



NUCLEUS
RESEARCH

CRM TECHNOLOGY VALUE MATRIX 2021

ANALYST

Daniel Elman, Ismael Voltaire

THE BOTTOM LINE

The competition among CRM vendors remains fierce to snap up the remaining green field territory while still boxing out competitors and continuing to reduce customer churn. Recently the space has experienced an overhaul expanding from primarily sales-focused to be customer-centric and focused on the full customer life cycle, from first impressions with a brand to post-sale service and follow-up. As a result, the most successful vendors are offering an integrated platform that is customer-centric rather than role-centric. Additionally, investment this year focused on automation, integration with other applications and tools to reduce overall IT complexity, continued progress with integrated analytics and AI-based functionality, and enabling remote collaboration, training, and data access to accommodate the workforce-wide shift to adopt remote work *en masse*.

CRM

Value Matrix | April 2021



OVERVIEW

As we mentioned in last year's Value Matrix, the CRM space is evolving to include all customer touchpoints and channels with an organization. The customer service, marketing, and back office functionalities that for so long were treated separately from the salesforce enablement and automation technologies are becoming increasingly relevant and value-add components to vendors' CRM (now CX) strategies. As a result, for the functionality aspect of

this Matrix, the ability of each vendor to address the entire customer life cycle via platform modules or capabilities has been given increased weight compared to previous years where core sales force automation has been primary.

In addition to overall platform expansion and integration with other related applications, customer-facing decisions have become increasingly data-driven as technology and industry practices have modernized to accommodate the approach. Organizations are now given top-down directives to leverage analytics across all departments; as a result, CX teams require integrated, easy-to-use analytics tools that enable the ability to surface insights, explain trends, and guide strategic decision-making without requiring extensive technical training or statistics education.

Vendors this year have made key strides in improving platform flexibility to accommodate all configurations of remote, hybrid, and in-person work. With the COVID-19 pandemic precipitating long-lasting changes to the way business is done and the role technology plays in facilitating business. Vendors have invested in supporting varied pipeline types, team configurations, automated deal flows, and custom dashboard requirements while developing specific coaching and onboarding tools designed with remote work in mind.

Vendors are positioned on this Value Matrix based on the relative usability and functionality of their solutions, informed by customer/user conversations and vendor participation, as well as Nucleus' year-round ROI assessments of technology deployments. For more information on understanding the intent and methodology of this report, please refer to our previously-published companion piece, s142 – Understanding the Value Matrix – September 2018, on NucleusResearch.com.

LEADERS

Leaders in this year's Value Matrix include Microsoft, Oracle, Salesforce, SugarCRM, and Zoho.

MICROSOFT

Microsoft Dynamics 365 is a tool to unify data and customer relationships to support comprehensive end-to-end business solutions. Dynamics 365 integrates CRM and ERP solutions to enable intelligence-driven decision-making to support analysis of business performance and business needs. Through AI and Power BI, users can utilize real-time data to enhance customer relationships and marketing campaigns. As was the case in 2020, Microsoft plans to support Azure platforms in 2021, such as Power Apps, Power Automate, Power Virtual Agents, Microsoft Power Platform governance and administration, and data

integration. The 2020 release waves brought new innovations and features across Dynamics 365 applications, including Marketing, Sales, Customer Service, Field Service, Finance, Supply Chain Management, Human Resources, Commerce, Fraud Protection, and Business Central.

In October 2020, Microsoft announced the second wave of release plans and updates for the Dynamics 365 platform covering October 2019 to March 2020. Dynamics 365 Marketing saw improvements to the customer journey canvas experience and added integration for Microsoft Teams for virtual events. Additionally, segmentation improved with new natural language experiences to eliminate the specialized skills needed to build segments. Dynamics 365 Sales continued to support simplified experiences through app integrations, gamification, improved forecasting, and improved pipeline intelligence. Customer Service expanded agent productivity by allowing agents to coordinate multiple sessions simultaneously. Dynamics 365 Commerce saw new features to enable non-technical users to quickly design and manage digital commerce experiences. As with many successful software solutions in 2020, enabling non-technical users was a key driving force behind a platform's long-term success.

