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Scorecard Summary: RightNow Service 6.0

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Key Findings From Forrester's eService TechRankings™

This is the fifth document in the "2004 eService" series.
with Elana Anderson and Liz Herbert

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RightNow's early successes with companies like Ben & Jerry's gave it a reputation for simple tools for general Web self-service. But our latest TechRankings evaluation shows that the latest version of RightNow Service has come a long way from an early core competency in FAQ (frequently asked questions) lists. Of the vendors evaluated, RightNow offers one of the most comprehensive and well-rounded solutions, along with the best overall marks for financials and market presence. RightNow is a good fit for high-volume B2C support operations, with the customer list to prove it, although companies with more complex CRM requirements will likely integrate RightNow to a more complete customer information model.

We evaluated RightNow against more than 130 criteria. Read the scorecard summary for key findings from the evaluation (see Figure 1). To view the complete scorecard and see how the product stacks up against the competition, access Forrester's interactive TechRankings tool using the links below.

SCORECARD SUMMARY

RightNow is the only eService suite vendor originally conceived for a hosting model, with a very strong focus on browser-friendly applications, configuration settings (as opposed to customizations), and painless upgrades. Growing from a pure eService base, RightNow has continued to expand its functional footprint, first focusing on expanding its offering to a full customer service suite, then releasing its outbound email marketing module in the fall of 2003; it's planning to release a sales module by 2005. This continued expansion of the platform across all of the core areas of CRM differentiates RightNow from the other vendors in this analysis and makes the vendor a leader in the on-demand CRM arena. Scorecard highlights include:

- **Strong capabilities in ancillary areas.** Known for good knowledge base capabilities with an FAQ orientation, RightNow offers strong components outside of core eService functionality. Multiple references are available for multilanguage knowledge bases with linked content for ease of maintenance; an optional HTML WYSIWYG editor is included for content authoring; internally developed Web collaboration is available (while many competitors rely on partnerships); customers rave about ease of upgrade; and scalability references show the platform is well-constructed.



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- **Less credibility for onsite installations.** The majority — more than 90% — of RightNow's customers are hosted, and the vendor has limited large-scale references that have installed the software on their own premises. Although the software is available for onsite installation, the suite will suffer in comparison to the competition when IT leads the selection process because database support is limited to MySQL and the suite is not currently SOAP-compliant — an increasingly common IT requirement to ease integration. Most customizations will require the involvement of RightNow professional services, although an XML API library is available.
- **Market presence boosted by IPO.** RightNow's much anticipated IPO occurred recently (August 5, 2004), raising the vendor's visibility. RightNow has had 25 consecutive quarters of revenue growth, including 33% year-over-year growth in fiscal year 2003 and 28% year-over-year growth in fiscal year 2002. As a public company, financials will be more on display than ever before, and the pressure will be on RightNow to sustain this momentum as its product suite grows and it begins competing head-to-head with CRM vendors.
- **Good fit for B2C customer service providing general information.** While RightNow's forte is low-complexity support centers that supply customers with product and service information (like Procter & Gamble), more complex environments can also benefit from RightNow's tools for particular channels. For example, Air Canada implemented RightNow Service on its Web site, offering customers quick and easy access to information. Originally focused on the Aeroplan frequent flyer program and later expanded to include flight information, policies, and rules, RightNow's easy-to-navigate self-service had a big impact: Air Canada's inbound email inquiry volume dropped nearly 60% from 10,000 per month to around 4,000.

Figure 1 RightNow Service 6.0 Scorecard

| Attribute | Explanation |
|---|--|
| Knowledge base | RightNow receives a high rating for knowledge bases, despite the fact that it does not offer interactive diagnosis for complex technical problems. This is not an issue for the high-volume B2C centers targeted by RightNow, and RightNow's many happy customers claim the ease of use for agents and customers makes RightNow a good choice. |
| Agent collaboration tools | RightNow offers in-house-developed collaboration tools, including page push and cobrowsing, that are well-integrated to the agent desktop application. |
| Email response management | Although earlier versions of RightNow's ERMS were fairly basic, the most recent versions are full-featured and can hold their own against the legacy ERMS leaders. |
| Interaction tracking and customer history | One of the first vendors to offer full customer service to complement the eService modules, RightNow has an interaction tracking module designed for high-volume contact centers, although it is not as comprehensive as the case management module of enterprise CRM vendors. |
| Search technology | RightNow's approach to search will meet the needs of all but complex technical support. The vendor's lack of interactive search keeps it from receiving a best-of-breed rating in this category. |
| Reporting and analysis | RightNow's reporting capabilities include many packaged reports for trends and usage reporting, but more complex analytics (such as intent analysis) are not offered. |
| Technology/architecture | Standards-based approach to technology; platform coverage is being expanded in the next major release. |
| Market presence | Although RightNow's market presence is not as strong as that of others (particularly Kana) within enterprise-size companies, its large number of (referenceable) customers and a very visible IPO give it a good rating, with expectations that visibility will increase. |
| Cost | RightNow competes well on price and ownership cost, although most implementations do not involve multiple integrations. |

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

TECHRANKINGS RESEARCH PROCESS

Forrester analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of each product through a hands-on, scenario-based evaluation process. We evaluate products in a controlled setting and check facts and analyze the results carefully.

These scores reflect our assessment of RightNow Service 6.0, which we refer to throughout the scorecard as “the product.”

This product was last evaluated in August 2004.