

Retail Customer Experience Management Buyers Guide

Software Provider and Product Assessment

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

***iSG** Research



Key Takeaways

Retail customer experience management (CXM) software has evolved from channel-specific systems to platforms designed to coordinate customer interactions across physical and digital environments. Earlier investments in commerce, point-of-sale (POS) and marketing tools improved reach but fragmented visibility and execution across the customer lifecycle. As customers move fluidly across channels, retailers require unified data, orchestration and real-time decisioning to maintain continuity. CXM platforms now emphasize journey-centric coordination and artificial intelligence (AI)-driven engagement to align marketing, commerce, fulfillment and service around shared outcomes.

Software Provider Summary

The ISG Buyers Guide™ for Retail Customer Experience Management evaluates 19 software providers offering products supporting customer lifecycle management, personalization and omnichannel engagement. The research ranked the top three overall leaders as Salesforce, NiCE and SAP. Providers were classified using weighted performance in Product Experience and Customer Experience for ISG quadrant placement. Adobe, Genesys, NiCE, Salesforce, SAP, Sprinklr, Talkdesk, Verint, Zendesk and Zoho were rated as Exemplary, with no providers rated as Innovative. No providers were rated as Assurance; and Birdeye, Braze, Emplifi, Freshworks, HubSpot, MoEngage, Netcore, Nextiva and Qualtrics were rated as Merit.

Product Experience Insights

Product Experience, representing 80% of the evaluation, focuses on Capability (30%) and Platform (50%), which includes adaptability, manageability, reliability and usability. Salesforce, NiCE and SAP achieved the highest performance as Leaders in this category, supported by strong integration across retail-specific systems such as commerce and order management and robust platform capabilities enabling scalability and governance across channels. Leaders demonstrated enterprise-grade platform capabilities across varied roles and contexts.

Customer Experience Value

Customer Experience, representing 20% of the evaluation, focuses on validation and TCO/ROI. Salesforce, NiCE and Verint were the Leaders in this category, showing strong customer advocacy and clear investment in success outcomes. Providers with lower performance often lacked publicly available customer validation or failed to demonstrate structured ROI measurement and proactive lifecycle engagement.

Strategic Recommendations

Prioritize platforms that unify customer data and orchestration across digital and physical channels to support consistent omnichannel experiences. Evaluate integration with core retail systems such as commerce, POS and fulfillment to ensure continuity of context and execution. Assess AI and analytics capabilities based on their ability to support real-time personalization and decisioning within operational constraints. Align CXM initiatives with cross-functional governance to coordinate marketing, merchandising and service around shared customer outcomes.



The Findings

The software providers and products evaluated in this research offer product and customer experiences, but not every feature is equally valuable to every enterprise or is needed to support the relevant business processes and use cases. Moreover, having too many product capabilities may be a negative factor for an enterprise if it introduces unnecessary complexity. Nonetheless, you may decide that a more comprehensive set of capabilities is important and meets your enterprise’s requirements.

An effective customer relationship with a software provider is vital to the success of any investment. The overall customer experience and the full lifecycle of engagement play a key role in ensuring satisfaction and long-term success. Providers with dedicated customer leadership, such as chief customer officers, tend to invest more deeply in these relationships and prioritize customer outcomes in line with TCO and ROI expectations. It is equally important that this commitment to customer success is evident throughout the provider’s website, the buying process and the customer journey.

Overall Scoring of Software Providers Across Categories

The research finds Salesforce atop the list, followed by NiCE and SAP. Providers that place in the top three of a category earn the designation of Leader. NiCE and Salesforce have done so in five categories; SAP in three; and Verint and Sprinklr in one category.

Retail CXM Overall		
Providers	Grade	Performance
Salesforce	B++	Leader 78.1%
NiCE	B++	Leader 76.3%
SAP	B+	Leader 73.5%
Verint	B+	73.4%
Sprinklr	B+	71.7%
Genesys	B+	70.3%
Adobe	B+	70.0%
Zoho	B+	70.0%
Zendesk	B	68.0%
Talkdesk	B	67.3%
Freshworks	B	66.9%
HubSpot	B	64.2%
Emplifi	B-	60.3%
Qualtrics	B-	58.1%
Nextiva	B-	58.0%
Netcore	C++	56.1%
Birdeye	C++	55.7%
MoEngage	C++	53.2%
Braze	C++	52.6%

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Keith Dawson leads the software research and advisory in the Customer Experience expertise at ISG, covering applications that facilitate engagement to optimize customer-facing processes. His coverage areas include agent management, contact center, CXM, field service, intelligent self-service and voice of the customer.



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