# The essential guide to choosing a web analytics and online marketing solution

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## About this guide

As in many areas of technology, the market for web analytics and online marketing solutions has undergone consolidation and upheaval in recent years. WebTrends remains as a pure play vendor, while Adobe-owned Omniture and IBM broaden their portfolios. Meanwhile, Google Analytics provides a free offering with increasing levels of functionality and a paid version offering premium capabilities.

Changes in the vendor landscape have raised issues for organizations that use web analytics and online marketing solutions or are in the market for them. This guide is meant to help you understand key characteristics to look for in how the solution can impact your online marketing performance whether you are:

• In the market for a new web analytics and online marketing solution
• Looking to move up from a free or entry-level offering
• Re-evaluating the solution you now have in place

## Introduction

Web analytics and online marketing have become indispensable technologies as businesses look to acquire and retain customers through such channels as personalized email, natural and paid search advertising, targeted display ads, social and mobile, on-site product recommendations and more. As this guide outlines, the power and reach of today's technologies are vastly superior to the relatively crude clickstream data capture of 10 years ago.

Usage is growing in virtually every industry with a web presence—from retail to education, from financial services to travel and hospitality, from telecommunications to B2B software sales, organizations are striving to understand how visitors interact with their brands online and capitalize on that information to drive revenue, conversions and engagement. Deployments of web analytics technologies in the U.S. is expected to scale at 17 percent each year through 2014, and fully 84 percent of businesses are using web analytics technology, according to independent research firm Forrester Research Inc.

Many organizations are taking a hard look at the capabilities of web analytics and online marketing solutions to drive bottom-line performance by harnessing vast stores of online customer data as it changes over time. Others are looking to reorient their systems to better focus on such fast-growing areas as personalized retargeting, social media and mobile commerce. Still others are assessing the long-term viability of the solutions they have in place. It's critical that you select the right solution from the right vendor, particularly to future-proof your organization as web analytics and online marketing continue to grow in importance. As you examine your online analytics and marketing objectives, it's useful to keep in mind several key factors:

**The online marketplace is changing rapidly.** Most recently, the mobile and social channels have skyrocketed in importance beyond what anyone could have anticipated two years ago. For instance, mobile traffic increased by 200 percent in 2011 alone, and Cyber Monday 2011 online spending increased 33 percent over 2010. Analysts expect mobile to continue growing rapidly, while social media also gains importance. Another key driver is the integration of online customer data with data that customers generate in offline channels (namely in-store and call centers) for a single cross-channel view.

**Agility is key to identifying and capitalizing on opportunities.** A key lesson from recent years is that the best marketers take nothing for granted. Those that excel recognize that "they don't know what they don't know," and apply robust analytics to rapidly identify marketing campaign opportunities that otherwise would have been overlooked. You can't afford to take three months to roll out a campaign—too many competitors are poised to execute ingenious rapid-fire campaigns to entice,

engage and retain web browsers. Your marketers need a flexible, powerful and integrated platform to achieve the agility that today's fiercely competitive market requires.

**Your platform and vendor shape your business success.** The dynamic, constantly changing nature of online customer data puts a premium on the caliber of platform and vendor you choose. Online marketers who excel will have access to deep web analytics that can generate insights from customer information and an integrated platform for cross-channel online marketing. They will rely on a vendor partner committed to rapidly rolling out innovative features designed to give users a competitive advantage, backed by proven expertise in enterprise-class technology.

Given the heightened role of web analytics and online marketing in business performance, selecting a solution is more frequently being made at the chief marketing officer (CMO) and chief information officer (CIO) level, ideally in collaboration with grassroots personnel who operate systems for web analytics, email, display and paid search advertising, and systems. This is a natural progression, as the optimal solution enables you to marry the art of marketing with the science of technology, and smart companies strive to implement a fully integrated platform that, as a whole, is greater than the sum of its parts.

## Platform and delivery model
Execute atop a robust and flexible analytics and marketing platform

**Does the solution maintain and measure visitor behavior over a period of many months and share it with other applications?**

Online behavior is complex and ever-changing. Many elements influence the conversion of visitors to customers: email, banner advertisements, paid search, organic search, and so on. To optimize your budget and marketing mix, you need to accurately attribute value to the many sources of influence that led to conversion. The best solutions track and measure individual visitor behavior across multiple visits for the entire lifecycle of each visitor, which typically amounts to many months, and tie conversion behaviors to the correct points of influence. Ask your vendor whether this is a default capability or whether such a warehouse of data is offered at additional cost. To fully leverage lifetime behavioral data, the solution should also be capable of sharing it with other enterprise applications, such as a customer data warehouse, to provide a more comprehensive view of your customer. Combining web analytics data with data customers generate in offline channels enables you to track behavior across multiple channels to fuel multichannel customer marketing initiatives. One example is targeting high-value customers who research your products online, but purchase expensive goods in a store with personalized emails.

