Vendor Landscape Methodology

Version 2.0; Effective January 1, 2012

INFO~TECH
research group

Vendor Landscape Methodology: Overview

Info-Tech's Vendor Landscapes are research materials that review a particular IT market space, evaluating the strengths and abilities of both the products available in that space as well as the vendors of those products. These materials are created by a team of dedicated analysts operating under the direction of a senior subject matter expert over the period of six weeks.

Evaluations weigh selected vendors and their products (collectively "solutions") on the following eight criteria to determine overall standing:
- Features: The presence of advanced and market-differentiating capabilities.
- Usability: The intuitiveness, power, and integrated nature of administrative consoles and client software components.
- Affordability: The three-year total cost of ownership of the solution.
- Architecture: The degree of integration with the vendors other tools, flexibility of deployment and breadth of platform applicability.
- Viability: The stability of the company as measured by its history in the market, the size of its client base, and its financial performance.
- Strategy: The commitment to both the market-space as well as to the various sized clients (small, mid-sized and enterprise clients).
- Reach: The ability of the vendor to support its products on a global scale.
- Channel: The measure of the size of the vendor's channel partner program as well as any channel strengthening strategies.

Evaluated solutions are plotted on a standard two by two matrix:
- Champions: Both the product and the vendor receive scores that are above the average score for the evaluated group.
- Innovators: The product receives a score that is above the average score for the evaluated group, but the vendor receives a score that is below the average score for the evaluated group.
- Market Pillars: The product receives a score that is below the average score for the evaluated group, but the vendor receives a score that is above the average score for the evaluated group.
- Emerging Players: Both the product and the vendor receive scores that are below the average score for the evaluated group.

Info-Tech's Vendor Landscapes are researched and produced according to a strictly adhered to process that includes the following steps:
- Vendor/product selection
- Information gathering
- Vendor/product scoring
- Information presentation
- Fact checking
- Publication

This document outlines how each of these steps is conducted.

Vendor Landscape Methodology:
Vendor/Product Selection & Information Gathering

Info-Tech works closely with its client base to solicit guidance in terms of understanding the vendors with whom clients wish to work and the products that they wish evaluated; this demand pool forms the basis of the vendor selection process for Vendor Landscapes. Balancing this demand, Info-Tech also relies upon the deep subject matter expertise and market awareness of its Senior and Lead Research Analysts to ensure that appropriate solutions are included in the evaluation. As an aspect of that expertise and awareness, Info-Tech's analysts may, at their discretion, determine the specific capabilities that are required of the products under evaluation and include in the Vendor Landscape only those solutions that meet all specified requirements.

Information on vendors and products is gathered in a number of ways via a number of channels.

Initially a request package is submitted to vendors to solicit information on a broad range of topics. The request package includes:
- A detailed survey
- A pricing scenario (see Vendor Landscape Methodology: Price Evaluation and Pricing Scenario below)
- A request for reference clients
- A request for a briefing and, where applicable, guided product demonstration

These request packages are distributed approximately twelve weeks prior to the initiation of the actual research project to allow vendors ample time to consolidate the required information and schedule appropriate resources.

During the course of the research project briefings and demonstrations are scheduled (generally for one hour each session, though more time is scheduled as required) to allow the analyst team to discuss the information provided in the survey, validate vendor claims, and gain direct exposure to the evaluated products. Additionally, an end-user survey is circulated to Info-Tech's client base and vendor-supplied reference accounts are interviewed to solicit their feedback on their experiences with the evaluated solutions and with the vendors of those solutions.

These materials are supplemented by a thorough review of all product briefs, technical manuals, and publicly available marketing materials about the product as well as about the vendor itself.

Refusal by a vendor to supply completed surveys or submit to participation in briefings and demonstrations does not eliminate a vendor from inclusion in the evaluation. Where analyst and client input has determined that a vendor belongs in a particular evaluation, they will be evaluated as best as possible based on publicly available materials only. Because these materials are not as comprehensive as a survey, briefing, and demonstration, the possibility exists the evaluation may not be as thorough or accurate. Because Info-Tech includes vendors regardless of vendor participation, it is always in the vendor's best interest to participate fully.

