnson & Johnson.

# Consulting

The CGT community's preferred providers for third-party strategic and tactical consulting services.

## Best in Category: **Accenture**

Accenture once again earned Best in Category honors by offering services that span retail execution, promotion management, front office and goods mobility solutions, and store compliance. One client cited the firm as its most valuable partner overall "because they understood our retail execution strategy and are helping us execute with high standards and scale." Carlsberg engaged Accenture to transition its IT infrastructure to the public cloud as part of the beer maker's strategy to be an intelligent, digitally enabled, connected enterprise. Accenture has cited three trends heavily impacting the rules of the game for CG companies: the need for frictionless business, data veracity and citizen AI (the last referring to the ways in which AI can benefit society as well as business).

## SMB Market Leader: **Deloitte**

Startups are disrupting many traditional consumer goods categories, but as they grow they begin facing many of the same challenges as legacy enterprises. SMBs have been turning to Deloitte in large numbers to help them tackle challenges in human capital, strategy and operations, and technology; Flour supplier Ardent Mills tapped Deloitte to help it undergo a technological "transformation at startup" when it launched several years ago by combining several existing companies. In 2018, Deloitte enhanced its internal services by establishing partnerships,

such as an alliance with Blue Prism that brings robotic process automation to clients, a collaboration with Google and SAP to jointly develop cloud strategies, and a move to become an Amazon Web Services partner.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Clarkston Consulting**

Clarkston again topped the Customer Satisfaction rankings in the Consulting category with another score that was a full point higher than the category average. One respondent offered the following praise: "Exceptional bench strength and process knowledge, a true business partner and willing to have the hard discussions when required." The firm was called out by Gartner for its work in helping consumer goods companies drive digital transformation through upgrades to the SAP S/4HANA ERP platform. During 2018, Clarkston announced a partnership with cloud-software provider Veeva Systems to help clients mitigate the risks driven by more stringent, tighter quality regulations while providing demonstrative evidence of quality management. Clients include Coca-Cola and L'Oréal.

## Noteworthy:

### **Tata Consultancy Services**

Digital transformation has been a huge growth driver for TCS, which works with large retailers including Best Buy and The Home Depot as well as wholesale distributor and retailer ALDO Group. The fast-growing firm offers CG

## Consulting

Best in Category: **Accenture**  
SMB Market Leader: **Deloitte**  
Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Clarkston Consulting**

### TOP PROVIDERS

<b>Accenture</b>
<b>Capgemini</b>
<b>Clarkston Consulting</b>
<b>Cognizant</b>
<b>Deloitte</b>
<b>EY</b>
<b>Infosys</b>
<b>McKinsey</b>
<b>Microsoft</b>
<b>PwC/PwC Strategy&amp;</b>
<b>Tata Consultancy Services</b>

*Note: Due to a tie, this list contains 11 solution providers*

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.82**

companies a range of IT services and solutions; recent projects included an SAP implementation for a global toy manufacturer, a cloud-based TPM makeover for a food manufacturer, and a cloud-based digital platform for a global food ingredient maker. TCS was recognized by Gartner as a "Magic Quadrant Leader" for data center outsourcing and hybrid infrastructure managed services last year, due in part to its new cognitive business operations unit, its cognitive automation platform, and its enterprise intelligent automation business.



# Consumer Experience Management

The CGT community's preferred providers of solutions for improving consumer engagement through social media, online platforms, digital content, advertising and omnichannel management.

## Best in Category, Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Salesforce**

Last year's Customer Satisfaction leader retains that honor (with a 3.9 rating) but also earns the Best in Category nod. Respondents praised the company for its "robust platform" and "good functionality." One said, "Overall we are happy," but acknowledged that

## Consumer Experience Management

Best in Category: **Salesforce**

SMB Market Leader: **Adobe Systems**

Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Salesforce**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Adobe Systems

Astute Solutions

Management Science Associates

Marketo

Mars Agency

Maxpoint (Valassis Digital)

Netbase

Oracle

Salesforce

SAP

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.57**

his company isn't yet using the product to its full potential.

In 2018, the company unveiled Salesforce Customer 360, a way for clients to connect various apps and deliver unified cross-channel consumer experiences, which will become widely available in 2019. The tool enhances data management across Salesforce apps and provides instant access to consistent, reconciled consumer data. These include enhanced integration between Google Analytics 360 and the Salesforce Marketing Cloud, and machine learning and pattern analysis capabilities for discovering new audiences and personalizing consumer journeys. Users include footwear manufacturer Crocs, which is using the platform to gain a 360-degree view of its consumers by enabling every system to recognize an individual through a single ID, regardless of engagement channel.

### SMB Market Leader: **Adobe Systems**

Adobe Systems captured the SMB Market Leader title this year for its ability to help companies access end-to-end solutions for marketing, advertising, analytics and commerce. Survey takers praised the fact that the "cost is at our level," as well as the cloud-based platform's "ease of use." Adobe's strategy gained a major boost in 2018 with the addition of Marketo

(see below) and its lead management, account-based marketing and revenue attribution technology, which meshes well with the Adobe Experience Cloud's analytics, personalization and content capabilities. Elsewhere in 2018, Adobe, Microsoft and SAP introduced an open data initiative to offer a common approach and set of resources to let their mutual clients derive greater value from their data and deliver world-class consumer experiences in real-time.

### Noteworthy: **Marketo**

Marketo made it back onto the Consumer Experience Management list this year shortly after being acquired by Adobe. (Ah, well.) The company's engagement platform empowers marketers to drive more meaningful consumer interaction and deliver greater insights to improve campaign success. Clients include Cannon and Sherwin-Williams. During the year, Marketo unveiled new campaign platform Marketo Sky. It also acquired business marketing software firm Bizable and formed a partnership with Pedowitz Group. Combining the analytics, personalization and content capabilities of the Adobe Experience Cloud with Marketo's lead management, account-based marketing and revenue attribution technology is intended to help client further connect their marketing engagement to revenue growth.