**Does the solution capture and maintain the data you need—from day one—without requiring you to know up front all the types of analysis you might want to perform?**

The online marketplace is a fluid and evolving environment. The type of information tracked one day does not necessarily remain the same over time. The optimal web analytics solution enables you to analyze any historical visitor segment, campaign or pathing scenario—without having to specify these analyses before data is collected. You should not have to know in advance which marketing campaigns or content links to track, or which visitor segments to analyze. And in no case should you need to re-instrument your site for additional data, which is expensive and only allows you to capture new data from the time of re-instrumentation, which can compromise your programs'

effectiveness. The best solution will maintain all raw behavioral data in a unified repository, accessible and readily usable by non-technical marketers. The data should be maintained, in its original detail, for at least 13 months to permit meaningful trend analysis.

**Does the solution ensure data accuracy and integrity?**

Web analytics is only as good as the data it's based on. It's vital that your solution includes capabilities to ensure the accuracy and integrity of site visit data that it collects, as data quality will ultimately affect the quality of your online marketing initiatives. (For instance, an email promoting a product a customer has already purchased, or aiming gender-specific products at the wrong gender, invites customer dissatisfaction). The best solutions will collect data directly from the client browser to ensure you're monitoring authentic visitor activity—not automated actions performed by spiders or bots. The solution should also address third-party cookie blocking to maximize data capture from all visitors, and not just those who accept third-party cookies. Be sure the solution counts all marketing clicks prior to third-party vendor redirects that may delete or overwrite tracking codes. To maintain data accuracy, look for a solution featuring filtering, auditing and data sanity checks, which enable you to accept only transaction data within certain defined ranges to minimize bad data. Ask your vendor how they can help you validate the accuracy of the data that you are reporting versus in-house systems such as your e-commerce system.

**Does the vendor sample data? How? When?**

With the enormous volume of data collected, some analytics solutions sample sections of data instead of analyzing all of it to provide faster results. Unfortunately, this can sometimes return incomplete results and make some types of analyses impossible. For other types of quick analyses, data sampling can be quite

useful. Look for the ability to toggle data sampling by user definition. Strong analytics vendors will provide the ability to use sampling where it makes sense, but also provide full-data analysis as the default for in-depth analytics.

**Does the vendor deliver a complete marketing solution, with applications that turn analytics data into action?**

The vendor's ability to deliver a complete business solution should be high on your list. This entails providing a feature-rich analytics solution, a smooth implementation method and a robust training and support offering to help maximize your return on investment (ROI). The analytics platform and online marketing solutions should work in concert, enabling users to simply point and click to create customer segments and target those individuals with a personalized promotional email, or display ads featuring products they just browsed on a website. Visual dashboards should provide highlights of web data analysis with capabilities to drill through to underlying detail, and feature real-time key performance indicators (KPIs) that enable you to track intra-day activity and make adjustments on the fly. Look for best practice reporting templates to help you identify quick wins, and ensure the vendor offers both in-person and virtual training so that users can make the most of the solution.

| Platform and Delivery Model |
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| Does the solution maintain and measure lifetime visitor behavior and share it with other enterprise applications? |
| Does the solution capture and maintain the data you need—from day one—without requiring you to know up front all the types of analysis you might want to perform? |
| Does the solution ensure data accuracy and integrity? |
| Does the vendor sample data? Can users choose to eliminate sampling at no additional charge? |
| Does the vendor deliver a complete business solution, with applications that turn analytics data into action? |

## Analytics and reporting
### Harness data for insights that drive performance

**Does the vendor have an industry focus and provide best-practice vertical reporting "out of the box?"**

Requirements and objectives vary considerably across industries. It's important to select a vendor that understands the nuances of your industry and offers a solution tailored to your unique needs, with implementation and support resources experienced and knowledgeable in your vertical. While web analytics and online marketing have their roots in retail, the best solutions will be geared to individual verticals, be they financial services, telecommunications, travel and hospitality or others. The solution should include an integrated, industry-specific best practice framework that enables you to understand the data and derive maximum value from it. Look for out-of-the-box configurable KPIs relevant to your industry, and role-based reporting templates geared to enable your executives, marketers, merchandisers and site designers to organize and analyze visitor behavioral data in ways most effective to their job function.

