Navigating the Oracle Advertising and Customer Experience Platform

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Oracle Advertising and Customer Experience provides a comprehensive unified platform for marketing, sales, customer service, digital experience and digital commerce. Application leaders assessing this platform should use this research as a guide for understanding its capabilities.

Overview

Key Findings

- Organizations realize that buying journeys are dynamic and difficult to map to internal support processes due to siloed functions and disconnected applications but want to be able to do this seamlessly.

- Creating a holistic experience for customers will span multiple functional areas such as marketing, advertising, sales, customer service, digital experience and digital commerce.

- A personalized customer experience requires integration of technology and capabilities for buying that must maintain continuity across channels, providing a seamless experience for the customer.

Recommendations

Applications and software engineering leaders supporting digital commerce and CRM sales technologies should mitigate risk by taking these steps:

- Carefully evaluate the options from the Oracle suite offering by comparing the integrated capabilities against disparate best-of-breed solutions before proceeding.
Strategic Planning Assumption

By 2024, organizations with IT teams that understand the needs of customers by benchmarking and tracking improvement will outperform other organizations’ customer experience metrics by 20%.

Introduction

The concept of a “one-stop shop” customer experience (CX) sounds tempting. In reality, large and mature organizations are going to have many applications and will have to deal with multiple vendors. But, how much can using one vendor do to mitigate that risk? It’s not just a question of the number of applications, but also their interconnectivity in dealing with a comprehensive technology stack for CX.

Application leaders must avoid deploying a disconnected “bucket of products,” each of which fulfills specific needs. Creating a seamless experience for both employees and customers, while difficult, will yield better business outcomes. It is a journey of continuous improvement. Without an aggregated or consolidated view of the customer or buyer, organizations are less capable of designing and driving engagements that provide the best customer experience possible, resulting in better, long-lasting value.

Oracle has reorganized its product groupings, and buyers can find CX under the umbrella of Oracle Advertising and Customer Experience. It includes advertising, marketing, sales, service, industry solutions, CX Cloud platform, DXP, Unity CDP, content management, digital assistant, AI and digital commerce. It’s important to understand the offerings as well as how Oracle brings them all together under one umbrella to properly plan your strategy. For example, Oracle just announced capabilities for Fusion Marketing (its Marketing 2.0) that automate the campaign creation, generation, qualification and assignment processes. Oracle uses its Redwood UX to automate what have been typically time-consuming manual tasks. It plans to continue to span the concept across to sales in the next several months.

- Weigh the Oracle offering architecturally to meet the needs of your organization by scoring Oracle against best-of-breed solutions for interoperability.

- Seek a flexible solution by reviewing capabilities for orchestrating the information captured and coordinating messaging across major functional areas such as advertising, marketing, sales, customer service and support, digital experience platform, and digital commerce.
Oracle Advertising and Customer Experience offers a connected suite of applications that goes beyond traditional CRM to help you create, manage, serve and nurture lasting customer relationships. Build a complete view of your customer and their every interaction — no matter how, when, where or with whom they engage. Empower your entire business to deliver exceptional customer experiences — from acquisition to retention — and everything in between.

— Oracle

In our 2020 martech survey, Gartner saw a shift in preference for an integrated suite approach, with 59% of respondents preferring this approach for marketing technology. For more information, see 2020 Marketing Technology Survey: Cost Pressures Force Martech Optimization and Innovation.

More Gartner clients are asking about best-of-breed versus a suite approach. We find the pendulum swings back and forth over the course of time on this subject. Many organizations are feeling cost pressures across the board. The professional risks of choosing the wrong approach or vendor have increased, making the decision process arduous.

While best-of-breed decisions tend to be made in a siloed approach, the professional risks of sponsoring a suite solution and single-vendor approach are significant.

