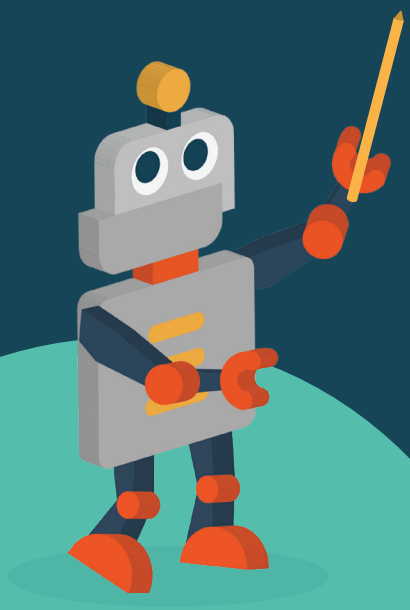
CHOOSING THE PERFECT MARKETING AUTOMATION PLATFORM FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Comparing the **Top 5** Marketing Automation Platforms and the business cases they suit best.





MARKETING AUTOMATION CORP

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MARKETING AUTOMATION CORP

What is Marketing Automation?

At face value, marketing automation might sound like a novelty.
But in this day and age, it's the opposite. It's a necessity.
Imagine having a super-efficient assistant for your business (one that never sleeps!) Its existence is dedicated to promoting your company's products or services.

Marketing automation (MA) software automates repetitive tasks, such as...

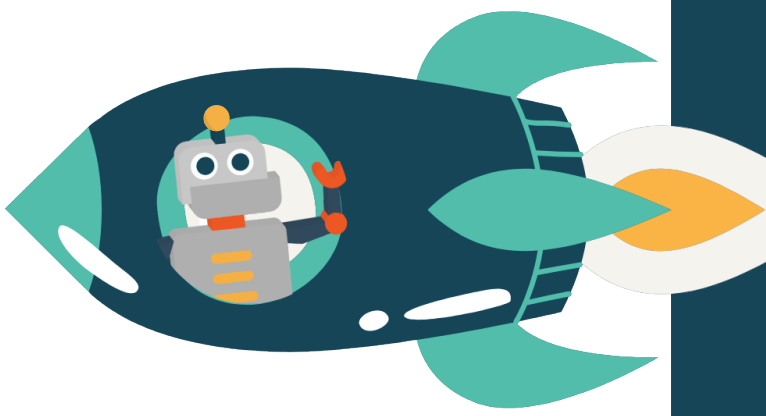
- Website inquiries from alerting the team, to sending responses, to scheduling tasks
- Qualifying leads
- Logging engagement data
- Organizing and cleansing customer data
- Sending personalized emails
- Managing events and webinars, from registration to follow up and beyond

MA solutions allow you to reach the right customers, at the right time, with the right message. This is achieved through a combination of automated processes and personalized marketing efforts.

One of the key benefits of using MA is its ability to free up time for your human employees. By automating time-consuming tasks, you can focus on more important aspects, such as strategy development and customer relationship management.

MA makes it possible for businesses of any size to compete with larger corporations by providing equal opportunities to reach and engage with customers.

As you can see, MA is an essential tool for modern businesses looking to stay relevant and competitive in today's digital world. With its capability to personalize, boost sales, and accurately measure the success of marketing campaigns, it is no wonder that MA has become a must-have for every business.



So, How Do You Select the Right MA Platform?

If you're in charge of choosing your company's marketing automation platform, you may feel overwhelmed by the many options available.

You're not alone. With new features and updates emerging every few months, keeping up to date on the strengths and weaknesses of each platform can be a daunting task.

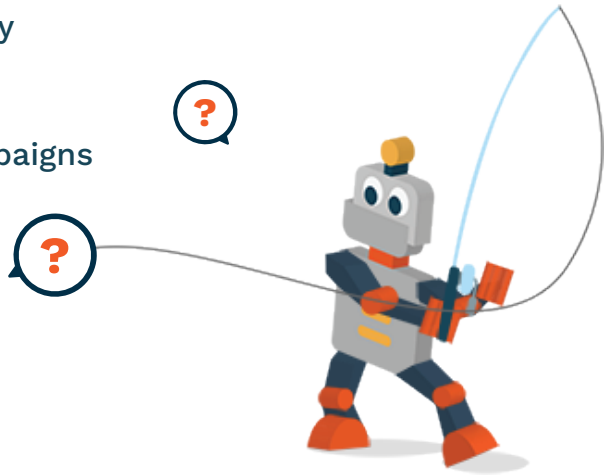
You might be wondering...