**Does the vendor provide competitive benchmarking data from your specific industry to help drive optimization?**

The optimal solution will offer industry benchmark capabilities that enable you to compare your performance against competitors in your same industry or vertical (using anonymized, aggregated data). This unique and invaluable insight into online marketing effectiveness in your vertical helps you focus resources on the greatest areas of opportunity and keeps you ahead of the

curve in regards to industry trends. Look for a solution that enables you to track your performance versus your industry by such metrics as click-through rates, time on site, average order value, effectiveness of email, display ad, paid search and other channels, and more. Being able to benchmark with competitive data allows you to see where you're lacking against competition in your specific vertical and sub-vertical, and focus your campaigns, marketing spending and site optimization accordingly.

**Does the solution support web analytics and marketing optimization based on stages in an extended customer lifecycle?**

The ideal solution will feature innovative capabilities that enable you to track customer progression through lifecycle milestones such as browser, one-time buyer, email registrant, two-time buyer, Facebook fan, three-time buyer, and so forth. With an extended view of behavior, you can identify which campaigns and touch points trigger progression though lifecycle stages and accelerate movement from one milestone to the next, while increasing the value of each transaction. Such capabilities enable you to advance beyond traditional, limited single-session measurement to a next level of "measuring customers, not clicks" over a lifecycle that extends many months. In addition, the solution should feature built-in support for multiple types of lifecycles (including buyer, event, value, frequency and engagement), with the ability to customize lifecycle perspectives to meet the unique needs of your organization.

**Does the vendor offer a robust real-time reporting and trending capability?**

In many industries, knowing "what happened" a day or two ago simply isn't sufficient to keep up with intense competition in the digital marketplace. Slow response to customer and competitor

behavior leads directly to missed opportunities and suboptimal ROI, simply because the analytics just couldn't keep up with the marketplace. This pressure is felt particularly acutely by marketers meeting daily revenue goals and content and media site owners who need to understand what content visitors are interested in right now, not yesterday. Using real-time reporting, marketers can quickly test whether a digital campaign is configured correctly for tracking, make fast changes to landing pages based on customer response and reallocate spending based on data, rather than intuition. A strong real-time analytics capability should look beyond top-line metrics and offer ad hoc reporting down into page-level attributes as well. Look for in-session and session-close reporting, same-day trending and hour and date comparison—that is, how did this last hour compare to the same hour slot last week? Your analytics' ability to keep up with the competition you face will be a crucial competitive advantage to consider.

**Is power-user analysis included by default, or does it require an additional fee?**

Different types of users will require different levels of analysis, which means the ideal solution will need to provide multiple levels of reporting within the same easy-to-access user interface. Key capabilities include dashboarding, KPIs, alerts and scenario analysis for business users that can be accessed on a role-by-role basis. Additionally, dedicated ad hoc reporting capabilities are required for power users. For example, look for customizable report creation for individual users and scrutinize segmentation capabilities in detail to make sure both single-session and cross-session segments are provided. Look for parameter manipulation, slice and dice, and drill-down capabilities. This reporting should also be extendable by imported offline data and should provide rich support for emerging media types: mobile, social, offline content and more.

| Analytics and Reporting |
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| Does the vendor have an industry vertical focus and provide best-practice vertical reporting "out of the box"? |
| Does the vendor provide competitive benchmarking data from your specific industry to help drive optimization? |
| Does the solution support web analytics and marketing optimization based on stages in an extended customer lifecycle? |
| Does the solution offer a robust real-time trending capability? |
| Does the vendor offer comprehensive ad hoc and custom reporting capabilities? |

## Social and mobile measurement
### Capitalize on emerging channels

**Does the solution help you track ROI from your investment in Facebook and other social media?**

Despite the rapid growth of Facebook as a channel for online marketing and customer engagement, many marketers lack measurement tools to determine the payback from their investments in Facebook and other social media. As the importance of social media will continue to grow, look for a solution that can link individual visits to Facebook fan pages, exposures to Facebook ads and interactions with Facebook applications to subsequent website visits, and ultimately conversions and ROI. As social channels proliferate, the importance of the ability to interact directly with social media visitors from the analytics user interface will increase. Finally, the ideal solution enables marketers to measure the return of both clicked and unclicked assets (or impressions) through technology that ties clicks and views of those assets by users to subsequent site visits and conversion, enabling credit to the proper channels,

including Facebook. Recognize the limitations of "social listening" tools that can report on what users say about your company on social media, but do not provide the ability to act immediately on that information.

