

Katelyn Housler

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## External Communication Audit

### **Introduction:**

Both effective design and organization are becoming increasingly important for business websites as the digital media age continues to advance in prominence within our lives. As the internet continues to take a greater hold in our lives, expectations for what a website should look like escalate accordingly, meaning that designers have to keep improving their websites' designs in order to stay relevant. Those websites that are the most visually compelling and functional are the ones that see the most traffic and are the most successful at promoting the business they represent.

This paper will compare two CRM websites that are commonly used by businesses and their sales teams. CRM stands for Customer-Relationship Management and is a tool that helps companies interact with past, current, and potential customers. It allows sales teams to track the history of orders with their customers, pursue new leads that could become customers, and focuses on retaining customers and sales growth. Two major CRMs that are used in the business industry are Salesforce.com and Oracle's Sales Cloud. While both websites communicate to their customers effectively, for the most part, there are several components that make Salesforce much more effective than Sales Cloud.

### **Effective Organization:**

#### **Analysis of Salesforce.com:**

- **Functional Design:** Website design should be functional so that users are able to find what they are looking for with little trouble while also looking visually appealing. As stated in Peter W. Cardon's textbook, *Business Communication: Developing leaders for a networked world* (2018), any pictures should accentuate the message that is being presented ("*Business Communication: Developing leaders for a networked world*").
  - **Visual Appeal/Navigation:** As part of the website's design, navigation should be quick and easy to use. Users want to find what they want with as few clicks as possible and have information displayed all in one place. Salesforce displays data all in one place with visual and graphic elements that enhance it and allow users to *see* the data they are analyzing. The graphics they use are also, "drillable", meaning that you can click on them to find out more information or see the data in

text form. This is especially useful for elements such as graphs displaying sales in various departments because they allow users to learn more about the data they are visually seeing.

- **Assistance/Training:** For websites that are frequently used by businesses, it has also become important for them to have help sections where users can speak with a representative or read Frequent Questions and Answers. Salesforce goes the extra mile in this area as it caters the help it provides to the page that the user is on. This includes links to videos and modules that will guide users through any functions that they may be struggling with on the website. Salesforce additionally has its own training website called Trailhead that will walk users through every single tool that Salesforce has. Through modules, users are able to test different features out as they read through instructions and watch videos. According to the company, one of the main components to this system is its Trails which, “are guided learning paths that chart your course through Salesforce skills” (“Welcome to Trailhead,” n.d.).

### **Ineffective Organization:**

#### **Analysis of Oracle Sales Cloud:**

- **Functional Design:** Less effective websites are typically either extremely cluttered or lacking in content. They can be more challenging to navigate because information is not displayed in a visual manner and there is too much text present, making any data appear overwhelming and much more difficult to analyze. Though overall Sales Cloud has a relatively practical design, it appears extremely ineffective when compared to Salesforce, one of its biggest competitors. Additionally, the way that Oracle promotes Sales Cloud is extremely vague as the company uses phrases such as, “Prescriptive forecasting, Next-best actions, Opportunity prioritization, [and] Sales assistant” (“Oracle Sales Software,” n.d.). They avoid telling users what the website will actually do for them by instead accompanying verbs with strong adjectives. This is something that accurately portrays what the rest of the website is like.
  - **Visual Appeal/Navigation:** As compared to Salesforce’s simplistic design, Sales Cloud appears extremely cluttered with more words present than visuals to represent them. The landing page when you first log on to the website can be overwhelming with everything clustered in the middle of the page with white space surrounding it rather than using spaces to separate distinctive tools and features. Sales Force also requires more clicks to navigate because of the way it displays its data. Instead of placing all the information for a company on one page, users have to click tabs to view different information and are unable to visualize “the full picture.”
- **Assistance/Training:** The assistance that Oracle Sales Cloud offers is overall very basic. It will provide primitive steps to walk users through various functions, but is unsuccessful

in doing so to the extent that Salesforce does. Help is general and not specific to the page a user is on and there are few videos available to guide users. Most noticeably, however, Sales Force lacks the training program that Salesforce has created through Trailhead. Businesses instead have to contact an Oracle representative to train their employees and do not have an easily accessible tool that will teach them about any feature that they are not proficient in.

### **Suggestions for Improvement:**

#### **Analysis of Oracle Sales Cloud:**

- ***Functional Design:*** In terms of design aspects that Oracle should consider making changes to, the company should add more visual elements to its website and make it more interactive. Information can be displayed in drillable charts rather than just placing data on the page as text. This would also make the website more interactive and allow users to see more content rather than just read it. By making the data this website displays more visual, they would also be making their website easier to navigate by reducing the number of clicks users would have to make to find the information they are looking for.
- ***Assistance/Training:*** The “Help” features that Sales Cloud currently uses are extremely basic compared to those that Salesforce has implemented. Though the assistance that Sales Cloud provides is sufficient, it is not enough to make it competitive in the CRM industry. It needs to be more visual and provide more videos and other interactive tools to guide users through various processes. Though it might take a few years to develop, Oracle should also create a training interface similar to Salesforce’s Trailhead that will teach users how to operate and navigate the Sales Cloud website. This would ensure that users would be able to gain a full understanding of the website and its features. It would also serve as a training tool for Oracle’s customers to use with their new employees who would be unfamiliar with Sales Cloud.

### **Conclusion:**

Should Oracle Sales Cloud want to remain competitive in the Customer Relationship Management industry, it needs to further update its website and make it more functional for users. The company has to be willing to adapt its website to make it more modern, meaning that navigation needs to be quicker and data should be presented in a more visual format so users can see what they are trying to analyze.

## Works Cited

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