A view on Gartner's Magic Quadrant for CRM/CX implementation services providers

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The new digital world is practically forcing businesses and organisations to change, transform and adapt to the new customer and his/her rising expectations. As well as to the fact that the customer is much more empowered these days, with the different sources of information, devices and channels.

To answer new demands and achieve business outcomes, companies need help from consulting and implementation services providers, that specialise in CRM and CX. Gartner reckons that "*by 2018 more than half of organisations will implement significant business model changes in their efforts to improve CX*".

Gartner recently published the ***Magic Quadrant for CRM and Customer Experience Implementation Services, Worldwide.*** It is accessible here. It is a report on the largest CX and CRM consulting and implementation service providers (one of Gartner's criteria for inclusion was a minimum of $200 million in revenue).

The "Big 4" are obviously included and on the *Leaders* quadrant, due to their man-power, thought leadership, geographic reach and market presence. Followed by the likes of IBM, Cognizant, and the Asian giants Tata, Infosys, NTT and others.

Traditionally these large providers were (and still are) chosen when it comes to CX and CRM consulting and implementation services, mainly by big brands and organisations. But the truth is in the last few years, more and more companies are choosing smaller, more nimble an agile, specialist consultancies.

There are several reasons for that. Price is obviously one of them, as hiring the "Big 4" and other giants his expensive. The largest providers are also less flexible and focused. They seem to be less effective on smaller projects and/or smaller clients. And customers seem to also point out that they often utilise junior, off-shore and less skilled staff.

Despite their experience and well established methodologies, customers say largest providers sometimes fall short on project, scope and expectations management. And, apart from the "Big 4", there seems to be a lack of thought leadership, CX vision/strategy, innovation, as well as a lack of capacity around business transformation and change management.

Smaller and specialist consultancies may lack the geographic reach or the breadth of practices, but in the CRM and CX implementation space they usually bring industry knowledge, business experience and alignment. Backed by deep technical, architecture and integration skills.

Smaller teams also work out well on these projects, as there is a more joined up, focused, collaborative, and close partnership. Of people who are totally committed to the project, the client's success and its customer satisfaction. Working efficiently and effectively.

And despite their size - sometimes because of that - these consultancies are very close to the big technology vendors (Oracle, Salesforce, Microsoft, SAP, etc.), who not only support them but also, in various cases, advocate them as consulting and implementation partners for CRM and CX projects, where their platforms are chosen.