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THE CHANGE MAKERS CLUB

Navigating a New Era of Pricing

Industry Report 2026

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A REVENUE LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT LEADER

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Synopsis

This report examines how senior finance, pricing and commercial leaders are adapting pricing strategies in response to volatility, geopolitical uncertainty, shifting cost bases and growing pressure to protect margins.

With insights from leaders across telecoms, technology, manufacturing, healthcare, pharma services, automotive and distribution, the discussion explored where organisations sit on their pricing maturity journey, how they are responding to fast-moving market conditions, and what needs to change to make pricing more agile, evidence-led and commercially effective.

Where appropriate, contributors and quotes have been anonymised to preserve confidentiality.

> *Only 12% of CEOs report both cost reduction and revenue growth from AI.* **[PwC, 2026]**

> *70% of AI initiatives fail due to people and process related issues.* **[BCG, 2025]**

> *Reaping value from AI investments requires mastering the tensions between talent and tech or risking an AI productivity drop of 40%.* **[EY, 2025]**

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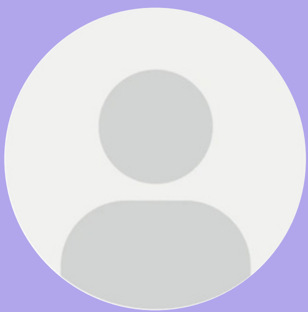

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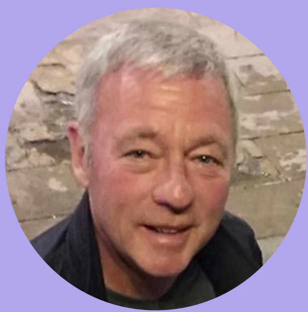

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Topic Overview

NAVIGATING A NEW ERA OF PRICING

How do you set your prices when ongoing volatility and geopolitical uncertainty create a moving target for your margins?

Ongoing volatility and geopolitical uncertainty are increasing the need for dynamic, adaptive pricing strategies. Given that a 1% change in price can impact operating profit by around 8%, pricing remains one of the most powerful profit levers available to organisations [McKinsey].

But unlocking this is easier said than done. Only 3% of pricing and sales teams operate with real-time, data-informed pricing guidance [Deloitte, 2025]. However, the maturing of AI is opening up an opportunity for the remaining 97%, offering greater access to agile pricing systems that were previously difficult to implement.

This report explores how pricing leaders are making better-informed decisions to improve negotiation outcomes and protect margins through their pricing strategies.

#1 Static Pricing to Margin Agility

PRICING IS BECOMING A STRATEGIC MARGIN DISCIPLINE

Pricing maturity varied across the group, but leaders consistently described a move away from static, periodic pricing towards more responsive, margin-aware models.
The shift is not simply about changing prices more often. It is about understanding when prices should change, why they should change, and how those changes affect customers, contracts and commercial teams.

Several contributors felt their organisations had made progress, but that progress had often developed in separate areas. Web pricing, customer agreements and spot quotes may all be managed differently, creating a challenge when teams need a consistent view of price.

“We have very different ways of working, processes and systems. And none of those talk to each other, which is a constant frustration.”
[Andrew Bedford, Farnell Global]

This reflects a wider maturity challenge: pricing activity may exist across the organisation, but it is not always connected enough to support faster decisions.

#1 Static Pricing to Margin Agility

FRAGMENTED SYSTEMS, FRAGMENTED DECISIONS

Fragmented pricing systems can make it harder to manage change consistently. A price update in one area may affect another, particularly when public prices, customer agreements and negotiated discounts are connected in practice but managed through different processes.

For businesses operating across countries, channels and customer segments, this adds complexity. Different customer types may have different levels of willingness to pay, but managing those differences becomes more difficult when systems and processes are not joined up.

"Over half of pricing leaders say their ability to adjust prices quickly is held back by data shortfalls, a lack of cohesive pricing strategy, and inadequate pricing tools"
[Deloitte, 2025]

The group also recognised that many organisations are not at the start of their pricing journey. Instead, pricing capability has often grown incrementally, with separate tools solving specific problems.

