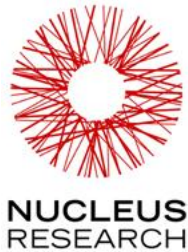


A CLOSER LOOK AT ORACLE SALES CLOUD



THE BOTTOM LINE

The accelerating release cadence of cloud CRM vendors are often about playing catch up with the features and functions of competitors, not on the ultimate goal of sales force automation: more sales. In looking the latest Oracle Sales Cloud release, Nucleus found that a focus on sales productivity and addition of key capabilities to simplify, focus, and automate tasks for both reps and managers is likely to drive better adoption, more effective use, and better sales results.

In April, Oracle announced the latest enhancements to Oracle Sales Cloud. The enhancements focus on improving sales productivity, reducing the management burden for sales managers, and providing all users with greater access to meaningful analytics.

Key components of the new release include:

- A simplified user interface available on any device and any platform
- Improved Microsoft Outlook integration, integrated social collaboration, and voice capture
- Territory, account, quota, and incentive compensation management capabilities
- Embedded dashboards, analytics, and reports with pre-built key performance indicators (KPIs), opportunity management and forecasting, support for rapid building of custom reports and dashboards, and real-time dashboard reporting
- Improved lead management and forecast management capabilities, including a Sales Predictor to identify account white space and new sales opportunities and a wizard-based user interface to create and execute sales campaigns
- Improved support for integration between Oracle Siebel, E-Business Suite, and JD Edwards

CHANGING THE USER EXPERIENCE

As CRM market competition has intensified, vendors have raced to add more features and capabilities to their applications, both organically and by acquisition. The result, in many cases, is pixel overload: with more alerts, feeds, dashboards, updates, and fields to manage, sales people are distracted from their primary job: selling. Oracle has taken a

different approach with Sales Cloud, instead limiting the number of visual elements on the desktop or device and reducing both the initial training and ongoing data input demands for sales people.

THE SALES FORCE AUTOMATION CHALLENGE

The last generation of sales force automation (SFA) applications were all about capturing data. Driven by the legitimate enterprise goal of better predictability, visibility, and accuracy of sales, the old CRM required sales people to enter updates on their activities on a daily basis. It's not surprising that this approach resulted in poor user adoption, particularly when the applications were cumbersome and hard to use.

Over the past years, much of the focus in CRM research and development has been around making it easier for the system to capture data, with e-mail integration, automated data updates, integrated social capabilities for capturing both internal conversations and prospects' activities on the broader social Web, and autosearch and prefilling capabilities. Many have introduced gamification to reward reps for entering more data. However, these steps have not solved the problem: sales reps still hate entering data, and sales managers still need it for better forecasting, visibility, and coaching.

Pushing reps to enter more data is not the answer. In fact, in analyzing the results of CRM ROI case studies from the Nucleus library over the past several years, Nucleus found that the optimal amount of time sales reps should spend entering data in a CRM application is 7.56 percent. If sales is spending more than 8 percent of their time entering data in CRM, sales productivity, and thus, profitability, drops. SFA users who play the game may get more badges or stars on the leader board, but they're not selling more (Nucleus Research *n167 – Enterprise software must adopt the principles of Dark Cockpit*, November 2013).

ORACLE'S APPROACH

In looking at the latest version of Oracle Sales Cloud, Nucleus found that Oracle has made progress in adopting the key design principles of the Dark Cockpit approach:

- **Simplify.** The simplified user interface, with one click to view and manage key company and contact information, and the simplified mobile user interface make the application easy enough to adopt and use without training.
- **Focus.** The Sales Predictor and embedded in-context analytics help sales people to focus their efforts on the deals they're most likely able to move forward or close so they can focus their time and energy on the deals that matter. For sales people that lose focus or have time to spare, the AroundMe capabilities enable reps to quickly find accounts, contacts, and events associated with their location so they can use their time more productively.
- **Automate.** In this version, Oracle has automated data capture, updating, and correction so reps can spend more time selling. Improved Microsoft Outlook integration, built-in customer data management and data quality capabilities, configurability to support specific business processes, and voice capture capabilities

can help bring sales reps to the optimal 8 percent for data entry time. Additionally, the integrated marketing and campaign wizard functionality reduce the tasks associated with lead nurturing.

- **Coach.** In addition to the Sales Predictor for automated coaching, the embedded real-time analytics can help managers to quickly identify areas for coaching in the moment — as opposed to after the fact. Additionally, the automation of time-consuming tasks like territory, forecasting, and comp management can free up sales managers' time for more effective in-person coaching. Finally, reporting capabilities that enable managers to see when a deal changed, how it changed, and who changed it can expose greater opportunities for coaching.

CONCLUSION

As the CRM arms race continues, more is not better. To get effective adoption, and maximum ROI, from SFA, it needs to be first and foremost a productivity tool for sales reps. With this release, Oracle has gone back to basics with a simplified user interface, tools to focus sales reps on the best use of their time, and features to automate more of the tactical steps that are time and morale drains for reps and sales managers. This thoughtful approach to design should drive greater productivity and, ultimately, greater, more predictable sales results.