- How much time will each platform take to configure and stand up? Are some platforms simpler than others to configure?
- Which platform will my team be able to learn to use confidently and effectively—with minimal training involved?
- How flexible is each platform to be able to do what we want? Will we run into limitations that could hinder our business strategy, forcing us to undergo a costly and labor-intensive migration?
- Which platform is the most time-efficient to use daily?
- Which platform integrates best with my CRM/tech stack? Do any not play well with our most critical technologies?
- What is the cost difference between platforms, and will I even use the added benefits a higher price tag gets me?
- How well do the reporting options in each platform support my KPIs? What level of revenue attribution analytics will we get from each platform—in order to power our decision-making?

So, let's circle back to the question—how do you determine which marketing automation platform is right for your organization? Clearly, the answer isn't so black and white. It depends on several factors, including:

- The size and structure of your company
- Your budget
- Your specific goals and needs
- The complexity of your marketing campaigns

Today, we'll unpack each of these factors and help you understand which marketing automation platform is right for your organization.



What to Expect From This Guide

Marketing automation platforms deliver valuable data-driven insights, offer massive-scale personalization, and provide a comprehensive view of the customer's journey.

However, the task of selecting an ideal platform can be challenging for organizations, with major stumbling blocks including integration issues, lack of adaptability, scalability hurdles, and the need for extensive training and support.

This guide aims to shed light on this process by offering an in-depth comparison of top-tier platforms, including: Hubspot, Adobe Marketo Engage, Salesforce Marketing Cloud, Salesforce Pardot, and Oracle Eloqua. We're here to help you find the one that aligns best with your organization's needs.

In evaluating each platform, we will consider the following criteria:

- Integration Capabilities: Can it seamlessly blend with your existing tech stack?
- Flexibility: Does it offer the ability to tailor features to your specific needs?
- Scalability: Can it keep pace with your organization's growth and evolving requirements?
- Ease of Use: How easy is it to start using efficiently and effectively?

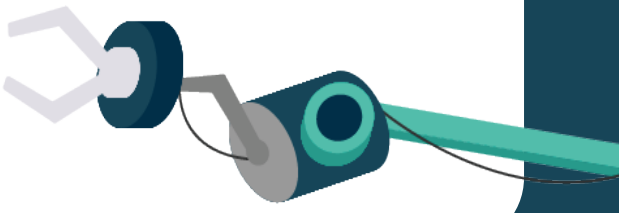
Each platform has strengths and weaknesses—often with trade-offs. For example, some platforms may be easier to use than others, but have more limitations because of that. Other platforms may be more complicated and time-consuming to initially set up, but will be more scalable for years to come.

Our in-house certified experts are offering their unbiased opinions on each of the platforms to help organizations like yours make an informed decision.

Disclaimer: This guide is intended to provide a starting point for your research and evaluation. Ultimately, you know your organization best and should select the platform that best aligns with your specific goals and needs.

With that in mind, we're about to explore our top picks for marketing automation platforms.

But first, it's only polite to introduce ourselves!



Intro to MAC—That's Us!

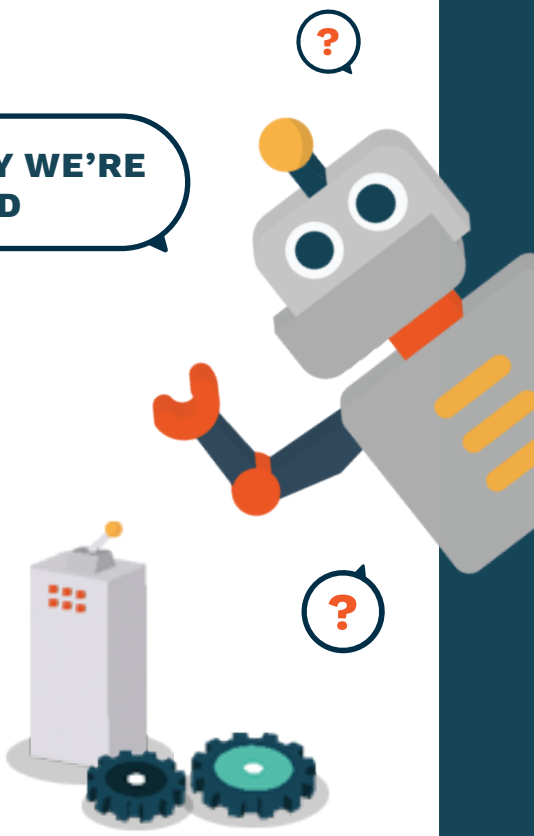
We're Marketing Automation Corp. (or MAC for short!) MAC provides expert, certified MA and Salesforce consulting — from strategy to development and beyond.