In revenue terms, the issue is not only setting the price. It is the connection between pricing, quoting, contracting and managing the commercial outcome.

#1 Static Pricing to Margin Agility

THE VALUE-BASED PRICING GAP

Many leaders agreed that value-based pricing is the direction of travel. However, the discussion also showed that organisations may not yet be fully equipped to deliver it consistently.

In practice, pricing often remains a mix of cost-plus logic, competitor benchmarking and negotiated discounts. Competitor benchmarking can help teams stay close to the market, but it can also make it harder to defend value where the organisation offers greater certainty, service or availability.

"I don't think as an organisation we're equipped, structured and ready to really do value-based pricing and selling. So we end up very fragmented."

[Andrew Bedford, Farnell Global]

The group also discussed the role of buyer behaviour. Suppliers may want to move towards value-based or outcome-based models, but customers may continue to buy through a cost-reduction lens.

"Value-based pricing is definitely where it's going, but it's not just our organisation that's immature. It's the buyers that are immature in how they adopt value-based pricing."

[Paul Archer, Envision Pharma]

This suggests value-based pricing requires more than internal pricing capability. It also requires clearer evidence of value in the customer conversation.

#1 Static Pricing to Margin Agility

COST VISIBILITY IS THE FOUNDATION OF PRICING POWER

Advanced pricing does not replace commercial fundamentals. Before organisations move towards AI-enabled or dynamic pricing, they need clear visibility of cost drivers, contract exposure and margin risk.

This is particularly important in sectors exposed to long contracts, changing input costs and shifting demand. A pricing decision made at the start of a deal can shape profitability for years.

"If you make a wrong decision at the front end, you are then going to live with that for a number of years."

[Nick Keast, Goodridge]

Cost volatility is now a recurring pricing issue. Tariffs, currency movements, raw materials, energy prices, supply disruption and customer demand can all affect margin.

Several contributors suggested that finance and pricing teams need to be involved earlier in the sales cycle, particularly when modelling escalation clauses, floors, ceilings and volume assumptions.

"Forget about fancy AI tools until you have properly understood your cost drivers."

[Nick Keast, Goodridge]

#2 Pricing Intelligence to Commercial Confidence

DYNAMIC PRICING NEEDS CONTEXT

Dynamic pricing was recognised as an opportunity, but not as a universal answer. Leaders were clear that agility does not mean every price should move constantly.

In some channels, customers may expect prices to change. In others, price stability is part of the value proposition. Strategic customers may value certainty, predictability and trust as much as price optimisation.

"A big value sell as part of our proposition, as literally a middleman, is actually holding price stability. A lot of our customers value that from a distributor."
[Andrew Bedford, Farnell Global]

The opportunity is therefore not dynamic pricing everywhere. It is more contextual pricing: understanding which customers, products, channels and contract types benefit from agility, and which require stability.

As markets continue to change more quickly, pricing is increasingly on the agenda for businesses - 86% of CFOs expect pricing to become more important to their organisation's performance over the next year [Deloitte, 2026].

#2 Pricing Intelligence to Commercial Confidence

SPEED MATTERS WHEN COSTS MOVE

When costs move quickly, slow pricing processes can affect margin. Leaders recognised that mature pricing operations need to respond at pace when cost pressures move against the business, while managing customer relationships carefully.

"When there is a lot of movement and volatility, you want to be very, very quick to respond."

[Carl Smith, Conga]

This is where connected systems become important. If pricing logic, customer agreements, quotes, approvals and contracts are managed separately, organisations may know what they need to do but still struggle to act quickly.

EY's 2026 research on margin resilience found that only 10% of companies consistently deliver top-quartile margins. Those organisations shared structural levers including pricing power, operational discipline, recurring revenue and strategic agility.