Still, organizations must use most of the capabilities of a suite's offerings in order to receive the full benefits. To receive the benefits of a single-vendor solution, organizations must have the buy-in of all impacted functions first.
That employees across these functions can engage and utilize the full capabilities of a suite's offerings is critical to receiving these benefits. While it is perfectly fine to begin with two or three applications, the bigger-picture objective is to use all of the applications in combination. That approach will enable you to achieve greater connections and lasting value for your customers. If the applications are not connected, or the data is not combined and aggregated, then the messaging is difficult to coordinate and present to customers. They may receive conflicting messages or messages may not take into account situations happening in other functional areas that would affect their relationship with your organization.

Today, Gartner sees few organizations utilizing the entire stack offered by Oracle. Most often seen in some combination are purchases of HCM, ERP, marketing, services and sales. This presents issues in understanding the customer, where they are in their journey with your organization, and how you can best serve them holistically. Oracle, among other portfolio vendors, is trying to stand out by providing integrated applications via a single platform that connects major functional areas in serving customers across the end-to-end journey.

Figure 1 depicts an overview of Oracle's platform.

**Figure 1. Oracle Advertising and Customer Experience**

![Oracle Advertising and Customer Experience](source: Adapted From Oracle 753110_C)
Analysis

When choosing a SaaS provider, organizations must consider both the product capabilities as well as the interconnectivity, experience and overall price/TCO. In Gartner’s 2020 Future of Applications Survey, respondents were asked to prioritize which factors were most important in selecting a SaaS vendor (see Figure 2). The top five include feature/function capabilities, application security, ease of integration to other applications, quality of user experience and access to capabilities via APIs.

Figure 2. Top Five Capabilities Desired for SaaS Applications

Buyers considering Oracle should evaluate these factors in their overall consideration for a suite solution.
Below is an analysis of each of the following areas of the Oracle Advertising and Customer Experience platform: advertising, marketing, sales, customer service and support, digital experience platform, and digital commerce. Overall, Oracle offers solutions that can stand on their own based on function, or work in concert to provide a better customer experience. Generally, Oracle provides out-of-the-box connectivity between its clouds and the products within them. The most commonly seen use cases from Oracle connect ERP to HCM and sales.

**Advertising**

Oracle has made substantial acquisitions of advertising-related technology companies over the past decade. The rise of new privacy laws and technical restrictions on data collection imposed by Apple and Google have impacted these investments, especially its Data Cloud strategy. This was based on the 2014 acquisition of BlueKai, which consisted of a data management platform and data marketplace largely reliant on third-party cookies, which are being phased out.

Oracle has adapted and evolved its offerings. It has reduced dependencies on soon-to-be-obsolete technologies and is in the process of pivoting to a more future-proof approach to advertising. Nonetheless, uncertainties persist regarding the status of post-cookie workarounds that Oracle is promoting in its suite.

Oracle Advertising offers solutions to target and reach audiences and measure impact. Oracle’s Activation solutions include curated third-party Oracle Audiences, OnRamp data onboarding, and Oracle Contextual Intelligence for filtering of fraud and invalid traffic, ensuring brand safety and suitability, and ad targeting. Underpinning Oracle’s audience data and modeling is its proprietary identity graph, which unifies disparate data sources, connects available identifiers, and enables attribution of sales and conversions.

The Oracle Moat Measurement suite consists of Moat Analytics, Moat Reach and Moat Outcomes. It measures advertising performance across digital channels (including in-game), CTV and linear TV. Analytics provides brand safety, verification and attention metrics. Reach measures deduplicated reach across digital and TV campaigns by audience, channel and program. Outcomes provides in-flight measurement of sales lift and visit lift.

To address advertiser concerns about the monetization of disinformation, Oracle has integrated its advertising solutions with the Global Disinformation Index to prevent ad placement on disinformation sites.
Oracle Moat has seen wide adoption across the ad tech ecosystem. 100% of buy-side ad tech vendors surveyed by Gartner reported integrations with Moat for ad verification and viewability.