# Customer Relationship Management

The CGT community's preferred providers for customer relationship management solutions including marketing, sales force automation, customer service and category management.

## Best in Category: **Salesforce**

Longtime CRM favorite Salesforce (and 2018's SMB Market Leader) ascended to Best in Category this year, earning praise from its consumer goods clientele for "cost and contract flexibility" and a platform that is "easy to use" and "gives the right information in the right way." Several survey takers noted that they're still only using a fraction of the solution set's functionality. Service enhancements in 2018 included the addition of a voice assistant for conversational CRM, expansion of a global alliance with AWS involving new product integrations, the acquisition of app-network building platform MuleSoft and launch of the Salesforce Integration Cloud (to be powered by Mulesoft). Top clients include Kellogg Co., lifestyle product manufacturer Yeti, and soda syrup maker Torani.

## SMB Market Leader: **SAP**

SAP set its sights squarely on rival Salesforce (which unseated it as category leader this year) when it launched the fourth-generation SAP C/4 HANA in 2018, taking a broader, customer-centric approach to the category by incorporating the capabilities of acquired tools Hybris, Gigya and CallidusCloud. The cloud is also a key part of SAP's invigorated approach to the SMB space, where SAP Business ByDesign and SAP Business One (also available on-premise) both incorporate

CRM alongside other ERP functions. At the company's annual SMB Innovation Summit, CRM played an important role in SAP's digital transformation vision, which enables smaller enterprises to tap into capabilities to instantly identify and cater to customers based on stored preferences.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Exceedra**

Strong enthusiasm for Exceedra in last year's Trade Promotion Management rankings extended over to Customer Relationship Management this year, where the company topped the category with a 4.5/5 rating. Exceedra CRM users praise the solution's strengths in tracking, reporting and visibility. "A good system, intuitive, provides insight," said one respondent; "They have a very good system and collaborative development," said another. Exceedra was busy in 2018 adding new clients and on-boarding others, collecting accolades from analysts and media organizations, and hosting a series of events and webinars to help clients enrich their use of the integrated business planning and agile decision-making platform.

## Noteworthy: **StayinFront**

StayinFront has been providing a full suite of mobile, cloud-based field force effectiveness and customer relationship management solutions for

## Customer Relationship Management

Best in Category: **Salesforce**  
SMB Market Leader: **SAP**  
Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Exceedra**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Accenture
AFS Technologies
Exceedra
JDA Software Group
Microsoft
Oracle
RW3 Technologies
Salesforce
SAP
StayinFront

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.66**

consumer goods companies in more than 50 countries for over 20 years. UK soft drink manufacturer A.G. Barr signed on last year to leverage StayinFront TouchCG to improve selling tools and execution capabilities for its retail, telesales, direct-store delivery and van processes. Clients here in the U.S. include Kellogg, L'Oréal and Mondeléz International. An early 2019 upgrade to the StayinFront Consumer Goods solution is aimed at increasing efficiency and reducing total cost of ownership for system administrators.





# Demand Data Analytics

The **CGT** community's preferred providers of solutions for collecting, cleansing, analyzing and integrating point-of-sale, syndicated and other sources of retailer data.

## Best in Category: **Nielsen**

Nielsen recaptured Best in Category honors in Demand Data Analytics this year, with one user calling its solutions "comprehensive." Among the company's more recent fans is global food and beverage ingredient manufacturer Tate & Lyle, which named Nielsen its U.S. market analytics provider last October. Also, Nielsen and Microsoft announced an alliance to "democratize" the vast Nielsen Connect data

## Demand Data Analytics

Best in Category: **Nielsen**

SMB Market Leader: **Oracle**

Customer Satisfaction Leader: **E2open**

### TOP PROVIDERS

84.51

E2open

Infosys

IRI

JDA Software Group

Management Science Associates

Nielsen

Oracle

Salesforce

SAP

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.68**

set through the global-scale Microsoft Azure cloud platform. The goal is to help clients identify growth and accelerate innovation within an open data environment. Overall, the Nielsen Connected Partner Program grew 30% in 2018 to become the industry's largest curated community.

## SMB Market Leader: **Oracle**

Oracle's 2016 acquisition of NetSuite gave it a strong player in the Demand Data Analytics category. The Netsuite platform undertook a series of innovations over the past year, including the rollout of tools to embed more powerful analytics within existing business processes and provide an intuitive graphical toolset. Oracle also unveiled CX Unity, a unique approach to managing customer data that enables companies to deliver an experience that is timely, relevant, and consistent across known and unknown interactions. Users include Dutch confectioner Tony's Chocolonely and U.S. pet product manufacturer BARK, the latter of which is using NetSuite to gain real-time insight into order management, purchasing, and inventory.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader:

### **E2open**

E2open joined the top ranks of the category this year in a big way, capturing the Customer Satisfaction title with a 4.33/5 rating. In early 2018, Procter & Gamble tapped E2open to provide a next-gen demand planning solution.

P&G joined Land O'Lakes, Philip Morris and Walgreens on the client list, along with satisfied CGT readers: "E2open brings consolidation and integration of multiple software together into a single source for simple navigation of complex systems," reported one, who identified E2open as his most valuable partner. Another noted that, for his company's Walmart business, E2open "has enabled us to integrate multiple data sources that can now be used cross-functionally across sales, finance, supply chain, e-commerce and retail operations."

## Noteworthy:

### **Management Science Associates**

Clients had a lot to say about MSA, from the general ("Gives us the data we need to run our business") to the specific ("Cleansing and mapping of distributor data generates robust data sets.") The survey takers who picked the company as most valuable vendor were even more effusive: "The level of data they provide helps us make good business decisions. Their industry knowledge enables them to understand our needs and recommend working solutions. I get the feeling they really care about our business," said one. Another explained, "Their understanding of our business and ability to deliver solutions that directly influence strategy and tactics are unique. They are key partners and critical to our success."



