



Promotion Optimization Institute, LLC

POI 2021 Enterprise Planning Vendor Panorama

(This document supersedes the 2020 POI TPx Vendor Panorama)

SoftServe Business Systems

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Vendor Profile: SoftServe Business Systems provides a single, digital Eco-System with a fully integrated suite of solutions dedicated for Integrated Business Planning, Trade Promotion Management, Retail Execution, AI/ML driven Image Recognition, Distribution Management, Omnichannel, Gamification, and BI. They serve more than 20 countries globally. SoftServe Business Systems (SSBS) is a subsidiary of global IT-outsourcing company SoftServe. The TPM product name is PromoTool.

Geographic Presence: Europe (90%), and Asia/Pacific (10%).

Total Consumer Goods Users (Seats): SoftServe Business Systems utilizes business unit (country) licensing and allows unlimited number of users. They have ~ 1,000.

Tiers Represented: Tier 1 (70%), Tier 2 (20%), Tier 3 (10%).

Solution Offerings: TPM. Note: SoftServe Business Systems also has Retail Execution capabilities for in-store sales planning and execution which is covered in POI's sister report, POI RetX Vendor Panorama.

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.

Baseline Creation: SoftServe Business Systems has an automatic process of baseline calculations using the Holt-Winter's method. The staged algorithm supported by the ML/AI includes data clearance, seasonality, and trend evaluations. The baselines can be adjusted/corrected by the user, as well as by the solution itself, providing recommendations to the user based on data analysis from the entire SoftServe solution suite eco-system.

Headquarter Capabilities: There are currently no specific headquarter planning capabilities related to revenue and profit for AOP development. POI really likes that the annual plans and KPI's shown in SSBS are a result of IBP planning within the solution with base volume along with building blocks and incremental driven by promotional activity. 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 accelerating and delivering go-to-market strategy to the user and the value it provides not only based on PromoTool data but with the possibility of full 360 insight analysis. There is seamless connectivity between the SoftServe Retail Execution solution and PromoTool resulting in just in time in-flight monitoring for headquarters and sales.

Marketing: Marketing events can be planned as promotions within PromoTool. Additionally, the integrated business planning focus of the solution allows for communication of brand priorities within the tool, giving the user full visibility to go to market strategies as they are planning.

TPM: Currently, traditional TPM tactics are not leveraged when completing promotion entry. Instead, SSBS utilizes promotion mechanics and descriptions which 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 fully integrated with SSBS Retail Execution, and with minimal clicks, promotional data is sent into the field for mobile access, closing the loop on the sales cycle and providing valuable insights from field execution back to planners. This connectivity with Retail Execution provides seamless in-flight monitoring of promotion plans, increasing sales execution and ensuring teams deliver targets. The ability to send tasks along with the promotion data across the systems is nice. This also enables communication back into the tool for data related to execution so that changes can be made going forward. New, and of note this year, is the ability to plan national promotions and evaluate compliance for them. The ability to compare the national promotion vs. the actual promotions planned is somewhat unique and provides value to the client. All deductions and settlements are manual to date, with no auto-matching currently available.

General Analytics: SSBS's DMS module offers quality control for data, which is then used in PromoTool. SSBS 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 now predictive in nature using AI/ML. Additionally, all calculations are now in real-time for the most accurate and up to date analytics. This drives a collaborative "picture" with connected plans across sales, finance, and operations. POI likes the new dashboards SSBS has delivered. They are simple, clean, and intuitive. There are many dashboards to choose from, putting the power of analytics and preference into the hands of the user.

TPO: There is ROI analysis by promotion as well as the ability to do what-if scenario planning. Users can view side by side results and choose the best promotion for addition to account plan. There is currently no promotion decomposition or analysis of overlapping promotions.

Analytics Modeling: SoftServe Business Systems provides a sophisticated BI Tool, yet they are also fully integrated with Power BI. The system evaluates multiple modes and provides the best predictive model by client/product, takes the influence of the following factors: sales, promotional uplifts, promotion dates and duration, mechanics & TPR, number of products in the promo, etc., with intent to increase accuracy.

RGM Analytics: N/A.

User Experience (UX): The UX of PromoTool 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 and an 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. There is simple dashboard creation available within the tool based on user role. In addition, there is an intuitive calendar that displays planned activity.

Food Service: N/A.

IBP: PromoTool offers Financial Forecasting, which takes the forecast, including promotions, and creates forward-looking financials and the detailed annual budget 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.

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

Technology Architecture/Delivery Options: On-Premise, SaaS 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).

Vendor Trend: SoftServe PromoTool is part of a much larger suite of IT products for FMCG sales processes and they are investing in this part of the portfolio. They have a solid client base and platform in Europe, and they are continuing to expand and improve the product offering. POI has been impressed with the year-over-year capability advancements SoftServe has brought to market. They have an equally impressive roadmap for 2022/23.

Strengths: Strength in Eastern Europe. Building blocks in IBP. Seamless connectivity between trade promotion planning and in-store retail execution with the ability of just in time in-flight monitoring.

Challenges: SoftServe is currently a smaller player in the global market, but they are already working with many Tier 1 international companies in Eastern Europe. As they expand capabilities, we see them expanding their geographic presence.

Adjacent Offerings: SFA – shelf management and visualization, retail execution and monitoring supporting Merchandisers, Sales Representatives, Supervisors, and back office, and DMS – Data Management & Cleansing. Image Recognition – fully automated store audit, Gamification – unique engagement platform for both Field and Back-office teams to boost productivity, B2B – web portal providing better speed to market. SoftServe can provide deductions automation via customer-specific development which can be part of the implementation process for the customer. All solutions fully integrated within a single platform – SoftServe Eco-System.

Key Differentiators: SoftServe has roots in Eastern Europe which is a strength. SSBS has created a unique and powerful digital Eco-System with a fully integrated suite of solutions for their clients. They have financial forecasting at the 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 Business Systems 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 also have strong client success stories, which will help them gain exposure as they grow.

Evaluate SoftServe Business Systems When: You want a solution that is integrated with Retail Execution. You are looking for capabilities in IBP.

Avoid SoftServe Business Systems If: You are looking for a full, end to end Enterprise Planning solution or RGM.

Distinctions: Field Analytics & Insights, Collaboration - External

About the Authors



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 has 29 years in the CPG industry. She 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 E-commerce. 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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A special thank you to **Sarah Meyer** who is a POI Affiliate and supports POI Manufacturer Advisory with Pam Brown. She participated in the Enterprise Planning vendor process and helped to support the creation of the document you have enjoyed. An Affiliate for POI, Sarah works with companies to optimize profit through effective planning and specifically in TPM and TPO. Sarah has over 18 years of experience in the CPG and Food industry. She worked for 15 years with Rich Products Corporation, where she began her career in Finance and transitioned over to Sales to lead the trade management practice and TPM. She has led Sales Account Planning and business implementations of TPM process and technology. She has worked closely with Retailers to lead collaborative planning efforts and drive insights to change.



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)[™] 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.

For more information:

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