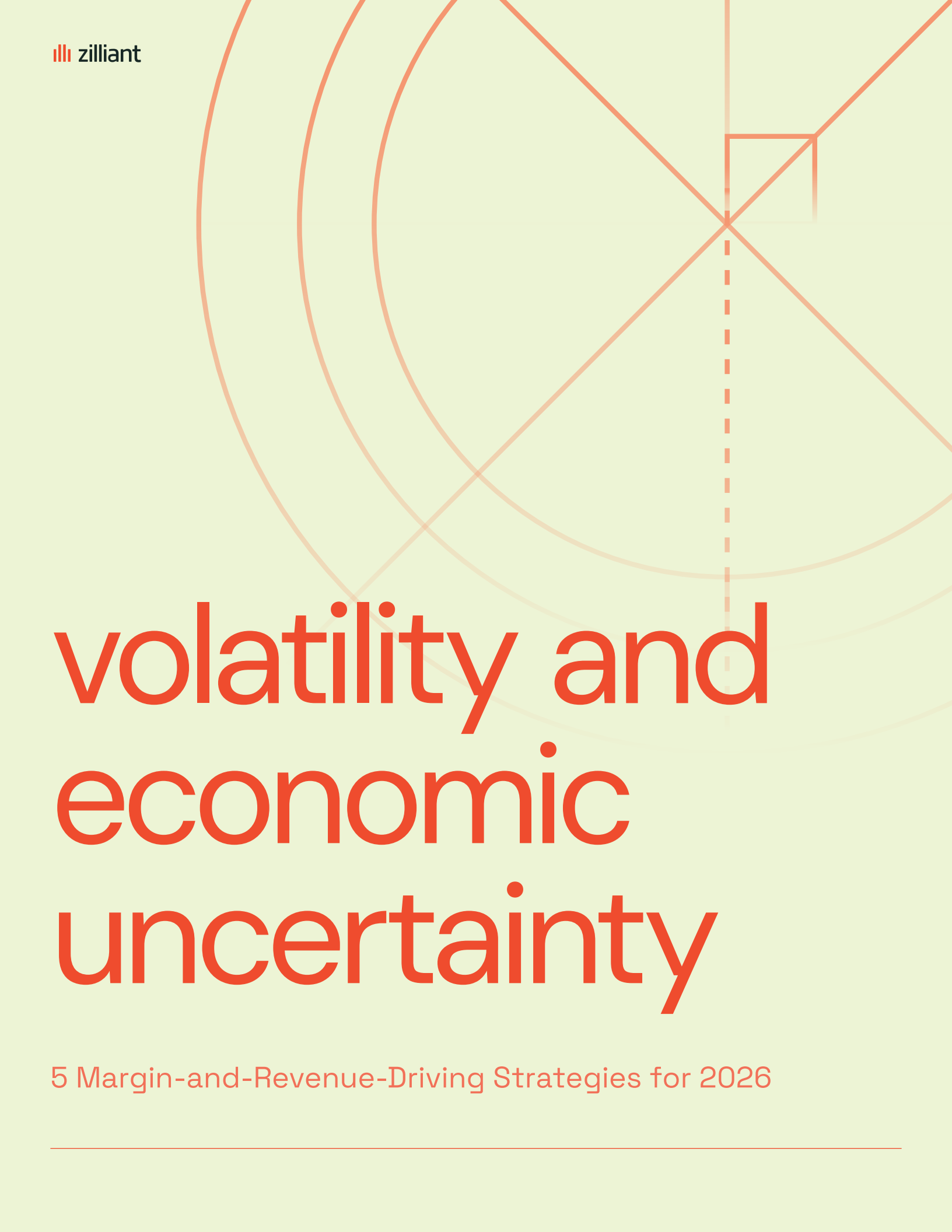


A background pattern of thin, light orange lines. It includes several concentric circles on the left side, a series of intersecting diagonal lines forming a grid-like structure, and a small square with a dashed vertical line extending downwards from its bottom-left corner. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

volatility and economic uncertainty

5 Margin-and-Revenue-Driving Strategies for 2026



introduction

The B2B landscape is a far different place than it was just 5 years ago. In hindsight, the pre-COVID economy was relatively well-behaved in the sense that challenging economic factors usually hit one at a time, and the degree of change in those factors were within normal historic ranges. Inflation up by 2% this year? No problem – we know what to do. By contrast, the new world is shaping up quite differently – multiple factors hit in rapid succession if not simultaneously, and each in the extreme. The past few years have been packed with all the following disruptions:

- 01 Annual inflation peaking near 10%, a level not seen since the early 1980's**
- 02 Intense supply chain shocks on a global scale which endured for multiple years**
- 03 Global demand dropping sharply during the early days of COVID then surging 15% above normal levels mid-COVID**
- 04 Interest Rates rising rapidly from near zero to multi-decade highs above 5%**
- 05 Trade tariffs doubling or tripling overnight as new long-term deals are negotiated**

The combined effects on input costs including raw materials, energy, and labor, as well as overall customer demand and sensitivity to price remain dramatic. Successful B2B companies can't simply try to ride out these tough times



52%

B2B companies surveyed need at least 30-60 days to implement a price change.