All information is recorded and catalogued to facilitate scoring and for future reference, as required.

Vendor Landscape Methodology: Scoring

Once all information has been gathered and evaluated for all vendors and products, the analyst team moves to scoring. All scoring is performed at the same time so as to ensure as much consistency as possible. Each criterion is scored on a 10 point scale, though the manner of scoring for criteria differs slightly:
- Features is scored via **Cumulative Scoring**
- Affordability is scored via **Scalar Scoring**
- All other criteria are scored via **Base5 Scoring**

In Cumulative Scoring, a single point is assigned to each evaluated feature that is regarded as being fully present, a half point to each feature that is partially present or pending in an upcoming release, and zero points to features that are deemed to be absent. The assigned points are summed and normalized to a value out of 10. For example, if a particular Vendor Landscape evaluates 8 specific features in the Feature Criteria, the summed score out of 8 for each evaluated product would be multiplied by 1.25 to yield a value out of 10.

In Scalar Scoring, a score of 10 is assigned to the lowest cost solution and a score of 1 is assigned to the highest cost solution. All other solutions are assigned a mathematically determined score based on their proximity to / distance from these two endpoints. For example, in an evaluation of three solutions, where the middle cost solution is closer to the low end of the pricing scale it will receive a higher score and where it is closer to the high end of the pricing scale it will receive a lower score; depending on proximity to the high or low price it is entirely possible that it could receive either 10 points (if it is very close to the lowest price) or 1 point (if it is very close to the highest price). Where pricing cannot be determined (vendor does not supply price and public sources do not exist), a score of 0 is automatically assigned.

In Base5 scoring a number of sub-criteria are specified for each criterion (for example Longevity, Market Presence, and Financials are sub-criteria of the Viability criterion) and each one is scored on the following scale:

5 - The product/vendor is exemplary in this area (nothing could be done to improve the status)
4 - The product/vendor is good in this area (small changes could be made that would move things to the next level)
3 - The product/vendor is adequate in this area (small changes would make it good, more significant changes required to be exemplary)
2 - The product/vendor is poor in this area (this is a notable weakness and significant work is required)
1 - The product/vendor is terrible/fails in this area (this is a glaring oversight and a serious impediment to adoption)

The assigned points are summed and normalized to a value out of 10 as explained in Cumulative Scoring, above.
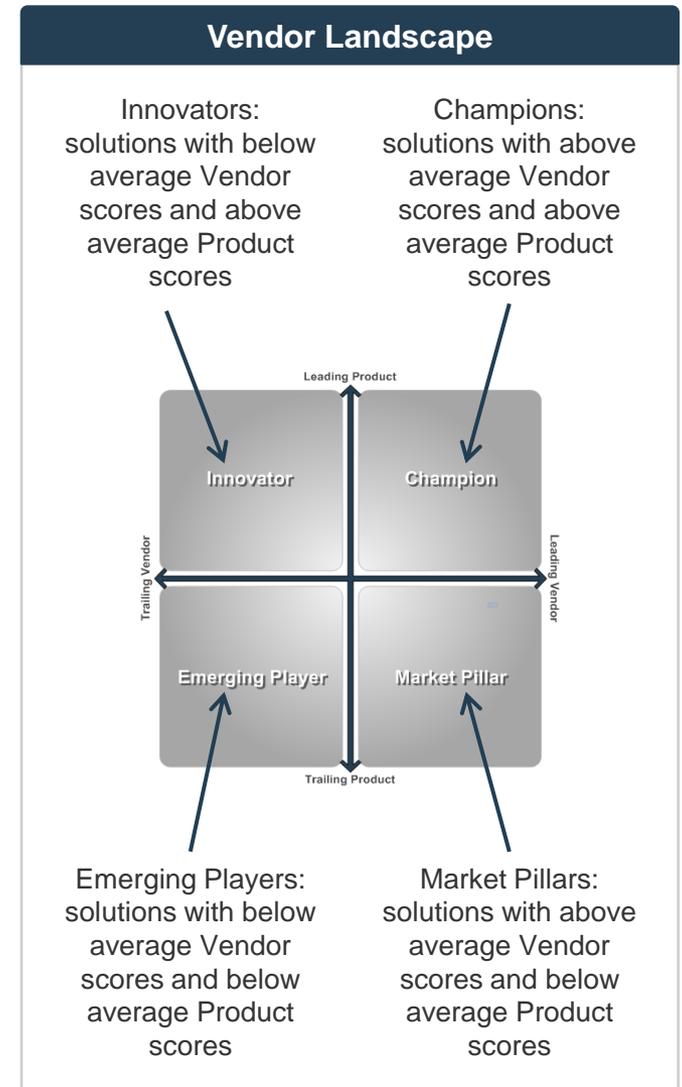
Scores out of 10, known as Raw scores, are transposed as-is into Info-Tech's Vendor Landscape Shortlisting Tool which automatically determines Vendor Landscape positioning (see Vendor Landscape Methodology: Information Presentation - Vendor Landscape, below), Criteria Score (see Vendor Landscape Methodology: Information Presentation - Criteria Score, below) and Value Index (see Vendor Landscape Methodology: Information Presentation - Value Index, below).