In March 2021, Microsoft announced the Dynamics 365 2021 release wave 1 plan highlighting new features launching for the platform between April 2021 and September 2021:

- Dynamics 365 Marketing will focus on improving built-in analytics dashboards and cross-journey insights to support more channels to engage and reach customers.
- Dynamics 365 Sales will see productivity enhancements for sellers and increase access to data-driven insights to support decision-making. Key updates will include automation and sequencing, conversation intelligence, and improvements to the mobile experience.
- Dynamics 365 Customer Service enhances contact center operations by providing intelligent omnichannel routing across channels to further support agent productivity and help companies create predictive service models.
- Dynamics 365 Customer Insights will see improvements to audience and engagement insights capabilities. Audience insights enable organizations to centralize customer data to produce intelligent insights and actions. Audience insights are adding customization and extensibility capabilities of the customer view, additional connectors for data ingestion, improved controls for AI-based unification, and features to support marketing, sales, and service professionals.

In the Dynamics 365 2021 release wave 1, Microsoft displayed a clear focus on improving decision-making capabilities, personalizing engagements across channels, and extending visibility across a wide range of data-driven use cases. With each release wave, Microsoft

continues to build upon past iterations' improvements and capabilities to support general business operations across an organization and help companies drive a personalized customer experience. Microsoft Dynamics 365 remains a Leader in this year's Value Matrix.

ORACLE

Oracle continues to leverage its expertise and position as industry leader in database technology to offer a differentiated CRM suite. Oracle CX is a modular platform built to handle all of a brand's customer-facing processes and related actions spanning sales, service, marketing, e-commerce, data management and analytics; as well as integrated, multi-departmental processes such as revenue management and lead-to-cash. Its customer intelligence platform, CX Unity, is enabled by Oracle's rich third-party and enterprise data network in addition to public record business information and is differentiated versus other vendor's intelligence offerings that in many cases simply crawl publicly available web data; Oracle has curated a wealth of aggregated customer behavior data. As analytics become a more significant part of the sales organization processes, Oracle will stand out further as one of the most functionally complete vendors in this area.

Outside of traditional CRM, Oracle offers a robust enterprise platform that supports other business departments and functions such as ERP, supply chain and logistics management, BI/data science/analytics, and human resources. In addition, Oracle offers core database technologies and its increasingly prominent public cloud infrastructure. Customers can truly run their entire businesses on Oracle without needing to fill gaps for each function with best-of-breed solutions. This past year we noticed customer preference shifting even more toward the full-platform approach, allowing IT teams to minimize complexity, eliminate redundant spends, and control costs. In particular as a leader in the enterprise space with NetSuite and Oracle ERP, it provides a significant cross-selling opportunity to help customers realize this integrated vision. Vendors like Oracle that can meet all customer needs across departments on the same platform will stand to benefit most from this trend.

Significant announcements and updates from the past year include:

- CDP loyalty data flows to enable marketers to build datasets and custom segments to help better target a brand's most loyal customers, as well as an improved campaign management integration to help create personalized offers for those buyers.
- Subject line optimization and fatigue analysis dashboard to provide a holistic view of customer engagements to help predict the subject lines most likely to contribute to favorable outcomes.
- Integration with Zoom to help marketers deliver, track, and analyze virtual event participation and multichannel demand generation programs.

- Digital voice assistant to allow salespeople to access CRM data, connect with customers on their preferred channels, and view recent quotes, messages, and other documents all from a conversational, natural language interface. Additionally, Oracle Sales has modernized the UI to include smart lists, advanced search, and other time-saving tools.

As an end-to-end enterprise technology provider with legitimate enterprise penetration across all application areas, Oracle occupies a unique position in the business technology space. It offers enterprise-level scale and performance and has the technology and expertise to address virtually any custom use case. It has a viable product roadmap, the internal expertise and staff to deliver regular product improvements and ad-hoc requests, and customers continue to respond favorably regarding their experiences using Oracle CX. For these reasons, Oracle is positioned as a Leader in this year's Value Matrix.

SALESFORCE

Salesforce has been a longtime leader and innovator in the CRM space. Salesforce Customer 360 is a unified platform that includes applications spanning sales, service, marketing, analytics, and commerce. By using Salesforce's unified cloud platform, Salesforce customers can integrate various Salesforce applications to break down data silos and enable more holistic visibility to a company's operations, while reducing IT complexity around data storage, governance, and management, and oftentimes, simplifying the customer experience application stack.

