DigitasLBi and Oracle Digital Build Toward First-Mover CX Agency Advantage
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By: Michael Versace

IDC’s Quick Take
DigitasLBi and Oracle together are introducing to digital enterprise leaders a first-to-market combination of digital agency, commerce, and cloud in a newly launched Oracle Solutions Group (OSG) for CX Cloud. The OSG is a partnership that amplifies the scale of DigitasLBi capabilities on Oracle CX Cloud for delivering proposition-based marketing and commerce solutions to enterprise buyers using highly tailored playbooks, DigitasLBi intellectual property, and consulting services focused completely on Oracle. The formation of the OSG also represents an important milestone in DigitasLBi’s strategy to be the center of excellence for Oracle within the Publicis Groupe of agencies and consultants. For Oracle Digital, the announcement demonstrates a continued commitment to the complete CX Cloud suite horizontally and vertically, using organic applications like Sales Cloud, Commerce Cloud, and Loyalty Cloud — and now, the line-of-business-facing expertise of an innovative digital agency. For CMOs, product managers, and CIOs, the OSG with DigitasLBi introduces a more complete marketing transformation solution that now includes the infrastructure necessary to digitize products and operations around all aspects of customer experience, from advertising to support.

Product Announcement Highlights
On August 9, 2016, DigitasLBi and Spindrift, a wholly owned part of the digital marketing and technology agency, announced a partnership with Oracle Digital and the formation of DigitasLBi Oracle Solutions Group practice for Oracle CX Cloud. Launching across the EMEA, North America, and Asia/Pacific regions, the goal of the OSG practice is to bridge the execution gap with a complete and structured business-to-IT view into how to build and service a truly customer-centric business on Oracle Cloud.

The OSG practice joins DigitasLBi digital commerce, proprietary IDIOM and Da Vinci data services, and customer journey management (CJM) strategy and consulting services to Oracle with the aspiration to transform customer acquisition, retention, and service and accelerate marketing innovation in highly competitive industry sectors including CPG and financial services, through the adoption of the Oracle Cloud.

IDC’s Point of View
Digital Agency in the Remaking

Digital agencies are possibly the hottest alliance targets in the tech industry right now and with good reason. While the term "agency" has a fair amount of cachet, the importance of creative and design orientations to client engagements has played an important role in reshaping and redefining traditional business and IT consulting. While in the past the term agency has conveyed the business of specialty boutiques serving the advertising industry, today’s full-service digital agency, exemplified by this announcement, describes a broader and more technical set of capabilities that binds together creative
and design skills with cloud, data, media, and analytics-enabling operating systems necessary to meet the needs of those organizations that place customers at the center of their digital investments.

The OSG practice is a recognition by both DigitasLBi and Oracle of the need to understand the changing nature of digital experiences with customers, employees, partners, and suppliers and the impact these changes are having on how organizations compete for business and loyalty. The way we interact and transact online has become inextricably linked to the way we behave, online and in-person. And over the past two decades, what was once referred to as ecommerce and brand strategy has changed dynamically to incorporate the ability to understand, anticipate, and satisfy these behaviors. For example, consumers have flipped the way they learn about a brand/product and have a limitless set of online resources, including their social networks, to empower decision making and establish expectations for low-friction digital commerce experiences. Participants in digital commerce interactions have much higher expectations for marketing and transacting today and, at the same time, a very low tolerance for poor marketing, pricing, and selling approaches. These expectations remain constant as customers interact person to person, with a company’s online and mobile application, through wearables and other IoT-informed channels, or with sales representatives and services center, thus forcing business executives to rethink the complete marketing, transacting, and servicing value chain as one component part of digital enterprise strategy.

Digital Agency "Empowerment" Platforms and Services

The DigitasLBi OSG practice also represents a further shift toward complete customer empowerment platforms with front-, middle-, and back-office capabilities that are customized and delivered to CMOs and CIOs as a collective set of services (including APIs), data, and IT. Viewed as a connected operating environment (and what others describe as services over platforms [SOPs]), the DigitasLBi OSG practice is aimed at helping clients transform marketing operations with capabilities necessary to sense and analyze digital behaviors and convert these "signals" into digital identities that can then be used to inform programmatic media buying and placement algorithms and produce extremely personalized experiences, services, and communications.

Not surprisingly, Oracle wants to command its piece of the digital experience revolution, and CX, Marketing, and Data Cloud are at the center of that strategy — solving for all aspects of customer experience across the client channel. Through the OSG practice at DigitasLBi, Oracle can now more completely deliver to clients the capabilities to service customer journeys from marketing to sales to service, and back again, while at the same time delivering a platform for breaking down departmental boundaries and silos.

In addition to cloud and data services, commerce software components from both firms will be key to the success of the OSG value proposition in individual vertical markets, all of which are based on Oracle incumbency. For example, OSG will need to join up DigitasLBi IDIOM IP with Eloqua, BlueKai, and Responsys as well as Oracle MICROSs and JD Edwards, demonstrating straight-through digital transformation capabilities. The OSG partnership establishes a new platform capability for DigitasLBi too, adding to the 17,000 employees in its network and ecosystem. Along with Spindrift, the OSG practice creates a full-service digital agency, with a heritage in Oracle Commerce from the days of ATG.
Last, the OSG practice will also be an important asset to the Publicis.Sapient organization. Publicis.Sapient was forged in 2015 by fusing three paths to digital strategy problem solving — solutions, business, and technology consulting. Publicis.Sapient is unique in that it now combines digital thinkers of the past 20 years from DigitasLBi with Razorfish and SapientNitro with proven technology and significant tech investment through the OSG from Oracle.

The agency model is being remade by full-service capabilities brought together through the DigitasLBi and Oracle partnership and by others that individual business, IT consulting, and systems integration firms cannot match alone. And in an era of increasing automation and the desire to service a never-ending digital journey for customers, the role of the digital agency will evolve further as LOB executives mature their thinking of digital business not as a new channel but instead as a combination of infrastructure and services with the agility to empower the experiences that their customers, partners, employees, and networks demand and that can transform entire businesses, not just the departments they lead.

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