

## Salesforce Adds Valuable Analytics and Automation Assets to Its CRM Stable

Recent acquisitions could boost the CRM giant's bona fides.

by [James Alan Miller](#)

Salesforce is on a bit of an acquisition tear, **having bought a total of nine companies** over the past year alone.

The latest purchases took place a couple of weeks ago, when the customer relationship management (CRM) heavyweight announced the acquisition of cloud email-marketing software ExactTarget for **\$2.5 billion** — the most costly acquisition in Salesforce history — and business intelligence and analytics startup EdgeSpring for an undisclosed amount.

The acquisition of EdgeSpring, which recently came out of stealth mode after [raising \\$11 million](#) in Series A funding, may not have been as high profile as the ExactTarget deal was to its customers and investors, but the two acquisitions have something in common: Both bring complementary digital-marketing technologies to Salesforce's CRM stable.

For EdgeSpring, that includes its EdgeMart data store and Lens Framework, "a dynamic data visualization engine." They form the core of a platform that "enables applications to answer first and second order questions across structured and semi-structured data," according to an [article in TechCrunch](#).

"Business Intelligence and Analytics in the enterprise is a massively painful and IMHO still largely unsolved problem today," wrote EdgeSpring co-founder and CEO (and one-time Salesforce employee) Vijay Chakravarthy, announcing the acquisition on his [company's website](#). "Being a part of salesforce.com will give us a tremendous opportunity to take our technology to the next level and deliver truly amazing innovation to solve this high value problem."

As for the purchase of ExactTarget, conventional wisdom has it that Salesforce had to do something to counter Oracle's acquisition of digital marketer Eloqua for \$871 million last December.

John McGee, president of [OptifiNow](#) — a SaaS company that offers sales-automation tools that complement both ExactTarget and Salesforce's offerings — notes that Eloqua delivers true automation to drive inbound marketing opportunities to Oracle CRM.

"Salesforce didn't have anything like that. The ExactTarget buy is Salesforce's attempt to keep pace with Oracle," McGee said.

ExactTarget is known for its industry-standard email-marketing services. But until recently, it only **offered limited automation tools** to create and deploy online lead-generating marketing campaigns. As McGee explained, the company greatly expanded those toolsets with the acquisition of a company named Pardot for \$95.5 million last October.

“Marketers around the world are hungry for a lead nurturing solution that integrates with their broader marketing efforts and transcends the current offerings available from point solution providers,” said Scott Dorsey, ExactTarget co-founder and CEO, in a [statement](#) made at the time of the Pardot acquisition. “With the addition of Pardot to the ExactTarget suite, we will redefine marketing automation and deliver the most scalable, comprehensive automation solution that helps both B-to-B and B-to-C marketers leverage the power of data to connect with customers across email, mobile, social media and the Web.”

It is too early to tell how Salesforce will integrate ExactTarget. OptifiNow’s McGee estimates it could be at least a year before we see how they will come together. However it happens, whether ExactTarget continues to operate as an independent entity or not, this acquisition — as with Oracle’s buy of Eloqua — is further evidence of **how important digital marketing has become not just to the major players in the CRM business**, but to their customers as well.