One of the keys to Salesforce's success is the strong usability of the solutions; the user interface is intuitive and doesn't take long to learn. At an organizational level, administrators and developers are plentiful, and can be trained and certified in-house with Trailhead—Salesforce's free online learning platform. With more than 2.5 million learners earning over 20 million badges to date, Trailhead has exponentially grown the number of qualified Salesforce administrators and developers available which drives consistent, growing demand for Salesforce products in the workforce. Further, the user community is vibrant and active online in forums for sharing ideas, best practices, and other resources. This serves as a massive value-add for Salesforce customers and is an attractive part of the Salesforce value proposition for prospective customers.

Customer 360 is an integrated platform that encompasses sales, service, marketing, and commerce, analytics, and integration. It is flexible and customizable to specific industry and business needs; partner solutions to extend functionality are readily available via the AppExchange, and customers can further specialize the platform by developing custom low-code applications with Salesforce Lightning. With so many business areas built onto the same platform, customers can truly realize a unified view of customers and the business processes that serve them. To that end, Salesforce has developed Einstein, its embedded AI

solution for CRM. It helps to automatically surface relevant insights, predict future outcomes, see in-context recommendations for next-best action and activity prioritization, and automate repeated workflows and tasks like activity capture. Further in line with Salesforce's mission to offer a fully customizable platform to meet customer needs, developers can build custom applications that leverage Einstein with clicks or code.

In the past year as the COVID-19 pandemic brought about significant changes to global business operations as well as customer preferences and behavior. Salesforce was among the most active technology companies in developing new solutions to address the unique challenges and changes that organizations faced through the past year. In May 2020, Salesforce announced Work.com to help businesses and communities reopen safely with a variety of employee wellness and management, contact tracing, and emergency response management tools. It also includes a Command Center for leadership to see a 360-degree view of return-to-work readiness across company sites and make data-driven decisions for returning to the workplace safely. Tableau and Mulesoft created a COVID-19 Data Platform that aggregates and curates publicly available COVID-19 data to inform return-to-work decisions and emergency response projects. Salesforce also released an updated set of collaboration capabilities to support remote work and distributed teams with Salesforce Anywhere.

Other key announcements and activities over the past year include:

- In July, Salesforce announced the general availability of Einstein Call Coaching. This feature helps sales teams and leadership gain insight into reps' customer interactions, and helps to accelerate onboarding, enablement, and the identification and sharing of best practices.
- In August, Salesforce launched a new Feedback Management Solution which offers a collection of tools and surveys for collecting and analyzing real-time, actionable feedback. This helps drive business decision-making that is in-line with customer needs and preferences, and helps companies remain connected with customers despite the decrease in face-to-face interactions that previously enabled organic feedback sharing.
- In September, Salesforce announced updates to Salesforce Field Service focused on bringing additional AI-powered capabilities to the platform. It includes appointment scheduling and optimization, AI-driven guidance for dispatchers, asset performance insights, and automated customer communications.
- In September, Salesforce also announced updates to Sales Cloud focused on helping businesses optimize and adapt to end-to-end digital sales processes. It includes Salesforce Meetings, Einstein Video Call Coaching, Salesforce Maps Field Safety Kit, and Enhanced High Velocity Sales.

- Also in September, Salesforce announced Digital 360 to help businesses optimize marketing and commerce activities for the new all-digital customer journey. It includes Customer 360 Audiences, a customer data platform for identifying and targeting custom market segments; Commerce Cloud Payments, an out-of-the-box payment solution powered by Stripe; and Experience Cloud for creating CRM-powered digital experiences. It also includes expert services and new learning content on Trailhead to help educate customers on all-digital marketing.
- In December, Salesforce signed a definitive agreement to acquire Slack. It will combine Slack with the Customer 360 platform to enable real-time communication and collaboration across the platform.
- Also in December, Salesforce announced Hyperforce, a revamp of Salesforce's architecture built to securely and reliably deliver Customer 360 applications on major public clouds, and help customers realize the benefits to scalability and agility that public cloud enables. This redesign looks to reduce the barrier to entry for prospective customers with pre-existing footprints on major clouds.

