



OPTIMIZEZELY DELIVERS MORE THAN TRADITIONAL TESTING

ANALYST

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Optimizely's "Experimentation Platform" delivers an alternative to traditional A/B testing solutions. Optimizely equips marketers, product teams, and developers with the tools they need to run experiments on both the technical architecture and the front-end of their digital channels, test as many variations as they like, and look at results any time without skewing data.

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As customers expect more personalized experiences, testing, personalization and optimization are becoming increasingly vital to an organization's ability to keep up. There are plenty of basic A/B testing solutions on the market, and plenty of marketing and web management solutions (WMS) with built-in testing capabilities. However, many of these solutions are limited to website optimization, and rely on traditional statistical models which have inherent flaws. Optimizely has identified these shortcomings, and attempted to deliver a solution that better suits an organization's needs. Nucleus explored the solution, and identified what exactly makes it different from the other solutions on the market.

THE SOLUTION

Optimizely, a company founded in 2010, began as a Web testing and optimization solution, but the company's core competencies have since expanded. Optimizely considers itself an "Experimentation Platform" because it enables different teams within an organization to experiment with various modifications of their digital properties, both client and server side, across channels, without wasting too much time or money. Optimizely X, the vendor's new platform launched in September

2016, consists of six products: Web Experimentation, Web Personalization, Web Recommendations, Full Stack, Mobile, and Over-the-top TV (OTT). These solutions enable marketers, developers, and product teams to perform A/B testing, optimization, and personalization to optimize their omni-channel digital strategies.

The Optimizely X Web products are primarily for marketers and product development teams. Web Experimentation enables customers to run A/B, multivariate, and multi-page experiments. Web Personalization enables customers to leverage browsing behavior, demographic information, and first and third party data to personalize and deliver targeted content to customers in real-time. Web Recommendations allows customers to add product recommendations to their websites that update per a visitor's behavior. Full Stack, Mobile, and OTT primarily serve developers. Full Stack enables developers to run experiments on algorithms, pricing, redesigns, new architectures, and campaigns, and launch new features easily and quickly anywhere in the technology stack. Mobile is a mobile experimentation platform with A/B testing and personalization capabilities for app development teams. OTT enables users to run experiments in Apple TV or Android TV to drive more video engagement.

WHAT MAKES OPTIMIZEZY DIFFERENT

Several big-name vendors offer optimization and personalization solutions, such as Adobe Target, Oracle Maxymiser, and Google Optimize, and many marketing tools have built in A/B testing capabilities. So, what makes Optimizely different? Nucleus identified three key differentiators that set the solution apart:

CLIENT AND SERVER SIDE OPTIMIZATION

Most testing and optimization solutions focus on the optimization of the client-side of a website, in other words, what runs locally on a user's computer and only connects to a server when it needs to. Optimizely's Web products do this, but on top of that, Optimizely has Full Stack, which focuses on optimizing the server-side – i.e., the operations that are performed by the web server. This enables experimentation not only on the front-end of the user experience, but also on any part of the code or underlying logic of a website. Using open source software development kits (SDKs), developers can do things like test search result algorithms to see which produce the most relevant results, or run experiments on product pricing. Full Stack is relatively new for Optimizely. It was incorporated because customers were encountering limitations as they tried to run experiments on aspects of their site that they did not realize required server-side changes. Now, it is one of their most unique features.

OMNI-CHANNEL OPTIMIZATION

Optimizely's Full Stack enables customers to run experiments across any channel. By running tests server side, changes are reflected across Web, iOS or Android mobile app, OTT app, or any other digital touchpoint. Competing solutions that lack server side capabilities focus on Web testing and optimization.

REAL-TIME RESULTS

One of the most common tests used today is still the A/B test, when a version A is compared to a version B to see which performs best. However, A/B and other traditional statistical models do not deliver accurate insights in real-time, as data is received. Optimizely's Stats Engine works differently, moving away from traditional testing to sequential testing with false discovery rate control, which evaluates data as it is collected and gets more accurate over time. This enables customers to look at results as frequently as they like, with reduced risk of skewed data. They can also test as many metrics and variations as they like.

CONCLUSION

Optimizely's investment in building out its functionality was very strategic, as some of its most recent capabilities – including Full Stack and Stats Engine – have become its primary differentiators. Now that Optimizely is on the map and can hold its ground amongst the big-name players functionality-wise, it should focus on increasing its visibility. While Optimizely is good at explaining its technology from both a high-level and a technical level, making the journals behind its technology publicly available from its website, it could be better at leveraging this information to differentiate itself from the competition and marketing to its strengths.