Vendor Landscape Methodology:
Information Presentation – Vendor Landscape

Info-Tech's Vendor Landscape is a two-by-two matrix that plots solutions based on the combination of Product score and Vendor score. Placement is not determined by absolute score, but instead by relative score. Relative scores are used to ensure a consistent view of information and to minimise dispersion in nascent markets while enhancing dispersion in commodity markets to allow for quick visual analysis by clients.

Relative scores are calculated as follows:

1. Raw scores are transposed into the Info-Tech Vendor Landscape Shortlisting Tool (for information on how Raw scores are determined, see Vendor Landscape Methodology: Scoring, above).

2. Each individual criterion Raw score is multiplied by the pre-assigned weighting factor for the Vendor Landscape in question. Weighting factors are determined prior to the evaluation process to eliminate any possibility of bias. Weighting factors are expressed as a percentage such that the sum of the weighting factors for the Vendor criteria (Viability, Strategy, Reach, Channel) is 100% and the sum of the Product criteria (Features, Usability, Affordability, Architecture) is 100%.

3. A sum-product of the weighted Vendor criteria scores and of the weighted Product criteria scores is calculated to yield an overall Vendor score and an overall Product score.

4. Overall Vendor scores are then normalized to a 20 point scale by calculating the arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the pool of Vendor scores. Vendors for whom their overall Vendor score is higher than the arithmetic mean will receive a normalized Vendor score of 11-20 (exact value determined by how much higher than the arithmetic mean their overall Vendor score is), while vendors for whom their overall Vendor score is lower than the arithmetic mean will receive a normalized Vendor score of between 1 and 10 (exact value determined by how much lower than the arithmetic mean their overall Vendor score is).

5. Overall Product score are normalized to a 20 point scale according to the same process.

6. Normalized scores are plotted on the matrix, with Vendor score being used as the x-axis, and Product score being used as the y-axis.

Vendor Landscape

Innovators: solutions with below average Vendor scores and above average Product scores

Champions: solutions with above average Vendor scores and above average Product scores

Leading Product

Innovator

Champion

Trailing Vendor

Leading Vendor

Emerging Player

Market Pillar

Trailing Product

Emerging Players: solutions with below average Vendor scores and below average Product scores