Salesforce has been a longtime CRM leader, helping to define the space initially, and this past year leading to redefine the space in the new all-digital context. It was among the most proactive technology vendors across any space in recognizing the changing business climate, requirements, and customer preferences, and bringing to market updated technologies to address these new challenges. In addition, it has continued to advance long-term roadmap items at the cutting-edge of CRM including AI-powered insight discovery and task automation, explainable and augmented analytics with Tableau (now tightly integrated with Customer 360 as Tableau CRM), and digital-first sales operations with High Velocity Sales. Customers continue to reference Salesforce on short lists in buying or switching situations, and customer deployments continue to deliver positive ROI and legitimate business value including time savings and increases to sales, marketing, and service efficiency. Salesforce is positioned as a Leader on this year's Value Matrix for its continued leadership in developing and bringing new value-add services and capabilities to market, its standout response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and continued customer success as shown by case studies and customer wins throughout the year.

SUGARCRM

SugarCRM provides a functionally complete customers experience management platform including modules for sales, service, and marketing, as well as analytics and data integration. It offers the Hint relationship intelligence tool to identify relationships and connections within businesses, and Sugar Discover for time-aware analytics and insight discovery. These platform services help the company differentiate itself in an increasingly

crowded CRM marketplace. This year it acquired Node.ai to bolster its analytical and AI-powered capabilities, and further differentiate its AI-for-CRM offering.

Recent company announcements include:

- In April 2020, Sugar Integrate was released as the company's iPaaS platform to integrate Sugar products with other business applications. It also includes a library of pre-built templates and connectors, as well as a dedicated integration services team to assist in customer integration and migration projects.
- In September 2020, from the Node.ai acquisition, Sugar announced Sugar Predict, an embedded AI engine that continuously analyzes internal and external customer data to provide in-context predictions.
- In October 2020, Sugar announced SugarLive, a new capability in Sugar Serve that enables omnichannel communication between customers and service reps. It is built on Amazon Connect to allow users to build voice call and chat flows with intelligent response, routing, and workflow automation.
- In November 2020, Sugar released Nurture Builder 2.0, the redesign of Sugar's nurture campaign creation tool. It is a graphical tool for designing, testing, and executing marketing nurture campaigns.
- In February 2021, Sugar announced the Renewals Console improvement to Sugar Sell. It improves the platform's suitability for selling subscription-based products and services out-of-the-box, including a dedicated screen for managing product renewals.

Sugar moves into the Leaders' quadrant of this year's Value Matrix. With recent acquisitions and module additions to the platform, ranging as far back as 2019's Salesfusion pickup to the addition of Sugar Integrate and acquiring Node.ai, Sugar has proactively augmented the platform functionality to compete with entrenched market leaders. At this point, its time-aware approach to processing platform data is differentiated versus other market players and enables more sophisticated analytics, reporting, and automation than other leading vendors. Further, the inclusion of omnichannel and voice-powered capabilities as well as a dedicated integration platform and on-platform automation of tedious manual tasks like data entry speak to a noted improvement in usability since last year's evaluation.

ZOHO

Zoho offers its integrated suite of over 45 applications as the web application Zoho One. CRM is the most-used application in the portfolio and one of its most mature modules, with over 200,000 businesses using the solution worldwide. With so many applications and platform services, customers can activate the various Zoho applications as-needed to enable

the functionality and workflows that each organization demands. The unified data model that Zoho has developed and employs across all components of the platform is key as it enables all applications to work together “out-of-the-box” without requiring costly or time-consuming integration. CRM includes all the standard components: salesforce automation, information management, lead and opportunity analysis and management, calendar management and meetings, and dashboards and insights from Zoho’s AI, Zia. Zoho maintains its own private cloud infrastructure end-to-end, so it can scale as needed by its customers while still offering the privacy and ownership of data that customers demand.

It has a number of features dedicated to improving personalization including CommandCenter to unify and track customer journeys across various platforms and applications, Signals for real-time alerts to sales opportunities or customer actions, and conversational AI for salespeople to alert users to changing conditions on a live deal as well as ongoing interaction analysis to identify prospect sentiment and likelihood to buy.