**Best in Category: AWS**  
(Amazon Web Services)

Amazon's booming success as an e-commerce retailer and private-label purveyor may be keeping consumer goods executives up at night, but the company wants to be an ally when it comes to digital commerce tools and services like infrastructure, analytics and database management through the growing (and profitable) AWS unit. After first arriving on the Read-

## Digital Commerce

**Best in Category: Amazon AWS**

**SMB Market Leader: Shopify**

**Customer Satisfaction Leader: Salesforce**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Amazon AWS

Clavis Insight (Edge by Ascential)

Digital River

Hubspot

IBM

Magento

Oracle

Salesforce Commerce Cloud

SAP

Shopify

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.63**

# Digital Commerce

The CGT community's preferred providers of solutions for BTB and B2C transactions, direct-to-consumer selling and other e-commerce services.

ers' Choice scene last year by earning Customer Satisfaction honors, AWS jumped to the very top of the ranks this year. Survey respondents were succinct with their praise, noting a solution that "works well" and is "still tracking steadily," and reporting simply that they are "satisfied." CG companies making use of the company's broad range of offerings include Unilever, GoPro and Under Armour. AWS released a stream of product enhancements and releases throughout 2018, from managed blockchain to a new optimized edge computing product.

**SMB Market Leader: Shopify**

"Shopify makes it very easy to collect orders in a variety of ways and has been easy to use as well," one survey taker remarked. "Just started to work with them, but am pleased with the functionality and value," said another. In 2018, the company opened its first physical space to provide in-person help to merchants, expanded its integration efforts with Instagram, and added Google Pay as an option. Product enhancements included significant upgrades for retail stores, a new marketing section in the dashboard, automation and simplification of back-office workflows, a Shopify services marketplace, and a revamped app store.

**Customer Satisfaction Leader:**

**Salesforce**

The former Demandware platform, now officially Salesforce Commerce

Cloud, earned props as the Customer Satisfaction leader with 4.0/5. Appropriately, one survey respondent praised Salesforce for its "good customer service," and another said the vendor is "very new to our organization, but has been good so far." In 2018, Lilly Pulitzer implemented both the Salesforce commerce and marketing clouds and Tarte Cosmetics launched two new websites built on Salesforce Commerce Cloud. Milk Makeup began using the Cloud to redefine its digital shopping experience. Denim brand NYDJ adopted the commerce and marketing clouds to grow its direct-to-consumer channels.

**Noteworthy: Clavis Insight**

Numerous companies have turned to Reader's Choice newcomer Clavis Insight (an Editors' Pick in 2018) to provide action-ready insights and performance measurement about their brands' e-commerce activity, help them drive sales, optimize content and compliance, and gain unified reporting. The list of blue-chip clients includes Unilever, P&G, Kimberly-Clark and Nestlé. After expanding its relationship with IRI to include Australia, Clavis Insight was acquired by Ascential plc in late 2017. Now, the solution set sits alongside those of Brand View, One Click Retail and PlanetRetail as part of Edge by Ascential, a next-generation data, insights and advisory service compiled by British business-to-business media conglomerate Ascential plc.

# Enterprise Resource Planning

The CGT community's preferred providers of full-suite ERP solutions to empower finance, HR, CRM, BI, supply chain, PLM and other key business functions.

## Best in Category: **SAP**

Perennial category leader SAP is moving decidedly away from its legacy ECC solutions and toward cloud-based ERP with the migration toward S/4HANA. With an eye to enabling complete customer journeys, from purchase intent to actual buying and post-product success and support, SAP has been integrating its core ERP tools with the new SAP C/4HANA suite. This combination of assets features new machine learning capabilities from SAP Leonardo, as well as a new data management suite that enables companies to control highly distributed data. Hershey began its migration last year to streamline manufacturing and supply chain processes, gain real-time consumer insights to inform decision making, and accelerate revenue-generating innovation to drive growth. Giorgio Armani, Bombardier and McDonald's Corp. are among the other marquee names that have moved to the HANA cloud platform.

## SMB Market Leader: **Microsoft**

Microsoft again was the most popular ERP solution provider among smaller CGs. Survey respondents cited the company for its "good customer service" and being "user friendly," with one calling the company's ERP product "best in the field." Another named Microsoft as its most valuable partner with, "They handle a lot and are reliable." Product changes for Microsoft Dynamics 365 announced in 2018 included a range of financial manage-

ment module updates, updates to business central, and a tightening of the links between Dynamics 365 and other MS tools like Azure, Office 365, SharePoint and Outlook. Clients include furniture maker American of Martinsville.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Sage Group**

Clients apparently stay loyal to Sage Group, as several of this year's respondents noted their long-term relationship to this year's Customer Satisfaction Leader (with a 4.0/5 rating). Sage is coming off a healthy 2018, when it reported 15% growth in enterprise contracts in the U.S. and the addition of 75 partners (including PayPal and UPS) and expanded relationships with Microsoft, American Express, Expensify and Adaptive Analytics. The company is investing heavily in its cloud and related portfolio, and has added a core financials platform and a human capital management offering for both the mid-market and enterprises in the U.S. New clients include Costa Farms, Empire Candle Co., Smith Gardens, Nature's Bakery and Great Lakes Foods.

## Noteworthy: **SYSPRO**

Joining the mainstays in the Readers' Choice ERP category this year is SYSPRO, which is used by smaller consumer goods companies including American Printing House for the Blind, Benchmade Knife and Sun Mountain Sports. The latest release of the company's ERP solution, designed

## Enterprise Resource Planning

Best in Category: **SAP**  
SMB Market Leader: **Microsoft**  
Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Sage Group**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Aptean
Global Shop Solutions
Infor Global Solutions
Jesta
Kenandy
Microsoft
Oracle
Sage Group
SAP
SYSPRO

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.80**

to simplify business complexity for manufacturers and distributors, leverages industry 4.0 automation and data exchange capabilities to support the Internet of Things, cloud computing, and cognitive computing. It also allows manufacturers to connect their current factory equipment seamlessly to the traditional shop floor and other ERP technologies already in use, and can now support a large amount of structured and unstructured business and industry data.