**Does the solution allow you to track and optimize mobile channel device and application usage?**

More marketers are looking to capitalize on the mobile channel but aren't sure how to measure ROI from mobile investments. With consumers increasingly using powerful smart phones and other mobile devices to consume content, research products and services and place orders, your solution needs out-of-the-box support for a variety of mobile usage analytics and marketing optimization. Be sure to choose a solution that makes it easy to track usage by types of device and device operating systems accessing your site, emails or advertisements. The system should also enable you to track mobile applications, carriers, countries and more. Robust international mobile device reporting capabilities will also be especially important to any digital marketing strategy with a global view. Look for capabilities that let you examine drop-off points and bounce rates (invariably higher with mobile devices than online) and use those insights to improve your mobile interface and usability. Moreover, be sure you can understand the sequence of devices or channels your users are choosing, as this information will prove invaluable in designing your mobile strategy. Does the solution provide details on device capabilities ranging from screen sizes to cookie support and other details? Your ideal solution should readily integrate with other components in your web analytics and online marketing platform, allowing you to exploit potential of the mobile channel as device usage continues to grow.

| Social and Mobile Measurement |
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| Does the solution help you track ROI from your investment in Facebook and other social media? |
| Does the solution provide sufficient detail for tracking and optimizing traffic from mobile devices and application usage? |
| Does the solution help marketers understand how users combine multiple mobile devices over time so that they tailor the right experience to each device for each user? |
| Does the solution provide benchmarks for typical contribution of social media and mobile channels? |

## Data-driven advertising
### Target customers with broad scope and precision

**Can the solution attribute conversions and purchasing to the appropriate marketing programs and channels, by their relative influence?**

Successful online marketing requires the ability to measure the relative influence of each channel (for example, paid search, unclicked display ad impressions, email, recommendations, social media, mobile and others) on conversion and purchasing. Be sure your solution features the advanced technology required for you to understand a customer's interaction with your brand through multiple channels over an extended period of time, and doesn't pigeonhole you into crude and flawed single-session attribution models that credit the channel last clicked before conversion— a misleading metric that can undermine your effectiveness. Without a complete view of how each channel influences conversion and purchasing, you're liable to invest in an under-performing channel, while not budgeting enough for

channels that are driving revenue. The solution will include prebuilt and customizable attribution ratios to deliver insight into what works—and what doesn't. The devil is in the detail with solutions on the market. Understand in detail what is required for tag implementation and configuration before you can compare multiple attribution models side by side, and understand the sequence and combinations of marketing channels that lead to success.

**Does the solution have full retargeting capabilities for email and display ads built in?**

Maximizing your success requires aggressively retargeting individuals who have browsed or carted items at your website, but left without conversion or purchase. Your web analytics and marketing solution should feature capabilities for you to granularly segment those would-be buyers and retarget them with targeted display ads, personalized email, or a combination of the two. Look for an end-to-end platform that enables you to automatically launch targeted display ads and personalized emails to browsers and abandoners, with prebuilt integration with display ad and email service execution partners. The ideal solution will support robust A/B testing and capabilities to measure interactions over multiple sessions, which is important to refining your messaging to discriminating customers who value relevance and personalization.

**Can the solution measure the indirect influence of display advertising on conversions?**

Many marketers are skeptical about the value of display advertising because click-through rates are typically low and they're unable to measure the "view-through" impact of unclicked ads on the bottom line. However, numerous studies have found the unclicked impressions materially contribute to brand awareness, site visits, conversion and revenue. Your solution should feature built-in capabilities to track (via a lightweight impression tag) and measure the impact of display ads and other unclicked assets (such as blogs, syndicated videos or widgets) on conversion, as well as visitors' lifetime behaviors. Look for a solution that enables analysis of display ad performance by such metrics as sales, conversion events, page views, products purchased and unique impression viewers, and aligns with proper attribution across all channels.

| Advertising |
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## Personalization
### Build customer relationships with greater relevance