Our 60+ consultants are passionate about helping clients save time and supercharge their company growth by optimizing their marketing automation and CRM strategy. With over 15 years in the industry, 1,250+ clients served, and a 4.8-star rating on G2 Crowd, MAC is a key leader in the marketing automation consulting space.

We provide expert consultation and management of top platforms like:

- Adobe Marketo Engage
- Hubspot
- Salesforce Marketing Cloud
- Oracle Eloqua
- Salesforce Pardot
- Salesforce
- Microsoft Dynamics 365
- WordPress

READ WHY WE'RE #1 RANKED



We're here for you if you need assistance with:

- MAP / CRM implementations, migrations, or mergers
- MarTech stack audits and strategic plans
- Personalized buyer journeys & lead nurture strategies
- Solutions architecture & custom development
- Managed services
- Scoring models & lead lifecycle
- Design & branding services
- Website development and maintenance
- Database management
- Revenue attribution & reporting

...and much more!

Whatever your needs, MAC is your reliable partner in driving your organization's marketing success.

Our Expert Analysis of 5 Leading Marketing Automation Platforms

Without further ado, let's dive into our expert analysis of the top five marketing automation platforms. These platforms have been selected based on their popularity, robust features, customer reviews, and our own hands-on experience.

Adobe Marketo Engage

Adobe Marketo Engage is a robust marketing automation platform designed to help organizations streamline and automate their marketing processes.

Known for its advanced lead management and large-scale marketing capabilities, it's a popular choice among both B2B and B2C businesses of various sizes.



Integration Capabilities: 8/10

Marketo Engage demonstrates strong integration capabilities with various technologies. Marketo's native integration with Salesforce is its most notable strength.

One of the most critical aspects of the buyer journey is the handoff from the marketing team to the sales team. Marketo makes this process seamless with the easy-to-configure and smooth-running back-end link.

Marketo Sales Insights (MSI) is a particularly beneficial tool, allowing marketers to configure automations to log and share “interesting moments” with the sales team.

In turn, the sales team can choose specific emails and nurture journeys to push the lead into via their Salesforce view.

Beyond that, Marketo sports many LaunchPoint integrations for Webinars (On24, WebEx, GoToWebinar, Zoom, and to name a few), and Paid Ads (Facebook, Google, LinkedIn). It integrates with other platforms using webhooks, which make the options limitless.

We docked points because there are only 17 easy-to-configure LaunchPoint integrations available. Other integrations will need to be set up using a webhook, which requires a little more technical know-how.

Flexibility: 9/10

Marketo’s most prominent strength is its flexibility. From data fields, to program types, to campaign statuses—Marketo has the flexibility to build a system that suits your organization.

In particular, smart campaign filters and flow steps can be combined by simply dragging and dropping, making it easy to send emails, add leads to nurtures, trigger alerts to your team, clean up data, and more.

Scoring model flexibility is a particular strength. Whereas other platforms face limitations around the scoring model options, Marketo allows users to create as many scoring fields as they like, and completely customize the smart lists and flows—meaning you can have multiple models running in tandem. This opens up lots of possibilities for creative technical strategies!

On the design side, Marketo sports modular email and landing page templates, providing a drag-and-drop interface for building stunning marketing materials.

We docked one point because we sometimes run into limitations with non-core modules, like ABM, being less flexible.

Scalability: 9/10

Marketo was built to scale. There are many layers for permissions, which allow admins to limit who can see, edit, approve and/or send what. This can be extremely handy for enforcing processes in larger companies.

Marketo's workspaces and partitions feature allows different business units or sister companies to have their own space, with their own database. This allows multiple teams to use the same platform, independently of one another. This helps segment the database, and it ensures leads aren't over-marketed to.

