

FROST & SULLIVAN
BEST PRACTICES



2026

GLOBAL TARIFF
MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

COMPANY OF THE YEAR

 **Aankhen Inc.**

Best Practices Criteria for World-class Performance

Frost & Sullivan applies a rigorous analytical process to evaluate multiple nominees for each recognition category before determining the final recognition recipient. The process involves a detailed evaluation of best practices criteria across two dimensions for each nominated company. Aankhen excels in many of the criteria in the tariff management solutions space.

RECOGNITION CRITERIA	
<i>Visionary Innovation & Performance</i>	<i>Customer Impact</i>
Addressing Unmet Needs	Price/Performance Value
Visionary Scenarios Through Megatrends	Customer Purchase Experience
Leadership Focus	Customer Ownership Experience
Best Practices Implementation	Customer Service Experience
Financial Performance	Brand Equity

The Transformation of the Tariff Management Solutions Industry

Global supply chains are under unprecedented strain as tariff regimes and trade disruptions reshape the economics of sourcing and manufacturing. Traditional systems, built for backward-looking accounting and siloed processes, cannot keep pace with the volatility and complexity of today’s environment. Decisions that determine margin and competitiveness are often based on 90 to 120-day-old financial data, leaving enterprises blind to the real cost implications of tariffs until it is too late. Existing planning tools compound the problem by relying on inaccurate stock keeping units (SKU)-level cost inputs, creating cascading inefficiencies across procurement, logistics, and inventory management.

The challenge is structural: tariffs are not merely a supply chain issue, they are a financial problem with global ripple effects on capital flows, cost structures, and growth strategies. Companies attempting to mitigate tariff impact face SKU proliferation, multi-origin sourcing, and fragmented visibility, all while operating in systems designed for human speed rather than digital speed. In this context, the industry urgently needs solutions that deliver forward-looking, computable, and verifiable financial facts, automate execution across functions, and compress the time between insight and action. Without this shift, enterprises risk eroding margins, misallocating resources, and losing competitive advantage in a tariff-driven world.

Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Silicon Valley, California, Aankhen is redefining global supply chain management through its pioneering financial supply chain solutions. By delivering forward-looking, computable, repeatable, and verifiable financial facts and deploying digital assistants that execute work autonomously, the company enables enterprises to make decisions at digital speed, mitigate tariff impacts, and transform cost centers into margin drivers. With a proven track record of audit-ready execution, global deployments, and outcome-based engagement models, Aankhen sets the benchmark for innovation, resilience, and measurable customer value in a tariff-driven world.

The Financial Supply Chain Optimized with Relevant, Updated Information

Aankhen reframes supply chains by making the financial supply chain explicit and operable alongside the physical and information supply chains, a reality most enterprises have not systematized. The company's fiChains counters the reliance on outdated data with forward-looking, computable, repeatable, and verifiable financial facts at SKU level, enabling decisions at digital speed rather than human cadence. The result is price versus performance value on first use, with the shortest path to information and minimal training demanded of the client's teams.

The company's digital assistants (DA), (fiDA for finance, procDA for procurement, logiDA for logistics, iDA

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**- Karthik Sundaram
Research Director, GOA**

for information) do the work rather than merely deliver insights. They perform tasks that otherwise stall in human-in-the-loop workflows, updating systems, enforcing negotiated prices, and propagating those prices to the next unit drawn on any assembly line globally. This system-of-record discipline reduces corruption vectors and establishes immutability for financial decisions, capabilities legacy enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions cannot guarantee. As a result, the company's DAs improve operational efficiency by replacing fragmented, manual steps with autonomous execution.

Aankhen's value is most visible where the pain is undeniable: tariffs. Its fiChains solution calculates tariff financial impacts for future periods, quantifies optionality to recover or compensate via growth, and surfaces measurable savings opportunities. Financial supply chain visibility from the executive level to the SKU, consistently aligns operations meetings across geographies, accelerating decision cycles. Clients realize over ten times productivity by offloading 'busy work' to DAs and compressing time-to-value through outcomes that are computable and auditable. With deployments already battle-tested, including serving as the price execution system of record for \$35 billion in direct materials at a global supply chain leader, the company substantiates its claims through measurable metrics such as time to compute impact, time to decision, time to implement change, and time to recover.

Beyond Software: Outcome-Paid Digital Employees at Scale

Aankhen anticipates and operationalizes several converging macro shifts. First, the information technology stack is evolving from systems and applications toward outcome-based digital employees: DAs that are paid for measurable, financial results rather than for automating legacy processes. This reorientation aligns incentives with the commonly accepted CEO’s rule-of-40 lens (e.g., growth plus margin) and moves software ‘behind the glass,’ letting assistants act so people can focus on relationship, risk, and strategy.

Secondly, forward-looking finance is replacing backward accounting as the basis for executive decisions.

