



Promotion Optimization Institute, LLC

POI 2022 Enterprise Planning Vendor Panorama

(This document supersedes the 2021 POI EPx Vendor Panorama)

SoftServe Business Systems

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business systems

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 the global IT-outsource company SoftServe. The TPM product name is PromoTool.

Geographic Presence: Europe (85%), and Asia/Pacific/Africa (14%), LatAm (1%).

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

Tiers Represented: Tier 1 (85%), Tier 2 (15%), Tier 3 (0%).

Solution Offerings: TPM, Advanced Analytics, including What-if Scenarios, ROI/TPO. 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: SoftServe Business Systems offers an innovative Data Platform that includes complete data across all the organization and can be scaled up as the organization grows. Data preparation for modeling includes analysis, cleansing, and harmonization.

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. Rather, 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.

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,

the volume forecast includes baseline and promotional uplift, and they utilize building blocks with comments to understand the composition of forward-looking sales. The Demand Planning capabilities are native within the tool, and we see this as a differentiator. Forecast Value Added methodology helps to show who is making the forecast better and who is not. 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. 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. The dynamic dashboards also show change over the previous month, ensuring proper focus for IBP.

TPM: The landing page is new, with interactive dashboards and dynamic KPIs. The dashboard shows next action for user. Promotions are simple and intuitive to enter. In addition, there is an intuitive calendar that displays planned activity. 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. SSBS features a nice contract terms entry screen for customer management. Also, users have 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.

TPM User Experience (UX): 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. SSBS has done a complete platform redesign, featuring a better UX and improved UI. The new framework is on Blazor, and the resulting user experience is more intuitive and offers users more customization options, including the ability to easily change the language shown. Additions such as mass edit promotions and more flexible budget management significantly improve the user experience. Another benefit to the user is better overall performance. The dashboards are designed to be role-specific, and the actions presented to user by role are very specific. For example, HQ can send specific to-do tasks to KAM's.

Advanced Analytics Capabilities (What-if Scenario Planning, Pre/Post Event ROI, Revenue Management (RGM), Trade Promotion & Pricing Optimization (TPO)):

Softserve is in early stages of trade optimization capabilities. There is ROI analysis by promotion and a view of both own and competitor promotions. SSBS has 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. Currently, there is no RGM functionality.

Advanced Analytics User Experience (UX): The UX of PromoTool is very simple and intuitive. 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. The views by role are very specific and custom to that role.

Analytics Modeling: SoftServe Business Systems provides a sophisticated BI Tool, yet they are also fully integrated with Power BI. The system evaluates ten different models and provides the best predictive model by client/product, taking the influence of the following factors: sales, promotional uplifts, promotion dates and duration, mechanics & TPR, number of products in the promo, etc., with the intent to increase accuracy. Models are trained and improved continually. There are also visualizations to help users validate accuracy of models.

Food Service: N/A.

Configuration/Customization: Softserve allows for a high level of customizations. They utilize custom code with the use of plug-ins, which brings flexibility without adding new functionality. They also have an extensive system of configuration, fine-tuning different aspects of the system without the need to write custom code (e.g., adding fields persistent or calculated, rules, calculations, UI elements, workflows, etc.). All these configurations and customizations can be easily shared across markets or separated between them, depending on the deployment model.

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. They have made tremendous improvements over the past year to enhance the user experience, and they have an 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, with all the data residing in the same solution.

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 — Distributor Management System. 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 has TPM and Retail Execution in one ecosystem. 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.

2022 BIC Distinctions: Field Analytics & Insights, Collaboration – External, Enterprise Planning IBP/S&OP Capabilities, TPx Tier 2 & 3 Organizations &/or Other Tier 1 International Geos.

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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