Finally, Marketo is part of the greater Adobe Experience Cloud. This means there is a suite of other platforms available that make it ideal for scaling—including Adobe Journey Optimizer, Adobe Marketo Measure (previously known as Bizible), and Adobe Experience Manager to name a few.

We docked a point because, like many Marketing Automation tools, Marketo is priced based on database size. So, for larger databases (we're talking 500k+), the annual technology fee can become a bit pricey.

Ease of Use: 7/10

The flip side of high flexibility is usability.

While Marketo's interface is very intuitive, architecting it to serve you well not only now, but well into the future, requires a little more strategy and planning.

This is because Marketo is like a blank canvas, whereas other platforms that are easier to use, like Hubspot or Pardot, are more "paint-by-number."

In Marketo, you can essentially design and build whatever you dream up. Some other platforms have more “lines” to guide you, but they also come with more limitations.

In our expert opinion, with a little bit of forethought, the benefit gained from Marketo’s flexibility far outweighs the challenges brought forth from a usability perspective.

Hubspot

HubSpot is a prominent player in the marketing automation landscape, known for its user-friendly interface and rich feature set. It offers a comprehensive solution for both marketing and sales teams, making it a popular choice for small to medium-sized businesses. (But we must say—the Enterprise plan is great, too!)



Integration Capabilities: 9/10

With the acquisition of PieSync, a leading data synchronization and integration company, HubSpot significantly expanded its capabilities. Today, it boasts over 500 built-in integrations with a diverse array of software applications and services.

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In our expert opinion, with a little bit of forethought, the benefit gained from Marketo’s flexibility far outweighs the challenges brought forth from a usability perspective.

Hubspot’s native integration with Salesforce streamlines sales, marketing, and service teams globally. With the addition of custom object sync along with ticket synchronization, they’ve expanded the capabilities of all teams and eliminated the silos.

This integration ensures seamless data flow and communication across departments, leading to improved efficiency, productivity, and better customer experiences overall.

With native integrations with G2 and Demandbase, you’ll be able to drive campaigns based on intent.

If you can't find what you need in HubSpot’s App Marketplace, HubSpot's API endpoints offer flexibility by providing access to tailored endpoints for specific objects. These endpoints facilitate batch or bulk requests, simplifying the management of extensive datasets. With the incorporation of custom objects, the possibilities become limitless.

Despite the plethora of native integrations offered by HubSpot, we've noted a limitation. Custom API integrations and webhooks may require developer expertise and technical knowledge, which may be a drawback for some users.

Flexibility: 7/10

HubSpot offers a wide range of flexible features that empower organizations to scale and grow within their platform.

On the design front, like Marketo, HubSpot provides modular emails, landing pages, and website templates. These templates can be customized either through custom coding for advanced users or via a user-friendly drag-and-drop interface for those with less technical expertise, enabling users of all skill levels to create stunning marketing materials.

Moreover, for organizations with multiple brands or business units, HubSpot offers robust segmentation capabilities. Users can easily segment their marketing materials by business units, ensuring that each brand receives tailored messaging that resonates with its target audience. This feature enables organizations to maintain brand consistency while accommodating diverse marketing needs across different segments of their business.

It's important to recognize that HubSpot has some limitations, notably the lack of global forms and a hierarchical folder system. This means that users must update each form individually, which can be time-consuming. There's less organizational structure for managing campaigns and assets compared to some other platforms.

For lead scoring and prioritization, Hubspot has set scoring fields, meaning they simply do not allow the level of customization that Marketo does.

However, despite these drawbacks, HubSpot remains a powerful tool due to its overall flexibility and versatility, making it ideal for organizations aiming to create and manage impactful marketing campaigns.

Scalability: 8/10

HubSpot facilitates organizational scalability and consolidation by providing a comprehensive platform. Comparable to Marketo, HubSpot offers multi-layered permission settings, empowering administrators to control access levels for viewing, editing, approving, and sending content—a valuable feature for enforcing processes within large enterprises.

HubSpot's Business Units feature enables brands to segment and operate within a unified HubSpot instance. This functionality allows for the segregation of contacts and marketing materials, facilitating the management of multiple brands within a single platform.

Tailored subscription types and Hubs cater to the specific needs of diverse organizations, offering flexibility and customization options. By centralizing data storage, HubSpot mitigates silos, fostering collaboration and efficiency across teams.