58%

These same companies realize less than half of their intended price increase.

At a time when the profitability of the business is under greatest attack, this combination of slow and ultimately ineffective price changes is devastating.

Read Zilliant's State of Pricing Technology Report

with old-school tactics. The world will not return to 'normal'.

A landscape of volatility and economic uncertainty is the new normal, and those who want to thrive in it must embrace this truth and adapt themselves to it.

While volatility and economic uncertainty may feel unpredictable and overwhelming, they can be addressed directly through strategic action. The companies that endure and even thrive during turbulent times are those that recognize pricing as one of the most powerful levers available to navigate disruption.

Why pricing? Pricing is uniquely positioned at the intersection of costs, customer behavior, and competitive dynamics, making it a vital tool to counteract inflationary pressures, supply chain shocks, and shifting demand. And unlike external forces that are largely beyond a company's influence, pricing is an internal capability that is fully under your control — one that, when managed strategically, can counterbalance uncertainty, protect profitability, and guide the business toward firmer ground.

B2B companies who are not strategy-minded and-data-driven in their pricing approach find themselves at a great disadvantage. For example, many watch as their input costs rise quicker than their ability to take prices up with customers. The average B2B company has struggled to keep up with cost changes even before this shift, and most are completely overwhelmed in the new era.



responding to pricing triggers

The frequency and magnitude of relevant “pricing triggers” — external events that cause a B2B company to execute price changes — have increased rapidly in recent years. In times of market volatility, as the volume and velocity of pricing triggers increase, the inefficiencies in a company’s pricing process are exposed and the cumulative drag on the business growth.