Market Pillars: solutions with above average Vendor scores and below average Product scores
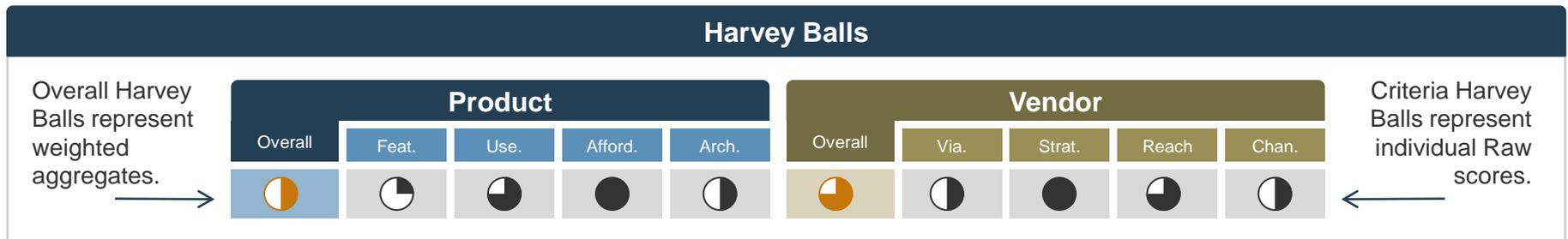
Vendor Landscape Methodology:
Information Presentation – Criteria Scores (Harvey Balls)

Info-Tech's Criteria Scores are visual representations of the absolute score assigned to each individual criterion as well as of the calculated overall Vendor and Product scores. The visual representation used is Harvey Balls.

Harvey Balls are calculated as follows:

1. Raw scores are transposed into the Info-Tech Vendor Landscape Shortlisting Tool (for information on how Raw scores are determined, see Vendor Landscape Methodology: Scoring, above).

2. Each individual criterion Raw score is multiplied by a pre-assigned weighting factor for the Vendor Landscape in question. Weighting factors are determined prior to the evaluation process, based on the expertise of the Senior or Lead Research Analyst. to eliminate any possibility of bias. Weighting factors are expressed as a percentage such that the sum of the weighting factors for the Vendor criteria (Viability, Strategy, Reach, Channel) is 100% and the sum of the Product criteria (Features, Usability, Affordability, Architecture) is 100%.

3. A sum-product of the weighted Vendor criteria scores and of the weighted Product criteria scores is calculated to yield an overall Vendor score and an overall Product score.

4. Both overall Vendor score / overall Product score as well as individual criterion Raw scores are converted from a scale of 1-10 to Harvey Ball scores on a scale of 0-4 where exceptional performance results in a score of 4 and poor performance results in a score of 0 (zero).

5. Harvey Ball scores are converted to Harvey Balls as follows:
   • A score of 4 becomes a full Harvey Ball
   • A score of 3 becomes a three-quarter full Harvey Ball
   • A score of 2 becomes a half full Harvey Ball
   • A score of 1 becomes a one-quarter full Harvey Ball
   • A score of 0 (zero) becomes an empty Harvey Ball

6. Harvey Balls are plotted by solution in a chart where rows represent individual solutions and columns represent overall Vendor / overall Product as well as individual criteria. Solutions are ordered in the chart alphabetically by vendor name.

Harvey Balls

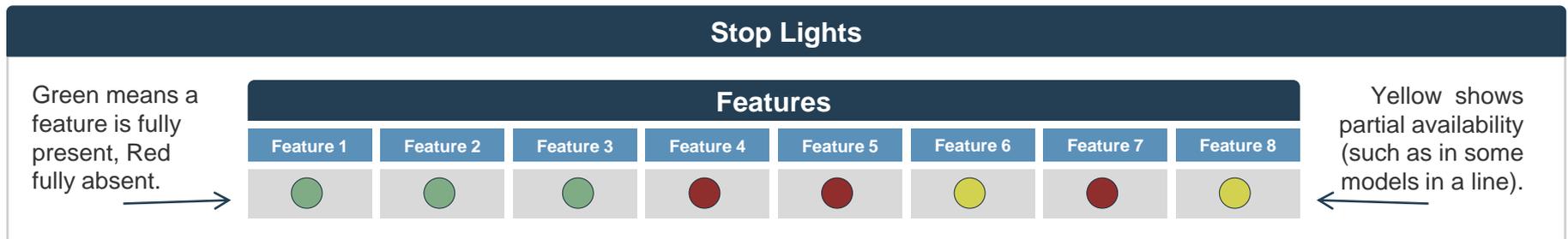|	Product					Vendor				
Overall Harvey Balls represent weighted aggregates.	Overall	Feat.	Use.	Afford.	Arch.	Overall	Via.	Strat.	Reach	Chan.	Criteria Harvey Balls represent individual Raw scores.
→	◐	◔	◑	●	◐	◔	◐	●	◔	◑	←

Vendor Landscape Methodology:
Information Presentation – Feature Ranks (Stop Lights)

Info-Tech's Feature Ranks are visual representations of the presence/availability of individual features that collectively comprise the Features criterion. The visual representation used is Stop Lights.

