



I Asked About Marketing Automation Platforms And Got These Answers

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My research production cycle has me working on multiple projects at once so, though still

- Delivering speeches/advisory on [ABM](#) and [Partner Management Automation](#) and
- Reviewing research and text with vendors for the upcoming [Marketing Event Management](#) report.

... I am already looking at the data from a new survey on Marketing Automation Platforms (MAP). Plus, I am now approaching the vendors to arrange briefing so that I can publish in February 2022.

The MAP report is planned as an update to my previous reports on [Marketing Lead Management](#). I'm seeing so many marketing organizations maturing from being a mere supplier of leads to Sales to a more strategic orchestrator of full lifecycle customer engagement, that I thought MLM was no longer suitable as the process title for this research. "MAP" was the alternative term for MLM, though traditionally used only in North America and in the tech industry (I remember at Forrester we used the term "Lead-to-Revenue-Management").

But ... what is a Marketing Automation Platform nowadays?

You may be surprised to hear I used "MAP" in the survey because I always stress that my research is about how businesses automate a marketing process or family of processes – as opposed to a product category. In my many interviews for B2B Marketing, marketing people always talk about their "marketing platforms", but I have noted they often mean different things in terms of which technology and processes. So, I was curious to see what marketers mean by MAP and which vendors turn up in the vendor landscape from our global survey of 1,500 business buyers. Well, here is that list of vendors (unprompted) that were associated with MAP by the survey respondents:

- *ACT-ON SOFTWARE, ADOBE, CREATIO, DEMANDBASE, EMARSYS (SAP), HUBSPOT, INFOR, MARKETO, ORACLE, PEGASYSTEMS, RIGHT ON INTERACTIVE, SALESFORCE, SAS INSTITUTE, SELLIGENT, and SUGAR MARKET.*
- For completeness, also named in the survey, but not included in the report are *ACTITO, ACTIVECAMPAIGN, ADESTRA, KEA, MAILCHIMP, UPLAND SOFTWARE, and ZOHO*

So, the usual suspects but quite a variety of product categories, as the classical industry analyst would say: Traditional MAP plus MRM, ABM, Low-Code Generation, and even some "Marketing Cloud" (whatever that is) providers. But **HERE IS THE MORE IMPORTANT POINT**

Expectations of a MAP have changed in the last 18 months. Look at these highlights from the survey questions:



- **87% of the respondents said they were re-assessing their current MAP**
- **One of the top drivers for MAP investment was “Measuring marketing ROI and performance”**
- **46% said “not getting the promised return from our MAP” as a BIG challenge (not just a challenge).**

There is much more data like that for me to chew over in the next weeks. The respondents also scored the vendors they know about based on criteria around product, satisfaction, innovation, vision, etc. After the briefings, I get to add my POV for some criteria and then profile them in the context of meeting the needs of a MAP project.

Our research provides a quite accurate snapshot of the market perception about Marketing Automation Platforms and the vendors associated with it. Vendors who use (or don't) the term need to understand the impact of their marketing message in that context. The messaging across the above list of vendors is very confusing.

In the old days, when IT was buying the software and using Gartner- or Forrester-generated categories to split the budget, vendors could align their products to that framework.

Now, the buying center is mostly business people – and perhaps some marketing-software vendor marketers need to become as customer-centric as they are always saying they want their clients to be.

I am looking forward to my briefing meetings with all the vendors over the next months. As usual, feel free to contact me if you'd like to hear more about this research. It will come out in February 2022.

Always keeping you informed!

Peter O'Neill