



How Salesforce Acquiring ExactTarget Will Change the Face of CRM, Marketing and Sales

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Recently, there have been significant shifts in the focus of CRM (customer relationship management) solutions. Looking at industry giants [Oracle](#) and [Salesforce](#), there's an increasing focus on creating additional functional uses of CRM products. Traditionally, CRM was the central repository of customer information. CRM companies moved to the cloud as mobile sales forces needed access to data on the go.

CRM now supports a more cohesive operational enterprise. As CRM has grown within the infrastructure of enterprises, it's been adopted beyond sales management to other focuses, including accounting, procurement, human resources, customer service and support. But with the acquisitions of [Eloqua by Oracle](#) and [ExactTarget by Salesforce](#), the focus is shifting to the marketing department.

Salesforce's acquisition of ExactTarget has been the hot topic of conversation lately in CRM, marketing and sales circles. Salesforce now has added the ability to support the enterprise with lead generation tools. Marketing teams can use the new tools brought forth by the acquisition of ExactTarget to create leads to funnel to the sales team. However, there's one issue many have failed to discuss until now: What will this acquisition mean for the actual sales professional who is responsible for converting leads into closed deals? The answer, unfortunately, is nothing.

The acquisition of ExactTarget by Salesforce will enhance the marketing campaign features of Salesforce, but leave significant gaps in the sales side of the equation. Lack of tools, specifically for digital selling within Salesforce, has resulted in sales professionals spending priceless hours entering data into a system instead of communicating with prospects. While Salesforce offers many unique and beneficial tools for marketing and sales management, a successful sales organization needs modern tools not found in Salesforce to effectively function in today's competitive sales environment. Marketing to prospects is an essential business function but, unless sales professionals are armed with sales tools to support them, the marketing efforts will go to waste.

Digital selling tools can empower sales teams to be more effective, efficient and drive more sales. Using digital selling tools in conjunction with digital marketing tools increases the return on investment of both sales and marketing. Despite the lack of digital selling features in Salesforce and ExactTarget, both products can still prove useful to sales professionals when used with a supplemental solution.

There are software solutions available that seamlessly integrate with both Salesforce and ExactTarget. Digital selling software is capable of harvesting demographic information from Salesforce databases. Furthermore, sales professionals armed with this information can generate fully customized, one-to-one communication customer touchpoints with little more effort than a few clicks of the mouse. By integrating digital selling software into its current CRM solutions, the enterprise can establish best practice sales processes and repeatable consistent communications with their leads, prospects and customers.

Digital selling solutions also support marketing teams. Marketing has always been challenged with putting the right message in the hands of the individual sales professional at the right time and in the right format. Digital sales tools support marketing teams by allowing them to create a library of legal and brand-compliant marketing messaging, which in turn empowers sales professional to send prospects individual communication. This reduces time spent by salespeople creating ad-hoc communication materials, which tend to be problematic.

While Salesforce acquiring ExactTarget is another step forward in the evolution of digital marketing and will likely lead to more innovation in the marketing automation space, companies still need to look outside Salesforce for solutions to bring their sales professionals into the digital selling age.

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