Stop Lights are determined as follows:

1. A single point is assigned to each evaluated feature that is regarded as being fully present, a half point to each feature that is partially present or pending in an upcoming release, and zero points to features that are deemed to be fully absent.

   - Fully present means all aspects and capabilities of the feature as described are in evidence.
   - Fully absent means all aspects and capabilities of the feature as described are in evidence.
   - Partially present means some, but not all, aspects and capabilities of the feature as described are in evidence **OR** all aspects and capabilities of the feature as described are in evidence but only for some models in a line
   - Pending means all aspects and capabilities of the feature as described are anticipated to be in evidence in a future revision of the product and that revision is to be released within the next 12 months.

2. Feature scores are converted to Harvey Balls as follows:
   - Full points become a Green light
   - Half points become a Yellow light
   - Zero points become a Red light

3. Stop Lights are plotted by solution in a chart where rows represent individual solutions and columns represent individual features. Solutions are ordered in the chart alphabetically by vendor name.

For example, a set of applications is being reviewed and a feature of "*Integration with Mobile Devices*" that is defined as "*availability of dedicated mobile device applications for iOS, Android, and BlackBerry devices*" is specified. Solution A provides such apps for all listed platforms and scores "Green", solution B provides apps for iOS and Android only and scores "Yellow", while solution C provides mobile device functionality through browser extensions, has no dedicated apps, and so scores "Red".

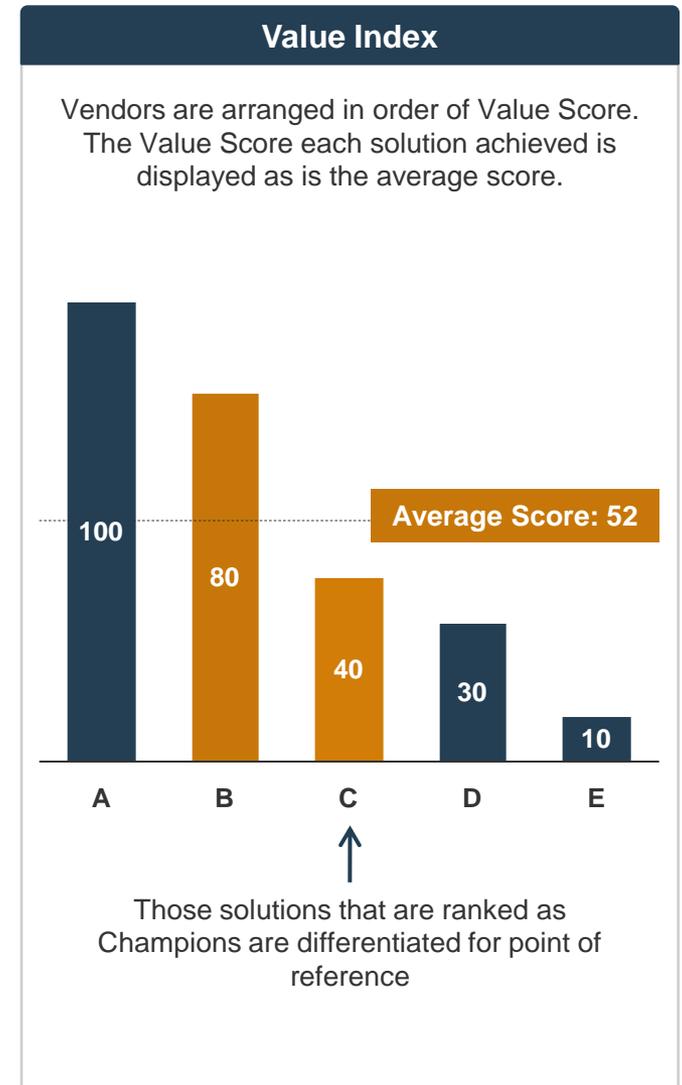| Stop Lights									
Green means a feature is fully present, Red fully absent.	**Features**								Yellow shows partial availability (such as in some models in a line).
	Feature 1	Feature 2	Feature 3	Feature 4	Feature 5	Feature 6	Feature 7	Feature 8	
→	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟡	←