### Best in Category: **SAP**

SAP's dominance of the solution provider landscape extends across all categories (in case you haven't noticed yet), which means the company is close to coming out on top of almost any list: This year, that meant "Best in Category" recognition for NPDI/PLM. The PLM capabilities within the S/4HANA ERP suite include bill of materials management, recipe development and document and change man-

## NPDI/PLM

Best in Category: **SAP**

SMB Market Leader: **Dassault Systemes**

Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Selerant**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Dassault Systemes

Gerber Technology

IBM

Infor Global Solutions

ProductVision

PTC

SAP

Selerant

Siemens PLM

Sopheon

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.50**

# NPDI/PLM

The **CGT** community's preferred providers of solutions for new product development and introduction, and various other aspects of product lifecycle management.

agement. The new S/4HANA Cloud intelligent product design offering is made to accelerate smarter product development through multi-discipline collaboration; requirement-driven development of smarter products; and live product intelligence across the value chain. At a recent event, customers asked SAP to focus on managing complexity as innovation speed increases, as well as on compliance, digitization of engineering, and heavier R&D collaboration.

### SMB Market Leader:

#### **Dassault Systemes**

Dassault Systemes offers a variety of specific functionalities for SMB clients, such as five pre-engineered bundles designed to meet the needs of various industry segments. PLM processes can be integrated end-to-end across the enterprise and beyond, linking in key partners, suppliers and customers to enable manufacturers to operate as on-demand e-businesses. As with everything Dassault does, 3D environments are a key component of the offerings. Procter & Gamble began deploying Dassault's 3DExperience platform in 2017 to connect thousands of users to data, colleagues and consumers and, thereby accelerate and improve packaging and product design, requirements management and program management.

### Customer Satisfaction Leader:

#### **Selerant**

Formula-based PLM software provider Selerant earned Customer Satisfaction

honors with a 4.0/5 rating. "The package works well, the vendor is responsive to our needs, and they provide good support," explained one client. In 2018, Selerant announced a new version of its flagship platform, DevEX 3.6, that allows clients to bring better products to market faster and at lower cost. It also helps them unify critical aspects of the NPDI process. The company also released the new DevEX Baseline System for food and beverage manufacturers as it hones its focus on process industries even more. Clients include B&G Foods, Colgate-Palmolive and Nestle.

### Noteworthy:

#### **Gerber Technology**

Gerber Technology rejoins the NPDI/PLM ranks in 2019 after a five-year absence. The company's cloud-based PLM solutions and services are designed largely for the apparel and furniture markets. In 2018, Gerber launched a new platform to enable fashion companies to set up a purchase-activated business model. It also acquired Avametric, which develops cloth simulation technology, and partnered with ExactFlat to continue moving toward 3D work flows in the furniture market. New customers in 2018 included Totes Isotoner and denim-focused fashion brand Citizens of Humanity. Fast fashion brand Happypunt began using Gerber's digital solutions to reduce costs and time to market while integrating with its ERP system to provide efficiency in design and prototyping.





### Best in Category: **Infosys**

The company received high praise from several respondents in earning Best in Category honors this year. One CGT reader named Infosys his most valuable IT partner “due to their level of integration and their extensive capabilities.” Another called the company “a strategic partner that ...

## Outsourcing/IT Integration

Best in Category: **Infosys**

SMB Market Leader: **IBM**

Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Accenture**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Accenture

Cognizant

Deloitte

HP

IBM

Infosys

Management Science Associates

Mindtree

Tata Consultancy Services

Wipro

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.58**

# Outsourcing/ IT Infrastructure

The CGT community's preferred providers of business outsourcing and/or IT services and integration.

has demonstrated value for more than 10 years.” Infosys is building out a four-pronged corporate strategy that seeks to scale its agile business, energize its core, reskill its workforce and localize operations, the last of which lead to opening facilities in markets across the U.S. In 2018, Infosys launched a new Microsoft Cloud Business Unit and a partnership with Google Cloud to develop transformation and migration services for clients.

### SMB Market Leader: **IBM**

The company is deeply involved in digital transformation projects, including adoption of cloud architecture for core infrastructure. (One survey taker was “satisfied so far” with its work in these areas.) Its overall commitment to cloud-based business became pretty evident last fall, when it announced plans to acquire open source cloud software provider Red Hat for \$34 billion. The company also recently announced completion of more than 100 successful SAP S/4HANA implementations (including supermarket chain Smart & Final), along with a slate of new advanced features for its on-premise private cloud platform that include the integration of powerful AI capabilities.

### Customer Satisfaction Leader:

#### **Accenture**

Why did Accenture earn this year's Customer Satisfaction recognition? Maybe because it simply provides “good customer service,” as one survey taker said. (The company scored a

3.75/5 rating overall.) Accenture has been recognized specifically for its efforts assisting clients with large-scale SAP and Oracle In 2018, Hershey Co. tapped the company to lead its SAP S/4HANA implementation, the goals of which are to streamline manufacturing and supply chain processes, gain real-time customer insights to inform decision making, and accelerate revenue-generating innovation to drive growth. Elsewhere, AB InBev is leveraging Accenture's NewsPage Distributor Management System to better manage sales and distribution operations in Africa, and also engaged the company's implementation services in a three-year contract.

### Noteworthy: **Mindtree**

Mindtree offers a broad range of outsourcing and IT infrastructure services. One extremely satisfied Reader's Choice respondent specifically noted that the company “helped us revolutionize learning through gamification.” Mindtree has been investing in an “automate-everything,” platform-based approach, which it says has driven larger deals and more industry recognition. A key priority has been finding innovative ways to reskill the workforce to help staffers succeed in the modern information economy. Among recent client efforts was the digital transformation project it handled for a multi-national CPG to align its marketing channels, and the development of a robotics-driven automation process for a UK-based CPG's distribution network.

