

BLOG POST

2019 BEST ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE VENDOR

Zoho demonstrated excellence and improved customer relevance,
market share, customer satisfaction and brand standing



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BEST ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE VENDOR

This category recognizes the enterprise software vendor who improved their customer relevance, market share, customer satisfaction and brand standing.

Winner: Zoho



WHY DID THEY WIN?

Zoho has emerged as one of the winners in delivering business productivity and enterprise-class applications to the small- and medium-sized business market. Their success gives them an opportunity to go up market to the enterprises who continue to see escalating costs and a slowdown of innovation in the enterprise software market. The company's ever-expanding portfolio is designed as constituent parts of a greater whole, so everything works together. Led by Sridhar Vembu, the co-founder and CEO, Zoho has found a formula to digitize businesses at scale. With an estimated valuation of \$2 billion (USD) for Zoho, the company remains private and has not taken any investments from venture capitalists. The relentless focus on reinvention and new ways of working has enabled the organization to deliver not only innovation at scale but also a massive breadth of business applications and a robust platform.

NOT QUITE LIGHT SPEED PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION, BUT CLOSE

Some may think of Zoho as a CRM provider for midsize companies; others may associate Zoho with business tools for running small and growing business. In reality, Zoho has built an application portfolio that spans ERP, CRM, productivity and office tools, and the databases, data models, and security features required to make them all work. The company has managed to simultaneously expand the scope of its portfolio to encompass just about every kind of business application you can think of and significantly improve them with rapid iterations. If you need a capability that Zoho doesn't currently offer, you probably won't have to wait long for it to become available. Think certain features could be improved? Contact support, provide your feedback, and watch how quickly that feedback is incorporated in next releases. Zoho's quest for completeness across its scope of offerings is matched only by the speed with which it improves the initial offerings it releases. It's fair to say that Zoho has reached a critical mass of enterprise application capabilities to support the core operations of a business.

THOSE BUILDING BLOCKS ARE IN THE LOGO FOR A REASON

One of the hallmarks—and major sources of value for customers—of Zoho's enterprise application portfolio is that whichever elements you choose, they integrate with each other smoothly and easily. This is very much by design and a major advantage of building an application suite from the ground up. Consistent data models, shared code bases, and a unified approach to application development make it easy to provide customers with a flexible set of capabilities that can be readily adapted to whatever individual requirements demand. That's not limited to integration within the Zoho suite either. Zoho's cloud-based, API-first design approach facilitates integration with other applications and tools across a wide array of vendors and capabilities.

CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS CAN'T STOP RAVING

It's impossible to find a technology company (or any company) that doesn't have its detractors. That said, it's also a rare thing to find the kind of passionate zeal and advocacy displayed by so many of Zoho's customers and partners. The product set, expansion, and improvement rate all drive a high degree of customer satisfaction. Customers and partners alike also cite the earnest and responsive support that

they receive. Zoho continues to invest in building an ecosystem of implementation partners that can help customers of various sizes and complexity to implement its products successfully. At the same time, the company continues to invest in a support capability that is closely tied to product development, providing both knowledgeable support and a short feedback loop to product roadmaps.

PHILOSOPHY UNDERPINS A STRONG COMPANY CULTURE

Perhaps the most powerful force behind Zoho's growth and success has been the philosophy that underpins its company culture, and it comes straight from the top. At the core, the company and its leadership endeavor to do right by their customers and their employees. Spend any time discussing strategy with senior leadership, and you'll understand the company's commitment to providing its customers with the benefits of Moore's law applied to business software. If technology costs continue to go down as capabilities increase, the thinking goes, shouldn't this apply to software as well as hardware? The Zoho One licensing model is just one case-in-point. New features and capabilities are constantly being added to the scope of Zoho One licenses, without an increase in license costs.

Zoho's commitment to its employees is no less fundamental. Zoho University aims to educate and train young people who might never otherwise find a path to programming or the technology industry, with the goal of ensuring they work (and get paid) while they learn and go on to forge successful careers. The company's investment in its new headquarters campus in Austin, Texas demonstrates a similar commitment to providing opportunities for its employees to build their own financial foundations for success, while benefitting the local community as well.

Zoho's leadership has the audacity to dream big, the skills to focus that vision, and the tenacity to see it realized. We expect plenty more yet to come.

ANALYST BIO

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Nicole France is Vice President and Principal Analyst at Constellation Research, focusing on digital marketing, sales effectiveness and customer experience. Her research examines the interrelationship between sales, marketing and customer engagement and how to make it work effectively. She focuses on the migration path from traditional CRM to next-generation customer engagement strategies. Her work helps both vendors and enterprises to get the most from their investments.

With over 20 years of experience as both a technology analyst and marketer, France has a unique perspective on the trends and practicalities of effective customer engagement. She has held wide range of marketing roles, including market intelligence, offering marketing, industry marketing and C-suite thought leadership, at *Fujitsu*, *Equinix* and *Cisco*. France was previously a research director at *Gartner*, which she joined through the acquisition of *G2R*, and senior editor at *ITSMA*. France has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Economy from the University of California, Berkeley.

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