Some major platform updates and additions from the past year include:

- CommandCenter, an advanced automation tool to chart and capture the entire customer journey thru connected applications in the ecosystem.
- AI tools including Recommendation Builder to recommend products and services to customers based on previous purchase patterns and habits, Prediction Builder to help derive strategies to predict prospects’ conversion probabilities, and Zia Vision to validate images uploaded to CRM records.
- Digital Marketing enhancements. Customer segmentation using RFM technique to identify the most loyal customers, allowing sales teams to proactively engage for cross-sale and up-sale opportunities. Also added webform analytics and A/B testing to automate A/B testing for webforms and identify the best performers, and marketing attribution to determine ROI of various marketing campaigns.
- Sales analytics templates for cohort analysis to analyze time-based sales processes to determine health based on lead conversion times, sales rep pipelines, countries and territories, products, and other factors. Also added quadrant analysis for self-service analytic tasks.
- The Zoho CRM Analytics Mobile app gives sales reps and managers access to analytics dashboards, KPI’s, and progress towards sales objectives.
- Support for multiple sales pipelines and workflow/call automation to automate repeated sales outreach plays and enable different sales timelines and strategies.

With the breadth and customizability of the Zoho platform, customers can truly run their entire businesses with Zoho. This puts Zoho into a league of behemoth technology vendors

like Microsoft, Salesforce, and Oracle. We have consistently seen Zoho move upmarket as the platform has increased in breadth and capability, to where now it is a viable platform for enterprise-size organizations around the world. It is differentiated in its unified data model and private cloud approach, both of which are increasingly compelling reasons to partner with Zoho; the unified data model allows for cross-departmental visibility and process integration. As more work is done from a distributed setting, the ability to integrate data and unify business areas on a single platform will come increasingly into demand. In the same vein, as the regulatory framework around customer data collection and usage becomes more complex and risky, Zoho's privacy-centric approach that gives customers full, unadulterated control over their data will likely become the norm (or definitely the most well-received by customers). Full platform vendors like Zoho, Oracle, Microsoft, and Salesforce will have an advantage over best-of-breed vendors competing in the space. Combining this with Zoho's rapid pace of innovation and product development, it is well-positioned to gain market share from customers looking for a lower-risk approach to increasing CRM sophistication and modernizing legacy deployments. With competitively complete functionality, virtually limitless potential for customization and process digitization on the platform, and rapid deployment times, Zoho is positioned as a Leader in this year's Value Matrix.

FACILITATORS

Facilitators in this year's Value Matrix include Acumatica, HubSpot, and Keap.

ACUMATICA

Acumatica continues to invest in its CRM platform with the 2020 R2 release that reveals notable updates to product capabilities. The CRM platform has a high usability among Acumatica customers and the improvements seen following the 2020 R1 release include:

- Acumatica Point-of-Sale. A complementary service to the previously released BigCommerce Integration is the ability to further manage over-the-counter retail sales for a company's retail locations. The improved feature provides a single database for access to real-time data.
- Electronic banks and credit card transaction feeds: Improve operational efficiency by downloading and automating bank transactions leading to accelerated reconciliation. The company now allows the ability to connect over 11,000 financial institutions to its platform.

- Acumatica advanced expense management: Advancements on the AI/ML capabilities will now allow the automation of transactional processes such as the ability to create rule-based assignments of financial accounts, streamlining employee reimbursement and corporate credit card reconciliation. The novel technology will further build on existing AI/ML tools through the mobile platform, which will enable customers to record receipts.

At Acumatica, ERP based products continue to be the focus of the company's expansion efforts. The inclusion of CRM serves as an assisting feature to customers and can aid in bettering usability. Time saved and reduced expenses have been a core benefit for users through offerings such as autonomous creation of AP documents from vendor bills, instant access to recently visited records and data retrieval. This year, Acumatica plans to continue its efforts in providing a simplified solution to its users that allows convenient customer management and financial solutions. Acumatica is positioned as a Facilitator in this year's Value Matrix; it would likely provide the greatest ROI to existing Acumatica ERP customers with less complex sales organizations and processes. It can be easily deployed and managed as a significantly lower-cost option than other enterprise-level solutions. Acumatica is positioned as a Facilitator in this year's Value Matrix.

HUBSPOT

HubSpot is a major provider of cloud-based sales, services, and marketing automation solutions for many small to mid-sized businesses. The company continues its efforts in facilitating automatable processes for large corporations by integrating advanced permissions, sophisticated reporting and configure-price-quote functionality. These are several new updates in the Sales Hub Enterprise, a HubSpot native software built on promoting a unique sales process through an enterprise-specific CRM model.