# Product Information Management

The CGT community's preferred providers of solutions for managing, updating and syndicating product data internally and in conjunction with retailers and other sales partners.

## Best in Category: SAP Hybris

SAP Hybris repeated as Best in Category among PIM solution providers this year (although the results were a lot closer than in 2018). The company provides a "solid solution" (according to one survey taker) that, although it appeals largely to SAP's enterprise-level client roster, has options for smaller businesses as well. Hybris Product Content Management, which aggregates data from different sources and lets product managers, marketers and external stakeholders work together simultaneously, is part of the larger Hybris Commerce suite, a leading enterprise-class e-commerce platform. A spring 2018 release introduced new content management capabilities designed to improve speed to market, increase efficiency and let business users complete complex tasks more easily and effectively.

## SMB Market Leader: 1WorldSync

The clients of 1WorldSync — last year's "Noteworthy" solution provider for the category — came out in force this year, especially the smaller business who made it the SMB Market Leader. One survey respondent commended the company's solutions for "making it really easy to distribute our info to our vendors quickly." Clients include CPG distributors McLane Co. and Acosta. In 2018, 1WorldSync launched product enhancements that let users leverage a single solution for content management across e-commerce, supply chain, regulatory maintenance

and cross-channel sales support. The company also announced alliances with rich-content creator Label Insight, tracking and auditing specialist Content Analytics, and content syndicator inRiver to enhance its own solutions.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader: Nielsen Brandbank

The solution provider earned a 3.75/5 rating to lead the PIM category (which, at 3.1/5, had the lowest cumulative Customer Satisfaction rating in the entire Readers' Choice Survey). Originally launched in the UK, Brandbank crossed the pond in 2016 soon after being acquired by Nielsen. At the end of 2018, Wakefern Food Corp. named the company as its preferred content solution partner for both internal private label activity and the e-commerce and merchandising data coming from national brands; a few months earlier, Walmart had identified Brandbank as its preferred partner for content creation and management in the grocery category. Also in 2018, the solution provider opened its first U.S.-based full-service content studio, in Green Bay, Wis.

## Noteworthy: ItemMaster

ItemMaster began life as the internal PIM for supermarket operator Ahold USA's Peapod e-commerce business, then spun off on its own in 2016. Since then, the company has attracted a number of leading CPGs as clients, including including PepsiCo, P&G and Barilla. It also garnered attention from

## Product Information Management

Best in Category: **SAP Hybris**

SMB Market Leader:

**1WorldSync**

Customer Satisfaction Leader:

**Nielsen Brandbank**

### TOP PROVIDERS

1WorldSync

Gladson (inc. WebCollage)

Informatica

ItemMaster

Kwiikee

Lansa

Nielsen BrandBank

Salsify

SAP Hybris

Semarchy

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.10**

rival Gladson, which acquired the company in early 2019. (Gladson bought another member of this year's list, rich content developer Webcollage, last spring.) In addition to solutions for creating, managing and distributing structured product data, ItemMaster was an attractive buy for two reasons: the wellnessMaster platform it launched in 2019 to help brands deliver the more detailed health information that consumers increasingly demand, and a solid retailer partner list that includes Peapod, Southeastern Grocers, Bashas', Instacart, Schnucks, Google and Hy-Vee.



# Retail Execution

The **CGT** community's preferred providers of solutions for executing and monitoring in-store activity to identify tasks and improve efficiency and performance.

## Best in Category: **Salesforce**

Salesforce has steadily gained "share of CGT readers" in a number of categories in the last few years, with its ascension here being a prime example. The company's retail execution-specific solutions are bolstered by its more universal platforms: the data visibility and real-time reporting capabilities of Salesforce Sales Cloud, the mobile facilitation provided by Salesforce Service Cloud, and the AI-driven in-

sights driven by Einstein. The client list includes Brown-Forman, which uses Salesforce to manage sales and enable social collaboration across the global team; L'Oréal, which leverages the platform to distribute product information and communicate with the field force; and Unilever, which claims to have streamlined both retail execution and TPM processes.

## SMB Market Leader: **Retail Solutions, Inc.**

"They offer good overall service," is how one of RSi's small business clients summarized the company's work ethic. RSi's solution collects systematic information about retailer programs and in-store activity, and then combines it with actual, store-level daily sales data to drive deeper understanding. In 2018, the company announced the global availability of IRIS, an on-shelf availability platform intended to reduce out-of-stocks through a better method of measuring, correcting and even preventing potential situations. SMB clients include alternative beverage company Alpro, cosmetics marketer Markwins, and apple grower Stemilt. (RSi also boasts enterprise blue-chippers like Unilever and P&G.)

## Customer Satisfaction Leader: **AFS Technologies**

Being "purpose-built" for food & beverage manufacturers and distributors might be one reason why AFS

captured the Customer Satisfaction title this year (with a 4.0/5 rating). The company's solutions aim to enable clients to serve all channels through a single point of execution. The flagship RE Enterprise solution now embodies best practices from deployments in global enterprises, while the more nimble POP System 6 is multi-tenant SaaS solution that can be deployed in days. Promotion Optimization Institute named AFS "best in class" for three capabilities: merchandising, guided selling and analytical insights. Among AFS' 1,300-plus clients are PepsiCo, Whyte & Mackay and Nestlé.

## Noteworthy: **Field Agent**

Customers including Kohler, Kellogg and Jarden Corp. have turned to Field Agent to get real-time visibility into store conditions and quick insights into shopper behavior. The company employs mobile technology and crowdsourcing to rally ad hoc field forces that are dispatched to gather information about display placement, out-of-stock situations, pricing and planogram compliance, or to conduct shopper intercepts, mystery shopping or "buy and try" programs. Recent projects included mystery shops of all six Amazon Go locations, surveys of shoppers on the one-year anniversary of Amazon's Whole Foods acquisition, and a test of the BOPIS fulfillment service of Kroger grocery orders at Walgreens drugstores.

