



10 Questions to Ask Before Considering a Customer Data Platform



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It is increasingly vital for enterprises to deliver rewarding, hyper-personalized experiences across all customer interactions, across all channels. To deliver these experiences, enterprises must start with clean and consistent customer data. Reliable customer data must be available to all functional areas, not just to marketing. Many organizations struggle with selecting the right solution to consolidate, organize and distribute the customer data. Many consider Customer Data Platform(CDP) to solve the challenge.

CDP has become an increasingly confusing martech segment where various tools deliver different values. But is a CDP the right solution for you? Do you have the right foundational elements ready to implement a CDP? Will the CDP solution deliver your business objectives across the enterprise?

This checklist helps ask those questions so that your enterprise can select the right solution.



1 Do you need to use customer data across the enterprise, beyond marketing campaigns?

What to look for: Evaluate if you need consistent and holistic customer data across the enterprise for omnichannel engagement and digital transformation, or you just need it for your marketing project to optimize campaigns and engagement. Customer data is a valuable enterprise asset used by support, finance, order management, and many others. Having consistent data across all channels and functional groups is crucial for consistent and connected customer experience. You need a trusted customer data foundation for all your downstream digital and non-digital systems such as field service applications, POS, loyalty platforms, and support applications.

2 Does the CDP solution provide identity resolution on more than just rudimentary attributes such as email?

What to look for: Your data comes in different formats and from various sources - internal, external, and 3rd-party sources. Matching data just based on basic attributes such as email or phone is not sufficient. You require a comprehensive solution that provides you an option to use all profile attributes for smart matching and identity resolution. Easy to configure match rules, support for fuzzy logic for nickname matching, and executing all matching in real-time are critical factors to get the best out of your solution. Also consider that the best in class platforms today offer smart matching through a combination of rules and Machine Learning.



3 Will the CDP solution ensure data quality?

What to look for: Maintaining ongoing data quality is essential to deliver consistent and hyper-personalized customer experiences, not just by marketing, but across all touchpoints. Data quality is vital to execute real-time operations without rework or transaction failures. Check if the CDP solution will offer data quality and validation capabilities, including address verification and enrichment, and identify potential matches. In addition, ensure you get the data quality scores that flag when there is a need for data cleaning efforts.

4 Does CDP allow you to design workflows and enable collaboration for data change requests?

What to look for: Check if the solution offers an industry-standard GUI BPMN 2.0 Modeler, integrated with data steward UI and task management. Creating custom workflows for data change review, approvals, and resolving matches are essential for data steward performance. Enabling collaboration among different business groups and departments is crucial, features like discussion threads allow business users to collaborate and make informed updates to data profiles.



5 Can you track your data lineage?

What to look for: Check if the solution provides visibility into data lineage, provides metadata management, with full source ownership, visual lineage, and audit history of data changes. Businesses need to have a clear understanding of the origin of data, who uses it, and how it transforms. In the event of a change in data, data lineage provides a way to determine which downstream applications and processes are affected by the change, and helps in planning for application updates. It is also critical for reporting, managing consent, as well as for many other regulatory requirements.

6 Does the CDP offer adequate data security and support data privacy needs?

What to look for: Compliance requirements such as GDPR and CCPA are becoming commonplace. The customer data platform must support visibility to where PII data is stored across systems. It should provide workflow governance of delete requests and manage all communication preferences of customers across all channels and applications. It must provide the complete profile history, ability to query, and view profile attributes at a particular date and time. Moreover, it must meet all your security requirements and certifications to make sure that customer data is safe.



7 Does the CDP enable omnichannel experiences?

What to look for: Marketing is only one touchpoint along the customer journey. Customer journey encompasses many channels (web, phone, email, chats, stores) and many functional groups (marketing, sales, order management, service, support.) Modern digital business mandates holistic management of customer experience across all such touchpoints. This means maintaining a consistent customer data, a cross-reference of all channels, multi-channel consent information, enhanced attributes via Data Science that are shared, in context, with various users to power effective customer engagement. If delivering omnichannel experience is your goal, then marketing-focused CDP will solve a tiny piece of that puzzle. Moreover, if you select a CDP before developing an overall enterprise customer data strategy, the solution will become more complicated with additional data silos. Make sure your customer data platform supports your omnichannel transformation initiatives.

8 Does the CDP help manage multiple domains and uncover relationships across them to understand the customer better?

What to look for: To run a business effectively, you not only need clean customer data but must also understand the relationship of the customer with products, stores, devices, locations, and so on. This means that your data platform must support mastering customers, products, organizations, and locations - multi-domain, and each entity with complete attribute set and interactions. Besides, it should uncover the relationships across all by connecting customers to other domains of data like households, products, and store locations to give you a comprehensive picture. Leading platforms use connected graph technology to manage relationships as well as complex multi-domain hierarchies.



9 What are the requirements for segmentation? What does the CDP offer?

What to look for: First, understand and document your segmentation needs. Many CDPs offer pre-built segmentation algorithms, but those may not fit your needs or tools may not have the necessary data for algorithms to work. Many rules-based and ML algorithms are becoming commodities. Data and domain knowledge are the differentiators. See if you can use all attributes from your 100s of data sources, including calculated attributes for segmentation. See if your business and data science teams have the flexibility to design segmentation that works for you.

10 Does CDP support an agile, flexible data model?

What to look for: We live in a dynamic-experience economy and need responsive data management to manage the frequently changing needs of the business. Make sure your platform supports ease of adding new data sources, new attributes, and un-merging data sources. Rigid, RDBMS-based tools will not be future proof. Ultimately, it's crucial that enterprise teams, including marketing, develop a holistic customer data management strategy while implementing data platforms. Investigate and document customer data best practices, who the users are, and the analytics, reporting and compliance requirements for the enterprise. In addition, make sure that your data platform can grow and adapt to your changing business needs.

By implementing a responsive data platform teams can realize maximum value from their CDP and other martech investments. To deliver optimized results, your customer data platform must enable all teams (not just marketing) to leverage data from diverse sources and standardize it for broad-based distribution. It should uncover relationships among people, products, stores, locations and more. It must help operationalize cross-channel customer journey for real-time engagements.



ABOUT RELTIO

Reltio is an award-winning cloud software provider that enables enterprises to win in the experience economy. Reltio Connected Customer 360 is a fundamentally better way to create rich customer profiles that include relationships, omnichannel transaction and interaction data, and other valuable insights. Global 2000 enterprises use this information to fully understand customers and deliver exceptional experiences.

Innovative global brands trust Reltio Connected Customer 360 to manage the customer data that matters most to their businesses. Reltio customers include eight of the top 10 global pharmaceutical and life sciences companies, market-leaders in healthcare, financial services, and technology, major travel and hospitality brands, and prestigious international luxury consumer brands in fashion, retail, and personal care. Visit www.reltio.com to reimagine your customer experience.

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