Recent announcements include:

- In October, HubSpot announced the launch of Marketing Contacts, a new pricing model that allows customers to strategically target an intended marketable group via email or ad.
- In September, HubSpot announced major upgrades to their automated Marketing Hub software with the purpose of customer engagement and retention. Upgrades included advanced personalization tools, a new report builder and custom objects.
- Also in September, HubSpot released new features to its product navigation framework through internal redesigning updates. Notable changes include Solutions Directory and new remote work integrations.
- Still in September, HubSpot announced several Service Hub enhancements. The software handles customer service tasks that include several growth-based cost plans

for small to large business sizes. Prominent additions such as logged-in visitor identification, help desk automation, and team management functionality offer an all-inclusive platform for customer volume operations.

HubSpot is positioned as a Facilitator, a notable shift from its previous Core Provider standing. The change primarily stems from upgraded product services, such as CMS Hub, which promotes streamlined website management capabilities, and its sophisticated marketing capabilities which are increasingly in demand as companies adopt all-digital and digital-first strategies. Further investments in automated software enhancements such as Marketing Hub and Service Hub directly improve the overall functionality of HubSpot compared to competitors.

KEAP

Keap provides an integrated CRM platform offering salesforce and marketing automation, e-commerce, payments, and analytics focused on SMB customers. Keap continues its efforts towards an innovative new platform since its identity change from Infusionsoft. In September, the company released Easy Automation, an intuitive feature that allows small businesses to automate repetitive customer engagement tasks. The focus of the new feature is to maximize the productivity of its customers through AI technology but with the personal touch of human interaction. In November, Keap released Infusionsoft Analytics, an interactive analytics feature created for ROI maximization through daily reports focused on customer engagement, email deliverability, payments, and revenue. The ability to access these services on a mobile app allows marketers to have a hands-on approach for analyzing and editing their campaigns. Keap continues to add pertinent features to its platform geared towards the current and predicted needs of its small business customers. Keap offers an approachable browser-based CRM that can be rapidly deployed without needing coding skill or extensive technical sophistication; further, it is becoming increasingly sophisticated incorporating functionality like automation and analytics. It is positioned as a Facilitator in this year's Value Matrix.

EXPERTS

Experts in this year's Value Matrix include Creatio, NexJ, Oracle Siebel, Pegasystems, and SAP.

CREATIO

Creatio, formerly known as bpm'online, is a business process management company centered on automated processes to improve operational efficiencies for its customers. The ability to customize on its platform continues to be a major attractive point for its users. Newly released features to its products have a commonality in improved user experience by embedding automated communication systems and customer engagement. By anticipating customer difficulties through proactive messaging, AI technology and analytics, key procedures can be put in place to improve customer retention.

In December, Creatio announced new features to its products such as:

- Telegram: Improvements on customer engagement through an easier external messaging system.
- AI technology: Improved retrieval and organization functionality through the use of AI. Updated capabilities include locating unstructured text from past user engagement
- Analytics: Automated processes such as calculation capabilities from gathered data.

Creatio's latest software releases are centered around the anticipation of customer difficulties and finding a proactive solution. Features such as Telegram provide improved dialogue, customer complaint filing and suggestion history data to address recurring operational difficulties. The ability to decrease the time of customer complaints to an actionable solution is catalyzed by AI technology. User conversations can be located and cross-referenced with previous troubleshooting issues resulting in case studies for proven solutions. Creatio's most significant differentiator has been its low-code application development offering which allows users to add custom apps and modules to extend functionality and fill any gaps. While other vendors offer low-code options, Creatio sports one of the most capable offerings among CRM vendors. That said, customers are increasingly moving toward unified cloud business platforms, and looking to simplify application ecosystems wherever possible, especially as workforces become more distributed and maintaining integrations more automated. For this reason, Creatio is positioned as an Expert in this year's Value Matrix.

