

IDC MarketScape

# IDC MarketScape: Worldwide SaaS and Cloud Value-Added Tax Software 2021 Vendor Assessment

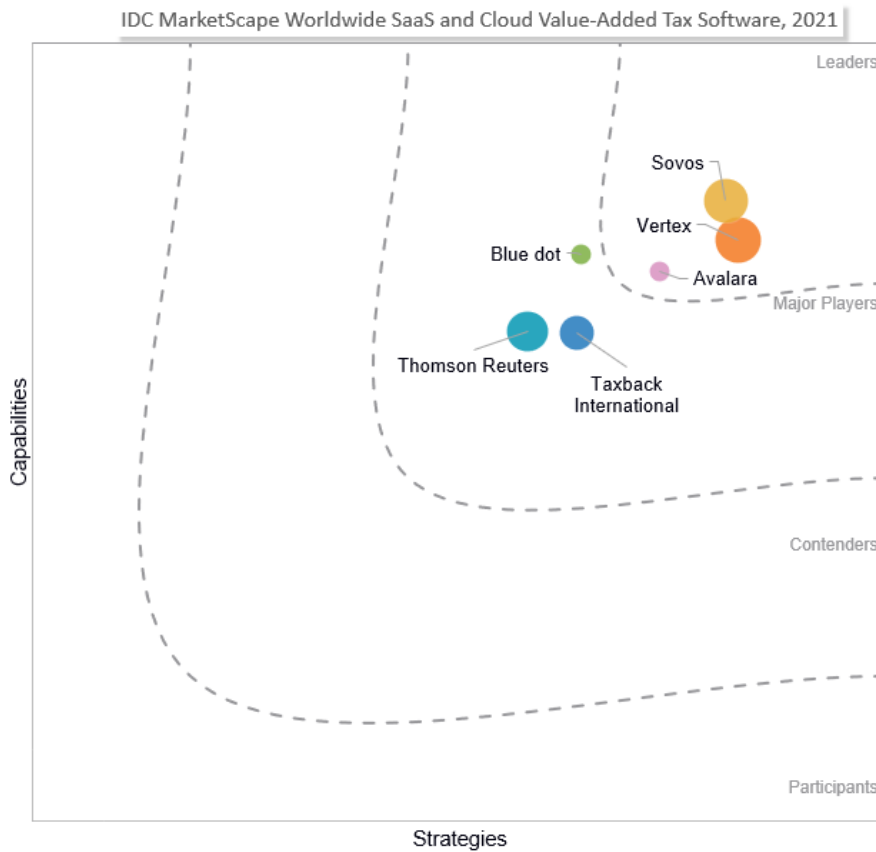
Kevin Permenter

**THIS IDC MARKETSCAPE EXCERPT FEATURES VERTEX, INC.**

## IDC MARKETSCAPE FIGURE

**FIGURE 1**

### IDC MarketScape: Worldwide SaaS and Cloud Value-Added Tax Software 2021 Vendor Assessment



Source: IDC, 2021

Please see the Appendix for detailed methodology, market definition, and scoring criteria.

## IN THIS EXCERPT

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The content for this excerpt was taken directly from IDC MarketScape: Worldwide SaaS and Cloud Value-Added Tax Software 2021 Vendor Assessment (Doc # US7987321). All or parts of the following sections are included in this excerpt: IDC Opinion, IDC MarketScape Vendor Inclusion Criteria, Essential Guidance, Vendor Summary Profile, Appendix and Learn More. Also included is Figure 1.

## IDC OPINION

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Indirect taxation is one of the most complicated aspect of today's business environment. Indirect taxation sits in the center of a long financial value chain that forms the backbone of corporate finance. Indirect taxation touches a whole host of business functions, including procurement, accounts payable/accounts receivable, inventory/supply chain, and expense management. Indeed, tax is quickly becoming a major part of the core business functions. Nearly every major economic region is undergoing some level of indirect tax reform and VAT/GST changes, which will add additional levels of frustration and complexity for businesses: Further:

- **COVID-19 impacts add for value-added tax (VAT) complexity:** The impact of COVID-19 and the loosening of VAT restrictions caused many governments to experience budget shortfalls. As a result, we can reasonably expect increased vigilance to close tax gaps in the years to come. For example, European Union (EU) countries lost an estimated €164 billion in value-added tax revenue in 2020.
- **Brexit adds more complexity to VAT:** As of January 1, 2021, the United Kingdom left the EU VAT tax regime. This dramatically shifted the VAT landscape for the United Kingdom and within the EU. This transition has increased the complexity of moving goods between the new United Kingdom trade zone and the EU zone.
- **Complexity grows in LATAM:** LATAM is quickly becoming a leader in VAT transformation. Countries like Mexico, Columbia, and Brazil have all taken major steps to embrace digital tax transformation in the past 18 months.