The addition of Ops Hub broadens HubSpot's functionalities, facilitating the creation of custom-coded workflows and seamless data integration. However, we've noted a constraint with the linkage of contacts and subsidiary companies with shared domain IDs.

Without a unique domain or website address specified in the contact object, linking subsidiary companies via the parent/child structure in HubSpot requires manual intervention. It poses challenges without a customized solution.

Ease of Use: 9/10

HubSpot's platform stands out for its user-friendly interface, offering segmented hubs tailored for marketing, sales, service, and more. This facilitates effortless navigation and access to specific features.

The Training Academy provides comprehensive resources, empowering users to unlock the platform's full potential and streamline their work more effectively.

A variety of templates are available for design and automation tasks, which help to streamline processes and accelerate tasks. Live chat support ensures quick assistance, elevating the user experience and fostering productivity.

Salesforce Marketing Cloud

Salesforce Marketing Cloud is another powerhouse in the marketing automation industry, known for its seamless integration with Salesforce CRM and advanced segmentation tools.

It's particularly favored by enterprise-level businesses that want to conduct multichannel marketing automation, including email, mobile, ads, social media, and web.



Integration Capabilities: 8.5/10

Salesforce Marketing Cloud flawlessly integrates with Salesforce CRM using Marketing Cloud Connect. This integration offers a 360-degree view of customers' interactions across various channels. It allows marketers to access Marketing Cloud functionality within the Salesforce CRM interface to provide a view of marketing activities.

SFMC also provides a robust set of APIs that allow developers to integrate Marketing Cloud with external systems and applications.

With SFMC's flexible architecture, organizations can develop custom integrations tailored to their specific requirements. Whether integrating with internal systems or third-party solutions, SFMC provides the necessary tools and documentation to facilitate custom integrations.

SFMC provides lots of great options for integrations, but those integrations with systems can be complex, especially for organizations with limited technical expertise. Configuring and managing integrations may require specialized skills and resources, which can result in longer implementation times and increased costs.

Flexibility: 8/10

Recognized for its deep customization and personalization of content, SFMC offers features for email, mobile, social, and digital advertising. Users can create dynamic content and utilize A/B testing to optimize campaigns. Its flexibility is evident in its email and template customization options.

SFMC's Journey Builder is a powerful tool that enables marketers to design and automate customer journeys based on specific triggers, interactions, and behaviors. Marketers can create dynamic, multi-step journeys that guide customers through various stages of the marketing funnel, from awareness to conversion and advocacy.

Some users, however, feel that many of the features are overdeveloped and require significant resources to implement. If you don't have in-house Salesforce experts, the platform might be difficult to manage.

Features like lead scoring is not available out-of-the-box which limits the potential to use SFMC for B2B use cases, making it more suited for B2C customers.

Scalability: 8/10

Designed for startups and enterprise-level businesses alike, Salesforce Marketing Cloud provides a comprehensive platform for multi-channel marketing automation. It's well-suited to handle the needs of small and large organizations alike, meaning it can easily keep pace with organizational growth and evolving requirements.

SFMC offers scalable data management capabilities for storing

and processing large volumes of customer data, including subscriber lists, contact records, and interaction data. The platform's data architecture is designed to support data-intensive marketing activities. (Think audience segmentation, personalization, and campaign analytics.)

On the downside, SFMC may be a bit on the expensive side, because it requires highly technical resources to manage the complexities.

Ease of Use: 6.5/10

SFMC provides a unified interface that allows marketers to access various tools and functionalities from a single dashboard. The user interface is intuitive and user-friendly, making it easy for marketers to navigate through different modules and perform tasks efficiently.

Despite Salesforce offering detailed training and certification through its Trailhead online learning platform, some users find the system complex to learn and have reported challenges with customer support responsiveness. Segmentation in SFMC typically involves using SQL, a programming language for storing and processing information in a relational database, so having SQL knowledge and technical coding capabilities is a must to make use of SFMC's advanced segmentation capabilities.

It has a steep learning curve, especially for users who are new to the platform or lack experience with marketing automation tools. Marketers may require training and hands-on experience to fully understand SFMC's features, functionalities, and best practices.