Vendor Landscape Methodology: Information Presentation – Value Index

Info-Tech's Value Index is an indexed ranking of solution value per dollar as determined by the Raw scores assigned to each criteria (for information on how Raw scores are determined, see Vendor Landscape Methodology: Scoring, above).

Value scores are calculated as follows:

1. The Affordability criterion is removed from the overall Product score and the remaining Product score criteria (Features, Usability, Architecture) are reweighted so as to retain the same weightings relative to one another while still summing to 100%. For example, if all four Product criteria were assigned base weightings of 25%, for the determination of the Value score Features, Usability, and Architecture would be reweighted to 33.3% each to retain the same relative weightings while still summing to 100%.

2. A sum-product of the weighted Vendor criteria scores and of the reweighted Product criteria scores is calculated to yield an overall Vendor score and a reweighted overall Product score.

3. The overall Vendor score and the reweighted overall Product score are then summed and this sum is multiplied by the Affordability Raw score to yield an interim Value score for each solution.

4. All interim Value scores are then indexed to the highest performing solution by dividing each interim Value score by the highest interim Value score. This results in a Value score of 100 for the top solution and an indexed Value score relative to the 100 for each alternate solution.

5. Solutions are plotted according to Value score, with the highest scorer plotted first, and all remaining scores plotted in descending numerical order.

Where pricing is not provided by the vendor and public sources of information cannot be found, an Affordability Raw score of zero is assigned. Since multiplication by zero results in a product of zero, those solutions for which pricing cannot be determined receive a Value score of zero. Because Info-Tech assigns a score of zero where pricing is not available, it is always in the vendor's best interest to provide accurate and up to date pricing

Value Index

Vendors are arranged in order of Value Score. The Value Score each solution achieved is displayed as is the average score.

Average Score: 52

Those solutions that are ranked as Champions are differentiated for point of reference

Vendor Landscape Methodology:
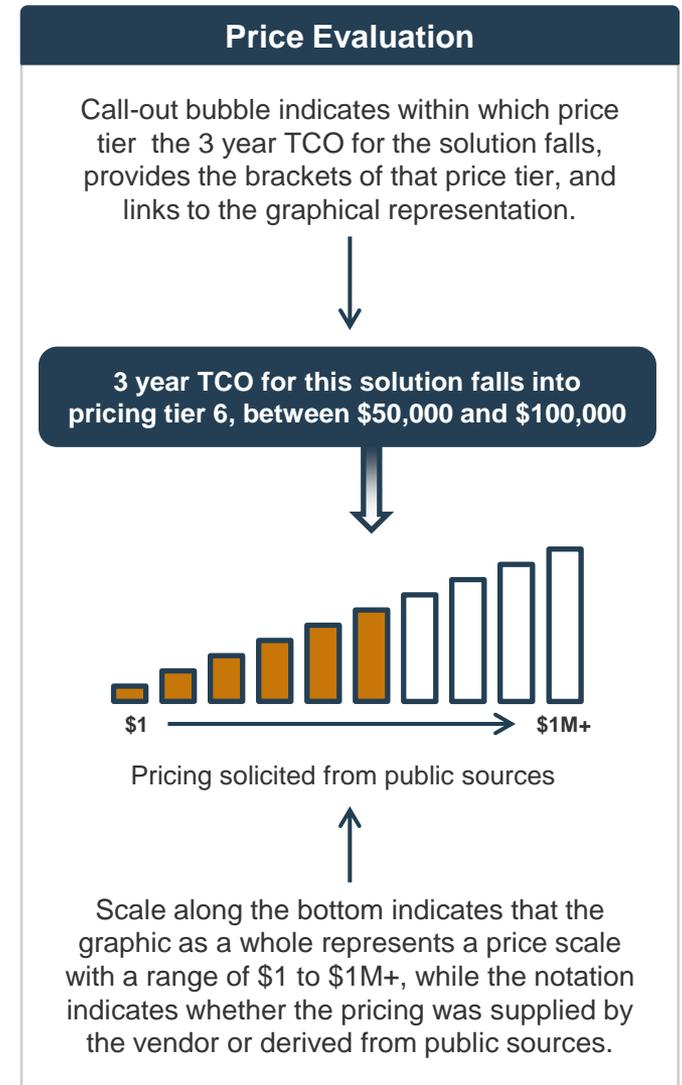# Information Presentation – Price Evaluation