**For retailers: Does the solution include a product recommendation engine that leverages analytics data and customized algorithms to boost cross-sell and up-sell revenues?**

Displaying product recommendations to site visitors based on their browsing and shopping histories has been proven to generate an additional 10 percent or more of site sales. Size up solutions based on their capabilities to leverage deep visitor behavioral data to generate recommendations for cross sell and up sell. Look for the ability to reuse your existing tags to speed implementation as well as customizable algorithms and A/B testing to continuously optimize your results. The ideal recommendations engine will offer both user-defined customization and full automation. It will also generate relevant content based on relatively little data, such as a natural or on-site search terms, and will integrate readily with your email solution, enabling you to feature recommendations in order confirmation emails or other communications.

**For content providers: Does the solution include a content recommendations engine that leverages real-time viewing and browsing data to deliver the most relevant content to users?**

In an era when customers are overwhelmed by the proliferation of digital content, marketers are always looking for more sophisticated tools to deliver personalized content to the right individual at the right time. Targeting the right customer with personalized content can be a major driver of website performance, customer satisfaction and sources of conversions. Look for content recommendation capabilities that employ search and navigation histories to guide individual users to the right material. Ideal content recommendations solutions will also understand a user's intent and include a self-learning, rules-based engine to provide maximum flexibility and demonstrate the ROI on its recommendations.

**Does the solution provide a consolidated, customer-perspective history of all marketing contacts and responses?**

Digital interactive marketing depends on maximizing the relevancy of every marketing touchpoint with the customer. By basing marketing offers and communications on a history of the past and current behavior of each customer, marketers can build significantly better response rates and ROI through more precise targeting. The ideal solution will keep a history of all marketing interactions with a customer, including responses, which can be seamlessly leveraged for optimized marketing mix planning. Look for the ability to tie past anonymous sessions to a user once they are recognized or registered. Then, the solution should be able to directly leverage this enhanced customer profile to drive more closely targeted and personalized offerings.

**Does the solution include segmentation and email personalization capabilities to drive conversions and revenue through relevant communication?**

The days of "spray and pray" email marketing are gone. Today, the only click an email not tailored to an individual's interests is likely to get is the "Unsubscribe" link at the bottom. Look for a solution that features powerful analytics that make it easy for non-technical marketers to identify and create segments (and micro-segments) of customers based on critical attributes such as pages, products, shopping carts, transactions, intra-page elements and conversion events. Once created, you should be able to reuse those segments time and again to more precisely target your campaigns. Also look for best practice templates that enable marketers to rapidly design and execute campaigns for browsers, cart abandoners, post-purchase and dormant visitors. Ensure that the solution dynamically updates your customer segments, adding or removing individuals based on new arrivals or those that have acted on your initiative, and demonstrates its effectiveness with built-in post-click analytics.

| Personalization |
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| Does the solution provide a consolidated, customer-perspective history of all marketing contacts and responses? |
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## Multichannel
### Engage customers across channels with a single view

**Does the solution permit you to input data customers generated by offline activity to create a complete multichannel customer profile?**

As critical as a customer's online profile is, it's only one part of the full customer picture. Your solution should be capable of accommodating data that customers generate in offline activities—in stores, through call centers or via direct mail—as well as demographic information. By integrating online and offline data, your solution can open new opportunities to target high-value customers (who research online but buy expensive items in stores), assess the impact of online marketing campaigns on in-store and other offline sales, target individuals by geographic location and position your company to deliver a personalized experience regardless of which channels a customer uses. The solution should feature flexible data import capabilities

from data warehouses, transactional applications or other systems. It should also offer testing and validation functionality that enables you to ensure data is accurate and properly formatted, minimizing the risk of error in communicating with your customers.

**Does the solution allow you to measure the offline impact of online marketing initiatives?**

With consumers interacting with brands in multiple channels, it is obvious that online marketing programs will increase offline conversions.  In order to show the full value of online marketing — and thus defend and expand budgets — it is important to quantify this increase.  The vendor should have a mechanism for linking online and offline data, such that customers who see an ad and browse online, but convert elsewhere are tracked across channels, linking the initial marketing program through to the eventual conversion.

| Multichannel |
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| Does the solution permit you to input data that customers generate by offline activity to create a complete multichannel customer profile? |
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## Growth path and integration
### Support across the enterprise as it grows

**Is the vendor's overall offering, expertise and direction aligned with your marketing growth path and needs?**

The development of the web analytics market reveals distinct areas of expertise between vendors. From low-cost or even free pure-play analytics applications to enterprise-scale multisite digital marketing platforms, the market is now made up of vendors that embed analytics in a larger offering and vision that is geared to differing needs. In choosing a vendor, consider its wider portfolio of products and expertise. Are digital analytics highly relevant to your business? What kind of actionable information do you want from your analytics, and what sorts of actions do you want to be able to take? If your ultimate goal is marketing success, look for a vendor that provides a full suite of online and offline marketing optimization and execution capabilities that build off analytical data.

