



**Oracle's New Solutions Catalog Adds
Another Showcase for Specialized Partners**
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The Oracle PartnerNetwork (OPN) team continues to add meaningful visibility and marketing benefits to its partnering program for that group of partners who have chosen to earn a specialization. The latest is the completely revamped [Oracle PartnerNetwork Solutions Catalog](#), formally launched today, which looks great and is easy to use. The catalog includes all 21,000 of Oracle's partners, not just a subset that proactively signed up. And it's integrated with Oracle's corporate marketing campaigns and editorial calendar for *Oracle* and *Profit* magazines. But it's Oracle's Specialized partners — as well as the Oracle Ready and Exastack partners — those ISVs who have products ready to run on Oracle's software and engineered systems, who are really highlighted here.

Like other vendors, Oracle has had a solutions catalog or partner directory for years. These catalogs and directories are an expected component of any mature partnering program. The OPN team at Oracle worked hard over the years to make the previous catalog easier to use and to highlight the specialized partners, but at some point, you just can't tweak it anymore to hide its faults. So, hats off to the OPN team for taking the time and effort to completely rebuild a catalog that works well for them, the Oracle partners, and the Oracle customers. We've all seen partner solution catalogs before, so here's some of what's great about the Oracle PartnerNetwork Solutions Catalog:

- **Specialized partners are front and center.** There's a tabbed format to find Specialized partners first, followed by Oracle Exadata Ready partners, and then "browse all partners." Customers are clearly directed to and will go to the first choices of Specialized and Oracle Exadata Ready, bringing more potential business to those "best partners."
- **Integrated with corporate marketing campaigns and editorial catalog.** Oracle Marketing runs hundreds of campaigns each year. Plus, the *Oracle* and *Profit* magazines, both online and print, are among the most highly subscribed technology publications in the industry. Getting partners aligned with that marketing engine is challenging, so the integration here is a very good step.
- **Related news and features match search criteria.** Along the right-hand side of the catalog are Related News, Specialized Partner Features, Featured Partner Video, and more. As you search, stories related to your search are displayed. For example, during a search of server and storage partners, a Specialized Partner Feature on the Oracle Database Appliance was highlighted.
- **Visual integration with Google Maps.** Searching for a partner by clicking on a map is quick and easy. Plus, customers are already used to this way of search since it is the same one Oracle Marketing uses for events worldwide.
- **Partner profiles are created automatically.** Oracle does the basic data entry for the partner's profile from their registration and membership information. From there, the partner just needs to add their own solution profiles, marketing information, YouTube links, and so on. Oracle has ensured that it is possible for a partner to "opt out" of being in the catalog, but doesn't expect many partners to choose that path.

This is not to say there isn't room for improvement. First, integration with Oracle's Partner Relationship Management system would make the lead process more effective. IDC has seen this with a few other vendors and finds that partners are very quick to respond to a potential customer who watches a demo on their catalog profile with the lead and the follow-up actions captured immediately. Oracle told IDC that they are looking at adding this type of functionality in the future. Next, while the Recommendation feature is nice and follows the standard set by LinkedIn, it is inherently "positive only," because the partner decides whether the recommendation will be displayed or not. There is tremendous value to customers in reviews that are perceived to be "honest," meaning it's not just the positive reviews that are posted. That said, the fact that some partners may have no recommendations should be an indication to customers as to the quality of their product or service. However, IDC believes that the "review and rating" format is becoming the industry standard as that allows for a full range of commentary.

But the complaints are minor for now. The new Oracle PartnerNetwork Solutions Catalog appears to be having a successful start. Feedback from partners around the world has been very positive and excited. At this point, IDC's advice is for Oracle's partners to update their profile on the Solutions Catalog and get Specialized! It's very clear that the choicest perks and preferential treatment are reserved for Specialized partners, so it is in the best interest of Oracle's non-Specialized partners to step up and earn the designation.

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