Info-Tech's Price Evaluation is a tiered representation of the 3 year Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of a proposed solution. Info-Tech uses this method of communicating pricing information to provide high-level budgetary guidance to its end-user clients while respecting the privacy of the vendor's with whom it works. The solution TCO is calculated and then represented as belonging to one of ten pricing tiers.

Pricing tiers are as follows:

1. Between $1 and $2,500
2. Between $2,500 and $5,000
3. Between $5,000 and $10,000
4. Between $10,000 and $25,000
5. Between $25,000 and $50,000
6. Between $50,000 and $100,000
7. Between $100,000 and $250,000
8. Between $250,000 and $500,000
9. Between $500,000 and $1,000,000
10. Greater than $1,000,000

Where pricing is not provided, Info-Tech makes use of publicly available sources of information to determine a price. Because these sources are not official price lists, the possibility exists they may be inaccurate or outdated, and so the source of the pricing information is provided. Because Info-Tech publishes pricing information regardless of vendor participation, it is always in the vendor's best interest to supply accurate and up to date information.

Info-Tech's Price Evaluations are based on pre-defined pricing scenarios to ensure as close to an "apples to apples" comparison as possible between evaluated solutions. Pricing scenarios describe a sample business and solicit guidance as to the appropriate product/service mix required to deliver the specified functionality, the list price for those tools/services, as well as three full years of maintenance and support.

Price Evaluation

Call-out bubble indicates within which price tier the 3 year TCO for the solution falls, provides the brackets of that price tier, and links to the graphical representation.

3 year TCO for this solution falls into pricing tier 6, between $50,000 and $100,000

$1 →→→→→→→ $1M+

Pricing solicited from public sources

Scale along the bottom indicates that the graphic as a whole represents a price scale with a range of $1 to $1M+, while the notation indicates whether the pricing was supplied by the vendor or derived from public sources.

Vendor Landscape Methodology: Information Presentation – Scenarios

Info-Tech's Scenarios highlight specific use cases for the evaluated solution to provide as complete (when taken in conjunction with the individual written review, Vendor Landscape, Criteria Scores, Feature Ranks and Value Index) a basis for comparison by end user clients as possible.

Scenarios are designed to reflect tiered capability in a particular set of circumstances. Determination of the Scenarios in question is at the discretion of the analyst team assigned to the research project. Where possible Scenarios are designed to be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, or at the very least hierarchical such that the tiers within the Scenario represent a progressively greater or broader capability.

Scenario ranking is determined as follows:

1. The analyst team determines an appropriate use case.
   For example:

   • Clients that have multinational presence and requires vendors to provide 4 hour on-site support.

2. The analyst team establishes the various tiers of capability.
   For example:
   • Presence in Americas
   • Presence in EMEA
   • Presence in APAC

3. The analyst team reviews all evaluated solutions and determines which ones meet which tiers of capability.
   For example:
   • Presence in Americas   – Vendor A, Vendor C, Vendor E
   • Presence in EMEA   – Vendor A, Vendor B, Vendor C
   • Presence in APAC   – Vendor B, Vendor D, Vendor E

4. Solutions are plotted on a grid alphabetically by vendor by tier. Where one vendor is deemed to be stronger in a tier than other vendors in the same tier, they may be plotted non-alphabetically.
   For example:
   • Vendor C is able to provide 4 hour on site support to 12 countries in EMEA while Vendor s A and B are only able to provide 4 hour on-site support to 8 countries in EMEA; Vendor C would be plotted first, followed by Vendor A, then Vendor B.

