Data Migration

Market trends

There are several distinct market sectors within data migration. For example, there are specific application migrations to, for example, the latest version of SAP. Conversely, migration may be used as a discipline to support the implementation of MDM, which may not be application specific. Similarly, you may be migrating from one database to another or you may be developing a brand new application for which you want to reuse existing data.

In addition to this, you may want to archive some of your data at the same time as you migrate. According to our last survey of the data migration market, some 60% of all migration projects involve some degree of archival. Now, you may already have data archival and information lifecycle management products in place, or you may want to examine the market for a best-of-breed archiving solution (see Bloor Research's Market Report on database archiving). On the other hand you may want to source both your migration and archiving platform from the same vendor.

Again, some 50% of migration projects involve the need to mask data for security and compliance reasons and, as with archiving, you have various choices. All data quality and integration tools have transformation and rule-based capabilities so all such products support at least a limited masking capability. So, if you are purely interested in masking in terms of your migration project and not for wider use then you might decide that this is not something you need to separately license. Alternatively, you may opt for a best-of-breed solution (see the relevant Bloor Research Market Report) or, once more, you may want to choose a data migration platform that supports explicit data masking capabilities.

Next, there is the issue of zero-downtime migrations. These are not especially popular—they are expensive—but they do represent a specific sub-category within the market. Only a relatively few vendors have explicit support for zero-downtime environments.

One further consideration, and this represents a trend that we believe will grow, is the deployment of data quality tools without any data integration engine for migration purposes. This may need a little explanation. The fact is that all of the data quality vendors that do not have accompanying ETL (extract, transform and load) tools all have their own transformation engines: they have to because they do not have an ETL platform that they can exploit for this purpose when cleansing data. However, this same transformation capability can also be used to convert data into a format suitable for loading into the target database. All you need now is to be able to generate load files for relevant database and application environments and that's your migration. Of course, this may not be sufficient for very complex migration projects but for many it is more than adequate and, probably, significantly simpler and less costly.

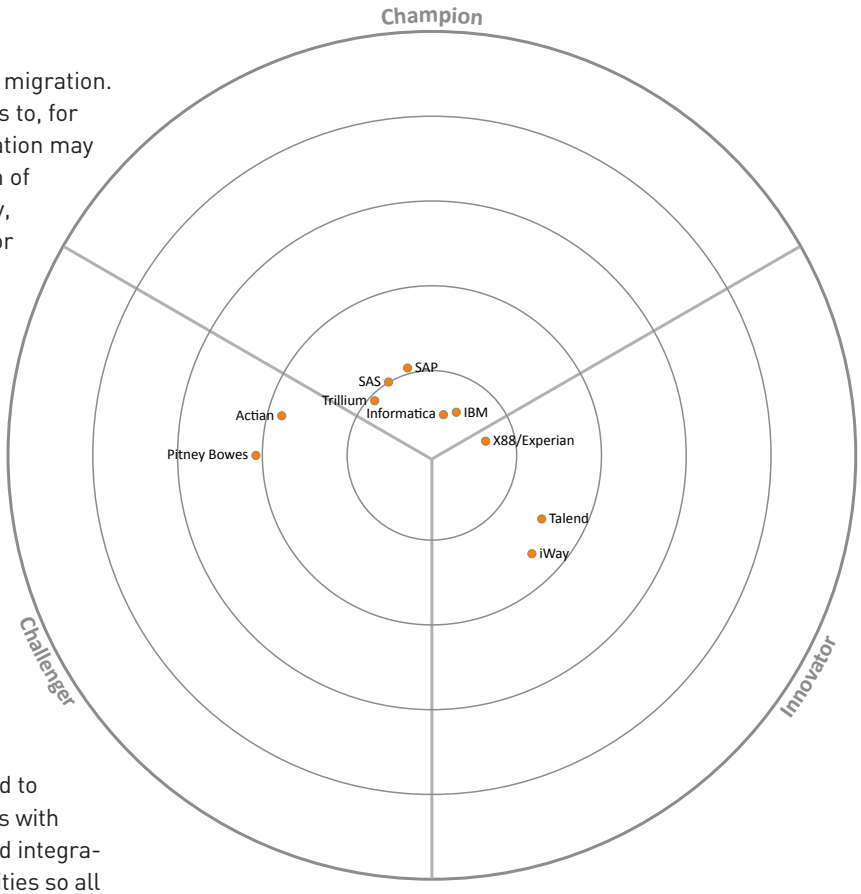

Figure 1: The highest scoring companies are nearest the centre. The analyst then defines a benchmark score for a domain leading company from their overall ratings and all those above that are in the champions segment. Those that remain are placed in the Innovator segment if their innovation rating is over 2.5 and Challenger if it is less than 2.5. The exact position in each segment is calculated based on their combined innovation and overall score.

