Business

Curating your technology in a
wild landscape

About the Orange Business CX Practice

Orange Business is trusted by some of the world's biggest brands to help them communicate more effectively with their customers – we work with nine of the top ten and 40 of the top 50 of Interbrand's best global brands. Our mission is to help businesses deliver best-in-class, frictionless customer experiences by simplifying and orchestrating the CX ecosystem.

Through working at the leading edge of CX technology for the past 15 years, Orange Business has amassed a unique combination of consulting and technical capabilities. Our CX Practice unites our unique and extensive expertise across industry best practices, consumer behaviour, brand activation, system architecture, data integration and technical execution. Because we are not tied to one individual vendor, Orange Business provides unbiased advice to customers, collaborating to deliver compelling, consistent, and compliant experiences that enhance engagement between consumers and brands.

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The MarTech landscape now consists of over 11,000 companies.

Faced with such a vast choice, what strategies can CX leaders use to determine the best solution for them? And, with all this complexity, why does selecting your ecosystem from among a curated set of vendors enhance your prospects of CX success?

More than

40%

of customers saying they would avoid doing repeat business if they were dissatisfied with the service they received.

Standing before the audience, the conductor must carefully orchestrate the evening's performance to create a brilliant experience, trusting that the musicians demanded by the score have all been assembled – and that they are sufficiently rehearsed to ensure they play beautifully together. CX leaders face a similar challenge: taking the customer experiences they wish to create as their score, they must carefully bring together the vendors able to deliver those experiences and ensure that they interconnect seamlessly to deliver frictionless interactions between their company and their customers.

That is easier said than done, but consumers are increasingly unhappy with the experiences brands are delivering. In the UK, for example, customer satisfaction has fallen to its lowest level since 2015, with more than 40% of customers saying they would avoid

doing repeat business if they were dissatisfied with the service they received. That's why companies must re-evaluate and heighten their commitment to CX excellence.

However, the number of solutions available to CX leaders is exploding. In the marketing department alone, there are more than 11,000 MarTech vendors from which to choose: if you add the technologies from the other Business Units and factor in the huge growth of new technologies, this adds even more complexity. Each new technology has an influence on the decision-making process and creates use cases that didn't exist before. And, of course, each of these systems introduces its own points of friction and vulnerabilities, making it harder to deliver on the objective of creating secure, frictionless experiences.
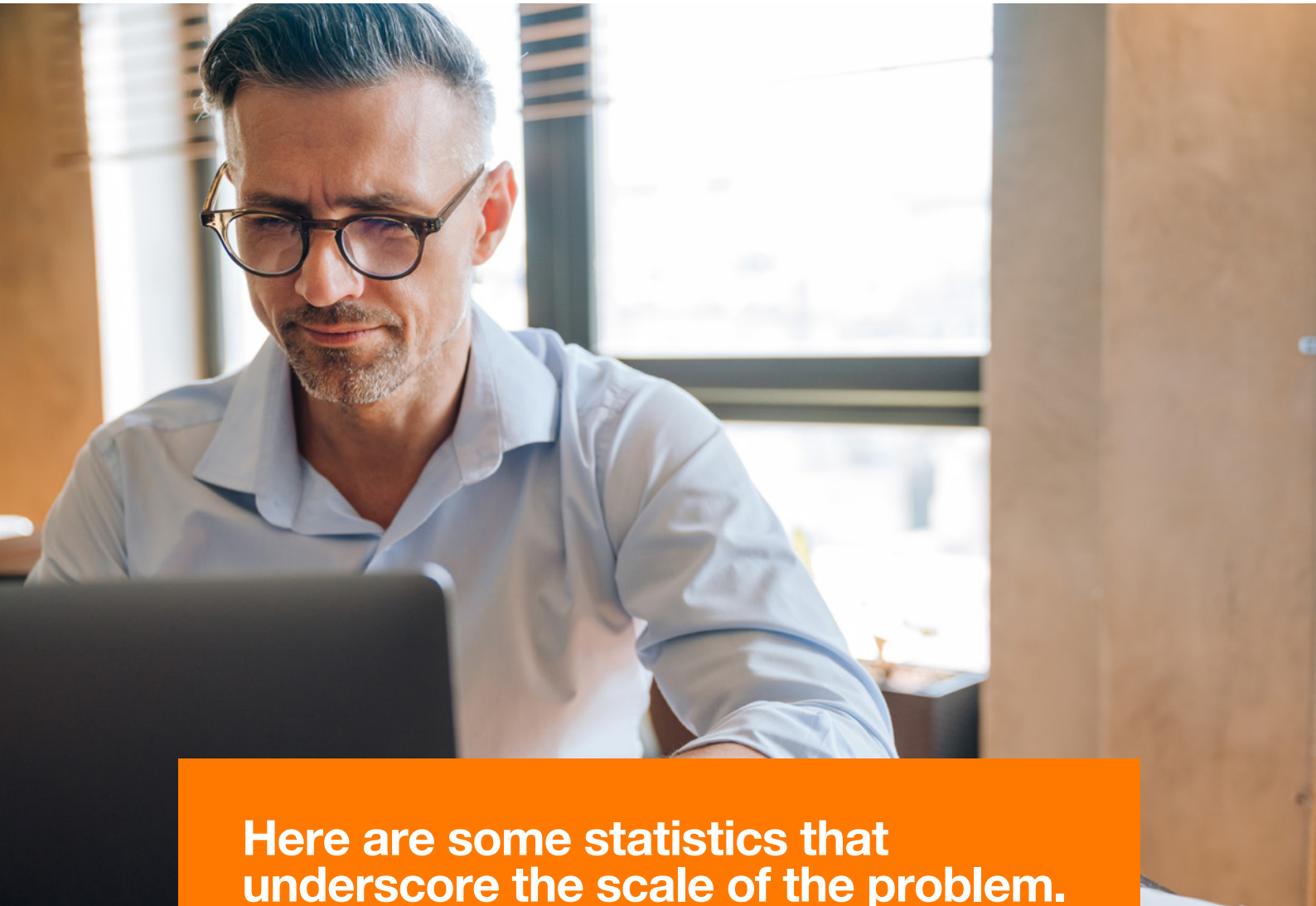
Here are some statistics that underscore the scale of the problem.

