Thought Leadership

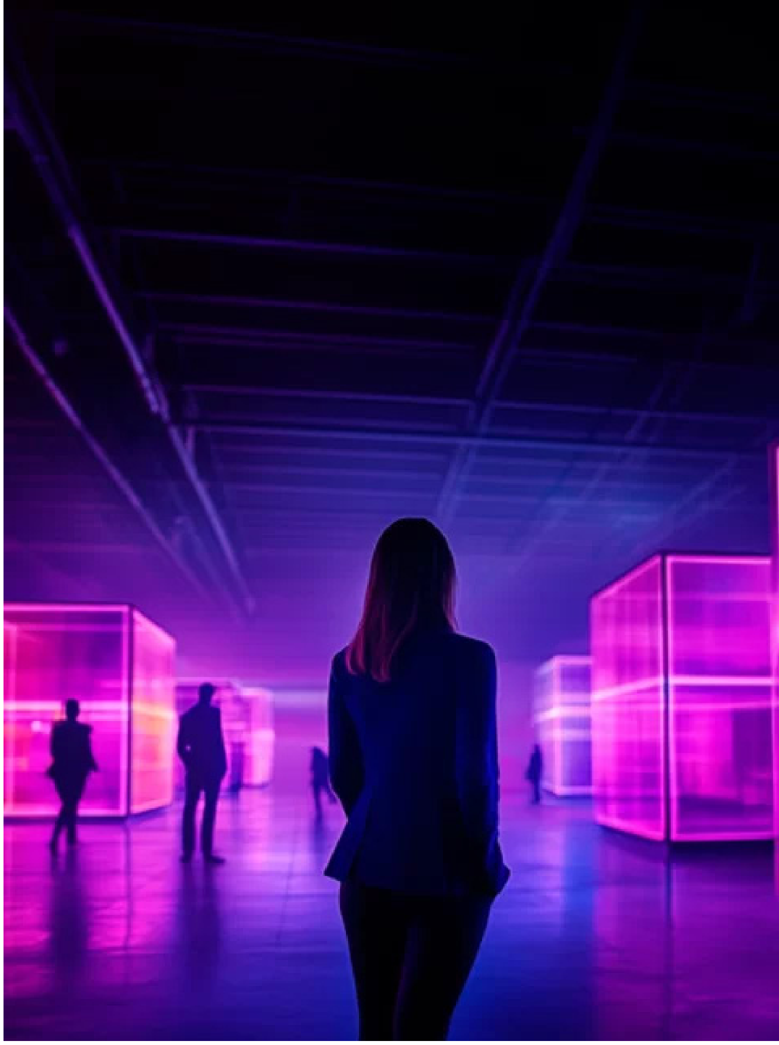
Sales and Service Optimization

Your product portfolio is lying to you.
Here’s how to make it tell the truth.

accenture

TrueChoice·Ai

Most B2B companies manage their product portfolios the same way they have for decades: spreadsheets full of margins, cost-plus pricing models, indexing off public benchmarks instead of measured value, conversations that stop at the procurement desk rather than reaching the people who actually use what's being bought, and gut instinct about which products "feel" like winners. But in a world of tariff shifts, volatile input costs, and increasingly sophisticated buyers, that approach is quietly bleeding value — and most leadership teams don't even realize it.



We have spent years working on this problem, and the uncomfortable truth is this: cost and margin data alone cannot tell you which products are actually worth investing in. They tell you what things cost. They don't tell you what customers value.

That gap — between what you charge and what your customer is willing to pay — is where the real money lives.

The Problem Hiding in Plain Sight

Consider a portfolio of hundreds of products spanning diverse applications and customer segments. That's not unusual for a mid-to-large chemicals, materials, or industrial company. Now ask yourself: how many of those products are you confidently pricing based on what customers actually value, versus what it costs you to make them?

For most organizations, the honest answer is close to zero.

The consequences compound quickly. You over-invest in products that customers don't particularly value. You under-invest in products where customers would happily pay more. You can't distinguish between a product that's temporarily underperforming due to market conditions and one that's structurally a loser. And when input costs spike or tariffs shift, your pricing team reaches for the only lever they know — cost-plus, or a nudge off the published index — which leaves money on the table in good times and destroys relationships in bad ones.

A Different Starting Point: What Would Your Customers Actually Pay?

The shift we've been driving with clients is deceptively simple in concept: instead of starting with your cost structure and working forward, start with the customer's willingness-to-pay and work backward.

That means quantifying — at the individual customer and segment level — what people actually value, what they'd trade off, and what they consider deal breakers. Not through traditional surveys (which capture stated preferences that rarely match real behavior), but through interactive, AI-powered preference dialogues that adapt in real time and produce 1:1 preference profiles with genuine predictive power. This is exactly the category of work **TrueChoice.AI** was built for.