For our partner, this is where revenue lifecycle management becomes relevant. If pricing, quoting, contracting and execution are connected, pricing changes can become easier to manage, govern and explain.

#2 Pricing Intelligence to Commercial Confidence

AI CAN SUPPORT BETTER PRICING DECISIONS

AI was discussed as an important enabler of pricing agility, particularly where pricing decisions involve many variables.

Deal size, delivery urgency, customer history, channel, product mix, cost movement and competitive context can all shape the right price. AI can help process these variables more consistently, particularly when pricing teams are managing high volumes of transactions.

"Good AI can be looking at all transactions, understand the relationships between the different attributes on a deal and where they're coming into play on every specific transaction to give price guidance."
[Carl Smith, Conga]

McKinsey argues that B2B pricing is moving from human-led processes supported by analytics towards AI-orchestrated systems guided by human oversight. Its research found that agentic AI can support tasks such as market signal synthesis, quote guidance, dynamic price updates, discount management and customer communications.

The discussion did not frame AI as a replacement for commercial judgement. Its value was seen in helping teams move faster, spot patterns and improve the quality of pricing guidance.

#2 Pricing Intelligence to Commercial Confidence

TRUST DETERMINES ADOPTION

One of the strongest themes in the discussion was trust. Sales teams are unlikely to follow a recommended price if they do not understand where it came from.

A tool that simply produces a number may be ignored. A tool that explains the logic behind the number can make the recommendation easier to use in customer conversations.

"If I can see where it comes from, I can trust it a bit more."
[Carl Smith, Conga]

Pricing guidance also needs flexibility. Sales teams need structure, but they also need room to respond to the reality of negotiations.

A pricing envelope, with a floor, target and expert price, was seen as more practical than a single fixed recommendation. It gives sales teams room to manoeuvre while still supporting pricing discipline.

"At least sales feel like they've got some control. They're not just being told a number, which I think would be a huge mistake."
[Carl Smith, Conga]

The value of pricing technology depends on adoption. Guidance needs to be trusted, understood and usable at the point of negotiation.

#2 Pricing Intelligence to Commercial Confidence

AI CAN STRENGTHEN THE CUSTOMER CONVERSATION

Beyond setting the price, leaders discussed how AI can help teams explain and defend pricing decisions. This is especially relevant in global markets where local conditions, customer expectations and competitive dynamics vary.

Several contributors saw AI's role in benchmarking, market intelligence and pricing justification. In global telecoms, for example, pricing teams need to understand how different markets are behaving and how customers' expectations differ across regions.

"AI can help with the benchmarking, because you need to have competitive benchmarking in your market."

[Ozlem Ozturk Saglikova, Nokia]

AI can also help move pricing conversations from assertion to evidence. By bringing together cost changes, competitive benchmarks, historical transactions, customer context and market signals, teams can give customers a clearer rationale for price movement.

Global organisations face an additional challenge: consistency. Pricing teams operating across markets need timely and aligned guidance.

"The global pricing is also important. We need to make sure that all of these things are being given at the same time to the rest of the pricing teams."

[Ozlem Ozturk Saglikova, Nokia]

#3 Barriers to Overcome

DATA, SYSTEMS AND READINESS

Data was one of the clearest barriers identified across the discussion. Leaders recognised that better pricing depends on better information, but many organisations still work with fragmented systems, inconsistent inputs and incomplete visibility.

McKinsey's 2026 research on B2B pricing found that more than 50% of respondents cited data quality, data availability and integration complexity as common barriers to realising the potential of AI in pricing **[McKinsey, 2026].**

Several leaders made the same point in practical terms. If the data going into pricing systems is poor, the output will not be trusted.

Poor data does not only affect pricing accuracy. It affects adoption. If sales teams do not believe the guidance, they are less likely to use it.

Data quality is therefore not only a technical issue. It is a commercial enablement issue.