Marketing

Oracle sells three marketing automation products: Oracle Responsys Campaign Management, its multichannel marketing hub for B2C marketers, and Oracle Eloqua for B2B organizations. These offerings are integrated with analytics, personalization, advertising, loyalty, commerce, content management, AI and CDP products within the Oracle Marketing suite. These comprise Infinity Behavioral Intelligence for testing optimization and personalization, CrowdTwist Loyalty and Engagement, Unity Customer Data Platform, Oracle Content Management, Oracle Commerce, DataFox Data Management for B2B enrichment, and Oracle Advertising for third-party data enrichment and programmatic advertising activation.

In 2021, Oracle announced Fusion Marketing, a workflow solution that addresses technical complexity in B2B Marketing and Sales. Once teams invest in the new tool, they are able to streamline the handoffs between marketing's demand generation and qualification activities and sales execution to create and close opportunities.

Eloqua also connects to Oracle DataFox for AI-sourced, human-verified account enrichment, and Oracle's Data-as-a-Service offering for updating account and contact profiles with relevant firmographic information. Deeper integrations with its own Oracle Commerce solution — as well as commerce solutions from Adobe, NetSuite, Salesforce and Shopify — will be released by the end of 2021.

Advanced intelligence applications for segmentation, analytics and orchestration apply machine learning to specific business needs to improve targeting response and conversion rates. These help marketers prioritize audiences with the highest growth potential while reducing the risk of oversaturating subscribers. Oracle's Redwood UI continues to expand across marketing suite applications and instances, but is not universally available across the portfolio. Oracle's marketing solutions address the orchestration demands of high-scale, personalized and complex customer journeys, and are suitable for large, diversified enterprise organizations.
Sales

Oracle Sales provides users with a comprehensive solution that includes sales force automation (SFA), sales performance management (SPM), configure price and quote (CPQ), planning, and data intelligence solutions for sales. In the last year, it incorporated its Redwood UX for sellers. This allowed Oracle to provide a UX that is responsive and modern, making seller work easier, and providing a better user experience. This also includes its mobile capabilities, which include adaptive search. It has also added an Oracle Sales Assistant and Microsoft Teams integration to collaborate and take actions.

These capabilities in combination allow buyers to create an experience for customers that is cohesive and functional. Organizations that favor a suite approach will find most integration out of the box between Oracle’s own clouds. Oracle has also created industry solutions for 16 industries including automotive, financial services, high tech, retail and life sciences.

Customer Service and Support

Oracle sells two customer service and support products: Oracle Service (inclusive of Oracle B2C and B2B Service) and Oracle Field Service.

Oracle B2C Service (originating from the vendor’s acquisition of RightNow in 2011) is suited to high volumes of service interactions with a focus on agent productivity. Oracle B2B Service is suited to high-touch service interactions with a focus on collaborative account management. Oracle Service offers a broad level of assisted and self-service capabilities supporting context-driven actions and channel assignments, such as voice, video, chat and digital assistant. Oracle Digital Assistant platform is voice-enabled and supports features such as real-time transcription. The vendor also works with third-party partners to provide additional voice capabilities.

Oracle Field Service (OFS, originating from the vendor’s acquisition of TOA Technologies in 2014) focuses on schedule optimization, forecasting and mobile capabilities. OFS stands out in its handling of appointment-centric field service use cases that require automated optimization of scheduling assignments for technicians with a high number of jobs and scheduling changes per day. Example industries would be B2C cable and satellite dish installers, appliance repair, home healthcare, B2B telecom and utilities with a wide range of reactive service requests. It has also packaged Oracle Cloud Service Logistics with OFS to add capabilities like parts logistics and pro forma invoicing.
Digital Experience Platform

Oracle’s DXP offering is Oracle CX suite, with Oracle Content Management (OCM) at its core.