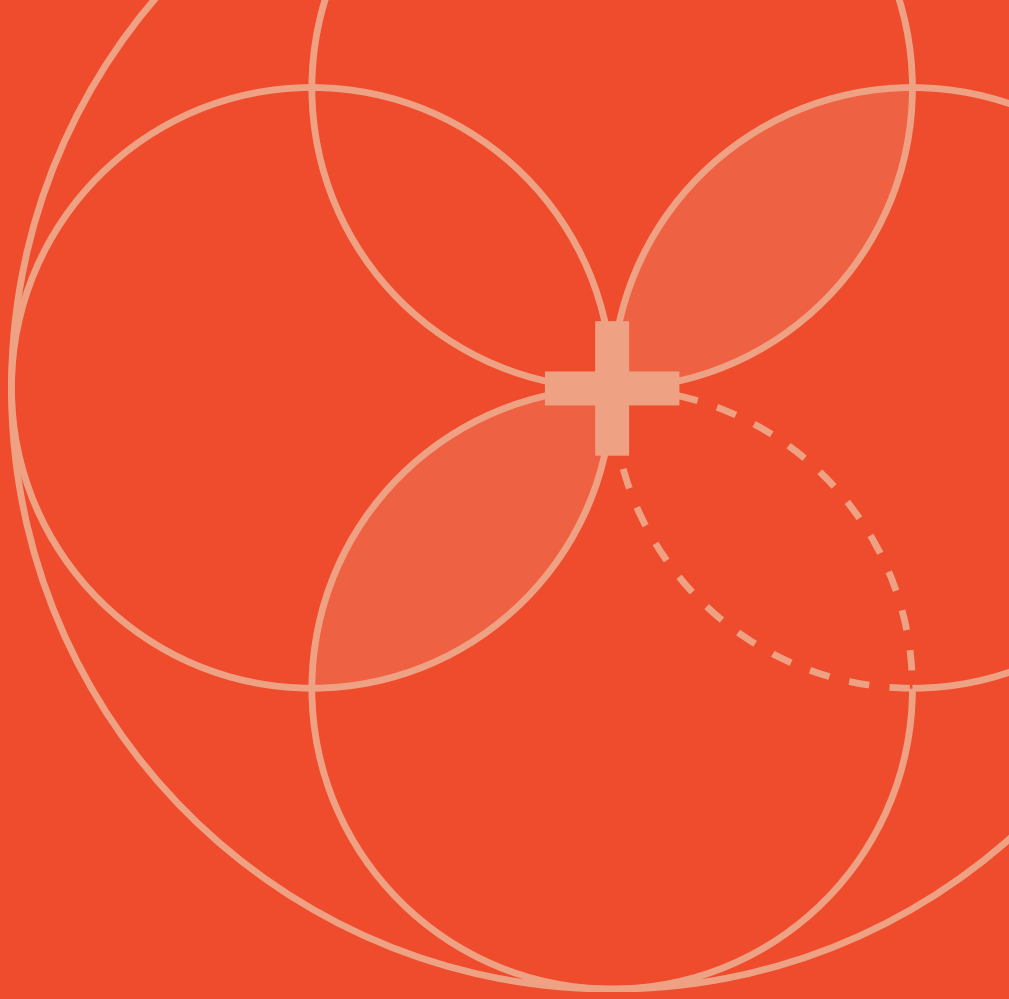


The practice of setting and updating pricing in B2B remains largely an intuition-led process, initiated as an after-the-fact reaction to various triggers and handled manually using spreadsheets and email. When commodity prices like steel increase, or if the economy begins to soften and recession becomes a reality, or when the next natural disaster or cyberattack disrupts critical supply lines, leaders and laggards will be differentiated by how quickly and strategically they are able to adjust pricing.

Consider this perspective from a 20-plus year veteran of B2B pricing

“Reactive pricing strategies are slow, at least by the standards of the fast-paced digital world we now live in,” said Zilliant Chief Value Officer Stephan Liozu. “By the time the decision is made to change prices, manually set the price lists, matrices, and customer agreements, brief the sales reps and inform customers, the market has already changed again.”

Manual tools severely limit a pricing team that is trying to execute new pricing, an executive team deploying new strategies, a sales team that must act on the new strategies, and customers who expect rational and consistent pricing, sometimes regardless of macroeconomic factors.



**predicting what's
next is impossible.
preparing for it is not.**

*Read on to learn how a company's ability to update prices
and sales guidance will be essential to their success
in times of volatility and economic uncertainty.*



01

craft scenario plans and contingency playbooks

For Example

A manufacturing company might model three scenarios for each of their 5 brands:

Base Case

supply chains remain stable, raw material costs rise modestly

Upside Case

tariffs are reduced by half and input costs fall

Downside Case

a new geopolitical conflict disrupts access to key components, driving costs up 25%

In times of volatility, the worst mistake is relying on a single forecast or “best guess” about the future, especially if that forecast assumes the past will repeat itself. Effective organizations invest in scenario planning — developing multiple plausible futures that capture different risks, from sudden tariffs to supply chain bottlenecks or currency swings.

For each scenario, the company explores and develops contingency playbooks — pre-agreed responses such as price adjustments, supplier shifts, or cost containment measures. This reduces decision-making paralysis when shocks hit, while including the perspectives of all key stakeholders. Importantly, companies set thresholds (e.g., when steel prices rise by 15% or when a regulatory policy becomes law) so they know when to move from planning to action.

This type of proactive scenario planning is impossible to do well with Excel and manual methods. After all, if it takes your business weeks or months to build out just one response after the actual circumstances arrive at your door today, how can you possibly explore dozens of potential scenarios ahead of time, and keep doing that month after month to remain prepared? Modern pricing solutions make this possible with less effort than you’re spending on your single-scenario, reactive approach today.



02

build dynamic and agile pricing strategies

Traditional price update cadences — annual list increases or quarterly reviews — are too slow for volatile environments. Instead, companies must treat pricing as a real-time lever of resilience.

Take this example

A distributor faces weekly fluctuations in freight rates. Rather than holding prices static and watching margins erode, the company implements dynamic pricing models that review costs weekly and adjust list prices, discounts, or customer terms accordingly. Sales teams are equipped with differentiated price responses: if fuel costs spike 10%, pass through 70% of that increase to customers in highly competitive markets but 100% in markets with less price sensitivity.

This differentiated price response is made possible by price optimization, a much more powerful alternative to broad-brush price adjustments which leave money on the table for some customers while simultaneously pushing other customers to switch suppliers. Price optimization uses data-driven AI models to account for all the factors that drive price in your market and to measure price elasticity itself. This reveals how price changes — up or down — affect quantity and thus profit and revenue. The capability to set differentiated pricing strategies as a part of each contingency playbook is likely to mark the difference between leaders and laggards.



Price agility also requires solid communication. Customers are more likely to accept frequent adjustments if they expect them and understand the logic. A global chemical supplier, for instance, trained its salesforce to present transparent, data-backed explanations for price changes. By linking adjustments to external indices (like oil or freight costs) and letting customers know to expect adjustments as conditions change, they preserved trust even while raising prices.