**What does the vendor offer to integrate analytics with in-house data warehouses, business intelligence and other predictive analytics?**

Marketers are increasingly finding value in mining their data warehouses for actionable insights into customer trends and tastes. A strong analytics solution will therefore avoid siloing analytical data outside of a usable context, and instead make the data relevant for different users who may be focused on content, marketing or pure analytics. Look for capabilities that leverage deep customer analytics to produce usable insights, and integration with predictive engines and other types of business intelligence for more effective mining of customer data.

**How practical does the vendor make it to integrate digital analytics into cross-channel CRM, campaign management solutions and other direct marketing tools?**

Too often digital marketers and customer relationship marketing groups operate in silos, and their disconnected marketing programs create poor customer experiences and missed opportunities to improve marketing results.  Ask the vendor how

practical they make it to bring these marketing efforts together. Are data integrations productized and supported? Do they require IT teams to manage data feeds and create custom programming to go from raw data feed data to marketing-ready information about customers? Does the functionality help with understanding the data trail from anonymous prospects that eventually register and become offline customers, or does this require custom data manipulation? Ask the vendor how they enable marketing to create compelling experiences via any channel and engage customers in cross-channel dialogues so they can deepen customer relationships, increase brand loyalty and customer lifetime value, and boost marketing results.

**What tools does the vendor provide for full integration with the digital marketing ecosystem: email, display ads, search, social?**

Digital marketing is not simply analytics. Once your analytics shows you actionable insights, offering the marketing tools to then leverage that information as well can be immensely useful. Consider your analytics vendor's product growth strategy and portfolio offerings around not only the collection of data, but its use as well. Look for seamless, native integration into email, display ad, search, mobile and social campaign management. The ideal solution will avoid building a silo around analytical data and instead share it seamlessly across the marketing platform for improved retargeting, segmentation and digital marketing execution.

**Does the vendor provide complementary business intelligence technologies to integrate with web analytics?**

In sizing up competing solutions, it's worthwhile to envision your organization's customer-oriented environment a year, two years or five years down the road. Many enterprises are already evolving towards an integrated view of customers that spans both online and offline realms and diverse solution sets. Therefore, it's important that your vendor have proven expertise in delivering cross-functional solutions for conventional (offline) customer analytics, using its own or third-party data warehousing and business intelligence technologies to leverage large volumes of offline customer data. The vendor should offer capacity for you to integrate online and offline data into a single repository and apply sophisticated analytics to support precise, personalized marketing across multiple channels. Look to avoid web analytics solutions that leave you with a data silo at the end of a cul-de-sac.

| Growth Path and Integration |
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| What does the vendor offer to integrate analytics with in-house data warehouses, business intelligence and other predictive analytics? |
| How practical does the vendor make it to integrate digital analytics into cross-channel CRM, campaign management solutions, and other direct marketing tools? |
| What tools does the vendor provide for full integration with the digital marketing ecosystem: email, display ads, search, social? |
| Does the vendor provide complementary business intelligence technologies to integrate with web analytics? |

## Service and company
### Get support and leverage innovation services from your vendor

**Is the vendor's pricing structure straightforward, understandable and trustworthy?**

You're entering what could well be a long-term relationship with your solution provider. It's imperative that relationship be based on trust, clarity, and value in pricing and the overarching business model. Ensure that subscriptions based on a software-as-a-service (SaaS) model are straightforward and readily understandable. It will pay off in the long run if your organization does thorough due diligence on the vendor's pricing scheme to ensure that you receive the service levels you expect, at the price you expect. Be on the lookout for potential "nickel and dime" charges that add up, and take pains to verify any potential additional fees if, in the future, you want to integrate solutions for email and display ads, product recommendations, and so forth. With an optimal solution, components will be fully and readily integrated at no additional charge.

