

# CDP's are built, not bought

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If the Martech space in 2020 could be summed up in two words, it would be COVID-19 and CDP. The former, nobody wants—the latter, everybody wants. But there's one little problem. You can't just order a Customer Data Platform. Don't get me wrong, there's plenty of tech companies that will sell you a CDP. But there's a substantial difference between the software, and the solution.

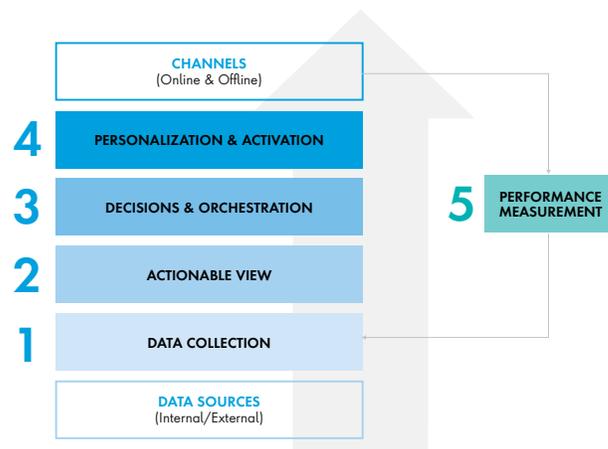
## LET'S BREAK IT DOWN.

The last I heard, there were north of 75 companies selling their versions of a CDP. This ranges from a number of point solutions to platform providers with a very wide range of capabilities marketed across the group. Many of the offerings are not even categorically comparable—creating a very confusing landscape that serves some, but not all, of the big picture.

## SO WHAT'S THE BIG PICTURE?

First of all, a CDP in itself is not an outcome. It is an enabler of an outcome. The outcome itself—for all intents and purposes—is the age-old concept of personalization. Secondly, a CDP will have several underlying parts. These parts are brought together to enable the outcome. They can be from one vendor, or many vendors.

The graphic below highlights the key construct of a holistic CDP, with a target outcome of real-time, multi-channel personalization. We've been using this approach for years at Publicis Sapient, and when I had a chance to see Salesforce's perspective on what constitutes a CDP, I was excited to see that we are in very close alignment.



As far as I can tell, most of the CDP marketplace is stuck in block #1 (Data Collection). These are high performing databases that are meant to collect activities and attributes about customers, and then apply a variety of segmentation rules. But once you purchase this, you still need to deal with data integration, capability activation, presentation and reporting. What good is having a bunch of data and segments if you can't do anything with it? Remember the goal is personalization, at scale. And because all of this costs money, it must return value. So measurement needs to be part of the plan.

Now maybe you're asking – even though I've bought (or am about to buy) a CDP, do I actually have a CDP?

I'll leave the definition up to you. Maybe the better question to ask is "are we getting the business outcomes we want out of the technologies we have"? You may have all of the underlying components. For example, you probably have a marketing automation platform, a CRM, a CMS, and other channels to activate on. Maybe you even have a Real-Time Interaction Management/decisioning platform. Not all of them may be the ideal, best-in-class solution. Or, as it is in many cases, perhaps the capabilities that already exist are highly underutilized (due to technical or organizational barriers). But here's where you need to zoom out and have a plan.

### CAN I BUILD MY CDP ON SALESFORCE?

Yes! Salesforce's official entry to the CDP market thru the acquisition of Evergage gives them a market leading "decisioning" engine along with developing an in-house high performance database solution that will be the core for data collection needs. They have been laying the framework for a very robust solution for a while now - with a vision that is well aligned to the diagram referenced above. To top it off, their official CDP product (C360 Audiences) is built in the Lightning construct, which will open up the range of capable developers, enable new apps on the Salesforce app store, and be very user-friendly. And - as the solution becomes more tightly integrated with Audience Studio, Salesforce will have a very unique ability to easily automate actions such as retargeting and suppression.

That said, we are bullish on Salesforce's roadmap, and we see three approaches to developing a CDP on Salesforce. Here's 3 lenses through which you can view achieving the target state of building a CDP with varying levels of Salesforce investment.

- 1. Platform Approach** - this is the ideal target state for companies heavily invested in Salesforce and Salesforce Marketing Cloud. It adopts the soon-to-be-released C360 Audiences as its central datastore and it leverages pre-built integrations to Marketing Cloud and other solutions. Advanced identity resolution is achieved with C360 Data Manager and ultimately the decision engine will be handled through Interaction Studio (formerly Evergage).
- 2. SaaS "Point" Solution Approach** - this is an ideal starting point for companies who want an advanced decision engine now and don't mind integrating data into Interaction Studio today as opposed to waiting for C360 Audiences. It is also a great starting point for organizations that otherwise have little or no

Salesforce footprint (it can stand entirely on its own). If required, advanced identity resolution may require an external solution. However the former Evergage product delivers a lot of near-term value with a high performance database, site activity listening, and best-in-class decisioning and machine learning.

- 3. Bespoke Approach** - this is a likely state for many large enterprises whose technology infrastructure is mature and widespread across vendors. There may be substantial legacy investments in custom data warehouses, BI tools, etc, with Salesforce providing key strategic components within (i.e. Commerce Cloud, Marketing Cloud, Service Cloud). In this model, integration and interoperability will be key, and over time some companies may start transitioning towards the platform approach (a trend we are seeing) with additional standardization on Salesforce.

### HOW WILL WE EVER GET STARTED?

First, you need to establish a north star. This is a vision for what you want the personalization solution to enable. It should consider the desired business outcomes and measurements, and the use-cases should flow from there. Then you need to take an inventory of what you have to enable the solution. It'll be a variety of technologies, data, integrations, people and process. You'll likely identify capabilities you want to improve, and maybe don't care for altogether. These can all go into the roadmap, and be balanced against the use-cases you need to enable. Then prioritize the use-cases to optimize time-to-value. And you'll also need to consider what is organizationally achievable. This is undoubtedly a bit of an art form.

By now it probably feels like you've picked up the Home Depot's proverbial guide to building a deck in 3 easy steps, only to shake your head and realize it's a whole lot more complicated than you were hoping. But that's why you hire a good contractor.

Publicis Sapient has performed this for a number of clients. We have accelerator templates and inherent domain knowledge to help advise, sort through use-cases and help you find value quickly. Together with Salesforce, we'd be happy to partner with you through this process.



**If you would like to continue this discussion, reach out to me at [don.dew@publicissapient.com](mailto:don.dew@publicissapient.com)**



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