



An Introduction To Our Market-Leading Research In Action Vendor Selection Matrix™ Methodology

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Every year, Research In Action surveys 10,000+ enterprise IT and business decision makers in order to gain insights on strategy, investments and ongoing challenges of technology innovation in the IT and Marketing Automation realms. We gain a wealth of direct and unfiltered feedback from the buyers and it also helps us to understand how buying decisions are made in today’s business environment.

The Vendor Selection Matrix™ research methodology is specifically designed to help business decision-makers develop a shortlist of the most suitable vendors for a particular project.

This is because the dilemma most buyers of automation software deal with is knowing which vendors are most relevant within a specific topic; after all, most of these buyers only deal with the topic every few years and do not have the knowhow about the leading vendors, how can they be compared, and how to select the most suitable solution for their project. On the other hand, the vendors are discussing potential projects with numerous prospects and customers on a continual basis and can often appear to be overpowering.

The Survey Basis

We maintain, communicate and recruit survey members on a continuous basis to ensure survey accuracy and efficiency. The panel of potential respondents for our IT Automation surveys is around 125,000 global contacts, for Marketing Automation we maintain a panel of some 90,000 contacts. Each panel member commits to contribute to at least one survey within a space of two years and each can access our full library of Vendor Selection Matrix™ reports in return. That means that we are talking to over 10,000 enterprise business professionals each year.

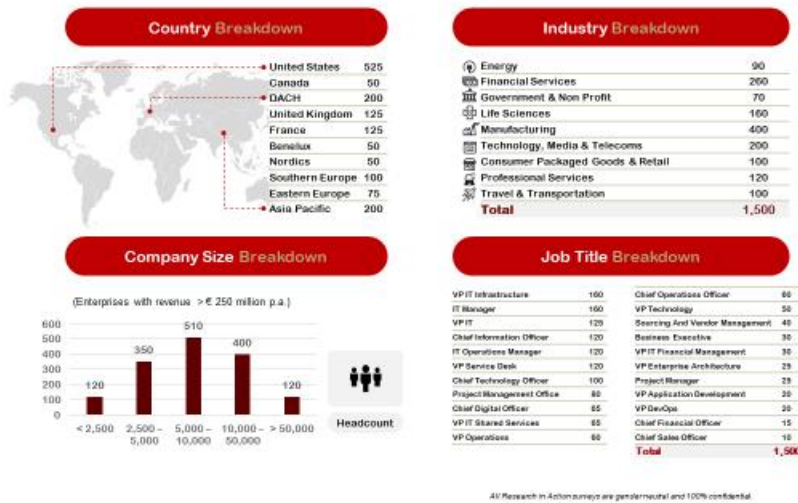
The Vendor Selection Matrix™ is a primarily survey-based methodology for vendor evaluation where 63% of the evaluation is based on a survey of enterprise IT or business decision makers and 37% on the analyst’s judgement. The analyst’s input is fed by a combination of intensive interviews with software or services vendors and their clients, plus their informed, independent point-of-view as an analyst. All of this combines to make Research in Action Vendor Selection Matrix™ reports so unique. This approach is one of the key differentiators of Research In Action in market research.



The Survey Process

For each Vendor Selection Matrix™ report we interview 1,500 IT or business decision makers with budget responsibility in enterprise globally (or 750 in individual countries like Germany). During the survey, Research In Action steers the panel adoption to ensure that the distribution is as close as possible to the target population demographics (see figure below). The vendors featured in the reports are those vendors which achieved the best evaluations scores from the respondents, but we disregard those with fewer than 15 evaluations.

OUR SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS: IT AUTOMATION



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100,000+
Data Points

1,500
Enterprise Managers

37%
Analyst's Opinion

63%
Survey Results

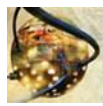
The Vendor Selection Matrix™ Evaluation Methodology:

The basis of our competitive vendor evaluation reports is always an extensive buyer survey. We then select those vendors which achieved the best evaluations scores from the buyers but disregard those with fewer than 15 evaluations. The final matrix scores are a combination of the survey results, vendor input and analyst's opinion.



At the start of each interview, we provide our definition of the topic and qualify whether that contact can provide qualified information for our survey. In each survey, we ask the 1,500 practitioners about their experiences, plans, preferences, and challenges around the automation topic in question. These initial questions are important in helping the survey respondent to understand the context of our survey and to collect important information and statistics. In fact, the Vendor Selection Matrix™ reports tend to start with several pages of trends insights that inform both buyers and vendors alike about what is most important when investing in the upcoming project.

Then the respondent is asked for THEIR view of a vendor's product, service, value-for-money, and ability to innovate. Some respondents can provide feedback about one vendor while others know enough about more than one vendor because they have done several projects or worked at several companies. It is only the vendors who score highly enough in the survey that get into the report in the first place (usually 15 to 20 vendors) – which means our vendor landscape is selected by the market, not the analyst.



The Research In Action analyst is provided with the survey data and the next stage is to contact those vendors and request a briefing. The survey data focuses on what the market is saying about the vendor’s customer service, product suitability and value-for-money. Although the respondents also score their perception of the vendor’s innovation capabilities and overall market vision, this can be adjusted by the analyst after their discussions with the vendor. The analyst is fully responsible for assigning scores around the vendor viability and market share and growth characteristics (see the full set of evaluation criteria below).