03

update customer-specific price agreements

When was the last time your company conducted a thorough analysis of customer price agreements and their profitability? The harsh reality is that while upwards of 50% of a company's revenue may be transacted on customer price agreements, it's difficult to nearly impossible to understand how many agreements exist and whether they are profitable.

Decentralized and disorderly systems are often the culprit. Most companies have hundreds or thousands of price agreements buried in disparate systems such as spreadsheets, in-house solutions, ERP systems, and even email. Making matters worse, it's all too common that agreements are set up with fixed net prices which lack expiration dates, creating a dangerous "set it and forget it" conundrum where price is fully disconnected from what's happening in the market. Significant margin loss is the inevitable result.

Rather than letting this important price type continue to be a hidden source of margin leakage, equip sales reps with a centralized location to set and manage customer price agreements with ease. Go a step further and equip your pricing and commercials teams to perform mass updates to the entire book of price agreements as circumstances change. This can be done by giving them tailored price guidance and a price scoring mechanism to ensure price agreements stay in a healthy margin range, even with thousands of agreement lines.



04

Defend off competitive intrusion and sell more effectively

In fast-changing environments, real-time intelligence is a competitive edge. Beyond price moves, it is also critical to equip sales teams to be more effective in managing their time and cultivating their portfolio to identify and execute high-value revenue opportunities. In unstable times, competition for each dollar is fierce. Companies that invest in revenue intelligence solutions will have a significant advantage.

Start by looking objectively at your current sales motions. Determine if you have enough of a handle on your customer and transaction data to:

- 01 Identify wallet share growth opportunities**
- 02 Detect and recover lost purchase volume**
- 03 Win back customers**
- 04 Monitor contract volume compliance**
- 05 Recommend substitute products**
- 06 Find the best customers to sell excess inventory when supply chain challenges hit**

Beyond identification, you also need mechanisms in place to programmatically deliver insights such as these to the sales



reps who are ultimately responsible for turning opportunities into orders. Much like their counterparts in pricing, most B2B sales operations teams lean on spreadsheets, emails, all-hands calls, and other manual forms of communication. Automation and integration are the keys to unlocking this potential to keep and grow your existing business.

To achieve this, most businesses need to invest in revenue intelligence software. Doing so brings twofold benefits. First, your transactional data and the execution systems that generate it (e.g. CRM, CPQ, eCommerce) begin to deliver new value to your business, increasing the effective ROI of these prior investments. Second, the identified revenue opportunities can be scoped, filtered, and published directly to sales reps within their daily toolsets, complete with a talk track for approaching customers and closed loop tracking and reporting for sales ops and management.

Businesses who take this proactive approach see an increase in same-customer revenue of 5–15% without adding additional headcount to the sales team.



05

launch cross-functional coordination and leadership

Volatility doesn't just challenge systems — it exposes organizational silos. Too often, supply chain, finance, pricing, and sales operate independently, each making decisions without a coordinated commercial response.

The most resilient companies designate cross-functional crisis response teams.

For instance, a global industrial supplier created a “Resilience Taskforce” that brought together procurement, pricing, sales, and finance leaders. When raw material tariffs were announced, the team aligned immediately: procurement assessed sourcing alternatives, pricing modeled various pass-through strategies, finance evaluated cash flow exposure, and sales developed customer communication scripts. Within 72 hours, they had a coherent plan for multiple contingencies, while competitors were still scrambling.

The Pricing team can play a central leadership role in bringing the business together.

Because it sits at the intersection of cost, customer, and margin, pricing teams are uniquely positioned to integrate information across functions and guide commercial response planning. By stepping into this role, they shift from a back-office support function to a strategic leadership seat at the table, ensuring decisions are made quickly, consistently, and with customer trust in mind.



the kicker: you need to be surgical and speedy

Time is of the essence. Costs change, interest rates move, and supply chain challenges are ever present. Companies can't afford to be slow or wrong in their price response. The manual tools that make up the status quo for most B2B organizations have become active impediments to executing effective margin- and revenue-increasing strategies.

Companies that utilize modern price and revenue optimization software have discovered that it is possible to be surgical and speedy, at scale.

conclusion

The reality of volatility and economic uncertainty is not going away. Trade wars, inflation, supply disruptions, and geopolitical shocks will remain features of the global economy. Companies that thrive will be those that prepare with foresight, act with agility, and lead with clarity.

Leading companies are making pricing and sales effectiveness their new superpower for business resiliency, allowing them to act and react quickly when market triggers cause prices to move or necessitate the sales team to pivot focus.

By embedding scenario planning, dynamic pricing, agreement price reviews, competitive intrusion prevention, and cross-functional coordination, organizations can not only weather volatility and economic uncertainty but also turn it into their competitive advantage.

Contact Zilliant to learn more about how Zilliant makes pricing your power in any market condition.