



MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 OR SALESFORCE?



A look at key factors to consider when selecting a CRM for your life sciences company.

When looking at Gartner's latest Magic Quadrant for Sales Force Automation (SFA), you can see a race to the top by two giants in their own rights. Salesforce currently holds the lead with 19.8% of the market share, making it the gigantic leader in this space.^{1,2} While Microsoft Dynamics follows closely in second place with 7.2% of the market share, the enormity of Redmond's technology strength and innovation into areas like artificial intelligence (AI) need to be taken seriously despite the percentage difference mentioned above.³ To meet the modern customer-centric and sales goals, chosen CRM systems need to have a greater precision, predictive analytics, and a focus on customer needs and behavior.

To help life science companies, we have prepared an evaluation of Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Salesforce, their pros and cons along with elements to consider when making your CRM choice.



Microsoft CRM has a broad set of international and industry-specific standard compliance requirements that the life science industry must follow.

Where Is CRM Data Hosted?

Salesforce's genesis is a cloud application that works with various infrastructure technology vendors and partners within the new public cloud-based data model.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 has different cloud and on-premises deployments available that include private, public, and hybrid features, which can be deployed based on your budget. Microsoft's globally distributed data center infrastructure supports thousands of online services and spans >100 highly secure facilities worldwide.⁴

Microsoft Dynamics also benefits from being a part of a large investment in the Healthcare vertical via Microsoft's Cloud for Healthcare program that provides "capabilities to manage health data at scale and make it easier for healthcare organizations to improve patients experience, coordinate care, and drive operational efficiency while helping support security, compliance, and interoperability of health data."⁵

Platforms

Dynamics offers 11 core modules or “apps,” five of which are CRM-centric such as sales, customer service, field service, project service automation, and marketing. The other six modules are enterprise resource planning (ERP), talent human resources (HR), finance and operation, retail, mixed reality, business central for small and medium businesses (SMB), and AI (for sales, customer service, and market insight). The overall number of offerings make Dynamics a robust and complete business package.

Salesforce’s CRM provides individual modules or clouds with the option to choose any and implement. These modules include basic CRM functionalities of sales, such as data management and marketing. Smaller specialized modules help introduce capabilities such as marketing automation and field services.

Overall, Microsoft offers single platform-built case management, basic marketing, and customer service as well as SFA. Whereas Salesforce offers only SFA thus additional add-ons need to be purchased separately.

Pricing Models

Microsoft Dynamics 365 uses a flexible pricing model to activate any incremental expansion of users or data storage. On-premises licensing is different because of the variable factors such as server costs, software, and user licensing. Additional cloud storage can also be purchased if needed. Costs may not seem like a significant consideration at first, but they can add up.

Salesforce offers essentials, professional, and enterprise groupings of plans and is, for the most part, more expensive than Dynamics.



Due to the complex licensing models, life sciences companies will benefit from having a knowledgeable partner to guide them.

Dynamics Offer More Integration

Another critical factor of Microsoft ecosystem is that virtually all the other products are compatible with Dynamics. Life sciences company users could benefit due to existing familiarity with other Microsoft business apps and server's technology such as SQL, SharePoint, Power BI, Outlook, Azure, Office and MS Teams to innovate and streamline existing processes.⁶

Salesforce's native app integration had limited scope and ease of usage when compared to Microsoft's suite of business apps and server solutions. However, Salesforce's AppExchange ecosystem does boast >5,000 ready-to-install solutions.⁷

Artificial Intelligence is Leading New CRM Capabilities

Microsoft's' continued investment in automation features and AI has paid off – Gartner announced it as the 2021 leader for Cloud AI Developer Services in its Magic Quadrant.⁸ Microsoft already has a Healthcare Bot service that has been used by life sciences and healthcare organizations for multiple use cases such as AI-powered virtual healthcare triage assistants, field team assistants, and medical chatbots.

Life sciences companies can empower Microsoft's AI investments into streamlining work, using contextual insights gained from customer and sales interactions to identify and predict better leads and opportunities, efficient relationships actioning, and deep customers retention.

Salesforce's does offer AI-driven Einstein Cloud that makes deeper views in customers and sales opportunities.

Both CRMs are committed in making better use of customer data via AI technologies but given Microsoft's AI investment, its integrated easy-to-use analytic tools such as Power BI and overall technological superiority, the long-run advantage remains with the Redmond giant in AI.

Social Media Campaigns

Modern CRMs need to be able to integrate and work with social media platforms. With Dynamics 365, marketing departments can create rich and engaging content that can be scheduled to post to social media sites as well as to gather valuable analytics. Dynamics use the Microsoft Social Engagement, a social media management and social listening app, as well as the Microsoft Relationship Sales app that integrates with LinkedIn data. This means that Dynamics customers can tap into sales opportunities across users worldwide. This is significant for life sciences companies since >2 million doctors and nurses are on LinkedIn in North America alone.⁹

Conclusion

Both Salesforce and Dynamics 365 are leaders in the CRM space, and both offer diverse feature sets, add-ons, and AI technology. Right now, Salesforce may be the market leader, but Dynamics 365 is gaining market share, investing in next generation technologies like AI and garnering analysts' acclaim. Life sciences companies need to closely review their current IT roadmaps to align to their strategic goals. As mentioned previously, partner interaction is key to make the best decision.

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