NEXJ

NexJ Systems offers Intelligent Customer Management products for financial services verticals including wealth management, private banking, commercial and corporate banking. It is built as verticalized solutions that are fully customized to fit the customer's processes and business model during deployment. It can be deployed in a private cloud or to infrastructure housed on-premises. In addition to the expected CRM functionality, NexJ

stands out for its Nudge AI suite, made up of three digital assistants Inform, Engage, and Insights. In January 2021, NexJ launched Inform, an AI digital assistant product, which allows advisors to establish a more individualized tone with customers through targeted content across the clients' lifecycles. The new product was released following the partnership with AdvisorStream, a customized communications platform. Engage delivers next best actions to advisors to ensure compliance and deliver relevant, personalized experiences to clients. Insights increases advisor efficiency by surfacing significant details and insights about clients to inform how the advisor engages with clients. NexJ recently entered into an agreement with Sand Hill East LLC, a business development firm offering advisory services, as an initiative to accelerate business growth for its clients. The benefits of the new business features were created for direct consumer impact and enhanced services for their users. Information security should continue to be the priority in the expansion of NexJ services with assessments recommended during the partnership agreement process. NexJ is positioned as an Expert in this year's Value Matrix for its specialized AI capabilities and specialized market niche as a vertical provider for financial services customers. It is among industry-standard financial services tools and appears on shortlists for virtually all CRM buyers in the industry.

ORACLE SIEBEL

Oracle is a leading cloud-based company that provides integrative tools for improving profit and operational objectives for a multitude of corporations. Its subsidiary, Siebel CRM, provides a server framework that is utilized to support user-created applications. Deliverable solutions include development, deployment, diagnostic, integration, productivity, and mobile services. Siebel continues a strategic pivot toward becoming a Cloud Native platform. This is followed by the implementation of its core feature campaign that was introduced in 2017. The campaign largely included application support systems that streamlined consumer objectives and reduced overall development time and consumer onboarding efforts. Key components of the strategic launch included the use of the globally recognized oracle cloud infrastructure and Docker containers. These product improvements align with the company's efforts to innovate across core themes of autonomous CRM, business agility, customer experience and industry innovation. Updates to the company's new services include:

- **Kubernetes Orchestration.** The company will be launching a Kubernetes orchestration feature to its platform. The software is intended to manage multiple clusters of containers by Siebel users. Docker, which gives users the ability to build and deploy containers, was initially launched by Siebel during the core feature campaign. The complementary features of both applications will drastically simplify software building and utilization on the part of the developer. The key benefit of the

new addition is the ability of the customer to scale each service automatically and based on current and anticipated workloads.

- **Redwood UX.** Siebel will be launching its Redwood UX feature as a visual revitalization effort to complement the company's novel cloud native platform. A group of designers, recruited from countries around the world, were chosen to enhance the user interaction features for its customers. The introduction of cloud native's improved application growth model for customers is anticipated to be highly receptive when conjugated with enhanced visualization and simplification features through Redwood UX.
- **Microservices.** The use of the Siebel services has historically been driven by on platform services and support. The creation and expansion of digital applications have centered around the organization providing in-house growth through Siebel-based Components. Post-cloud native implementation will include non-Siebel functionalities in the form of low coupling framework integrations with the Siebel platform. The push for increased flexibility through enhanced industry services, including microservices, is the foreseeable organizational initiative focused on market individuality and expanded customer benefits.
- **Edge Computing.** The industry services campaign set by Siebel will conclude with its most significant service offering, which includes next-generation CRM, innovation to support and edge use cases. The expansion will likely include complementary services to the ever-expanding Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, which is globally recognized and is an industry choice product. Concurrent efforts to launch a cross-functioning mobile-first platform that can be used by developers creates an ecosystem for rapid market growth and stronger customer adoption. The underlying ideology behind the extension of additional user-friendly services is the ease of transition from less extensive service offerings to improved products that are geared towards nurturing business growth.

Siebel CRM is currently a major market competitor with opportunities to improve and modernize. Being able to leverage the Oracle technology stack, as well as its customer and partner network are key differentiators and factors contributing to its success in the enterprise. It is positioned in the Expert quadrant of this year's Value Matrix.

PEGASYSTEMS

Pegasystems provides an automated solution designed to address complex business needs. Its CRM offerings cover sales, marketing, and customer service; and recent upgrades to the platform allow for more utility with less human intervention. Pegasystems continues to build

towards a more streamlined service offering with interconnected products creating a self-driven software model.

