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RESEARCH

ZOHO ANNOUNCES NEW APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES FOR ZOHO ONE

ANALYST
Daniel Elman, Cameron Marsh

THE BOTTOM LINE

On October 19th, Zoho announced major updates to its enterprise application platform, Zoho One. Key improvements and new capabilities include access to company-wide data analytics for enlightened decision making, the ability to scale and manage operations more effectively with mobile application management (MAM), and the tools to create strong employee experiences in any mode of work with Zoho Learn, Zoho Lens, and an Org Dictionary. We anticipate that these new offerings and improvements will drive significant value for customers in the following areas: reduced cost from integrating disparate applications with unified data centralized on the Zoho platform, more efficient data searches and increased digital organization, and increased employee productivity with automation, process improvements, and customization options such as with Canvas for Zoho CRM.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

On October 19th, Zoho announced new apps, services, and significant platform upgrades to help businesses unify systems, data, and teams. The new offerings provide users with the tools needed to overcome disjointed data obstacles and close communication gaps between departments to boost productivity and adaptability. This release coincides with increased demand for business unity capabilities as companies have begun to realize the potential of consolidating business applications on a single platform and attain the associated benefits, including native integration, data security, and scalability. Key points in the release include new employee tools such as Zoho Learn and Org Dictionary, as well as capabilities for enterprise search, mobile application management, and sweeping analytics improvements, including over 1,500 new templates for reports and dashboards, improvements to conversational analytics, and data prep capabilities. The release adds six new applications to the platform's total: Commerce, DataPrep, Learn, Lens, TeamInbox, and Payroll, to augment the platform with additional capabilities to further Zoho's mission of becoming the operating system for business.

ZOHO ONE

Zoho One is an end-to-end platform comprised of over 40 enterprise-level web-based or mobile business applications designed to run an entire business on the cloud. It offers a unified suite of Zoho applications and services under a single sign-on to help organizations manage sales, marketing, customer support, HR, financial operations, and other custom solutions that are fully integrated, connecting all departments within a business. Predominantly utilized in the IT and professional services industries, Zoho One has over 40,000 customers located in 160 plus countries and takes business unification beyond integrations by providing an in-house scalable infrastructure to create a completely unified system. It enables employees to work smarter with the help of Zoho's intelligent assistant Zia, gathers insight from company-wide data, and simplifies user provisioning, app deployment, and security policies.

Zoho One is modernizing solutions by equipping users with new offerings that will help unify business systems, data, and teams. Some key features of Zoho One's applications and services include:

- New innovations in Zoho's BI and analytics platform give businesses access to organization-wide analytics to consolidate data previously lost between departments and to facilitate confident business decisions. Zoho One users now can access embedded, conversational analytics with cross-departmental insights through natural

language commands powered by Zia Insights. This feature gives users access to over 1500 pre-built analytics dashboards and reports to enable more efficient and precise decision-making. Taking cross-departmental insight capabilities further, DataPrep, a self-service data preparation and management tool, is also now available in Zoho One. This lets users easily integrate, model, and transform data from third-party applications or sources to deliver real-time supplementary insights.

- Work Graph, Zoho's new back-end service, builds a business-wide work graph that is tailored to each employee by mapping interactions between people, resources, and processes to give teams increased clarity of the purpose, plans, and responsibilities of each team member. This service maintains a unique graph for each user and leverages Zia Search to detect natural language to process the most contextually relevant results.

- The addition of mobile application management (MAM) and Zoho Commerce enables users to manage operations better and prioritize employee data and security. MAM supports the shift towards a remote workforce, giving admins the ability to add and manage employee devices. This increased insight and control over specific app permissions, provisioning, and the option to lock or wipe devices remotely supports employee mobility and flexibility. Zoho Commerce equips retailers with all the tools necessary to easily build online shops, as well as the ability to process payments, manage shipping, and analyze consumer data.

- To promote stronger employee relationships, more collaboration opportunities, and overall employee experiences, Zoho One includes features designed to support employees in any work mode. Zoho Learn, a learning management platform, centralizes company information, training materials, introducing a method to foster the growth of employees. This tool helps users capture and retain team knowledge, while measuring the effectiveness of training programs.

- A new organization-wide service, Org Dictionary, offers a central education source for employees by automatically incorporating employee names and other information with consistent verbiage across Zoho applications. This service maintains a dictionary that recognizes and stores a company's unique words like people, designation, and product names, eliminating unnecessary prompts and ensuring accuracy.

- Advancements in the customization and personalization of workspaces through unified consoles, custom dashboards, pre-built widgets, and smart-stack UI enable users to aggregate and explore their applications and services in one centralized view.

BENEFITS TO CUSTOMERS

Nucleus has identified the following specific benefit areas from the Zoho One update: reduced costs associated with integration, improved digital organization, and increased employee productivity through automation, customization, and more searchable corporate assets.

- Reduced costs associated with the integration of disparate apps. Based on previous research, Nucleus estimates that companies investing in data integration from external applications and data sources spent one to eight times their annual license budget on integration efforts. Zoho's unified data model and cloud-native construction make costs tied to the integration between applications a nonfactor and enabling cross-functional analytics while drastically reducing the need for third-party involvement.

- Improved digital organization. Zoho One's Work Graph feature enables employees to search for relevant materials and creates overall enhancements to a business's digital data organization. Reduced time spent searching for pertinent information grants employees more time to focus on value-add tasks or projects, and with the ability to understand natural language queries, Work Graph allows users across various Zoho applications to make more educated business decisions based on contextual insights from cross-departmental data. Nucleus anticipates that it will help accelerate employee onboarding and facilitate improved collaboration as well once company information and documentation are fully integrated.

- Increased employee productivity. Having access to a user-friendly interface complete with features like interactive training programs translates to improved performance while mitigating the time needed for onboarding. Similarly, updates designed to enhance the personalization of workspaces with centralized dashboarding result in significant bottom-line benefits driven by boosted productivity. Improvements to analytics, as well as increased automation and customization capabilities that extend throughout the platform, should enable employee time savings and productivity improvements.

LOOKING AHEAD

We've written at length about the growing trend toward consolidation in business technology, with those vendors who offer a comprehensive platform that spans disparate application areas and user groups positioned to be more successful than best-of-breed vendors. Zoho One is among the most comprehensive enterprise platforms available, with

applications spanning CX, analytics, ERP, and accounting, as well as employee management and collaboration. Further, Zoho maintains its own cloud infrastructure, allowing it to control data from end-to-end, leveraging its common data model for rapid deployment and cross-functional analytics without added complexity. This release focuses on the value of unifying business operations on a singular integrated platform. One area to highlight with the rush of new employee management and experience tools is how Zoho is proactively equipping its customers with tools to offer differentiated employee experiences in this current climate where workers are more likely to change jobs, and identifying, training, and retaining quality talent is a top priority for businesses across all industries.

Beyond the heightened focus on employee experience, this release showcases Zoho investing more seriously in IT enablement with tools such as newly accessible log and application performance data, new data preparation and integration capabilities, and increased focus on enterprise search tools. This will differentiate Zoho versus other application platform providers who, to this point, have not invested seriously in comparable toolsets for IT and DevOps users, choosing to focus instead on business users in core application areas (CRM/CX, ERP, HCM, etc.). These tools will be of particular value to small and medium businesses on rapid growth trajectories, as they will be able to increase their IT robustness and the complexity of their digital ecosystems with a platform that can scale to meet the rapidly changing needs. Demonstrating a track record of success with these organizations will fuel Zoho's continued push upmarket into the enterprise in the long term.