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The tariff cycle crystallizes this necessity: supply chains plan for future weeks and months, yet many boardroom decisions still reference past quarters. Aankhen’s financial supply chain solutions make the future quantifiable, replacing averaged historical costs with current, negotiated, and immutable prices and pre-computed impacts across scenarios, including disruptions and tariff changes.

Thirdly, geopolitical and commercial realities proliferate SKU variants for identical parts sourced from different countries, each with distinct tariff and logistics consequences. The complexity is untenable for human processing. Aankhen’s DAs scale this burden by executing continuously across functions, maintaining verifiable chains of custody for financial

decisions and ensuring consistent visibility from the executive suite to factory floors. Dashboards give way to actioning assistants, allowing them to go beyond merely seeing and discussing data but deciding and implementing with audited traceability.

Finally, Aankhen’s ecosystem approach underscores a pragmatic path to scale. The company partners with ThroughPut.ai for inventory optimization, grounded in forward-looking financial supply chain facts that fix the biggest flaw in planning systems (inaccurate financial inputs). This partnership empowers Aankhen to build a stack of missing links rather than attempting to rip and replace the thousands of applications in an enterprise. The vision is expansive and executable: construct the financial supply chain layer that the market lacks, attach it to the physical and information layers, and let DAs deliver outcomes at digital speed. This all-encompassing strategy solidifies the company’s thought and technology leadership, marking it as a true transformational player across supply chain and logistics applications.

Audit-Tight Execution through Immutability and Global Price Propagation

Aankhen demonstrates leadership by embedding codified best practices into DAs across industries, allowing clients to adopt a proven operating model from day one. The company's implementation stance rejects automation of broken processes; instead, it eliminates unnecessary steps outright, and where elimination is not possible, it automates and outsources with DA governance that defines work breakdown structure and RACI/DACI¹ boundaries between human roles and autonomous tasks.

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Aankhen also operationalizes tariff playbooks with pre-computing impacts, compensating through growth strategies, and accelerating time-to-decision, time-to-implement, and time-to-recover from disruptions. These routines embody best practices in resilience and agility. Coupled with operational security levels proven in mission-critical contexts (e.g., real-time alerting in theft scenarios and rapid incident detection without installing client-side software) the company establishes readiness for environments where latency and vulnerability are unacceptable.

Aankhen's leadership position is further reinforced in partner choices that advance customer results. By collaborating with UNIFY to scale deployments and by fixing planning inputs (accurate forward costs) for tools like ThroughPut.ai, the company improves adjacent systems without claiming to replace them wholesale, demonstrating a disciplined focus on missing links. The mark of best-practice leadership here is not novelty for its own sake but the consistent delivery of audited, outcome-level improvements clients can measure and trust.

Scalability and Value from Implementation

Aankhen structures the customer experience around outcomes, not effort. Clients encounter the shortest path to information and value upon first use, with DAs subtracting work rather than adding it. Minimal training reflects an interface philosophy modeled on consumer-grade simplicity: let assistants act, provide the same forward-looking financial supply chain facts to every operations meeting across regions, and allow teams to concentrate on judgment calls where subjective expertise matters most.

Aankhen's commercial model advances this experience by aiming to pay digital assistants for financial outcomes, mirroring how enterprises compensate people for results rather than tool usage. This shift aligns incentives and raises purchase confidence: customers are not asked to fund automation of legacy steps but to invest in audited improvements to margin, cost, and agility. The service ethos targets zero

¹ Responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed versus driver, approver, contributor, informed

trouble tickets by deploying assistants that update systems, enforce immutability, and propagate change without bottlenecks, reducing friction from onboarding through ongoing service.

2025 functioned as Aankhen's validation year, specifically for its tariff-focused solution. With early traction secured, the company is preparing to spin fiChains into a separate legal entity in 2026, signaling confidence in market demand and scale readiness. Aankhen's performance metrics are direct and comprehensible: time to compute tariff impact, time to decision, time to implement change, and time to recover designed to expose and compress the latency between insight and execution.

By making finance forward-looking, execution agentic, and service outcome-based, Aankhen converts tariff-era complexity into measurable advantage, highlighting its wide-scale value and future transformative impact potential.

Conclusion

Aankhen delivers what the market demonstrably lacks: an audited, forward-looking financial supply chain that converts tariff-era complexity into measurable advantage by putting computable, repeatable, verifiable facts and digital assistants that do the work at the center of decisions. The company solves the core unmet need, replacing 90 to 120-day lagging data with immutable, stock keeping units (SKU)-level prices and impacts that propagate in near real time to any assembly line. Its digital assistants empower a shift from information technology stacks and dashboards to outcome-paid digital employees, scaling continuously across functions as SKUs and sourcing geographies proliferate. Aankhen operationalizes best practices including codified playbooks that compress time to compute, decide, implement, and recover, with governance that eliminates broken processes instead of automating them. Finally, it delivers a superior customer experience by enabling the shortest path to information, minimal training, empowering a zero-trouble-ticket ambition. The net effect of its strategic value is a company that reduces latency between seeing and acting, turns cost centers into reliable contributors to margin, and sets an execution standard competitors have not matched.