**Does the vendor provide high-level customer service at no extra cost, and offer expert implementation by vendor personnel?**

As the success of your solution will depend in part on the quality of service and support you receive, carefully compare support pricing among your short-list candidates and pay particular attention to the scope of the vendor's support services. Make sure that you don't face unanticipated costs down the road for support that you expected would be covered by your subscription. You should expect an expert

implementation by highly trained and qualified vendor personnel, if you choose, and not be surprised to discover your implementation is to be done by a third-party contractor engaged by your primary vendor as a cost-cutting and revenue generation technique. Recognize the limitations of self-service support via message boards and static help documentation that are standard with no-cost solutions. Understand in detail who can place customer service tickets and how many tickets can be placed per period before the vendor charges additional fees. Additionally, a free solution does not equal zero total cost of ownership either. Look to ensure that your vendor's implementation personnel have expertise in your vertical to tailor your solution with industry-specific best practices.

**Is the vendor a trusted company with the assets and expertise to succeed and innovate?**

The evolution of web analytics and online marketing has been marked by ceaseless innovation. From relatively crude clickstream data capture of the late 1990s, today's best technology has matured into integrated solutions that drive quantifiable performance. It's important to align with a provider that you can trust to supply a platform that can adapt to future needs and deliver the innovations that you need to stay a step ahead of the competition. Key characteristics to look for include a pronounced vertical focus and an emphasis on the use of web analytics and online marketing to address distinct business challenges, such as building long-term loyalty among your customers across all touch points. The best solution vendors will continually reinvest in their products and, particularly with SaaS solutions, recognize that their own success depends on their customers' success.

| Service and Company |
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| Is the vendor's pricing structure straightforward, understandable and trustworthy? |
| Does the vendor provide high-level customer service at no extra cost and offer expert implementation by vendor personnel? |
| Is the vendor a trusted company with the assets and expertise to succeed and innovate? |
| Does the vendor possess complementary business intelligence technologies to integrate with web analytics? |

## Conclusion

The selection of a web analytics and online marketing solution is a high-stakes decision that can shape your company's fortunes for years to come, whether you're in the market for a new solution, looking to upgrade from a free system to a more robust solution or re-evaluating a solution you now have in place. It's vital that your decision-makers diligently scrutinize solution capabilities and vendor direction, anticipate future scenarios, examine for potential weaknesses and "gotchas" and ask the tough questions that ultimately help in the informed selection of the optimal solution for your needs.

## For more information

To learn more about IBM Coremetrics,
please contact your IBM marketing representative or
IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:
**ibm.com/**software/marketing-solutions.

## About IBM Enterprise Marketing Management

The IBM Enterprise Marketing Management (EMM) Suite is
an end-to-end, integrated set of capabilities designed
exclusively for the needs of marketing organizations.
Integrating and streamlining all aspects of online and offline
marketing, IBM's EMM Suite empowers organizations and
individuals to turn their passion for marketing into valuable
customer relationships and more profitable, timely and measur-
able business outcomes.

The IBM EMM Suite helps marketers understand customer
wants and needs and leverage that understanding to engage
buyers in highly relevant, interactive dialogs across digital,
social and traditional marketing channels. IBM EMM provides
robust web and customer analytics, event detection, campaign
management, real-time interaction management and
recommendations, lead management, digital marketing
optimization, email marketing, targeted advertising, search
engine marketing and marketing resource management
capabilities.

Over 2,500 organizations around the world use IBM EMM
solutions to help manage the pressures of increasing marketing
complexity while delivering improved revenue and measurable
results. IBM's time-tested and comprehensive offerings are
giving companies such as E*TRADE, ING, Orvis, PETCO,
United Airlines, Telefonica | Vivo and wehkamp.nl the power
and flexibility required to provide their customers and prospects
with what they expect today: a more consistent and relevant
brand experience across all channels.

## About IBM Coremetrics

IBM Coremetrics, a leading provider of web analytics and
marketing optimization solutions, helps businesses relentlessly
optimize their marketing programs to make the best offer, every
time, anywhere, automatically. More than 2,100 online brands
globally use Coremetrics Software as a Service (SaaS) to
optimize their online marketing. Coremetrics integrated
marketing optimization solutions include real-time personalized
recommendations, email targeting, display ad targeting across
leading ad networks, and search engine bid management. The
company's with Coremetrics solutions are delivered on the only
online analytics platform designed to anticipate the needs of
every customer, automate marketing decisions in real time and
syndicate information across all customer channels.