## Retail Execution

Best in Category: **Salesforce**

SMB Market Leader: **Retail Solutions, Inc.**

Customer Satisfaction Leader: **AFS Technologies**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Accenture

AFS Technologies

E2open

Field Agent

Oracle

Retail Solutions, Inc.

RW3 Technologies

Salesforce

SAP

StayinFront

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.72**



# Supply Chain Execution

The *CGT* community's preferred solution providers for supply chain execution including warehouse management, transportation management, and load optimization and fulfillment.

## Best in Category: **SAP**

SAP's reign over the Supply Chain Execution category continues for the 11th straight year (We're checking the archives to see if it dates back farther). The company has been working hard to continue adding digital improvements that can be implemented within the S/4HANA ERP platform to bring even more intelligent capabili-

## Supply Chain Execution

Best in Category: **SAP**

SMB Market Leader: **FedEx Supply Chain**

Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Oracle**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Aptean

Blujay Solutions

FedEx Supply Chain

JDA Software Group

Jesta I.S.

Logility

Manhattan Associates

Oracle

SAP

SYSPRO

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.45**

ties. SAP's Digital Logistics and Order Fulfillment products encompass tools for warehouse and transportation management and logistics networks, and are designed to help users address logistics demands, identify cost efficiencies, facilitate connected networks and increase transparency. Clients include Beiersdorf AG and Colgate-Palmolive.

## SMB Market Leader:

### FedEx Supply Chain

There may be no more obvious supply chain execution solution for SMBs than FedEx, which offers a one-vendor option for warehousing, fulfillment, packaging, transportation and reverse logistics (the last a specialty of the Genco business acquired in 2015). "Good customer service and easy to use," said one reader. FedEx helps companies manage inbound and outbound transportation, distribution management, network optimization, labor management, packaging/kitting/postponement, and liquidation. In 2018, the company launched FedEx Returns Technology, a solution for returns management that lets high-volume merchants and e-tailers improve the shopper experience. New clients include denim brand Revtown and beverage maker BAWLS Guarana.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader:

### Oracle

Reader's Choice regular Oracle recaptured a top slot this year by earning a

4.0/5 rating to take Customer Satisfaction honors. In 2018, the company enhanced its capabilities with several new releases. Updated, cloud-based tools for transportation management and global trade management help clients reduce costs, streamline regulatory compliance and accelerate fulfillment, while an improved Oracle Warehouse Management Cloud delivers heightened inventory visibility. There's now also a cloud for blockchain applications to help CGs become more agile while building trust in transactions across their business networks; a new suite of SaaS apps enhances traceability and transparency across the supply chain.

## Noteworthy: Logility

List mainstay Logility unveiled advanced analytics tools in 2018 that aim to boost retail performance through the use of AI, machine learning and social signals, along with dynamic allocation and replenishment capabilities that let multiple distribution centers work in tandem to automatically replenish merchandise at specific stores. In April, the company opened Logility University, which offers training for supply chain optimization and retail planning excellence. A deal with COU Consulting will facilitate implementation of the flagship Logility Voyager Solutions platform, which just released upgrades designed to break through functional silos to provide "concept to customer" visibility. Clients include KraftHeinz, Fender and VF Corp.



# Supply Chain Planning

The CGT community's preferred solution providers for supply chain planning including demand forecasting and inventory optimization.

## Best in Category: SAP

The IT solutions leader has an even longer (verified) hold on the Supply Chain Planning category, where it has enjoyed "Best in Category" status since at least 2007. New functionality announced in fall 2018 is designed to enable users to plan in real time across key corporate functions and align both retail customers and suppliers in an intelligent digital supply chain. That includes new capabilities for networked supplier collaboration through SAP Ariba, machine learning automation and self-regulating replenishment, as well as enhanced sales forecasts and delivery performance using ML and predictive analytics. SAP also initiated a "farm to consumer" blockchain pilot with 10 customers that will seek to improve materials tracing and product tracking.

## SMB Market Leader: Oracle

Clients including Ainsworth Pet Nutrition and candy maker Arcor turn to Oracle for its supply chain planning assistance. "We are a small to mid-size company with limited resources and they are an excellent integrated partner," explained one Readers' Choice Survey respondent, who selected Oracle as her most valuable IT provider. The Oracle Supply Chain Planning Cloud enables users to interactively balance demand and supply through collaboration and visibility tools that facilitate improved responsiveness. The global client roster also includes

Kuwait Food Co, Sunny Fields/Little Freddie Trade (Shenzhen) Co., Ltd. and Tramontina USA. Keys to the future will be personalization and frictionless commerce. This translates into making it easy for consumers to shop when and where they like, and tailoring products and services to their needs, Mario Vollbracht, Oracle's Global Director, Consumer Products, recently told CGT.

## Customer Satisfaction Leader: Microsoft

Having earned SMB Market Leader status in three of the last four surveys, Microsoft this year captures Customer Satisfaction honors with a rating of 4.0/5. Several survey takers cited the company's good customer service, with one adding that, "They handle a lot and are reliable." Acknowledging the breadth of the Microsoft Dynamics 365 suite, another respondent praised the company for having "the most comprehensive set of products." Recent and planned improvements to supply chain capabilities include enhanced planning engine functionality (which includes support for the consolidation of planned orders), refactoring methods for calculating and reporting on-hand inventory, and performance and flow improvements in warehouse functionality.

