SWOT Assessment: Oracle Mobile Security Suite (MSS)

Analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
Summary

Catalyst

Ovum's latest employee research shows that almost 70% of all full-time employees use their own devices for work – evidence that the number of mobile devices entering the workplace continues to grow. Support teams, that have traditionally only needed to manage a limited and controlled hardware estate, are now challenged with supporting a wider variety of devices and user needs relating to mobility. In helping support functions overcome this challenge and in realizing new support efficiencies, a large range of vendors – including Oracle – are approaching these various needs with enterprise mobility management (EMM) solutions, and the market for these solutions is growing very quickly.

Key messages

- Oracle is a relatively late entrant to the EMM market, but through acquisitions and organic development is making a push to become a major player.
- Oracle Mobile Security Suite is the EMM-specific part of Oracle Mobile Platform, which as a whole addresses a range of challenges faced by enterprises in terms of mobility, from device security and management through to app development.
- Oracle Mobile Security Suite provides mobile device and app management, mobile identity management, and mobile content management. It is tightly integrated with Mobile Application Framework (MAF), the part of Oracle Mobile Suite that provides mobile app development platform (MADP) capabilities. Working in tandem, these solutions present an opportunity to help enterprise IT departments more closely align themselves to lines of business.
- Like most other vendors in the market, Oracle does not yet provide what Ovum would call a complete EMM solution, and as a relatively late entrant it is also playing catch-up in a number of aspects.

Ovum view

While the EMM market in general is still immature, Oracle is itself a relatively late entrant to the space. Through a combination of acquisitions (notably Bitzer Mobile in November 2013) and organic product development that leverages experience in the enterprise applications market, it is aiming to join other IT mega-vendors as a major presence in this fast-growing market. Oracle Mobile Platform – of which Oracle Mobile Security Suite is one component – enables businesses to manage both corporate and employee-owned devices, to build custom enterprise mobile apps, and to secure and manage custom apps (whether built on the Oracle platform or not) as well as third-party “off the shelf” apps.

Oracle Mobile Platform is comprised of a number of distinct but interoperable products, each addressing different challenges faced by enterprises in managing their mobile estates:

- Oracle Mobile Suite (OMS) – an on-premise development and deployment platform. This MADP suite provides support for the development of both the front-end client and the back-end integration layer of a mobile system.
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- Mobile app framework (MAF) – a “build-once, deploy everywhere” mobile app development environment that is available as a standalone product or as part of OMS.
- Mobile Security Suite (MSS) – mobile security features including mobile device management (MDM), mobile app management (MAM), secure content, and communication.
- Mobile Cloud Service (MCS) – Oracle’s mobile backend-as-a-service (MBaaS) offering, allowing developers to consume pre-built mobile services, and create and expose new services and APIs. Mobile App Accelerator (MAX), a feature of MCS targeted at non-technical business developers to rapidly build mobile apps in the browser, is scheduled for release in 2015.

MSS fits neatly into this overall suite, enabling Oracle to compete in the EMM market even if customers are using other application development frameworks.

Recommendations for enterprises

Why consider Oracle Mobile Security Suite?

Oracle provides a well-rounded EMM suite, with its mobile security and IAM modules tightly integrated with other Oracle products that provide app development functions. These different components can be bought separately or bundled together, allowing IT buyers flexibility and the ability to tailor their purchase to any investments they may already have made around mobility. MSS provides the type of security features that enterprise IT departments require, while OMS and MCS provide the on-premise and MBaaS functions that make life easier for developers.

In addition, the release of MAX will offer a fairly innovative concept, aiming to make it easy for line-of-business power users to create basic apps, or at least provide wire-framing for developers to build on. As enterprise mobility strategies become more app-focused and look to transform business processes across an organization, this kind of functionality will become increasingly interesting as IT looks to align more closely with the needs of line-of-business users.

SWOT analysis

Strengths

Tightly integrated mobility management suite

The composition of Oracle Mobile Platform means that customers can pick and choose between the components they want, with OMS and MAF for MADP, MCS as an MBaaS product, and MSS for mobile security including MDM and MAM. These core modules are integrated and interoperable, but can also be acquired and deployed independently of each other, fitting in with any existing investments that an enterprise may have made. Providing such flexibility is key in the mobility management space, where exact demands and requirements vary widely from customer to customer.