46%

of companies think that siloed data and a lack of integration between systems prevent them from delivering the best CX.

69%

of IT leaders worldwide are 'very or extremely' concerned about the growing amount of technology investments required to remain competitive.

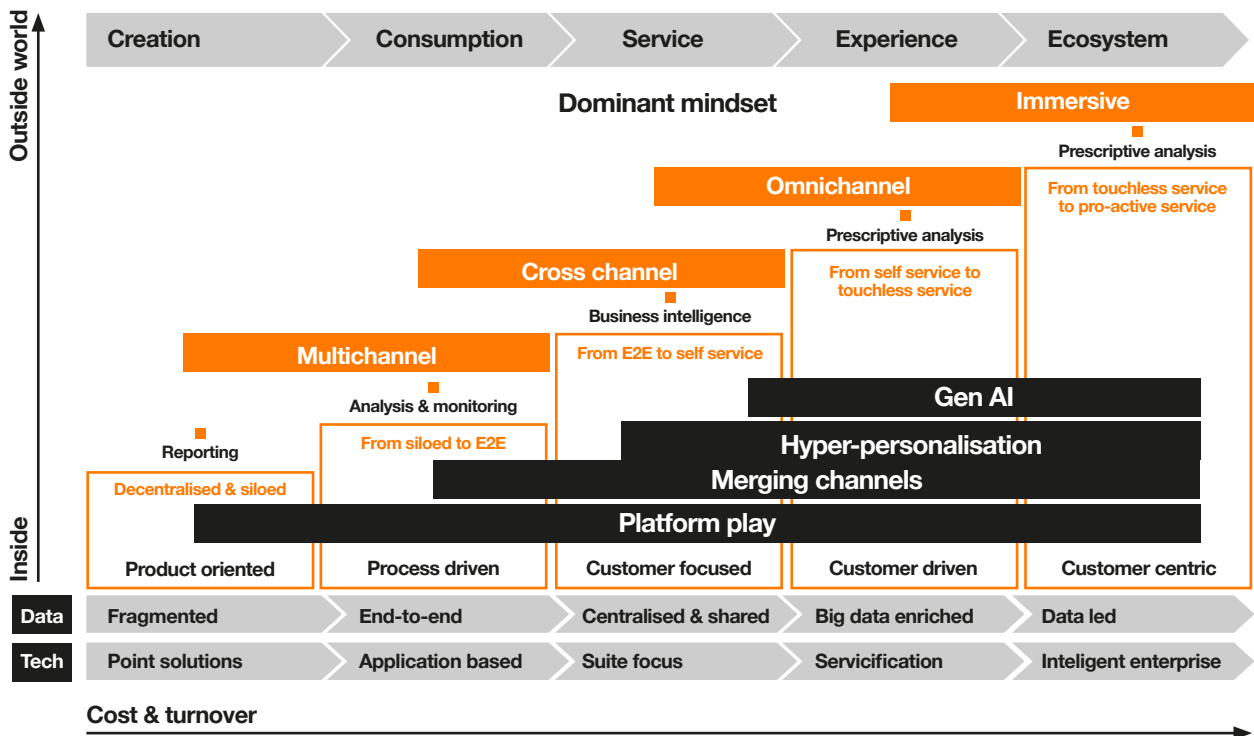## 42%

of companies don't know whether cybersecurity priorities are delivering the required outcomes or not.

So, with thousands of vendors potentially vying for your business, how do you begin to winnow that number down? The good news is that there are a number of strategies that will help you decide on the best ecosystem for you.

The influence of maturity
on ecosystem selection

CX and EX maturity depends on overall organisation maturity

Creation	Consumption	Service	Experience	Ecosystem

Dominant mindset — Immersive

Prescriptive analysis

Omnichannel — From touchless service to pro-active service

Prescriptive analysis

Cross channel — From self service to touchless service

Business intelligence

Multichannel — From E2E to self service

Analysis & monitoring

Gen AI

Reporting — From siloed to E2E

Hyper-personalisation
Merging channels

Decentralised & siloed

Platform play

Product oriented	Process driven	Customer focused	Customer driven	Customer centric

| Data | Fragmented | End-to-end | Centralised & shared | Big data enriched | Data led |
| Tech | Point solutions | Application based | Suite focus | Servicification | Inteligent enterprise |

Cost & turnover

Historically, companies started with a product-centric mindset in which customer needs were not given proper consideration. They then evolved into a more process-driven approach that focused on internal touchpoints and aimed to create greater efficiencies. Today, all companies should aspire to a customercentric mindset, a holistic 'outside-in' approach in which the entire company revolves around consumer needs.

In the five-stage journey from product orientation to customer centricity shown above, most companies are typically in stage two or three. However, the journey from one stage to another is incremental – it is not possible to 'leapfrog' a stage: so, your strategy – and the ecosystem selections necessary to deliver on that – will be determined by the relative maturity of your CX capabilities.