Vendor Landscape Methodology: Information Presentation – Vendor Awards

At the conclusion of all analyses, Info-Tech presents awards to exceptional solutions in three distinct categories. Award presentation is discretionary; not all awards are extended subsequent to each Vendor landscape and it is entirely possible, though unlikely, that no awards may be presented.

Awards categories are as follows:

- **Champion Awards** are presented to those solutions, and only those solutions, that land in the Champion zone of the Info-Tech Vendor Landscape (see Vendor Landscape Methodology: Information Presentation - Vendor Landscape, above). If no solutions land in the champion zone, no Champion Awards are presented. Similarly, if multiple solutions land in the champion zone, multiple Champion Awards are presented.

- **Trend Setter Awards** are presented to those solutions, and only those solutions, that are deemed to include the most original/inventive product/service, or the most original/inventive feature/capability of a product/service. If no solution is deemed to be markedly or sufficiently original/inventive, either as a product/service on the whole or by feature/capability specifically, no Trend Setter Award is presented. Only one Trend Setter Award is available for each Vendor Landscape.

- **Best Overall Value Awards** are presented to those solutions, and only those solutions, that are ranked highest on the Info-Tech Value Index (see Vendor Landscape Methodology: Information Presentation – Value Index, above). If insufficient pricing information is made available for the evaluated solutions such that a Value Index cannot be calculated, no Best Overall Value Award will be presented. Only one Best Overall Value Award is available for each Vendor Landscape.

Vendor Awards

Info-Tech's **Champion Award** is presented to solutions in the Champion zone of the Vendor Landscape.

Info-Tech's **Trend Setter Award** is presented to the most original/inventive solution evaluated.

Info-Tech's **Best Overall Value Award** is presented to the solution with the highest Value Index score.

Vendor Landscape Methodology: Fact Check & Publication

Info-Tech takes the factual accuracy of its Vendor Landscapes, and indeed of all of its published content, very seriously. To ensure the utmost accuracy in its Vendor Landscapes, we invite all vendors of evaluated solutions (whether the vendor elected to provide a survey and/or participate in a briefing or not) to participate in a process of Fact Check.

Once the research project is complete and the materials are deemed to be in a publication ready state, excerpts of the material specific to each vendor's solution are provided to the vendor. Info-Tech only provides material specific to the individual vendor's solution for review encompassing the following:
- All written review materials of the vendor and the vendor's product that comprise the evaluated solution
- Info-Tech's Criteria Scores / Harvey Balls detailing the individual and overall Vendor / Product scores assigned
- Info-Tech's Feature Rank / Stop Lights detailing the individual feature scores of the evaluated product
- Info-Tech's Value Index ranking for the evaluated solution
- Info-Tech's Scenario ranking for all considered scenarios for the evaluated solution

Info-Tech does not provide the following:
- Info-Tech's Vendor Landscape placement of the evaluated solution
- Info-Tech's Value Score for the evaluated solution
- End-user feedback gathered during the research project
- Info-Tech's overall recommendation in regard to the evaluated solution

Info-Tech provides a one-week window for each vendor to provide written feedback. Feedback must be corroborated (be provided with supporting evidence) and where it does, feedback that addresses factual errors or omissions is adopted fully while feedback that addresses opinions is taken under consideration. The assigned analyst team make all appropriate edits and supply an edited copy of the materials to the vendor within one week for final review.

Should a vendor still have concerns or objections at that time, they are invited to a conversation, initially via email but as required and deemed appropriate by Info-Tech subsequently via telephone, to ensure common understanding of the concerns. Where concerns relate to ongoing factual errors or omissions they are corrected under the supervision of Info-Tech's Vendor Relations personnel. Where concerns relate to ongoing differences of opinion they are again taken under consideration with neither explicit not implicit indication of adoption.

Publication of materials is scheduled to occur within the six weeks immediately following the completion of the research project, but does not occur until the Fact Check process has come to conclusion and under no circumstances are "pre-publication" copies of any materials made available to any client.