



ASSESSING ADOBE MARKETING CLOUD

ANALYST

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Nucleus conducted in-depth interviews with current Adobe Marketing Cloud customers to determine whether the solution should make the short list. While Adobe Marketing Cloud is not a fit for companies looking for a plug-and-play solution, between its nine marketing solutions it provides the kind of breadth and depth customers need to execute complex marketing initiatives, and realize benefits such as increased employee productivity and cost savings.

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THE SOLUTION

Adobe Marketing Cloud is an integrated digital marketing platform with a set of marketing tools that enable marketers to optimize marketing campaigns and deliver more personal customer experiences. Its product suite offers nine marketing solutions – including Analytics, Audience Manager, Campaign, Experience Manager, Media Optimizer, Primetime, Social, Target, and TubeMogul. Most Adobe Marketing Cloud customers purchase more than one solution, often starting with Analytics to start gathering data, Experience Manager to create Web and digital content, Campaign to develop personalized campaigns across channels and devices, and Target to test and optimize marketing strategy. No matter which solution or set of solutions customers use, they also benefit from five core services -- People, Places, Assets, Mobile, and Activation. These core services provide the connective tissue between solutions, and make segments and assets, for example, available across solutions.

THE PROCESS

Adobe Marketing Cloud does not have as long a history as Adobe's Creative Cloud and Document Cloud, yet the solution has grown at a faster pace than any of Adobe's other clouds. Nucleus wanted to know why, and if, its growth is justified, so we conducted interviews with 10 current Adobe Marketing Cloud customers who were instrumental in their company's decision to implement one or more Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions.

WHY ADOBE

Customers with whom Nucleus spoke chose Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions after going through a formal bidding process with Adobe and a number of its top competitors. Ultimately, customers chose Adobe due to the balance the platform strikes between intuitiveness and robustness, and its training and support services.

FUNCTIONALITY AND USABILITY

When asked to score Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions on a scale from one to five – one being the lowest score and five being the highest – customers with whom Nucleus spoke gave Adobe Marketing Cloud an average score of 3.5 for usability, and an average score of 4.4 for depth and breadth of functionality. While Adobe Marketing Cloud's usability score was lower than its functionality score, customers agreed that, once employees are properly trained and adoption has taken place, Adobe Marketing Cloud becomes much easier to use, due to its highly visual, modern design and intuitive workflow. Adobe's leadership in the creative and content software spaces has likely influenced its user interface/user experience (UI/UX). Overall, customers felt Adobe Marketing Cloud strikes a good balance between usability and functionality, meeting their needs in both areas.

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TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Customers spoke highly of Adobe's client services support teams, customer service teams, Managed Services, and Digital Learning Services. Managed Services can help customers set up Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions and streamline tactical information technology (IT) processes. Additionally, Adobe appoints an account manager to provide constant monitoring and support. Adobe Digital Learning Services can provide onsite, private training sessions or digital, instructor led

training sessions on topics such as digital transformation, personalization, mobile marketing, or campaign orchestration.

BENEFITS

100 percent of the customers with whom Nucleus spoke feel they have experienced positive return on investment (ROI) from Adobe Marketing Cloud. Nucleus dug into the benefits they experienced since implementing Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions to determine what benefits might be leading to positive returns, and identified two that had significant impact across the board:

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Customers across the board reported time savings due to Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions. Due to time savings and the enablement of marketing teams to perform tasks on their own that once required significant IT assistance, customers with whom Nucleus spoke report increased productivity overall of their marketing and IT teams. One customer who implemented Adobe Experience Manager reported that the time it takes the marketing team to make updates to their website decreased by approximately 83 percent, from about two to three hours to about 20 to 30 minutes. Another customer experienced an approximate 97 percent decrease in the time it takes their marketing team to launch new marketing campaigns, from about one week to around four or five hours with Adobe Campaign.

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COST SAVINGS

With employees able to do their jobs in less time with less assistance, companies have been able to reduce current headcount and avoid new hires with Adobe Marketing Cloud, thereby cutting costs. One company reduced headcount by implementing Adobe Analytics, as it no longer needed two data analysts devoted to data validation, cleansing, and importing. This saved the company approximately \$120,000 annually. Another company stated that, to achieve the same level of activity and marketing output it does today with Adobe Campaign, it would need at least five more marketers and IT specialists on staff. Avoiding these additional new hires saves the company from \$276,000 to \$294,000 annually. While Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions can be a big investment, the cost savings brought about by reduced headcount and avoided new hires helps to mitigate licensing costs.

BEST PRACTICES

Nucleus asked customers if they had any advice for companies considering Adobe Marketing Cloud. The most frequently cited challenge customers faced was integrating Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions with their pre-existing, non-Adobe systems. While Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions integrate seamlessly with other Adobe products, integrating with third-party solutions can be time consuming, complex, and costly – especially when companies do not use an implementation partner. Customers recommended budgeting for an implementation partner, or for time devoted by internal IT resources. Adobe suggests utilizing the third-party solutions in the Adobe Marketing Cloud Exchange program to ease the process of integrating with other solutions.

Customers also recommended taking advantage of Adobe's strong support network and Adobe Digital Learning Services. The customers who said the learning curve was steep for their employees also said they could have invested more into training. With sufficient time devoted to training, employees adopted Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions much more easily, and their perception of the usability of the solution increased. One customer said: *"If you are a new user without training in Adobe Marketing Cloud, the tool may be a big animal to chew. With proper training, however, it becomes pretty straight forward and easy to use."* Despite challenges with integration and adoption, 100 percent of the customers with whom Nucleus spoke said they would choose Adobe Marketing Cloud solutions again.

CONCLUSION

Nucleus determined that Adobe Marketing Cloud is among the broadest and deepest marketing cloud solutions on the market. The vendor devotes significant resources to customer support and training services to help customers maximize the potential of their investments. While Adobe Marketing Cloud is not a good fit for companies with lower functionality needs looking for a plug-and-play solution, Nucleus found that it is a good fit for companies with advanced marketing needs, who are looking for a solution that renders significant returns over time.