In terms of the technology built into products, the main trend that seems to be emerging to support data migration are tools and/or capabilities that provide before and after comparisons of the data that allow you to check that the migrated data matches with what you expected.

One thing we would like to see adopted as a trend is the sort of reuse that Entota (see below) is encouraging through its Data Migration Portal. Put briefly, this focuses on the target, with the aim of being able to reuse target definitions, either because this is a consolidation or MDM project or something similar, or for future use when this target becomes a source that you ultimately migrate away from. In addition, Entota has aimed its portal as much at the business as at the IT department. This is important because the biggest source of delayed or cancelled data migration projects is quoted by users as "lack of business involvement" and anything that will help in this regard (like the business glossaries provided by many vendors) can only be helpful. While the Data Migration Portal was developed specifically to work with SAP environments we see no reason why a similar approach should not be adopted more widely.

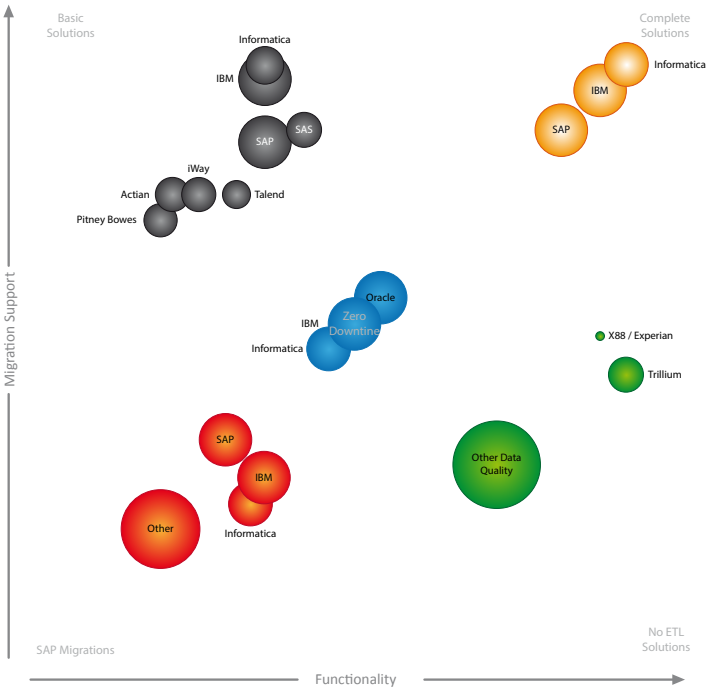

Figure 2: Market Map. The different coloured segments represent the different sectors of the market. Note that vendors may appear in multiple sections of the map. Within each grouping the further to the right the suppliers are, the richer their functionality and the higher they are the more complete is the data migration aspect of their solution. The larger the circle for each vendor the larger that company's share of this market.

The vendors

By the time this report is published SAP will have announced the SAP Accelerator for Data Services Migration by BackOffice Associates, which extends SAP's native capabilities for supporting data migrations by providing project management, reporting and auditing, and other functions. In addition, BackOffice Associates has just announced the acquisition of Entota, who's Data Migration Portal was discussed in the previous section. Add this to the package and it makes SAP's support for migrating its own environments compelling.

With the exception of the acquisition of Pervasive by Actian, which does not have any particular product implications, the most notable other change with respect to the vendors has been Experian's embedding of X88's Pandora into its product set and its re-branding from Experian QAS to Experian Data Quality, which reflects its intentions going forward. This is significant because X88 is perhaps the most active of the pure-play data quality vendors in addressing the data migration market. Whether Experian adopts this tack in the future remains to be seen. It will also be interesting to see if any of the other data quality vendors (most notably Trillium) start to actively target this market.

Apart from its zero-downtime migration capabilities we have omitted Oracle from diagrams (Figures 1 and 2) because a) the company did not respond to our requests for information and b) although the company offers its own data quality capabilities it also continues to resell Trillium Software products. We have also omitted Microsoft DQS (Data Quality Services) for the primary reason that it is focused on SQL Server and is not a general-purpose tool. As DQS comes with SQL Server it is only likely that readers will be interested in other tools if they have found DQS insufficient for their purposes. We have also left out Global IDs, at the company's request, even though we know from experience that its product portfolio has significant capabilities in this area.

The Landscape Diagram shown in Figure 1 is for general-purpose migrations. In particular, this means that it excludes the BackOffice Associates products that are co-marketed with SAP for SAP-specific environments.

Summary

Data migration continues to de-risk. Reuse and the automation that results from reuse are interesting developments moving forward. However, the big question mark remains the persuasion of the business that data migration is a business issue. Unfortunately, this is as much a political matter as it is technical one: you can lead a horse to water ... Until this is resolved—and it may take until the next generation of management (that has a better understanding of IT)—this will remain a concern.

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