Salesforce Pardot

Salesforce Pardot is an easy-to-use marketing automation solution that is well-integrated with Salesforce, targeting B2B organizations with its functionality. However, it differs from its competitors in some important ways.

Integration Capabilities

7/10



Flexibility

7/10



Scalability

6/10



Ease of Use

6/10



Integration Capabilities: 7/10

Salesforce Pardot integrates effectively with Salesforce CRM, a feature that is critical for many businesses—particularly for updating lead owners and other information.

However, compared to its competitors, Pardot may lack some advanced native integration features. Although it offers the possibility to do it through connectors, there are also some external actions and activities. All these are limited to the connection features.

Account Engagement API Version 5 launched a few years back. It can be used when the native integrations or third-party integrators are not suitable. However, it's not very integration-friendly, which influences Pardot's overall score in this category.

Flexibility: 7/10

Pardot provides various marketing automation features and excels in automating marketing activities like setting up lead generation forms and email campaigns.

When you're considering the field sync behavior, you can determine which field value wins (MCAE, Salesforce, or the most recent one). It also has a user-friendly interface for viewing flows through engagements, which can be used for operational purposes or lead nurturing.

However, Pardot lags in areas like email and landing page design. It does not offer modular templates, which allow code-free, drag and drop builds, like you'll find in some other platforms. Pardot's email builder calls for HTML coding, instead.

From a lead management perspective, Pardot is the most limited of all the platforms when it comes to scoring. Not only are there set fields (unlike Marketo, which allows many scoring fields and models to be developed simultaneously), but it also has preset triggers. For instance, whereas in Marketo, you could have different scores set for whether a "Request pricing" form was filled out, vs if a "Sign up for newsletter" form was filled, Pardot only allows you to define one score value for the action "Form submission". If nuanced lead scoring is important to your marketing strategy, Pardot might not be the best option for you.

Finally, whereas in other platforms, you are able to group various items together (reports, emails, and flows, for instance) according to campaign, Pardot does not have such filing structures. All emails are found in one place, all reports, etc. From an organizational perspective, you need to be very mindful of what you're doing—because the platform can become cluttered and confusing very quickly.

Scalability: 6/10

If you're already benefiting from Salesforce CRM, meet its ally—Pardot. This tool enhances your B2B marketing automation.

Also, the fact that it has shared objects eliminates the need to create the same record twice. One example is the Campaigns.

However, let's be real—when it comes to advanced automation like Scoring and Lifecycle, Pardot may not outshine some competitors.
If you're seeking complex automation capabilities, this could be a hurdle from using automation tools. There are other platforms that will help you more effectively manage completion actions, engagements, and overall efficiency.

Ease of Use: 6/10

Users have reported varied experiences with Pardot's customer support. While it offers a solid range of functionalities and integrates well with Salesforce, users have reported issues with platform bugs and slower performance.

The user interface is also considered less intuitive than Sales or Service Cloud, making navigation and basic tasks more complex. With the transition from a standalone platform like Pardot, to an integrated platform like Marketing Cloud Account Engagement, there are some features that are duplicated. This can create a lot of confusion.

These factors suggest that while Pardot offers significant support, there are areas for improvement, particularly regarding user experience and responsiveness to issues.

Oracle Eloqua

Oracle Eloqua sets itself apart as a marketing automation platform through its sophisticated targeting capabilities and comprehensive customer data management.

It excels at nurturing prospects with personalized content across multiple channels, enabling marketers to craft customized campaigns that resonate deeply with their audience.

What distinguishes Oracle Eloqua from other platforms is its robust integration with Oracle's suite of CX products and its emphasis on enterprise-scale solutions, catering to the complex needs of large organizations.

Let’s take a closer look at how this platform stacks up in our comparison.



Integration Capabilities: 7/10

Oracle Eloqua, part of the Oracle product ecosystem, provides good integration capabilities. It offers numerous benefits in terms of centralized data management, improved lead management, and enhanced campaign performance.

Integration with CRM systems like Salesforce enables seamless synchronization of leads between Eloqua and the CRM. This integration ensures that sales and marketing teams have access to up-to-date lead information, improving lead nurturing and conversion processes. Integration with analytics platforms enables you to track and analyze the performance of marketing campaigns across channels.

However, certain limitations have been identified. For example, integrating Eloqua with other systems can be complex and may require technical expertise. Configuring integrations, mapping data fields, and troubleshooting issues may pose challenges, especially for organizations with limited IT resources or experience.