VENDOR SELECTION MATRIX™: EVALUATION CRITERIA

STRATEGY		EXECUTION	
Vision And Go-To-Market	30%	Breadth And Depth Of Solution Offering	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the company have a coherent vision in line with the most probable future market scenarios? Does the go-to-market and sales strategy fit the target market and customers? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the solution cover all necessary capabilities expected by customers? 	
Innovation And Differentiation	30%	Market Share And Growth	15%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How innovative is the company in this market? Does the solution have a unique selling proposition and clear market differentiators? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How big is the company’s market share and is it growing above the market rate? 	
Viability And Execution Capabilities	15%	Customer Satisfaction	25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How likely is the long-term survival of the company in this market? Does the company have the necessary resources to execute the strategy? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How satisfied are customers with the solution and the vendor today? 	
Recommendation Index	25%	Price Versus Value Ratio	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would customers recommend this vendor in this market to their peers? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do customers rate the relationship between the price and perceived value of the solution? 	

NOTES:
 • 63% of the evaluation is based on the survey results, 37% is based on the analysts’ assessment.
 • 40% of the evaluation is based on the survey results: (1) Recommendation Index, (2) Customer Satisfaction, (3) Price Versus Value.
 • 15% of the evaluation is based on the analysts’ assessment: (1) Viability And Execution Capabilities, (2) Market Share And Growth.
 • 45% of the evaluation is based on a combination of survey results and analysts’ assessment: (1) Vision And Go-To-Market (2) Innovation And Differentiation (3) Breadth And Depth Of Solution Offering.
 The Research In Action Recommendation Index (RI) is collected and calculated by asking the survey participants: “Would you recommend this vendor in this market to your peers - Yes or No?”.

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This way, that curated market feedback is flavoured with a touch of industry analyst’s expertise to provide a well-rounded recipe for successful vendor selection. The final scores across the Matrix are calculated as a weighted aggregation down the Strategy criteria (y-axis) and the Execution criteria (x-axis). While the vendors are never ever compared to each other, it is the pure subjective feedback of each vendor in turn, most wish to be placed as far as possible up and towards the right side of the Matrix. However, each of the 15-20 vendors are already in the top echelon of vendors, as rated by both market and analyst, within an individual market segment that often has a hundred or more vendors active (see an example Vendor Selection Matrix™ result graphic below).



VENDOR SELECTION MATRIX™ ENTERPRISE SERVICE MANAGEMENT



	STRATEGY	EXECUTION	TOTAL
1. VENDOR	4.73	4.73	9.46
2. VENDOR	4.64	4.79	9.43
3. VENDOR	4.58	4.83	9.40
4. VENDOR	4.60	4.76	9.36
5. VENDOR	4.59	4.69	9.28
6. VENDOR	4.41	4.56	8.98
7. VENDOR	4.41	4.49	8.90
8. VENDOR	4.29	4.51	8.80
9. VENDOR	4.21	4.33	8.54
10. VENDOR	4.21	4.25	8.46
11. VENDOR	4.15	4.30	8.45
12. VENDOR	3.93	4.11	8.04
13. VENDOR	3.85	4.04	7.89
14. VENDOR	3.79	4.01	7.80
15. VENDOR	3.63	3.73	7.36
16. VENDOR	3.63	3.33	3.33
17. VENDOR	3.63	3.33	3.33
18. VENDOR	3.33	3.33	3.33
19. VENDOR	3.33	3.33	3.33
20. VENDOR	3.33	3.33	3.33

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Notes:
• Scale Explanation: 1 (Low) To 5 (High).
• Potential numerical deviations due to rounding.



RESEARCH IN ACTION
vendor selection matrix®

Report Publication

When Research In Action publishes its Vendor Selection Matrix™ reports, they are made available to several communities:

- Survey respondents. The 1,500 IT or marketing software decision-makers who answered the survey questions are provided with the full report as feedback
- Survey panel. The panel members are informed of the report and can download it if desired
- Website visitors. Any viewers of the Research-in-Action website sees a “public version” without the exact scores and matrix placements of each vendor (to save their embarrassment) but with all insights and the most important facts on each vendor.
- Vendor reprints. Research-in-Action does also license reprints, where a vendor can distribute a copy of the report, including their detailed profile, to interested parties.

Report Reach

The Research-in-Action Vendor Selection Matrix™ reports fills the substantial gap between:

- An industry analyst report, which is available behind that research organization’s paywall and is often focused on large enterprise needs, and
- The “trip-advisor” type of review websites which tend to be very busy and full of individuals providing specific comments.



Also, because 95% of the report content is made available in the public version (only the individual scores and detailed vendor profiles are not shown), they tend to reach and assist a broader community of software buyers. Indeed, the community reading the Vendor Selection Matrix™ reports is probably a whole order of magnitude higher than the audience able to access the “Tier One” research reports from analysts such as Gartner Group or Forrester Research. Over the last year, the Vendor Selection Matrix™ reports have been viewed by an average of 14,000 unique visitors (see figure below).

OUR MARKET IMPACT OVER 12 MONTHS



Vendor Selection Matrix™: The right mix makes all the difference
63% customer evaluations + 37% analyst's judgement = 100% success