In November, Pegasystems revealed new robotic process automation advancements such as Pega RPA Auto-balancing, an AI feature allowing intelligent allocation of workloads to a consumer's available bots. A more optimized process is anticipated due to a continued inflow of customer data which allows for the increased effectiveness of bots. Pegasystems continues to focus customer service resources towards a call center model rather than prioritizing online chatbot expansion. The acquisition of Qurious.io, a cloud-based speech analytics company, was based on improving customer interactions using speech-to-text, natural language processing (NLP), and emotion detection analytics in real-time. When accompanied by the Value Finder, a new AI-based capability focused on engaging underserved customers and addressing their specific needs, more comprehensive customer engagement data can be collected. Pegasystems continues to invest in improved product capabilities centered around self-sufficient AI progression and limited human mediation. X-ray Vision, a self-healing bot feature, was created with that purpose in mind.

Pega also offers custom application development to extend functionality and enable citizen developers. Investment into enhanced robotic process automation functionality have been a key component of Pega's approach. The combination of independent workload distribution and self-sufficient bot maintenance essentially creates a software-based workforce requiring limited human interference, and increasing user productivity. Pega is positioned as an Expert in this year's Value Matrix.

SAP

SAP C/4HANA suite offers many cloud-based business services including SAP Marketing Cloud, SAP Commerce Cloud, SAP Service Cloud, SAP Customer Data Cloud, SAP Sales Cloud and the CallidusCloud portfolio. The product centers on maximizing business efficiency on an all-inclusive cloud platform. Recently released features are geared towards achieving this goal in a customer's operational and financial lifecycle.

In February, SAP announced its release of an updated package with new capabilities to its service offers. New features and capabilities include:

- Manufacturing: Improved predictability in material needs. The update will allow customers to proactively identify likely supply chain limitations.
- Sales: Enhanced product tracking capabilities in real-time. Product demand changes can be monitored through sales volume allowing more refined inventory quantities.
- Extended warehouse management: Interactive dashboards allowing faster analytical insights. Supply to product data aids in reducing common barriers that are unique to the customer.

- Logistics: Upgrades to the material tracking platform now allow for simultaneous monitoring of handling units. Handling Unit Management aids in the facilitation of goods movement for a more concise logistics operation model
- SAP Activate Methodology: A cost-effective implementation process designed to support the realization of business projects at the desired pace of the consumer. The methodology of prepare, explore, realize and deploy is a structure in which consumers can manage projects with enough fluidity to achieve milestones at their discretion.

SAP C/4HANA continues to invest its efforts into furthering products and services that are focused on consumer needs. Recent updates consist of creating an all-inclusive platform that reduces operational demands for consumers. Data-driven features such as Logistics and Extended Warehouse Management target specific congestions realized by the consumer and aims to improve efficiency. Accelerated implementation projects promoted through SAP Activate Methodology helps consumers remain aligned with project deadlines. The ability to effectively support enterprise-level consumers with end-to-end platform infrastructure, a diverse, global customer base, and strong market penetration all contribute to SAP's positioning as an Expert in this year's Value Matrix.

CORE PROVIDERS

Core Providers in this year's Value Matrix include Maximizer Software and X2CRM.

MAXIMIZER SOFTWARE

Maximizer Software enables SMB's and medium-sized businesses with integrated sales and customer service technologies. Maximizer offers dedicated industry-specific CRM solutions for financial services, higher education, government, logistics, and manufacturing. The 2019 release of the All-In-One CRM solution continues to be the most recent software release. An importance on customer convenience is promoted through its 360 Customer Touch feature, which enables rapid deployment, transparent pricing, and proactive customer service. Maximizer CRM is situated as a Core Provider in this year's Value Matrix and is particularly notable for offering one of the most comprehensive and sophisticated product sets for non-enterprise customers.

X2CRM

X2CRM is the provider of a secure and highly configurable CRM suite. As a provider of market automation and workflow management, it offers customers an integrative and

cohesive platform. In December 2019, the company released X2CRM 8.0 Enterprise, an improved customer engagement solution with a focus on understanding user intention. The new release is following the industry trend of expanding enterprise specific services. However, the exclusion of AI, mass email and portal capabilities from the X2CRM 8.0 Enterprise platform, outside of additional payments, reduces the new offerings overall appeal compared to competitors. X2CRM provides an attractive option to SMBs seeking an easy-to-use, low-cost CRM solution. It is positioned as a Core Provider in this year's Value Matrix.