Flexibility: 6/10

Eloqua offers a range of functionalities and is especially noted for the ease with which campaigns can be set up. Eloqua supports multi-channel engagement across email, mobile, social media, web, and advertising channels. Marketers can orchestrate integrated campaigns that span multiple touchpoints, ensuring consistent messaging and brand experiences across channels.

Marketers can create personalized dynamic content blocks, email templates, and landing pages that adapt to individual customer profiles, ensuring relevant and engaging experiences.

Even so, its flexibility is somewhat hampered by its restrictive reporting capabilities and limitations on customization in general architecture. Users have highlighted this as an area where improvement could enhance the overall flexibility of the tool.

Scalability: 8/10

Ideal for large enterprises, Oracle Eloqua demonstrates a strong ability to handle complex and growing marketing needs. Its robust nature and the breadth of its features make it a highly scalable solution, capable of expanding in line with a business' growth.

It is designed to handle large volumes of data, including contact records, campaign metrics, and engagement data. Marketers can design sophisticated nurture campaigns, lead scoring models, and segmentation rules that adapt to changes in audience size and behavior.

Scaling Eloqua requires careful planning and configuration to ensure optimal performance and resource utilization. It requires technical expertise in system administration and database management to ensure data integrity and security while handling large volumes of data.

Ease of Use: 7/10

Oracle Eloqua provides a user-friendly interface that allows marketers to navigate through the platform easily. The dashboard layout and menu options are organized logically, making it simple for users to access different features and functionalities. Its drag-and-drop content builder allows marketers to create visually appealing emails, landing pages, and forms without requiring extensive coding knowledge.

Oracle offers comprehensive training and support resources for Eloqua users, including documentation, tutorials, webinars, and online forums. While Eloqua offers a wide range of features and functionalities, the platform can be complex for users who are new to marketing automation or lack experience with similar platforms.

Marketers may find it challenging to navigate through advanced features, set up complex workflows, and optimize campaigns effectively. There is also a steep learning curve for new users. Some errors require technical support.

While not a significant deterrent, this aspect slightly affects its score in the training and support category.

Make 2024 the Year You Automate Your Marketing!

Still stuck on which marketing automation platform is best for your business? MAC is here to help you make the most informed decision possible. You can also count on us to ensure seamless integration of the chosen platform into your existing tech stack and provide ongoing support to help you maximize the benefits of your new MA platform.

Don't wait! Embrace the future of marketing today with MAC.

Contact us to discover the perfect marketing automation solution for your business. We're ready—are you?

MAC team is an integral part of our automation strategy

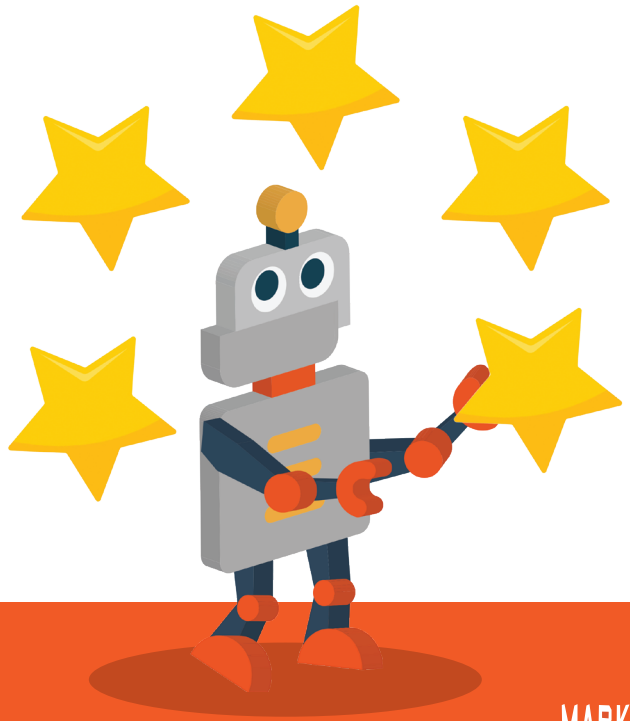
★★★★★

Excellent support and dependable expertise from MAC...

★★★★★

Responsive and highly qualified consulting...

★★★★★





LET'S TALK