## Noteworthy: Manhattan Associates

Released in 2017, Manhattan Associ-

## Supply Chain Planning

Best in Category: **SAP**  
SMB Market Leader: **Oracle**  
Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Microsoft**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Alloy
Demand Management, Inc.
Exceedra
Infor Global Solutions
JDA Software Group
Logility
Manhattan Associates
Microsoft
Oracle
SAP

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.67**

ates' Active suite is helping consumer goods companies (and retailers) address the new realities required for effective supply chain planning. The company boasts that Active is the first tool to deliver multi-channel, multi-echelon optimization that lets planners place inventory exactly where it will be most needed to meet the demands of digitally enabled shoppers. Brooks Brothers is using the platform to integrate order management and store fulfillment on a single platform; Adidas is employing it to standardize systems globally, enhance control and visibility, and improve inventory accuracy. Other clients include Papa John's and Nature's Best.



# Trade Promotion Management

The *CGT* community's preferred providers of solutions for trade promotion effectiveness, management and optimization.

## Best in Category: **Exceedra**

Exceedra earned Best in Category honors for the second straight year, and clients were again effusive with their praise. "They changed the way we run our business and the way we understand our trade promotion spends," said one survey respondent. "They provided a clear view of commercial P&L," and "They gave us a robust foundation for S&OP and NRM

## Trade Promotion Management

Best in Category: **Exceedra**

SMB Market Leader: **Adesso Solutions**

Customer Satisfaction Leader: **Nielsen**

### TOP PROVIDERS

Accenture

Adesso Solutions

Eversight

Exceedra

Management Science Associates

Nielsen

Oracle

SAP

T-Pro Solutions

UpClear

Vistex

*Note: Due to a tie, this list contains 11 solution providers*

Category Customer Satisfaction Score **3.71**

processes," said two others. One client even specified that Exceedra's solution improved forecast accuracy by 10%. Clients include ACH Foods, McKee Foods, Seventh Generation, Dyson, Birds Eye and Weetabix. In 2018, Exceedra also added Bayer, Treasury Wine Estates and its first Asia-Pacific customer, DKSH.

### SMB Market Leader:

#### **Adesso Solutions**

New SMBs including Wild Friends Foods, Chelsea Milling and White Castle Food Products joined what apparently is a happy roster of smaller Adesso clients in 2018. Readers' Choice respondents called the company and its CPG-focused solutions "Responsive to our needs and always willing to help," "User-friendly and intuitive," "A great system to manage trade," "Very accommodating and easy to use," and "Very simple to use — and it works." "The Adesso team is great to work with," concluded another. The company kicked off 2019 by introducing Smart Dashboard, a new reporting and analysis system designed to simplify and speed up the decision-making process.

### Customer Satisfaction Leader:

#### **Nielsen**

A 4.43/5 rating earned Nielsen Customer Satisfaction honors for TPM, one of the more hotly contested categories in the Readers' Choice Survey.

Respondents literally attributed "good customer service" as the reason for their satisfaction, along with lot of solid data and ratings that are "close to accurate." Several survey takers picked Nielsen as their most valuable partner on the sheer fact that the company provides "the primary source of data needed to make business decisions." With its historic POS sales data mining service as the foundation (and its direct retailer relationships a major competitive advantage, Nielsen offers an end-to-end revenue management solution to help CPGs guide their trade promotion spend.

### Noteworthy: **Eversight**

Eversight has a "great agile service and proven output," according to one Readers' Choice survey taker. In 2018, the company extended its "Offer Innovation Suite" to enable big-name CPG clients such as Coca-Cola, Johnson & Johnson, Mars, Inc., Henkel and MolsonCoors to better sense market conditions, optimize promotions appropriately, and track performance and compliance. The goal is to wean companies off the historical benchmarking that forces them to program promotions based simply on "learnings from the past" rather than more relevant current data. To that end, Ocean Spray, General Mills and McCormick & Co. are implementing the AI-powered Eversight Innovation Suite to optimize their programming.

## Readers' Choice 2019

## Editors' Picks

A short list of additional solution providers that nearly made the Readers' Choice lists and are delivering unique value to the industry.



### 1010data

A frequent entrant on the Demand Data Analytics list, 1010data's "insights for all" mantra refers not only to its novice-friendly, data-democratizing tools but also to the way it liberally shares internally generated consumer insights with the industry at large. The extensive client list boasts such top consumer goods companies as Nestlé, Procter & Gamble and Coca-Cola.

### Absolutdata

Artificial intelligence is "particularly good at predicting things that don't happen very often," Absolutdata co-founder and chief executive officer Anil Kaul told attendees of an industry conference last year. The 17-year-old company recently has focused on getting enterprises "AI-ready" by combining cutting-edge machine learning tools with its legacy analytical frameworks, business acumen and technologies.

### AnswerRocket

AnswerRocket's AI-fueled analytics interface employs natural language processing to let business users ask open-ended questions and get immediate results. "Like a newspaper that signals items worthy of attention, an insights 'feed' should relieve

a brand manager from ever having to browse data directly," senior vice president of sales and marketing Pete Reilly told *CGT* last fall.

### Applied Predictive Technologies

MasterCard International-owned APT nearly made the lists for both Business Intelligence and Customer Relationship Management. The cloud-based analytics provider's self-described "North Star" solution is its Test & Learn platform, which helps companies maximize bottom-line impact by harnessing predictive analytics to design, measure and calibrate marketing, merchandising, operations and capital initiatives. Clients include Coca-Cola, Kellogg and Walmart.

### Blacksmith Applications

Founder Paul Wietecha thinks innovative functionality and effective planning tools are merely table stakes for TPM/TPO solution providers in today's fast-changing marketplace; what CGs now need is a "trusted industry advisor." Among the companies who've tapped Blacksmith for advice in either the

retail or foodservice arenas are Unilever, Kraft Heinz, Conagra Brands and General Mills. (Note: Blacksmith significantly boosted its capabilities by acquiring TPO specialist T-Pro Solutions as this issue went to press.)