Aankhen earns Frost & Sullivan's 2026 global Company of the Year Recognition for its strong overall performance in the tariff management solutions industry.

What You Need to Know about the Company of the Year Recognition

Frost & Sullivan's Company of the Year Recognition is its top honor and recognizes the market participant that exemplifies visionary innovation, market-leading performance, and unmatched customer care.

Best Practices Recognition Analysis

For the Company of the Year Recognition, Frost & Sullivan analysts independently evaluated the criteria listed below.

Visionary Innovation & Performance

Addressing Unmet Needs: Customers' unmet or under-served needs are unearthed and addressed to create growth opportunities across the entire value chain

Visionary Scenarios Through Megatrends: Long-range scenarios are incorporated into the innovation strategy by leveraging mega trends and cutting-edge technologies, thereby accelerating the transformational growth journey

Leadership Focus: The company focuses on building a leadership position in core markets to create stiff barriers to entry for new competitors and enhance its future growth potential

Best Practices Implementation: Best-in-class implementation is characterized by processes, tools, or activities that generate consistent, repeatable, and scalable success

Financial Performance: Strong overall business performance is achieved by striking the optimal balance between investing in revenue growth and maximizing operating margin

Customer Impact

Price/Performance Value: Products or services offer the best ROI and superior value compared to similar market offerings

Customer Purchase Experience: Purchase experience with minimal friction and high transparency assures customers that they are buying the optimal solution to address both their needs and constraints

Customer Ownership Excellence: Products and solutions evolve continuously in sync with the customers' own growth journeys, engendering pride of ownership and enhanced customer experience

Customer Service Experience: Customer service is readily accessible and stress-free, and delivered with high quality, high availability, and fast response time

Brand Equity: Customers perceive the brand positively and exhibit high brand loyalty, which is regularly measured and confirmed through a high Net Promoter Score®

Best Practices Recognition Analytics Methodology

Inspire the World to Support True Leaders

This long-term process spans 12 months, beginning with the prioritization of the sector. It involves a rigorous approach that includes comprehensive scanning and analytics to identify key best practice trends. A dedicated team of analysts, advisors, coaches, and experts collaborates closely, ensuring thorough review and input. The goal is to maximize the company’s long-term value by leveraging unique perspectives to support each Best Practice Recognition and identify meaningful transformation and impact.

STEP		VALUE IMPACT	
		WHAT	WHY
1	Opportunity Universe	Identify Sectors with the Greatest Impact on the Global Economy	Value to Economic Development
2	Transformational Model	Analyze Strategic Imperatives That Drive Transformation	Understand and Create a Winning Strategy
3	Ecosystem	Map Critical Value Chains	Comprehensive Community that Shapes the Sector
4	Growth Generator	Data Foundation That Provides Decision Support System	Spark Opportunities and Accelerate Decision-making
5	Growth Opportunities	Identify Opportunities Generated by Companies	Drive the Transformation of the Industry
6	Frost Radar	Benchmark Companies on Future Growth Potential	Identify Most Powerful Companies to Action
7	Best Practices	Identify Companies Achieving Best Practices in All Critical Perspectives	Inspire the World
8	Companies to Action	Tell Your Story to the World (BICEP*)	Ecosystem Community Supporting Future Success

*Board of Directors, Investors, Customers, Employees, Partners

About Frost & Sullivan

Frost & Sullivan is the Growth Pipeline Company™. We power our clients to a future shaped by growth. Our Growth Pipeline as a Service™ provides the CEO and the CEO's growth team with a continuous and rigorous platform of growth opportunities, ensuring long-term success. To achieve positive outcomes, our team leverages over 60 years of experience, coaching organizations of all types and sizes across 6 continents with our proven best practices. To power your Growth Pipeline future, visit Frost & Sullivan at <http://www.frost.com>.

The Growth Pipeline Generator™

Frost & Sullivan's proprietary model to systematically create ongoing growth opportunities and strategies for our clients is fueled by the Innovation Generator™.

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Key Impacts:

- **Growth Pipeline:** Continuous Flow of Growth Opportunities
- **Growth Strategies:** Proven Best Practices
- **Innovation Culture:** Optimized Customer Experience
- **ROI & Margin:** Implementation Excellence
- **Transformational Growth:** Industry Leadership



The Innovation Generator™

Our 6 analytical perspectives are crucial in capturing the broadest range of innovative growth opportunities, most of which occur at the points of these perspectives.

Analytical Perspectives:

- **Megatrend (MT)**
- **Business Model (BM)**
- **Technology (TE)**
- **Industries (IN)**
- **Customer (CU)**
- **Geographies (GE)**