## Relevant Market Trends

- **Growth in the marketplaces.** Cross-border marketplaces are ecommerce sites where product is provided by multiple third parties (e.g., eBay, Etsy, Alibaba) that are growing rapidly. In fact, in many countries like China, Japan, and the United States, marketplaces are all expected to grow faster than their retail website counterparts.
- **The spread of e-invoicing in the European Union.** e-Invoicing mandates are quickly taking root in the EU and beyond. In fact, in the past 12 months, there have been new/updated e-invoicing initiatives in Italy, France, India, Chile, Brazil, and Poland.
- **Growth of the digital economy.** As a result of the massive shift toward digitalization, the amount of nonphysical digital goods (e.g., on-demand services, software, online gaming, ebooks, music files, and digital images) being sold has exploded. This explosion has caught the attention of tax authorities all over the globe.
- **Growth of the gig worker.** The gig economy is growing rapidly with companies like Uber, Grubhub, and Lyft representing a significant shift in the business landscape. This represents an opportunity for tax compliance vendors to develop/enhance software functionality to help businesses manage 1099s and other related tax forms.

- **Growth of the tax gap.** The new digital economy is placing tremendous strain on the legacy methods of collecting taxes within the United States and Western European nations. In the United States, the IRS estimates the gap between taxes owed and taxes collected is roughly \$400 billion for 2019. There will be increasing energy from tax authorities toward closing this gap.

## IDC MARKETSCOPE VENDOR INCLUSION CRITERIA

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The vendor inclusion list for this study was selected to accurately depict the vendors that are most representative of any given software application on a buyer's selection list based on the following:

- Vendors must have a SaaS or cloud offering – on premises-only applications are out of scope.
- Software application can be purchased separately (not just functionality built into a larger system) and is available off the shelf without required customization.
- Software application has capabilities for determination, filing, recovery/reclaim, e-invoicing, and localized VAT support.
- The vendor had at least \$5 million in 2020 tax management software revenue.
- The vendor has a minimum of one tax solution in market for at least three years.

## ADVICE FOR TECHNOLOGY BUYERS

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Tax applications are evolving rapidly as vendors invest research and development dollars into bolstering, augmenting and, in some cases, redesigning their applications. The applications must align with the new digital enterprise and its preferred way to absorb technology. The vendors must work to align their go-to-market strategies and product development strategies with the new digital enterprise. While the vendors in this study may vary widely in size, experience, levels of support, and sales model, the goal for all the vendors listed in this study is the same – create/curate a differentiating user experience (UX). To do that, the user experience must go beyond the software to include the sales process, account management, implementation, and post-implementation support. As a buyer in this market, here are a few of the key questions to consider during the buying process:

- **Begin by looking inward.** Before making purchasing decisions on tax software, here are a few key questions to ask regarding the internal resources and processes:
  - What are some of the issues I would like to resolve with this new system?
  - Are the issues technology related?
  - What are my internal support resources and capabilities?
  - How should we define success for this implementation?
  - Which internal stakeholders should we include in the evaluation processes?
  - How will a new system change my organization?
- **Select the right partners (internal and external).** The first step in the journey to tax system is developing a strategy and plan for the implementation. This includes doing the due diligence in finding the right vendor. Here are a few key questions to ask regarding the software vendor:
  - Does the vendor have experience with my type of product, service, and company size?
  - Can the vendor show me a hands-on demo with my organization's "live/real" data to show the benefit to the business?