Orange Business has a formal maturity assessment process, which is complemented by interviews and further assessments carried out by our CX Business Strategists. This is a technologyagnostic methodology which ensures that technology decisions are aligned with business requirements: customers use it to assess how far different departments have travelled on the journey to customer centricity and identify any gaps.

This five-stage journey will help to identify points of friction and will inform the decisions around technology portfolio selection.

Sharpening your focus

Many departments like Customer Service, Sales, Marketing, Operations, Digital, Data and IT teams, and even HR influence the customer experience. In selecting your CX ecosystem, collaboration between these teams is essential and yet all too often lacking.

Recently, an Orange Business customer only learned that their colleagues elsewhere in the company were investigating the same Unified Customer Experience platform when they bumped into them at an industry event. These teams must share their expectations for the solutions in your new ecosystem with the aim of identifying common solutions for problems experienced by different departments, as this will simplify the deployment and management of your CX system.

It is also likely that these teams will have made valid but independent choices about the different tools they need, so streamlining your CX system is essential: a proliferation of tools will inevitably increase friction and hamper the customer experience. It is therefore critical to conduct a thorough inventory of your existing technology stack to determine whether your existing ecosystem meets your company's CX Strategy.

> " **An inventory will also identify and eliminate overlapping or redundant software, which will not only optimise the customer experience but can also lead to significant cost optimisation.**

Using priorities as filters

In assessing the suitability of the many potential vendors that might ultimately feature in your CX stack, here are some of the key priorities.