It also means widening the aperture on who you listen to. Treating the buying organization as a single voice — usually the procurer's — is one of the most expensive habits in B2B. The procurer optimizes for price and risk. The plant engineer, the formulator, the operations lead, the sustainability officer, the end-customer's own customer — each weights value differently, and each can veto, accelerate, or quietly redirect a deal. What is newly possible, and increasingly necessary for survival, is capturing multiple buyer-value perspectives per customer — and per customer's customer — and aggregating them on demand into a coherent view of where value actually sits in the chain. Companies that still price and design to a single point of contact are flying with one instrument while their competitors fly with the full panel.

When you have that data, three things become possible that weren't before.

First, **portfolio rationalization gets surgical**. You can identify products where willingness-to-pay is structurally below cost-to-serve — not because of a temporary market dip, but because customers fundamentally don't value what you're delivering. You can also spot over-engineered offerings where you're investing in features nobody asked for.

Second, **pricing becomes value-based rather than reactive**. With price elasticity data by segment and by stakeholder, you know exactly where you have room to capture premium and where you're at risk of losing share. You stop guessing and start modeling — and you stop letting a public index dictate the conversation.

Third, **investment decisions get sharper**. Capital allocation, R&D priorities, service levels, and commercial focus all improve when you can rank opportunities by actual customer value rather than historical revenue.

What This Looks Like in Practice

We recently worked with a leading chemicals manufacturer facing exactly this challenge. They had a large, complex B2B portfolio, inconsistent service levels across regions, and no systematic way to understand which customers — or which stakeholders inside those customers — valued what.

We deployed the **TrueChoice.AI** real-time preference analytics platform across their customer base to measure willingness-to-pay for every dimension of the purchasing experience — product attributes, service priorities, and supply chain preferences — across multiple decision-makers per account. We then segmented customers by preference and willingness-to-pay patterns using advanced algorithms and built unified customer profiles by integrating CRM data with the preference insights, including downstream signals from the customer's own customers where it mattered.

The results were concrete and fast — delivered within a four-week engagement window:

30%
increase in conversion rates by aligning offers with what customers actually cared about

$78M+
in annual cost reduction by realigning supply chain service levels with customer value (cutting investment in things customers didn't value while preserving satisfaction)

25%
improvement in customer retention through more consistent, proactive service delivery

12-14%
increase in revenue per customer via better targeting and upsell

15%
margin improvement from value-based pricing and cost-to-serve optimization

What made the difference wasn't just having better data. It was having the right data — real-time, individual-level willingness-to-pay from multiple stakeholders — and building it directly into the commercial decision-making process. The sales team could tailor pitches based on actual buyer priorities, not just the procurer's checklist. The pricing team could justify premiums where value supported it.

And leadership had a fact base for long-term infrastructure investment decisions rather than relying on anecdotal evidence.

Why this matters now

Three forces are making this more urgent than ever.

Volatility is the new normal. Tariff changes, geopolitical disruption, and raw material price swings mean your cost base is a moving target. If your pricing and portfolio strategy is anchored to cost — or to a public index that everyone else is also watching — you're constantly reacting alongside the herd. A value-based approach gives you a stable foundation, because customer preferences shift more slowly than commodity prices.

Portfolio and stakeholder complexity is growing. As companies expand into new segments and geographies, the number of product-customer combinations explodes — and so does the number of people inside each customer who shape the decision. Without a systematic way to assess value across that web, you end up treating every product and every contact the same, which means you're optimizing nothing.

AI has changed what's possible. Five years ago, building 1:1 preference profiles at scale for a B2B portfolio — let alone across multiple stakeholders per account and into the customer's customer — was impractical. Today, with platforms like TrueChoice.AI deploying patented algorithms, adaptive digital dialogues, and real-time analytics, you can quantify willingness-to-pay across hundreds of products and thousands of individual decision-makers in weeks, not quarters, and aggregate those views into whatever lens the moment requires.

The Shift Leaders Need to Make

The companies that will win the next decade of B2B competition aren't the ones with the lowest costs. They're the ones that understand customer value — across every relevant stakeholder, at every relevant tier — with enough precision to make every portfolio, pricing, offer design, and investment decision count.

That starts with asking a question most organizations still avoid: Do we actually know what our customers — and their customers — are willing to pay, and who inside those accounts is telling us so?

If the answer is no — or "we think so" — that's your starting point.

Accenture partners with **TrueChoice.AI** *on preference analytics and portfolio optimization for B2B companies. If you're wrestling with portfolio complexity, pricing pressure, or investment prioritization, we'd welcome the conversation.*