- Does the vendor understand the regulations that will impact my business? How are these regulations reflected in my current product and how will it change in the future?
- What is the vendor's strategic investment outlook for the next three to five years? Why? How will that change and enhance my business?
- **Consider the foundation.** Tax application vendors have seen many iterations from a technology architecture standpoint. Even among cloud vendors there are many different varieties of software architectural approaches. IDC believes that taking time to understand the foundation of the software and its advantages (or limitations) is of critical importance during the buying decision. Here are a few key questions regarding the tax software vendor:
  - What is the data flow design within the current solution?
  - What kind of APIs are available now from this vendor? RESTful? SOAP? GraphQL?
  - What kind of developer tools does the vendor provide (e.g., sandbox, dedicated portal, low-code/no-code tools, and database management tools)?
  - Is any part of the software currently built on a microservice architecture? If so, which parts?
- **Take ownership of the implementation.** For the best results, organizations must take a very active role in the actual implementation of the software. Tax software touches upon a lot of other back-office systems (order management, accounts payable, accounts receivable, treasury, expense management, etc.). As a result, extreme attention must be given to how the tax system is set up and how it interacts with other systems within your organization. Here are a few key questions to ask regarding the tax software implementations:
  - What levels of support are available and are they geographically available for my business?
  - How should I set up the service-level agreement (SLA) before signing any contracts?
  - Can the system integrate with my company's other IT systems and those of my partners?
  - Which IT system needs to be integrated and to what degree?
  - How are we set up to deal with frequent product updates?
- **Note that post-implementation is critical.** In many ways, the success of any SaaS implementation hinges on what happens after the implementation is up and running. This is where change management takes center stage and the people's side of tax management becomes essential. Here are a few key questions to ask regarding the post-go live phase of tax software implementations:
  - Do we have a strategy to encourage rapid adoption among employees?
  - Do we have the right amount of training for employees to master the new features within the system?
  - Are we communicating the purpose and benefits of the system change to the relevant employees?
  - Have we aligned existing policies and procedures to enable the adoption of the new workflows?

## VENDOR SUMMARY PROFILES

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This section briefly explains IDC's key observations resulting in a vendor's position in the IDC MarketScape. While every vendor is evaluated against each of the criteria outlined in the Appendix, the description here provides a summary of each vendor's strengths and challenges.

### Vertex

After a thorough evaluation of Vertex's strategies and capabilities, IDC has positioned the company in the Leaders category in this 2021 IDC MarketScape for worldwide SaaS and cloud-enabled value-added tax software market.

Vertex Inc. is a global provider of indirect tax software and solutions. The company's mission is to deliver tax technology enabling global businesses to transact, comply, and grow with confidence. Vertex provides cloud-based and on-premises solutions that can be tailored to specific industries for major lines of indirect tax, including sales and consumer use, value-add, and payroll. With the recent acquisition of Taxamo, Vertex now offers solutions for payments, invoicing, liability assessment, multiseller invoicing, and more. The Vertex VAT Compliance solution enables multinational corporations to meet VAT/GST compliance needs, improve audit performance, and employ a globalized strategy for VAT/GST compliance that reduces risk and supports business growth.

Headquartered in North America and with offices in South America and Europe, Vertex employs over 1,200 professionals and serves companies across the globe.

Quick facts about Vertex include:

- **Employees:** 1,200
- **Total number of clients:** 4,175
- **Industry focus:** All verticals
- **SaaS:** Solutions offered in a multitenant deployment at the application, database, and cloud infrastructure layers. (There is also a single-tenant hosted option of the Vertex on-premises solution. It offers significant cloud growth, while maintaining a hybrid deployment model.)
- **Pricing model:** Subscription (multiple modes of pricing based on tiers/groups of service)
- **Average time of implementation:** Varies based on customer requirements/complexity
- **Partner ecosystem:** Global partners including alliances, resellers, systems integrators, channel partners, and connector partners, as well as hundreds of integrations and connectors including Adobe-Magento, Microsoft, Mirakl, Oracle-NetSuite, SAP, Salesforce, Workday, and Zuora

### Strengths

- **Specialized vertical expertise:** Vertex is a pioneer in indirect tax with marquee client base including over 59% of the Fortune 500. Vertex has developed specialized vertical expertise and offers indirect tax content and solutions tailored to the unique needs of industries including communications, hospitality, leasing, manufacturing, and retail, as well as specialty returns for food/beverage and business occupation returns.

- **Supporting complexity:** Vertex has historically focused on the enterprise market and is able to handle the most complex business, tax, and technology scenarios. Through recent acquisitions, the company's offering includes solutions packaged and priced for midmarket and enterprise businesses. Vertex has built solutions to support organizations throughout their life cycle, supporting tax determination and compliance for over 19,000 tax jurisdictions globally, including tax calculation, cross-border logic, real-time customer location verification, invoice and currency management for ecommerce, and filing and remittance.
- **Reporting and visibility:** Vertex VAT compliance software offers integrated customizable rule-based data quality and validation tools, as well as workflow automation that maximizes data and return accuracy and minimizes the risk of liability. Users also have access to VAT/GST data and adjustments through drilldown capability from the return to transaction-level data. Users can edit or add data prior to filing, with complete version control. Vertex VAT compliance also provides authorized users with access to audit event logs and detailed archives to support audit prep.