"You can use whatever tools you want, but if it's garbage in, you are going to get garbage out."
[Nick Keast, Goodridge]

"You need to develop the information that's going to give salespeople the confidence to sell."
[Jon Poley, Exertis]

#3 Barriers to Overcome

DO NOT WAIT FOR PERFECT DATA

While data quality matters, several contributors warned against waiting for enterprise-wide data perfection before making progress.

Pricing transformation can stall when organisations try to solve every data problem before moving forward. Instead, priority use cases can help determine which data work matters most.

If the priority is quote guidance, focus on the data needed for quote guidance. If the priority is discount governance, focus on the data needed for discount governance. This creates momentum without requiring a full enterprise data transformation first.

"Let your AI use cases drive which data work you need to do, as opposed to waiting for your enterprise data work to complete, because it will never complete."

[Marcus Robbins, Fujitsu]

The group also recognised that organisations need enough data quality to get started, but not perfect data.

"It is not about waiting for perfect data. There is a minimum level you've got to pass."

[Carl Smith, Conga]

This creates a more practical roadmap: start with clear pricing goals, test the available data, then build capability around priority use cases.

#3 Barriers to Overcome

SALES ADOPTION AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Even with better data and better tools, pricing transformation depends on behaviour change.

Several leaders described a gap between what pricing systems can recommend and what sales teams are prepared to sell. Some salespeople may still feel pressure to match or beat a competitor's price, even when the business provides additional value, service or certainty.

"You could have the best tool in the world, but if it's going to give them guidance prices they won't sell, you're kind of wasting your money."

[Andrew Bedford, Farnell Global]

A pricing platform can identify margin opportunities, recommend stronger price points and improve governance. But if sales teams continue to discount by default, the business may not capture the value.

"If someone gave me a cheque now to do the best tools, we wouldn't get the full benefit because it's not how we work."

[Andrew Bedford, Farnell Global]

Several leaders also highlighted the pressure sales teams face in live customer conversations. Even when the value proposition is clear, holding price can be difficult when a customer threatens to walk away.

"At the point of sale, it's very different emotionally to hold to the value-based pricing and the value that you add."

[Jon Poley, Exertis]

#3 Barriers to Overcome

REDESIGNING WORK AROUND AI

The final barrier was organisational design. Several contributors felt AI-enabled pricing will only create value if organisations rethink how commercial work is done.

EY's 2026 CEO Outlook argues that the focus on AI is moving from adoption to measurable value, with leaders under pressure to connect AI investment to financial performance, redesigned workflows and business outcomes.

The group made a similar point. AI should not simply be added to existing workflows. If teams keep working in the same way, the organisation may see limited value from new technology.

"It's a person and work conversation, it's not a technology conversation."

[Marcus Robbins, Fujitsu]

One participant compared AI adoption to electrification. The productivity gains from electricity came when organisations redesigned work around the new capability, not when they simply replaced one power source with another.

"You're going to see the same phenomena occurring in AI now. It's when you change your work, you get different outcomes. If you don't change your work, you get the same."

[Marcus Robbins, Fujitsu]

As AI supports benchmarking, market signals and price recommendations, commercial roles may evolve towards interpretation, governance and customer-facing application.

Conclusion

Pricing is entering a new era defined by volatility, speed and commercial accountability. Across the discussion, leaders recognised that pricing is no longer just a periodic review exercise. It is becoming a capability that affects how organisations protect margin, respond to disruption and maintain customer trust.

AI, automation and connected pricing systems can help organisations move faster, benchmark more effectively and provide stronger guidance to sales teams. McKinsey's 2026 research shows that 65% to 85% of organisations expect to adopt generative or agentic AI in pricing within one to three years.

However, the discussion also showed that technology alone is not enough. Organisations still need connected systems, reliable data, clear ownership and sales teams that trust the guidance they are given.

The businesses that make the most progress will be those that can turn pricing intelligence into usable commercial guidance, then equip their teams to act on it.

Pricing is one of the most powerful levers in business performance. In 2026, the advantage will sit with organisations that can explain, defend and adapt price before margin is lost.

Navigating a New Era of Pricing

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