- **Overcome data siloes:** To enhance the level of personalisation you can provide to your customers, you must unify data from different sources: this will allow you to identify and understand their preferences, behaviour, and the nature of their interactions with your company. Your partner in this initiative should be familiar with the latest and most innovative solutions and have a strong understanding of the role of AI as this will become the backbone of many CX initiatives.

- **Ensure compatibility of systems:** There is a huge need for seamless data exchange between different platforms, but the typical company has almost 300 applications in its tech stack, and in the CX space, a typical contact centre agent will be using 30 different software packages. Once your inventory is complete, you should determine the minimum number of applications necessary to deliver the functionality you need and ensure that these can be properly integrated.

- **Sovereignty:** In general, sovereignty is a regional issue (e.g. GDPR in the EU or the California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA) which is being adopted across the USA, as well as the strict and complex regulations in China). It is important to understand the regulatory regimes in each region and deploy fully compliant solutions that protect customer data during and after integration.

- **Security:** Best practice suggests you should view security across three main domains: at a connectivity level to secure the traffic passing across your network; at a legacy application level to address customer details held in your on-premise data centre; and at a SaaS level to secure third-party applications (e.g. Salesforce, Genesys Cloud, Microsoft Azure). The critical challenge is to combine these solutions to ensure a holistic approach to security.

The technology exists to address those challenges, but the field is wild, and the sheer choice of solutions can feel overwhelming. The question is, how can the brand navigate its way across this landscape, assess whether a particular solution can address its unique pain points, and make the right choice? This is a critical step and independent advice is essential here, not merely to cut through the vendor hype but also to make informed decisions about the many different technologies available to you.

The human touch

The increasing number of CX options available to companies is proliferating at precisely the same time that the budgets available to spend on them are being reined in. In our conversations with our customers, we know that CEOs prioritise cost management and that automation is seen as a key mechanism for delivering this. For example, 80% of organisations have said they are using, or planning to use, Gen AI for customer service. Nevertheless, 86% of consumers say that they start their customer service interactions with the intention of reaching a human – so your CX ecosystem must find the balance between the smart use of technology to create frictionless, automated customer journeys, whilst enabling human intervention at the right time.

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A never-ending story

Your curated CX solution will not be static – it will constantly evolve. Your business needs will change, new technologies will become available, new regulations will be introduced – and customer expectations will inevitably rise as new ways to interact with the brand become available. For example, most companies are now evaluating the potential of Gen AI to enhance the customer experience and European companies are grappling with the implications of the EU's new AI act. Your technology partner should be abreast of these developments and bring interesting and relevant innovations to your attention.

The business case
for a curated
technology ecosystem

Much of the dissatisfaction with the CX experiences provided by brands derives from the growing expectations of consumers: today, they are more informed, discerning, and empowered than ever before and demand instant communication and information sharing. Moreover, the COVID pandemic moved a lot of interactions online, accelerating the adoption of digital solutions – and raising the customer experience bar for all companies.

Business objectives are overlooked in the pursuit of incremental departmental gains, resulting in strategy directions and platform choices that are incompatible.

However, brands themselves must accept some responsibility. As we've seen, the overall customer experience is influenced by many different departments and rather than tackling CX challenges as a collective entity, they often seek to address only their own individual piece of that puzzle. Business objectives are overlooked in the pursuit of incremental departmental gains, resulting in strategy directions and platform choices that are incompatible. This is what leads to a lack of consistency across touchpoints and a fragmented customer experience.

This fragmentation is only made worse by the plethora of choices now available to CX leaders, a problem exemplified by the emergence of 'ecosystems of ecosystems'. Orange Business has identified four core domains of the CX technology ecosystem:

- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- Contact Centre (or increasingly Contact Centre as a Service – CCaaS)
- Customer Data Platform (CDP)
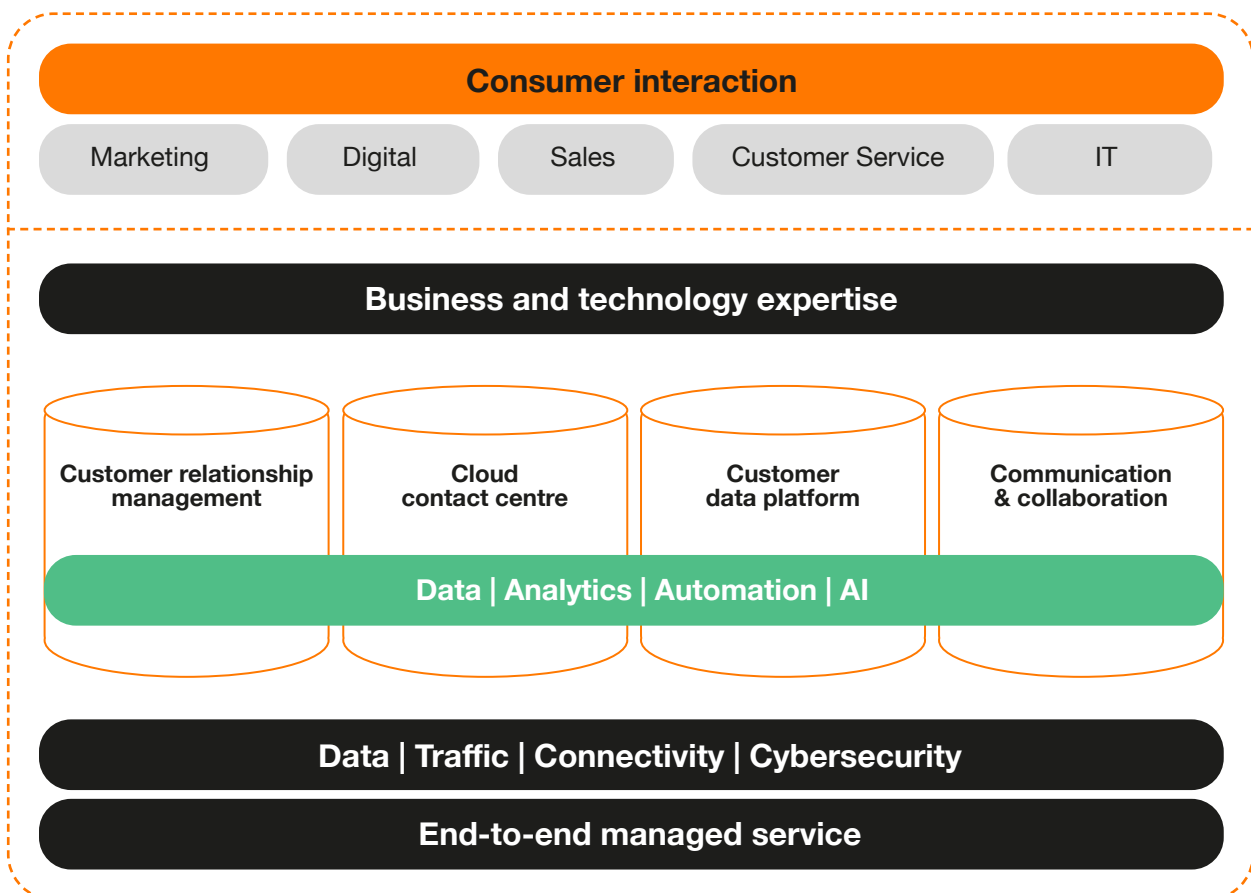- Communications and Collaboration Suites.

These domains are underpinned by a common set of automation, analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI) tools – and each of them is composed of its own distinct ecosystem of vendors.

Orange Business customer experience

Many companies active in the CX market claim that the way to address this complexity is to take their technology on an end-to-end basis and, with the wave of a magic wand, these integration issues will simply disappear. Sadly, this is not the case: many of these stacks were created through acquisition and may not interoperate as well as advertised. Additionally, no single vendor has a monopoly of 'best-of-breed' software across all the CX domains. Rather than put all their eggs in a single basket, most companies want to 'mix and match', for example, a contact centre from Genesys with a CRM solution from Salesforce, a CDP from Adobe and Microsoft Teams for collaboration. However, organisations are increasingly being forced to choose between their preferred solutions

Organisations are increasingly being forced to choose between their preferred solutions and those that are able to interoperate properly.

and those that are able to interoperate properly. A recent McKinsey survey asked B2B decision makers whether they preferred integrated solutions over best-ofbreed offerings – and the majority opted for the former: it seems most companies prefer to settle for sub-optimal solutions that work well together, rather than submit to the challenges of integrating their preferred choices into a united, functioning system.

