

The age of Data Quality: Siebel CRM Q&A



An interview with Charles O'Neill,
Principal Siebel Consultant at Experian Data Quality

The CRM market is evolving. SaaS deployments are heavily on the rise and it's leading to a watershed moment for on-premise CRM owners.



Projects will undoubtedly be underway to decide future CRM strategies and for those who desire (or require) an on-premise solution this period of analysis presents a clear opportunity to address long standing issues, such as data quality, to breathe life into CRM applications. We talk to our resident Siebel expert and Principal Siebel Consultant, Charles O'Neill, about why CRM owners should be thinking about data quality now, more than ever.



Hi Charles, can you tell us a little about your role at Experian Data Quality?

Hi, I'm the lead consultant for the development and implementation of Siebel-led data quality solutions and the resulting service-based requirements of our clients. I've been working in the data quality industry

for a number of years and more specifically specialising in Siebel CRM for the last five.

I support our clients with the planning and execution of data quality projects

within Siebel CRM, and I've got a keen focus on helping our clients integrate functionality that works in 'real-time', thus improving their business processes and decision making capability as a result.



In your opinion, what does the current market landscape look like for Siebel CRM owners?

It's no secret that the CRM landscape is changing. With the emergence of a larger number of CRM players over the last decade and the Market's move towards SaaS implementations, we've seen less market dominance from the traditional on-premise vendors such as Siebel and SAP.

That's not to say there isn't still strong support for CRM systems such as Siebel, particularly amongst more complex, global enterprises. In 2012, Siebel still accounted for 11.1% of all CRM sales*, plus, Oracle recently

announced a product roadmap for Siebel that extends beyond 2019.

Decision makers are still uncertain regarding the security and functionality of cloud-based technology and therefore the market for systems such as Siebel CRM will remain popular. Siebel owners do have considerations to make; are they going to stick with on-premise technology? Is Siebel still the correct vehicle for their business? Can they breathe extra life into their legacy systems?

This period of flux is the opportune time for Siebel owners to consider other factors that impact the effectiveness of their systems, such as data quality.



You mention data quality as a focus area for Siebel CRM owners, why is it so important?

Data quality is absolutely critical to every organisation, no matter its size, as it impacts every stage of the customer lifecycle, as well as many important business functions. This is particularly relevant to CRM owners, who are responsible for the functionality, accuracy and effectiveness of their systems.

Generally, CRM systems house the majority of the 'customer' information that a business acquires over its lifetime. If that CRM system contains incorrect information or duplicate records, for example, then an organisation's ability to make accurate decisions is diluted. If the data they are using to gain insight on their customers and prospects is flawed, how can they expect to make informed decisions?

Poor quality reference data can lead to a lot of other issues as well, such as poor customer experience through incorrect records, ineffective audience targeting for marketing and sales activity and inefficient business processes. All of which will cost an organisation time and money to fix.



Why doesn't every organisation have a clear data quality strategy for their Siebel CRM implementation?

There are a vast range of barriers to effective data quality within Siebel.

Traditionally, data quality initiatives have struggled to find a home. In many organisations data quality isn't owned by one team in particular and therefore doesn't command the attention from the board that it should. This lack of clarity over ownership means that data quality projects often take a back seat as more pressing projects are dealt with first.

Organisations also find it hard to assign a value to their data. Without a value there is little chance of convincing the board that data quality is an initiative worth backing, as it's hard for them to see the numbers stacking up favourably. This in turn means organisations continue to use out-of-date, and often manual, data quality techniques as they can't secure the funding to implement the technology or resource that they require.

However, we're seeing increasingly, the creation of specific data quality roles. Individuals or teams whose sole responsibility it is to manage the accuracy and reliability of the organisation's data. These organisations are leading from the front, recognising how important data quality has become to driving efficient operations and influencing customer perception.



Why is it currently a good time to start addressing data quality issues within Siebel CRM?

As discussed earlier, it really is a watershed moment for Siebel owners. With the growing popularity and ease of deploying SaaS solutions, it's time for them to take stock and decide their future CRM strategy.

For many, Siebel CRM will remain the perfect CRM tool for their organisation, due to its scope of functionality and security. For those with ageing systems, the development roadmap publicised by Oracle and the evolution of technology (such as

the introduction of Open UI) will be of comfort, as it will provide them with various flexible options in the future.

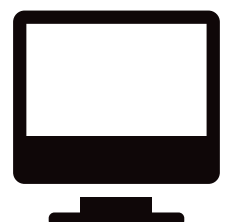
Critically, now is the ideal time to consider data quality. It is a key driver in high performance CRM and has to be right at the top of the consideration list as it impacts on so many elements of the business and can extend the life of your CRM system.

Given the strategic conversations around Siebel CRM that will no doubt

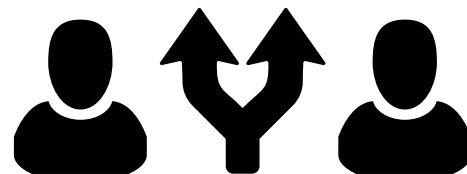
be taking place at both management and board level, it's the ideal time for Siebel owners to gain buy-in and revenue support for their data quality initiatives.

Ultimately, if a Siebel owner can communicate the importance of data quality and assign a value to its delivery, then the board will view project submissions much more favourably.

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“The availability of integrated, real-time solutions is changing the way Siebel owners approach data quality.”



What support can organisations get to help cement their Siebel CRM data quality strategies?

Organisations have a number of options when looking to support their data quality strategy. There is a wide range of tools and functionality on the market as well as organisations with the experience and expertise to help plan and execute a robust data quality strategy.

In terms of technology, this has really moved forwards over the last few years, to the point where you can buy off-the-shelf solutions that automate

many day-to-day data quality activities, in order to drive efficiencies and reduce costs. The availability of integrated, real-time solutions is changing the way Siebel owners approach data quality.

For those organisations that lack the time or internal expertise to roll-out a robust data quality strategy within Siebel CRM there is now expert support at hand. Organisations, such as Experian Data Quality, have a

vast wealth of CRM knowledge and strategic data quality insight. When coupled with the advancements in technology in recent years it gives Siebel CRM owners the ideal platform to tackle data quality within their systems.

About Experian Data Quality

Experian Data Quality has built up exceptional market coverage assisting customers with their unique data quality challenges. We provide a comprehensive toolkit for data quality projects combining our market leading software with a vast scope of reference data assets and services. Our mission is to put our customers in a position to make the right decisions from accurate and reliable data. The size and scope of data management projects varies considerably but the common factor in all ventures is unlocking operational efficiency and improving customer engagement. We see the potential of data. Whether it's in enabling ambulances to be sent to the exact location of an emergency or supporting financial organisations to ensure they remain compliant against regulations - data accuracy makes all the difference to service provision.

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