



Promotion Optimization Institute, LLC

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# POI 2020 TPx Vendor Panorama


 NEW

**Softserve** [softservebs.com](https://softservebs.com)

*New vendor to  
the TPx Vendor  
Panorama*

**Profile:** SoftServe Business Systems is an eco-system of IT products for trade promotion management and retail execution that together provide an extended sales platform. They are a market leader the Russia and Ukraine regional geography. SoftServe Business Systems is subsidiary of global IT-outsource company SoftServe.

**Geographic presence:** Europe (90%) and Asia/ Pacific (10%).

**Total consumer goods users (seats):** Softserve utilizes business unit (country) licensing and allows an unlimited number of users. They have ~ 1,000.

**Tiers represented:** All.

**Solution offerings:** TPM.

**Major product sub-segments not covered:** Tobacco, semi-durables, and durables.

**Data Management:** Data cleansing and data management are included in the DMS Product (Distributor Management System). PromoTool (TPM) utilizes data from DMS.

**Analytics:** Softserve's DMS module offers quality control for data, which is then used in the Promo Tool. The Preliminary Planning module sets strategic priorities and frameworks for detailed promo planning. It contains brand focuses/priorities set by marketing or trade marketing departments with appropriate timing and recommended promo mechanics. We really like this feature of delivering go to market strategy to the user and the value it provides. Softserve features a nice contract terms entry screen for customer management. The volume forecast includes baseline, promotional uplift, and volume building blocks. Volume building blocks help explain the activities or events that lead to changes in the volume. Forecast Value Added methodology helps to show who is making the forecast better and who is not. While the baselines are provided and can be overridden, the incremental lift on promotion is still a manual entry. The historical data is visible to guide, based on analytics, but the actual entry at this point is still manual. Softserve is moving quickly in their roadmap to have incremental provided based on AI. Currently, traditional TPM tactics are not leveraged when completing promotion entry. Promotion mechanics and description are leveraged to group a promotion. As they move into new markets, the addition of tactics to the promotion entry will be necessary. TPM is integrated with SFA and promotional data is sent into the field for mobile access, closing the loop on the sales cycle. The ability to send tasks along with the promotion data is nice. There is ROI analysis by promotion, but currently no side by side scenario or actual comparability within the tool.

**Configuration/Customization:** Customization as well as configuration can be accommodated in Softserve.

**Technology architecture/delivery options:** On-premise, both public and private cloud.

**Service partners:** None. All service is handled in house.

**Technology partners:** Kyivstar, Xelent, Dataline, Hetzner (hosting), Azure, OKTA, Pidentity (identity provider).

**User experience:** The UX of Softserve is very simple and intuitive. The promotion workflow is nice and simple as the user moves through the promotion process. Users are able to copy from Excel and paste directly into the promotion entry screen, providing continuity

in ergonomic feel. On the analytics side, there is a nice combination of data with graphing and visualization that is pleasing to the eye and simple to understand. From here users can easily take action as insights are quickly deciphered from the data. Currently Softserve is working to translate all interfaces into English, which will allow them to expand out of the current market more easily. There is simple dashboard creation available within the tool based on user role. In addition, there is a simple calendar that displays planned activity.

**Select TPx Capabilities:**

**Baseline:** Softserve has an automatic process of baseline calculations using Holt-Winter's method. The staged algorithm includes data clearance, seasonality, and trend evaluations. The baselines can be adjusted/corrected by the user.

**IBP:** Softserve offers Financial Forecasting, which takes the forecast, including promotions, and creates forward-looking financials using this data. In addition, they utilize building blocks with comments to understand the composition of forward-looking sales. They incorporate Demand Consensus into the process within the tool, which is unique. In addition, financial forecast provides a P&L by customer and channel.

**Vendor trend:** Softserve Promotional tools are part of a much larger suite of IT products and they are investing in this part of the portfolio. They have a solid client base and platform in the Russian region and they are continuing to expand and improve the product offering. Integration with Sales Force Automation is a nice way to work back from the shelf and build out the platform based on client need. They will also continue to leverage the AI platform they are using as they expand their capabilities and analytics.

**Strengths:** Strength in the Russian region. Building blocks in IBP, which is not often part of TPx solutions.

**Challenges:** Currently a smaller player in the global market, but they are already working with many international companies in the Russian and Ukrainian regions. As they evolve capabilities, we see them expanding their geographic presence.

**Adjacent offerings:** SFA – shelf management and visualization, retail execution and monitoring, DMS – Data Management & Cleansing.

**Key differentiators:** Softserve has roots in the Russian region which is a strength. They have financial forecasting at customer and channel level, which is a key component of IBP and not often found within TPx. Also, the integration with Retail Execution provides connectivity in the sales cycle. SoftServe takes pride in their integration expertise and has executed complex integrations with key clients.

**Outlook & prognosis:** Softserve is a strong player in their home market and they are building capabilities quickly to expand globally. We see them continuing to invest, expand their offering, and grow. They have a strong roadmap into TPx. They also have strong client success stories, which will help them gain exposure as they grow.

**Evaluate Softserve when:** You are looking for TPM capabilities with expertise in the Russian and Ukrainian region. You want a solution that is integrated with Retail Execution. You are looking for capabilities in IBP.

**Avoid Softserve if:** You are looking for a full, end-to-end TPx solution.

**Distinctions:** POI Best-in-Class for External Collaboration.

### About the Author

**Pam Brown** is POI's Chief Commercial Officer. In this role, she creates and executes POI strategy, advisory, and research. She elevates practices and CPG and Retailer relationships. Pam began her career executing at retail, and through promotions advanced to leading retail execution & key account teams for Unilever. For Kayser-Roth she led all Sales and Broker teams west of the Mississippi. In her 13 years with Del Monte, she carried many roles. She was the Director of Sales Strategy and Operations, which included: Sales Systems and Reporting, Sales Operations, BI Analytics, Sales Training, and Sales Policy. Pam's final role at Del Monte was the Director of IT Governance and PMO, which included planning and leading enterprise wide technology engagements. Pam has current, extensive knowledge in TPM, TPO, ROI, Revenue Management, Advanced Analytics, Change Management, Sales and Sales Effectiveness, Demand Planning, Supply Chain, Organizational Effectiveness and other relevant best practices areas. Over the years she has researched, designed, and deployed Enterprise wide solutions to meet business needs. She understands how to execute and gain user adoption of new systems for physical retail and eCommerce. She has advised solutions providers on enhancements to core capabilities and partnered with other CPG manufacturers to share, learn, and drive best practices in today's challenging retail and consumer goods environment for mutual benefit.



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### About the Promotion Optimization Institute

POI brings together manufacturers, retailers, solution providers, analysts, academics, and other industry leaders with the specific objective of collaboratively improving the promotion and distribution of consumer goods. Members of POI share cross-functional best practices in both structured and informal settings.

Additionally, members benefit through our industry alliances, the Certified Collaborative Marketer (CCM)<sup>™</sup> program, and industry-leading summits around the globe.

POI aims to instill a financial and metrics-based discipline not typically found with other trade groups. The goal of our innovative approach is collaborative promotion optimization. The focus is on the customer/shopper through sales, marketing, and merchandising strategies.

Executive advisory boards keep us apprised of industry needs and help us provide desired outcomes for members, sponsors, and academia.



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