Measuring the propensity to switch vendors

By Peter O'Neill, Research Director Research In Action.

The Digital Marketing Service Provider, Accenture Interactive, published some interesting research last year entitled "Service Is The New Sales"[1]. It points out that 44% of B2B buyers have switched sellers in the past 12 months and suggest that the strongest, most differentiated B2B relationships are driven by experiences that connect human and digital means to provide a deeper, more personalized level of service.

The research identified a rift between buyers' expectations and average seller experiences, underpinning the cited and unprecedented seller-switching trend. This disconnect means buyers are often finding ways of obsoleting existing vendor relationships and welcoming new disruptors in order to best serve their needs. The major reasons for switching were: uncompetitive pricing, long lead times for delivery and fulfilment, missed delivery dates, lack of integration between sales channels, and even poor commerce functionality. The Accenture survey was global and, while their survey was across many different B2B categories, I also hear many of these comments from marketers when talking about their software vendors.

Over the past 18 months, I've discovered many separate vendor landscapes in my own Vendor Selection Matrix reports. In these projects, I've interviewed thousands of marketers on their business processes automation and, since earlier this year, we have been asking the marketers whether or not they would recommend a vendor to their peers. We call the resulting indicator: The Research in Action Recommendation Index (RI). Over time, we see our Recommendation Index becoming a significant leading indicator of customer satisfaction and also propensity to switch. So, I thought I would list out the current RI values for vendors mentioned in the last 6 months and provide an update on a regular basis in the future.

Vendors: I think that any RI 95% or over is satisfactory, an RI between 90-94% should raise some alarm signals about your customers' emerging propensity to switch, while below 90% is a state of alarm.

Buyers: There is nothing stopping you interpreting the numbers in a similar manner.

The data below shows clearly that the classical Marketing Automation vendors listed in our Marketing Lead Management landscape are mostly threatened by a propensity to switch, with perhaps the exception of Marketo. These vendors are being threatened by new innovative vendors who talk about CX, customer engagement or even ABM and cover the MLM functionality as a routine orchestration component.

VENDOR SELECTION MATRIX™ – MARKETING LEAD MANAGEMENT: THE TOP 15 GLOBAL VENDORS 2020

Vendor	Recommendation Index
ACT-ON SOFTWARE	85%
ADOBE	93%
CREATIO	93%
CRMNEXT	88%
EVERGAGE	85%
HUBSPOT	93%
MARKETO	96%
ORACLE	90%
PEGASYSTEMS	89%
RIGHT ON INTERACTIVE	92%
SALESFORCE	89%
SALESFUSION	92%
SAP	90%
SUGAR CRM	87%
ZOHO	83%

- Marketo Engage is the B2B solution in Adobe Marketing Cloud; the B2C solution is branded as Adobe Campaign (Adobe acquired Neolane in 2013).
- Salesforce acquired Evergage in February 2020
- SugarCRM acquired Salesfusion in Summer 2019

Other Vendors mentioned outside of the Top 15 or with too few evaluations:
- ADESTRA
- BRANDMAKER
- EMARSYS
- ETRIGUE
- INFOR
- INFUSIONSOFT
- IMPARTNER
- REDPOINT GLOBAL
- SAS INSTITUTE
- SELLIGENT

Many of the Sales Engagement Management vendors also have a precarious customer standing. There is, indeed, a lot of churn in this market as businesses replace their initial investment with a more suitable SEM solution. But Brainshark, Clearslide, Seismic and Showpad have a more loyal following.

VENDOR SELECTION MATRIX™ – SALES ENGAGEMENT MANAGEMENT: THE TOP 15 GLOBAL VENDORS 2020

Vendor	Recommendation Index
ACCENT TECHNOLOGIES	84%
APPAROUND	83%
BIGTINCAN	91%
BRAINSHARK	95%
CLEARSLIDE	96%
HIGHSPOT	92%
MEDIAFLY	93%
PITCHER	89%
PROLIFIQ	85%
SALESLOFT	91%
SALESPHERE	94%
SAP	91%
SEISMIC	96%
SHOWPAD	95%
ZOOMIFIER (CUSTOMSHOW)	87%

This vendor landscape is a mix of
- sales enablement (content and/or training) providers
- sales acceleration platforms.

Most respondents work with two or more of these vendors.

SAP also resells Mediafly as a certified SAP Sales Cloud extension.

Other Vendors outside of the Top 15 or with fewer than 15 evaluations:
- CIRRUS INSIGHTS
- CLIENTPOINT
- DOCSEND
- GROOVE
- JOURNEY SALES
- OCTIV
- OUTREACH
- PREDICTIVE PLAYBOOKS (from XANT)
- VANILLASOFT
- YESWARE

Here is a sneak preview of my next report, on Marketing Resource Management which is coming out later this month. The table shows an impressive scoring of all Recommendation Index values in the 90s.

VENDOR SELECTION MATRIX™ - MARKETING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: THE TOP 15 GLOBAL VENDORS 2020

Vendor	Recommendation Index
ALLOCADIA	96%
APRIMO	99%
BIZIBLE (ADOBE)	93%
BRANDMAKER	99%
BRANDMASTER	97%
BRANDMUSCLE	91%
CONTENTSERV	96%
ELATERAL	95%
INFOR	95%
PERCOLATE BY SEISMIC	99%
SAP	93%
SAS	94%
SITECORE	98%
WEDIA	94%
WORKFRONT	98%

This listing is alphabetical and includes all relevant Marketing Resource Management solutions which were named by the survey respondents.

Also named but considered not relevant were:

- Brandsystems
- IBM
- InMotionNow
- MarcomCentral
- NewsCred

Also named but with less than 15 mentions were:

- Attribute
- Bynder
- HCL
- Hive 9
- Workspan

Always keeping you informed!

Peter O'Neill

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[1] See: https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/interactive/service-new-sales-b2b-growth