Oracle CX is deployed mainly for B2C and B2B use cases, and is offered as a mix of PaaS and SaaS cloud options. It has capabilities such as content management, AI, analytics and security. Oracle’s advances in content management are accentuated by modern and intuitive UIs for nontechnical users with the ability to create “pageless experiences.” The UI has improved to provide easier access to a wide range of functionality and a user-friendly experience.

Oracle CX’s REST APIs are used for integrating with adjacent systems, as well as data manipulation. Experience delivery can be done programmatically through REST APIs as well, where Oracle Content Management is used in a headless CMS fashion.

Oracle CX’s collaboration capabilities are limited to CX-driven tasks, such as creation of assets that drive digital experiences, such as websites, portals and mobile apps (for more information, see Defining the Digital Experience Platform). Collaboration for B2E/employee experience scenarios, such as document sharing and knowledge sharing, remains limited. Oracle’s search capability is also strongly focused on tasks that are more suited to B2C than to B2E, for example, visual searches for visually similar images and assets when crafting digital experiences.

Oracle’s DXP is most often used for B2C and B2B use cases, especially when other Oracle products are already part of the existing technology stack. For B2E use cases, collaboration and knowledge sharing capabilities may be limited in more advanced scenarios. Oracle’s product portfolio is extensive and complex, with a focus on the end-to-end CX. Customers may need to invest in multiple components on top of the foundation of Oracle Content to address their DXP requirements. This could potentially result in an expensive investment.
Digital Commerce

Oracle sells two digital commerce products: Oracle Commerce (cloud) and Oracle Commerce (on-premises). The latter is the direct descendant of ATG/Endeca and is still often called ATG by customers. It is deployed on-premises or traditionally hosted. Though Oracle does not focus on selling the on-premises product, there are still clients who require off-cloud solutions. This includes government, finance, healthcare and other (often highly regulated) sectors that have not ironed out the challenges of cloud-hosted data and services.

Oracle Commerce is a SaaS/PaaS hybrid and is only available on its cloud platform. It remains deeply functional, coming near the top of Gartner’s Critical Capabilities rankings year over year. However, the Oracle-only cloud strategy is also a hindrance to growth as prospects may be opinionated about this aspect. Oracle struggles to execute in the commerce market against faster-growing competition. Its hybrid cloud architecture, where the core platform is single-tenant, but the business UI and wider business functions are multitenant, suits larger enterprises with complex requirements.

Although Oracle Commerce does not integrate directly to third-party DXPs to enable “experience driven” commerce, Oracle’s own DXP tools (such as Oracle Content Management) natively integrate to the commerce platform. This has provided some wider DXP characteristics, and 2020 saw a new “open storefront framework” for creating decoupled storefronts, and more integrations with other Oracle products including Oracle Product Hub, Oracle Customer Data Management and Subscription Management.

Oracle’s solution for digital commerce works well with other Oracle capabilities, such as CPQ, OMS and of course ERP, and is therefore useful for organizations that already rely on Oracle investments in these areas.

Evidence

1 Gartner’s Future of Applications survey was conducted online from 26 May through 9 June 2020 with 101 members of Gartner’s Research Circle — a Gartner-managed panel. The survey was developed collaboratively by a team of Gartner analysts and was reviewed, tested, and administered by Gartner’s Research Data and Analytics team.

2 Future of Applications 2020 Survey

2020 Marketing Technology Survey: Cost Pressures Force Martech Optimization and Innovation
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Critical Capabilities for the CRM Customer Engagement Center

Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce

Critical Capabilities for Digital Commerce

Magic Quadrant for Digital Experience Platforms

Critical Capabilities for Digital Experience Platforms

Magic Quadrant for Field Service Management

Critical Capabilities for Field Service Management

Magic Quadrant for Sales Force Automation

Critical Capabilities for Sales Force Automation

Magic Quadrant for Multichannel Marketing Hubs

Critical Capabilities for Multichannel Marketing Hubs

Magic Quadrant for B2B Marketing Automation Platforms

Critical Capabilities for B2B Marketing Automation Platforms

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