



## **New Research In Action Vendor Selection Matrix™ Report – Partner Management Automation: The Top Global Vendors 2021.**

**Germany – October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021: Digital Transformation has seriously disrupted the traditional Partner Relationship Management (PRM) and Through-Channel Marketing Automation (TCMA) software markets. Manufacturers in all sectors who fulfill their transformation will need a more comprehensive Partner Management Automation (PMA) solution.**

It's been said that the pandemic has simply accelerated Digital Transformation processes already in motion with some thought leaders saying that two years of change is happening in as few as two months. Digital Transformation has dramatically affected channel relationships and processes too. Almost every industry is morphing to an "as-a-service" business model with more digital interaction. But eBusiness does not take work away from channel partners (no "dis-intermediation"); they become even more influential and advocational for all businesses. Channel partners now depend more on revenues earned from their buyers than from the manufacturer they, only occasionally, represent. And there are new channel players like affiliates, referrers, associations, commerce content publishers, communities, groups, ambassadors.

Companies must now cope with tens of thousands of potential partners around the world. Partner recruiters/managers cannot handle that volume manually, they must rely on a PMA software platform to do that. Hardly any vendor can cover all process within PMA, so companies must deploy software from several vendors. Our research shows that probably only three of them are equipped to cover the requirements of PMA in a cloud-based, digital, eCommerce-dominated world with a much-more complex ecosystem of partnerships.

A new Research In Action GmbH global survey of 1,500 business decision-makers about their PMA projects discovers not only why they are doing these projects but also which software vendors are the most known and what do the business people think about those vendor's products and services.

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, marketing or business decision makers and 37% on the analyst's opinion. 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. For this report we interviewed 1,500 marketing and business managers with budget responsibility in enterprises globally. We selected those vendors which achieved the best evaluations scores from the buyers but disregarded those with fewer than 15 evaluations.



## OUR MARKET IMPACT OVER 12 MONTHS

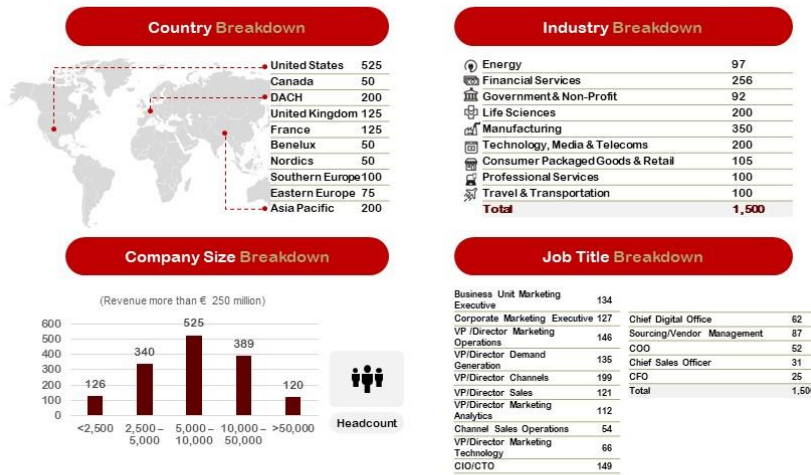


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Report details can be viewed here: <https://researchinaction.de/wp-content/uploads/VSM-PMA-2021-WWW.pdf>.

## OUR SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS: PARTNER MANAGEMENT AUTOMATION



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Peter O'Neill, Research Director for Marketing Automation at Research In Action GmbH, comments:

- **Partner Management must become Digital.** 40% of the respondents told us that they recognize that channel partners are already influencing more than one quarter of their business results. Many of these partners are not contracted resellers or distributors; they have more casual digital



marketing or sales relationships that can only be tracked and monitored electronically. Having a team of partner account managers supported by a rudimentary PRM system will no longer suffice.

- **Manufacturers are recognizing new cloud-based channels.** The advent of a services-based economy in many sectors introduces a new dimension of partnerships. When manufacturers add software-based services, or “apps” around their products, they also engage with new, different, partners – on the cloud and in marketplaces. This is already happening in the IT industry and the same will happen in all other manufacturing sectors.
- **Channel attribution and compensation become digital business processes.** Channel performance and attribution was always important for all B2B and B2B2C digital businesses, but now there are many more types of attribution: reselling, distributing, recommending, influencing, listing. The accurate attribution to all worthy partners is an economic priority and modern PMA systems need to include truly advanced, multi-touch attribution functions beyond basic attribution like first-touch, last-touch, etc. Also, traditional channel financing arrangements like deal registration, discount/margins contracts and shared marketing funding were simple processes supported by traditional PRM/TCMA software. In a digital world, there are many more types of compensation and rewards, most of which require a much more sensitive and dynamic digital platform.
- **The PMA vendor landscape will leave pure-play PRM or TCMA behind.** Our 2019 report already highlighted many vendors preferring to stick to their traditional offering of just a PRM platform or just TCMA: they were happy to do “business as usual” and find clients who wanted the same. With the digital transformation of channel management, many of those vendors will now run out of addressable clients. They may even lose much of their installed base as they, their customers, transform their channels.
- **The transformation to PMA is controversial with some vendors.** Our research insights on PMA were met with some resistance in the vendor community. Three vendors explicitly stated they did not want to be mentioned in this context, even threatening litigation. One even complained that we had “surveyed our customers without our permission”.
- **Who came out on top?** Here are the Market Leaders (having both a Strategy and an Execution score of over 4 out of 5) in the Vendor Selection Matrix™ – Partner Management Automation 2021 as scored by the survey and myself (listed alphabetically):
  - CHANNEL MECHANICS, COMPUTER MARKET RESEARCH, IMPACT.COM, IMPARTNER, and ZIFT SOLUTIONS.

Vendors who were scored high for execution with their current offering but lack a strategy to address the new PMA market were:

- CHANNELEXPERTS, CHANNELTIVITY, MAGENTRIX, SPROUTLOUD, and WEBINFINITY.



The full list of vendors in the Top 15 vendors scored in the survey is completed by:

- BRANDMAKER, ORACLE, and SALESFORCE.

**Vendor Selection Matrix™ Disclaimer:**

The Vendor Selection Matrix™ is a primarily survey-based methodology for comparative vendor evaluation. Research In Action GmbH does not endorse any vendor, product or service depicted in our research publications, and does not advise technology users to select only those vendors with the highest ratings. The information contained in this research has been obtained from both enterprise as well as vendor sources believed to be reliable. Research In Action GmbH's research publications consist of the analysts' opinions and should not be considered as statements of fact. The opinions expressed are subject to change without further notice. Research In Action GmbH disclaims all warranties, expressed or implied, with respect to this research, including any warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. All trademarks are recognized as the property of the respective companies.

**About Research In Action:**

Research In Action GmbH is a leading independent information and communications technology research and consulting company. The company provides both forward-looking as well as practical advice to enterprise as well as vendor clients.

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