



Know your customers

(or suffer the consequences)

A guide to selecting the right
Customer Data Platform for your business



The customer is in charge.
The age of the omnichannel
consumer is in full swing
as expectations rise
around the ability to shop
with maximum flexibility
and minimum friction.

It's almost as if consumers want retailers and CPG companies to know what they want, when they want it, where they want it delivered, and how they would like to pay for it.

These expectations are becoming the new normal, and organizations who fail to recognize this, run the risk of becoming irrelevant.

The good news is that you don't have to be left to the mercy of the ever-changing consumer, and you certainly have access to some powerful tools to help you turn these challenges into game-changing opportunities.

At Neal Analytics, we have developed a very straightforward framework to help our customers thrive in the customer-centric era, and the first step in the process is all about improving the internal capabilities to know your customers.

The Customer Data Platform

Customer Data Platforms (CDPs) are not new, but their importance has grown significantly over the past few years as organizations have begun to recognize the need to have a 360-degree view of their customers. By definition, a CDP provides a persistent, unified customer profile by combining and harmonizing data from multiple sources and then makes this data available to other tools and systems.

An effective CDP can drive increased revenues by enabling the delivery of targeted, personalized content and offers to your customers. It will also strengthen your brand through tailored experiences and community-building activities.

Finally, it can boost your marketing investment ROI as better data leads to better decisions.



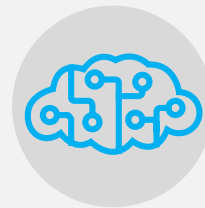
Data sources

Internal
External



Data unification

Ingest
Map & Match
Merge
Enrich



Insights

Analytics
AI & ML



Action

Visualization
Apps
Automation
Engagement

What to look for when choosing a CDP

Choosing the right CDP for your business is essential to unlocking the potential business value that it can deliver. This choice also impacts the length of time it takes to start realizing this technology investment benefits.

There are numerous turnkey or customizable offerings available, and it is also always possible to build your own.

Here are four critical factors to consider when evaluating your options.

1

Breadth of pre-built data connectors for ingesting data

The primary purpose of a CDP is to collect and unify customer data from as many different touchpoints (i.e., data sources) as possible. The ease with which you can connect to and pull data from these internal (ERP, CRM, PoS, Customer Loyalty/Support, and other martech tools) and external (social media, public information, third-party tools

such as marketing automation ones, etc.) data sources will play a significant role in how fast you're able to build out holistic and robust customer profiles. It's also crucial that the chosen CDP provides you with the flexibility to create custom connectors to so that are no limitations on the types and sources of data that you can integrate.

This ability to create custom connectors will allow you to use existing internal and external data sources to enrich customer profiles by unlocking current customer data already in your systems: loyalty programs, customer support systems, billing, and more.

2

Can be easily managed and maintained by your marketing organization with very little reliance on IT

Once the initial data connections have been configured and tested, the rest of the configuration effort should be something that marketers can perform on their own. It allows them to configure the solution to meet their specific needs while reducing the time and costs associated with the deployment of a new application.



3

Provides a secure and trustworthy **customer data environment**

Given the nature of the data involved, a CDP must adhere to the highest standards for data security and compliance. Solutions should provide data encryption between integrated systems and data sources while maintaining a secure authentication environment.

4

Data is **immediately actionable**

If your CDP can take on some of the baseline capabilities like segmenting customers and calculating marketing-defined metrics (such as Number of Purchases higher than \$100), the faster and more effectively your marketing team can leverage this data in their campaigns.

Of course, it's also crucial that the CDP provides access to the raw data so that you can apply AI and Machine Learning (ML) models for more advanced use cases.

Microsoft Dynamics Customer Insights

Released to General Availability in April 2019, Dynamics Customer Insights takes the value proposition of CDPs to the next level by augmenting CDPs basic functionality with a suite of advanced features that enable a faster time to value, more complete customer profiles, and a lower cost to deploy with less reliance on IT and consultants.



360 degree view of customer **Business end users**

Provide contextual customer insights embedded into existing business processes and applications



Grow Customers' Business **Business Analyst**

Be "the" source for truth for customer data & insights



Enable Internal Stakeholders **Admin**

Enable data analysts to radically reduce time to value & Total cost of ownership (TCO) and enable scale through self-serve AI/ML

In addition to the core capabilities expected of a CDP, here are some of the **key features** of **Dynamics Customer Insights**

Enrich customer profiles with aggregated audience intelligence from Microsoft proprietary sources like Microsoft Graph

Leverages the Microsoft Common Data Model to provide a consistent and common language, enabling applications to read and understand the data being shared between them

Extensive library of pre-built data connectors

Easily and quickly build custom business apps with embedded customer insights using Microsoft PowerApps

Automate processes by setting up workflows in response to customer actions and signals using Microsoft Flow

Gain deeper insights by leveraging the out-of-the-box connector for Microsoft Power BI to customize reports and dashboards that meet your business needs

Add powerful predictive analytics capabilities with Microsoft's AI and ML platform.

Dynamics 365 Customer Insights

key product capabilities



Eliminate data silos and unify customer data

Unlock and unify *all* customer data across all sources

Build semantically rich & cleansed data



Enable powerful AI & Insights

Data gravity around customer entity enables the best AI/Insights/KPIs

Accelerate the process through quick start "templates"



Enrich customer data with Microsoft proprietary signals

Enrich customer data with high value signals from Microsoft (e.g. Office)



Power your business processes

Customizable profiles & segments to drive business processes

Infuse OOB consistent "card" experiences in D365 apps

Enable LOB experiences to be built through Power* platform

Neal Analytics

—

Your trusted
partner in
enabling the
customer-centric
enterprise

Neal Analytics brings a unique approach that combines business consulting, cloud technologists, and data science skillsets to provide a holistic and agile engagement model that's focused on delivering business outcomes.

As one of the first partners in the Microsoft Partner ecosystem to actively deploy Dynamics Customer Insights into production for organizations, we have a proven methodology and extensive library of solution accelerators to help extend and expand the value of Customer Insights for your company.

In Conclusion

Marketing to customers based on simple, broad, and outdated ethnographic macro-segments is not working anymore. Customers expect companies to know them and their taste and to only reach out to them with relevant content and offer.

To enable this new era of micro-segments (aka “segment of one”) marketing, companies need to build a data infrastructure capability that can rely on all available internal and external customer signals. By leveraging this comprehensive dataset, companies will then be able to deliver micro-targeted marketing campaigns that truly resonate with customers.

Investing in the most appropriate Customer Data Platform will be the most critical part of this journey. It will decide which data will be included to build customer profiles, who can use it (marketing or IT), and what can be done with this data.

At Neal Analytics, we believe Dynamics Customer Insight is a CDP that checks all the boxes. Our experience implementing it for customers has demonstrated that it can be quickly implemented, can connect to the data sources and is flexible enough to adapt to each company's specific needs.

Interested to learn more about Customer Insight and how Neal Analytics can help you fast-forward its implementation? Contact us!



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