

Microsoft CEO demonstrates new CRM service at Convergence 2007

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Upcoming release of Microsoft Dynamics CRM will fuel new choices for customers and new opportunities for partners.

In his keynote address at Convergence 2007, Microsoft Corp.'s biannual event for Microsoft Dynamics customers, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer gave customers their first look at the future of customer relationship management (CRM) with a live demo of the upcoming Microsoft Dynamics Live CRM service. The Microsoft Dynamics Live CRM service is powered by the upcoming release of Microsoft Dynamics CRM, code-named "Titan," which uses the same multitenant code base to deliver both on-premise and Software as a Service (SaaS) deployments, and allows customers to choose the right deployment model for their needs at any time. Ballmer outlined the ways in which the Live CRM service will help deliver new levels of companywide productivity to users as well as the critical role of partners in the Live era that will fulfill Microsoft's vision to help customers connect business vision with software, people with processes, and companies with communities.

"Microsoft Dynamics CRM is a great example of how we're combining software and services to create exciting new opportunities for customers and partners," Ballmer said. "Users get a familiar interface that helps them be more productive, and businesses get the freedom to run the software in-house or buy it as a service -- and to change from one to the other if their needs change."

"Titan" Extends Opportunities for Partners Worldwide

The "Titan" release is specifically designed to open up new opportunities for Microsoft's global community of value-added resellers, independent software vendors, hosting providers and system integrators, as well as to provide a new platform for on-demand solution partners to plug into. "Our global partner community has a tremendous depth of business and technical expertise, and plays a key role in delivering successful CRM

solutions to our customers," said Brad Wilson, general manager of Microsoft Dynamics CRM. "With 'Titan,' our partners will be able to deliver innovative solutions across on- premise, Live CRM and partner-hosted environments."

Today, Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0 offers a rich service-oriented architecture (SOA) with metadata-driven configuration capabilities, allowing businesses to quickly develop solutions that fit their specific needs. End users can access role-based CRM capabilities that are most relevant to their jobs through Microsoft Office and Outlook, through a Web browser, and through a broad range of mobile devices. With the upcoming "Titan" release, the core platform is extended to offer full multitenancy, a capability that will be leveraged to enable high-volume hosting for the Live CRM service as well as for partner-hosted CRM solutions. The same metadata-driven configuration model is shared by Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0 and the "Titan" release, allowing partners and customers to easily build applications in Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0 today that can be automatically upgraded to "Titan."

As part of the rollout of "Titan," Microsoft will offer an extensive online solution catalog that allows partners to list their products and capabilities that relate to Microsoft Dynamics CRM. The online catalog will include partners that span the on-premise, partner-hosted and Live models for Microsoft Dynamics CRM. This will make it easier for customers worldwide to find Microsoft Dynamics CRM partners that offer solutions and components for their specific industry, region or company size.

"Titan" TAP Program Participants Move Full Speed Ahead

As part of the "Titan" pre-release program, a Technology Adopter Program (TAP) was launched earlier this year and will expand through the year with partners from around the world. Hundreds of partners have already begun building vertical applications, on-demand service mash-ups, integration connectors and other extensions for the new release.

"As an SaaS provider, we've historically worked only with other on-demand vendors; Microsoft is the first on-premise CRM provider we've done a packaged integration with," said Peter McCormick, co-founder and vice president of partnerships at ExactTarget, the market leader in on-demand e-mail software for permission-based e-mail marketing. "We started working with Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0 because customers were asking for it - bottom line. And as a 'Titan' TAP program participant, we're already building out several workflows in the next release to automate core marketing scenarios and help our customers more effectively nurture leads. From the moment we put 'Titan' in the hands of our developers and demonstrated how easy it would be to port our 3.0 integrations to the new version, we knew we'd made the right choice."

Availability

Today, Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0 addresses the needs of small businesses, midsize companies and large enterprises in more than 80 countries and in 22 languages. The "Titan" release of Microsoft Dynamics CRM is currently planned to be available via the Live CRM service beginning in the third quarter of 2007, with on-premise and partner-hosted versions becoming available in the fourth quarter of 2007. A total of 24 languages will be made available for the "Titan" release.

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