Consumer interaction

| Marketing | Digital | Sales | Customer Service | IT |

Business and technology expertise

Customer relationship management | Cloud contact centre | Customer data platform | Communication & collaboration

Data | Analytics | Automation | AI

Data | Traffic | Connectivity | Cybersecurity

End-to-end managed service

Conclusion

At Orange Business, we don't believe that companies should be forced to make this tradeoff – and this is where the true value of a curated ecosystem lies. It is, of course, impossible to guarantee that 11,000 products will integrate properly, but it is entirely feasible to select a finite group of best-of-breed solutions and acquire the knowledge and certifications necessary to ensure they work well together.

This is the approach Orange Business takes. We have defined portfolio priorities for services and platform integration across the four CX domains and have multiple partners in each of them. These partners consist of leaders recognised by the market and by market analysts: they include NICE and Genesys (CCaaS); Salesforce and Microsoft (CRM); Adobe and Imagino (CDP); and Cisco and Microsoft (communication and collaboration). In addition, we part-

Your path forward

In the 'Paradox of Choice', Professor Barry Schwartz wrote:

"When people have no choice, life is almost unbearable… But as the number of choices keeps growing, negative aspects of having a multitude of options begin to appear… the negatives escalate until we become overloaded. At this point, choice no longer liberates, but debilitates."

CX leaders understand this sentiment entirely. The sheer volume of solution choices available to them has indeed become debilitating. We have outlined some strategies for whittling down the thousands of potential vendors that claim to be able to advance your CX capabilities to a more manageable list.
However, the nuances and distinctions of each remaining solution may still be opaque to those asked to make the final selection. For example, Omilia, Genesys, NICE and Google all provide Conversational AI solutions that

make very similar claims, and it is impossible to expect a brand guardian to understand which of these will best align with the company's customer promise. There is a strong case to be made for working with Orange Business as a technology partner who has an in-depth understanding of the major players in each domain and can map their strengths and weaknesses to your individual needs.
Equally, the false choice between best-of-breed and integration highlights the value of curation: a portfolio that features a finite selection of the leading CX solution providers but promises a high degree of interoperability between them feels like a logical response to the paradox of choices.
They say that 'too many cooks spoil the broth' and – in CX – too many players can strip the orchestration of the harmonious journey you seek to create. Securing the help you need to get the players you want will enable you to deliver a frictionless experience.

ner with the world's leading cloud providers (Amazon, Microsoft, and Google) and with leading analytics vendors such as Tableau (Salesforce), Power BI (Microsoft) and Qlik (these solutions complement those available as part of larger CX suites such as Nexidia (NICE) and Pointillist (Genesys) and also those embedded into solutions such as Verint or Adobe). We are also constantly evaluating disruptors such as Sprinklr to see if they can be added to our partner roster. We have more than 1000 experts in our CX Practice – with more than 10,000 certifications for these vendors.

Taking this approach, all of the integrations between these different platforms have already been built and all the wrinkles ironed out. So, you are free to mix and match any of the vendors in this curated portfolio of CX vendors with the assurance that these will interoperate effectively, 'out of the box'. With some additional integration, it is also possible to add any vendor not on the list – so you have the perfect ecosystem for your business.

This goes a long way to overcoming the dichotomy between an ecosystem composed of either best-of-breed or integrated solutions. And it is the surest way to deliver the frictionless customer experiences that you want to create – and that your customers expect.

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Do you have any further questions?

Or if you would like to know more about our services and how we can support your business, do not hesitate to email us your query.

Digital Services

At Orange Business, we embrace a global and harmonious approach to customer experience. By synchronizing all human and digital touchpoints, you can deliver a consistent, personalized experience at every stage of the customer journey. Understanding individual preferences and orchestrating all customer interactions enables you to respond effectively and reinforce customer satisfaction and loyalty, while optimizing internal processes for greater overall efficiency.

Find out more how we can help you with your projects on:

www.orange-business.com

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Do you know your CX Maturity level?

Try this self-service Maturity Assessment and determine where you are in your CX Journey.

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