

Client Study: **Oracle Corporation**



INDUSTRY: ENTERPRISE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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—Gabrielle Zaits, director,
Market Analysis,
Oracle Americas

Oracle Corporation became the world’s second-largest software company by listening to its customers, making smart decisions, building great products, and staying ahead of the technological and marketing curve.

Historically, the \$8 billion dollar company made the majority of its applications sales to large enterprise customers - customers with revenues that exceed \$500 million. But recently Oracle realized that the large enterprise market was no longer the growth engine it had previously been. Trends indicated that the market for enterprise resource planning applications was changing.

“We saw the writing on the wall. The space was becoming saturated and the entire ERP market was turning toward middle market companies,” Gabrielle Zaits, director, Market Analysis, Oracle Americas, said.

Zaits’ organization develops and executes marketing activities in support of Oracle’s Applications products in the United States. When the market changes were becoming apparent, Zaits was tasked with developing a comprehensive understanding of the middle market arena and providing a framework for Oracle to sell its applications into that market.

Oracle’s culture reflects an aggressive entrepreneurial history. Several organizations within Oracle had begun to make forays individually into the middle market space, but without the benefit of a structured, overarching plan and true understanding of the market’s needs.

“Oracle can sometimes be very ad hoc in its approach to new markets,” Zaits said. “All of a sudden we had a lot of people focused on direct marketing, offering seminars, and developing new product offerings for the middle market space. What we needed was fast, in-depth, objective research and an aggressive, focused market penetration strategy to put all these resources into context.”

Seeing Beyond the Oracle View of the World

Zaits approached New Business Strategies to spearhead research to provide Oracle with a snapshot of the middle market and a deeper understanding of how to best penetrate it.

New Business Strategies’ goals were to identify the middle market driving forces, determine the size of the middle market opportunity, assess the competitive landscape and identify the most appropriate target markets. In the course of its research, New Business Strategies would also endeavor to understand the reseller and market perceptions of Oracle as a middle market vendor.

New Business Strategies provided a three-person team that worked side-by-side with the Oracle Americas Applications marketing team. Through a combination of market research that included analyst reports and published studies, and comprehensive dealer and channel partner interviews, the team pieced together a wealth of information on how the market space was currently apportioned and identified the trends that would impact how the market would evolve.

The dealer channel interviews in particular gave Oracle new insights, not only into the market, but also into dealer perceptions of the middle market space. “Oracle hadn’t sold through a dealer network,” Zaits said. “This group of people - dealers and channel sales reps - were the kind of people we didn’t have ready access to. New Business Strategies performed a large number of interviews and found out what they were doing on a day-to-day basis trying to sell to this market. It was extremely valuable information, very much in part because it was outside of the Oracle perspective.”

After performing the primary and secondary research, New Business Strategies analyzed and organized the data so that it could serve not only Zaits’ group, but many organizations across Oracle.

"We got great results," Zaits said. "We were able to give our internal customers a crash course in middle market USA," adding that New Business Strategies was invited to present the Firm's findings numerous times to various Oracle audiences.

The study was used in several sales education forums to heighten awareness of both the market needs and the potential opportunity areas within the middle market segment, eventually becoming a focal point to change how Oracle competed for that target market. The study also influenced the formation of a 'Fast Forward' program that targets middle market companies, by addressing the specific needs of this market segment.

Zaits noted that the outside perspective gained from New Business Strategies has led to a number of additional projects with Oracle. "New Business Strategies brought the non-Oracle-centric view of the world to us," Zaits said.

New Business Strategies delivered Oracle the Lens of Objectivity, helping keep Oracle ahead of new growth areas of the market, so the company can sustain its successes in the enterprise space.

New Business Strategies™

We listen. We craft. We deliver.

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buying-selling process.*

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