Strong MDM and MAM capabilities across iOS and Android

For iOS and Android device and app management, MSS offers the majority of features likely to be required by enterprise customers, including (but by no means limited to) the following: over-the-air
enrolment, AES-256 bit encryption, PIN enforcement, selected device wipe, granular user and group-specific policy settings, custom branded enterprise app stores, device and app activity logging, and app configuration management. Its MAM features also integrate with identity services, providing a single sign-on experience for users employing multiple different mobile enterprise apps.

Weaknesses

Not yet a complete EMM solution

Like most of its competitors in the EMM market, Oracle does not yet provide what Ovum defines as a complete EMM solution. In such an immature market it can be expected that different vendors will specialize in certain areas and have gaps in others. Oracle Mobile Platform does not yet provide Telecoms Expense Management (TEM) capabilities, or Network Access Control (NAC) features relevant to mobile management.

Trails market leaders in terms of platform support and advanced functionality

As discussed above, MSS provides a good level of support for most of the features likely to be required by enterprise customers across iOS and Android. However, support for Windows Phone and BlackBerry devices and apps is still missing. Also, Oracle has some catching up to do in terms of some of the more advanced features provided by leading specialists in the EMM space, such as app performance management, integration with Samsung Knox, and Apple volume purchase program (VPP) support.

Opportunities

Target the existing customer base

With Oracle Mobile Security Suite, the vendor has the chance to mobilize, manage, and secure the thousands of Oracle apps run by customers – allowing for both out-of-the-box Oracle-built apps and custom-built apps that enterprises might want to experiment with. Oracle has a huge base of existing customers and the Mobile Security Suite should provide significant added value with which to upsell.

MAX will help to more closely align enterprise IT with lines of business

Oracle’s forthcoming Mobile App Accelerator (MAX) aims to extend app development capability beyond the realms of developers and empower line-of-business users who don’t necessarily have great technical expertise. This presents a great opportunity for Oracle to tap into customers’ maturing enterprise mobility strategies, which are gradually becoming more focused on business process transformation through app deployments across all lines of business. Used in conjunction with EMM tools such as MSS, MAX can help business users not only to identify pain points and processes that can be improved through mobility, but also to put solutions into practice and test what works and what doesn’t.

Threats

Playing catch up to both peers and startups in the EMM market

Oracle is a relatively late entrant to the EMM market, so it is unsurprising that some of its core features lag behind the more mature leaders in the space. While this is a relatively immature and small market in terms of overall revenues generated, it is growing extremely fast and generating a lot of interest – and Ovum’s research shows that it is an area in which the majority of enterprise IT
departments are budgeting to increase spend over the next 12-24 months. The current market leaders are taking advantage of this interest to cement positions as trusted EMM vendors before the coming wave of investment. It is important for Oracle that it catches up in terms of features offered, otherwise it risks being left behind as this market expands.

The competition that Oracle is facing in the EMM space comes both from other IT mega-vendors aiming to incorporate mobility management software into their offerings, and from smaller, more nimble specialist vendors. These specialists tend to lead the way in terms of new features and have gained significant mindshare as “go-to” vendors for organizations considering a solution to their mobility problems, so Oracle faces a challenge in demonstrating that it can compete in terms of functionality.

Data sheet

Key facts about the solution

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Source: Ovum

Appendix

Methodology

Ovum SWOT Assessments are independent reviews carried out using Ovum’s evaluation model for the relevant technology area, supported by conversations with vendors, users, and service providers of the solution concerned, and in-depth secondary research.
Further reading

SWOT Assessment: Oracle Mobile Application Framework, IT0022-000229 (March 2015)

Ovum Decision Matrix: Selecting an Enterprise Mobility Management Solution, 2014–15, IT0021-000023 (September 2014)

Employee Mobility Survey 2014 Results: Enterprise Multi-screening and Application Usage Trends, IT0021-000021 (September 2014)

Harnessing the real transformational power of mobile enterprise apps, IT0021-000054 (March 2015)

2015 Trends to Watch: Enterprise Mobility, IT0021-000031 (November 2014)

Author

Richard Absalom, Principal Analyst, Enterprise Mobility

richard.absalom@ovum.com

Ovum Consulting

We hope that this analysis will help you make informed and imaginative business decisions. If you have further requirements, Ovum’s consulting team may be able to help you. For more information about Ovum’s consulting capabilities, please contact us directly at consulting@ovum.com.

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