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Oncontact Rejiggers CRM App for Vista

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By Erika Morphy
CRM Buyer
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Demand for Vista compatibility will grow soon -- and quickly, predicts Jon Zimmerman, president of Oncontact Software. Vista will gain traction in the marketplace once its enhanced security features and other higher-end capabilities become more familiar to corporates and IT executives.

[Oncontact Software](#) has released a new version of its CRM  (customer relations management) suite that is fully interoperable with [Microsoft's](#) (Nasdaq: MSFT)  Windows Vista operating system. This is the first release in a two-part rollout: Oncontact will release an enhancement to its Web offering in August.

Designed to be installed with little integration required, Oncontact offers typical CRM

functionality, including compatibility with Microsoft SQL Server and Microsoft Office 2007.

Features in Oncontact that are not traditionally part of a CRM app include a project management module, a time-billing module and an advanced search function.


The new version, 6.0, differs from its earlier incarnations in that it is styled around the Vista release, with the application's graphical user interface and other visuals remade to match Microsoft's newest OS.

This is the first CRM application to integrate Vista into its feature set, according to Jon Zimmerman, president of Oncontact Software.

Demand Catching Up?

Not many of Oncontact's clients have requested the Vista makeover yet, Zimmerman told CRM Buyer, although customers have been clamoring for support of Microsoft Office 2007.

However, he anticipates that demand for Vista compatibility will grow soon -- and quickly. "I think companies will be forced to jump to Vista as it begins to take off."

Vista will gain traction in the marketplace once its enhanced security  features and other higher-end capabilities become more familiar to corporates and IT executives, he added.

"Many IT professionals are still not well-acquainted with Vista," Zimmerman said. Once they begin to appreciate its functionality, "we will already be established in the market with our version of Vista-compliant CRM."


Though its look and feel may be something of a sea change for users, the back-end processes supporting Oncontact's features remain the same, Zimmerman said. In this

release, Oncontact also enhanced its calendar, a tool it developed to operate outside of Outlook's calendaring functionality -- another customer-driven change.

"We invested a lot of our own resources in developing a calendar after we realized that many of our clients do not use Outlook's calendar," he said.

Users can deploy either, depending on their preference, Zimmerman noted. Campaign management, enhanced to sit on a dashboard, is also a feature of this release.

Following Vista


At bottom, Oncontact's new release is all about leveraging Vista. That is not surprising, given the global popularity of Microsoft's products, observed Greg Sterling, principal of Sterling Market Intelligence. He pointed to Vista's sales  in the first month after it was released as an indication of its acceptance.


During that 30-day period, Vista sold more than 20 million licenses -- more than double the number of first-month sales of Windows XP. The 20 million copies shipped include licenses sold to PC manufacturers, copies of upgrades and the full packaged product sold to retailers, and upgrades ordered through the Windows Vista Express Upgrade program from Jan. 30 to Feb. 28.

"Vista's numbers came in higher than expected given the initial mixed reviews of the application," Sterling told CRM Buyer.

Oncontact is not alone in its decision to ride Vista's coattails. Shortly after Vista was released, [Five9](#) announced that its Virtual Call Center products -- on-demand contact center applications -- were fully compatible with Microsoft's Windows Vista operating system. Demand was partly a driver behind this development -- especially coming from large customers that had been looking to upgrade internal infrastructure even before

Vista arrived on the scene, according to the company.

A recent study by [IDC](#) quantifies vendors' sense that Vista can be a revenue driver for them. Vista, along with the new server  version of Windows -- better known by its codename "Longhorn" -- will enrich the hardware, software and services ecosystem built around Microsoft's products.

For every dollar Microsoft generates in revenue from Vista products, another US\$18 goes to other companies offering compatible software and related services, found the Microsoft-commissioned study. The two launches are expected to generate \$120 billion in revenue for Microsoft partners and vendors dealing in Windows-friendly technology. 

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