### Boomerang Commerce

The company's CommerceIQ solution is an end-to-end platform that uses machine learning to automatically analyze hundreds of variables to recommend the best sales-related actions for driving profitability and minimizing sales leakage. Founder and ceo Guru Hariharan gained his e-commerce cred while leading innovative initiatives in retail merchandising, supply chain and cloud applications at Amazon.

### Civis Analytics

Founder and ceo Dan Wagner served as chief analytics officer for Barack Obama's 2012 presidential campaign before launching Civis, which helps organizations across various industries use analytics to better engage with existing customers and reach new ones. The firm recently helped McDonald's Corp. shake off its traditional market-research mindset and

## Readers' Choice 2019

## Editors' Picks

become a digital-first, data science-driven organization.

### CPGToolBox

The company name clearly states the industry focus of this 6-year-old trade promotion planning vendor. In recent client wins, Mattel tapped the vendor to help transform the way it plans, manages and analyzes trade contracts and promotional spending globally, while American Pet Nutrition is moving beyond spreadsheets to bring real-time, data-driven insights to its promotion management efforts.

### eBest Mobile

Built on the Salesforce.com platform, eBest Mobile offers an integrated, frontline-focused product suite for sales force automation and retail execution to mobilize operations and accelerate productivity. The company helped Coca-Cola implement a retail execution platform that would improve business insights and front-line effectiveness and Petronas Lubricants International gain better visibility into its global distribution activity.

### EnterWorks

Long a provider of MDM and PIM tools that deliver a single, enterprise-wide view for acquiring, managing and syndicating product content, EnterWorks recently launched a Master Experience Management

umbrella solution that aims to better empower customers, associates, suppliers, and brand managers throughout the supply chain. Clients include Mary Kay, Fender and HP Hood.

### GoSpotCheck

PepsiCo enlisted Retail Execution specialist GoSpotCheck in its efforts to achieve “perfect store” planning, in which each location is optimized for product assortment, placement, pricing, promotions and service frequency. GoSpotCheck’s newest mobile innovation, dubbed HiFi, uses image recognition and machine learning to improve the accuracy — and, ultimately, the impact — of in-store data collection.

### Hubspot

The basic, limited-capacity level of 12-year-old Hubspot’s CRM tool is available “100% free, forever,” according to the company website. Customers can then graduate up to “Professional” and “Enterprise” packages providing a laundry list of advanced capabilities for handling social media marketing, content management, web analytics, search engine optimization and other digital marketing needs.

### Ivy Mobility

The overall goal of Ivy’s cloud-based customer management solutions is to help consumer goods compa-

nies unify sales, merchandising and distribution operations. Specific tools for sales force automation, retail execution, direct-store delivery and distributor management are designed to help clients solve problems faster and more accurately using big data and AI. Clients include Diageo, L’Oréal and P&G.

### Lingaro

Poland-based Lingaro considers itself a digital transformation solutions company, and it offers a wide range of tools spanning TPM, demand planning, business intelligence, data warehousing and supply chain analytics that are fueled by various new-age technologies. The company beefed up its capabilities last fall by acquiring e-commerce services provider Orba.

### Mautic

The company’s Open Marketing Cloud automates and personalizes the consumer experience across all digital properties and channels. Its two-year-old Maestro tool manages multiple accounts in a single platform, which is why the client roster includes both consumer goods companies and marketing agencies. Mautic began life as an open-source





## Readers' Choice 2019

## Editors' Picks

option (with 50,000 downloads) before launching as a business in 2016.

### Pepperi

Pepperi's unique omnichannel mobile platform combines CRM capabilities with order taking, retail execution, route accounting and e-commerce tools to deliver a multifaceted solution. The potential benefits include greater cross-channel consistency and the ability to respond faster to changing market conditions. Clients include Under Armour, Hallmark, Heineken and more than 997 others, according to Pepperi's website.

### Quotient

The digital marketing services company's core platform is Quotient Retailer iQ, which powers savings programs for retailers and their brand partners in the grocery, dollar, club, drug and mass channels. Last spring, the company launched Quotient Analytics, an intuitive, self-service tool that lets brand clients measure promotion performance in near real-time to optimize sales during and after the campaign.

### R4 Technologies

R4's unique selling proposition is the promise of "cross-enterprise AI," automated technology that lets consumer goods clients unlock the growth opportunities that have been hiding between legacy functional

silos. The 8-year-old company's platform has been built to sense and respond quickly to the accelerating pace of today's volatile marketplace.

### Signals Analytics

Founded by a pair of Israeli military intelligence officers in 2009, the now-New York-based Signals Analytics offers a platform that uses machine learning to turn unstructured data into actionable insights that can drive growth, accelerate new product development and propel breakthrough innovations. The client roster boasts Nestlé, Procter & Gamble and PepsiCo.

### Spring Global

The company offers a variety of packaged applications that drive efficiency in sales, merchandising and data insights. AI tools are improving work flows and processes, delivering "actionable insights" from HQ to the field and back again. Coca-Cola tapped Spring to help reduce operating costs, increase workforce efficiency and drive revenue growth across its North American bottler network.

### ThirdChannel

ThirdChannel offers cloud-based retail intelligence technologies that can improve merchandising and inventory, assisted selling, asset tracking, competitive intelligence and associate education. It also oper-



ates an exclusive network-for-hire of 130,000-plus field agents that can do that work on demand. Clients include New Balance, The Honest Company and Samsung.

### Trax Retail

The company's retail execution solution uses in-store cameras and backend analytics tools to give product manufacturers a comprehensive, real-time understanding of store conditions and field performance. The tools also can track shopper behavior to determine the sales impact of merchandising activity. The acquisitions of Nielsen's store observation business and Quri have added feet on the ground, too.

### Visualfabriq

Visualfabriq wants to help make the "fast moving" part of the FMCG industry more literal by adding a liberal dose of AI to revenue management. The company's predictive solution combines zero-touch planning, optimization and evaluation from a single point of entry, and integrates internal and external data with inbound and outbound interfacing to connect the entire enterprise. **CGT**