## Challenges

- **Adding midmarket functionality:** Vertex has traditionally targeted large multinational enterprises. As a result, it has traditionally missed some of the functionality needed to support certain segments of the midmarket. Vertex has recently added more functionality to support midmarket VAT and GST demands through the launch of its Vertex Cloud VAT Compliance solution, as well as recent acquisitions like Taxamo, a European specialist in tax automation for ecommerce and marketplaces.

## Consider Vertex When

Consider Vertex if you are an upper midmarket or large multinational company looking for advanced tax management tools from a company with deep experience in building enterprise-level tax management software. Vertex offers international reach to capitalize on continuously emerging compliance requirements and global content database coverage across verticals, digital, and physical goods.

## APPENDIX

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### Reading an IDC MarketScape Graph

For the purposes of this analysis, IDC divided potential key measures for success into two primary categories: capabilities and strategies.

Positioning on the y-axis reflects the vendor's current capabilities and menu of services and how well aligned the vendor is to customer needs. The capabilities category focuses on the capabilities of the company and product today, here and now. Under this category, IDC analysts will look at how well a vendor is building/delivering capabilities that enable it to execute its chosen strategy in the market.

Positioning on the x-axis, or strategies axis, indicates how well the vendor's future strategy aligns with what customers will require in three to five years. The strategies category focuses on high-level decisions and underlying assumptions about offerings, customer segments, and business and go-to-market plans for the next three to five years.

The size of the individual vendor markers in the IDC MarketScape represents the market share of each individual vendor within the specific market segment being assessed.

## IDC MarketScape Methodology

IDC MarketScape criteria selection, weightings, and vendor scores represent well-researched IDC judgment about the market and specific vendors. IDC analysts tailor the range of standard characteristics by which vendors are measured through structured discussions, surveys, and interviews with market leaders, participants, and end users. Market weightings are based on user interviews, buyer surveys, and the input of IDC experts in each market. IDC analysts base individual vendor scores, and ultimately vendor positions on the IDC MarketScape, on detailed surveys and interviews with the vendors, publicly available information, and end-user experiences in an effort to provide an accurate and consistent assessment of each vendor's characteristics, behavior, and capability.

## Market Definition

IDC defines indirect tax software as software that supports the management of tax considerations for external business transactions sales and use tax, value-added tax (VAT), goods and services tax (GST), excise tax, and property tax. Key elements of the software include functionality for corporations to calculate taxes for current transactions, estimate tax burden for future transactions, determine tax exemptions, manage filing and compliance, and house tax-related forms/documents.

## LEARN MORE

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### Related Research

- *Worldwide Corporate Tax Management Applications Forecast, 2021-2025: Complexity and the Pandemic Drive Technology Transformation* (IDC #US47995821, July 2021)
- *Worldwide Corporate Tax Management Applications Market Shares, 2020: Pandemic and Shifting Regulations Shape Market Dynamics* (IDC #US47995721, July 2021)
- *Market Analysis Perspective: Worldwide Corporate Tax Management Applications, 2020* (IDC #US45754920, September 2020)
- *Worldwide Corporate Tax Management Applications Forecast, 2020-2024: eCommerce and Dynamic Global Taxation Driving Growth and Innovation* (IDC #US46530420, June 2020)
- *Worldwide Corporate Tax Management Applications Market Shares, 2019: Global Regulatory Changes Raise the Profile of Tax Software* (IDC #US46530320, June 2020)

### Synopsis

This IDC study provides an assessment of the SaaS and cloud-enabled value-added tax applications and discusses the criteria that are important for companies to consider when selecting a system.

"Growth in tax regulations has made it increasingly complicated to sell product globally. More and more, organizations are looking to technology advancements to cope with the ever-changing challenges of global business. Tax software companies are uniquely positioned to provide the necessary tools and expertise to help digital companies cope with the new digital dynamics," says Kevin Permenter, research director, Financial Applications at IDC.

## About IDC

International Data Corporation (IDC) is the premier global provider of market intelligence, advisory services, and events for the information technology, telecommunications and consumer technology markets. IDC helps IT professionals, business executives, and the investment community make fact-based decisions on technology purchases and business strategy. More than 1,100 IDC analysts provide global, regional, and local expertise on technology and industry opportunities and trends in over 110 countries worldwide. For 50 years, IDC has provided strategic insights to help our clients achieve their key business objectives. IDC is a subsidiary of IDG, the world's leading technology media, research, and events company.

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