

The Forrester New Wave™: Sales Social Engagement Tools, Q2 2019

The Eight Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

by Mary Shea

April 18, 2019 | Updated: April 18, 2019

Why Read This Report

In Forrester's evaluation of the emerging market for sales social engagement tools, we identified the eight most significant providers in the category — Dynamic Signal, EveryoneSocial, Facelift brand building technologies (BBT), Grapevine6, Hootsuite, PostBeyond, Sociabble, and Thought Horizon — and evaluated them. This report details our findings about how well each vendor scored against 10 criteria and where they stand in relation to each other. B2B marketing and sales leaders can use this review to select the right partner for their sales social engagement needs.

Key Takeaways

Hootsuite, Grapevine6, And Sociabble Lead The Pack

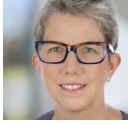
Forrester's research uncovered a market in which Hootsuite, Grapevine6, and Sociabble are Leaders; PostBeyond and EveryoneSocial are Strong Performers; Facelift BBT and Dynamic Signal are Contenders; and Thought Horizon is a Challenger.

The Sales Lens And Ability To Scale Are Key Differentiators

Forrester found tools developed with the sales use case as a priority and the ability to support comprehensive global programs were the top two differentiators in this category.

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Few Vendors Fully Deliver On The Sales Use Case

Businesses use social media for a range of activities, including marketing, advertising, communication, advocacy, listening, market research, customer support, and one-to-one engagement with prospects and customers. Modern sellers require social engagement tools, but most lack ample support.¹ In a recent study, only 25% of respondents said they consistently equip sellers with social engagement tools and an even smaller portion — only 8% — have optimized such practices.²

Few vendors tailor their offerings and services exclusively for sellers. Several vendors in this evaluation, as well as a handful of others that abstained, focus on the advocacy use case and view sellers as *über* advocates. While many of these vendors enjoy blue chip customers, they lack the full range of functionality and subject matter expertise to fully support sales users.

Sales Social Engagement Tools Evaluation Overview

The Forrester New Wave™ differs from our traditional Forrester Wave™. In the New Wave evaluation, we only assess emerging technologies, and we base our analysis on a 10-criterion survey and a 2-hour briefing with each evaluated vendor. We group the 10 criteria into current offering and strategy (see Figure 1). We also review market presence.

We included eight vendors in this assessment: Dynamic Signal, EveryoneSocial, Facelift BBT, Grapevine6, Hootsuite, PostBeyond, Sociabble, and Thought Horizon (see Figure 2 and see Figure 3). Each of these vendors:

- › **Has at least \$1 million in annual revenues.** Forrester included vendors that delivered at least \$1 million in annual sales revenues in 2018.
- › **Supports more than three social networks.** Forrester included vendors that allow sellers to utilize more than three social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Xing, and others.
- › **Has at least 1,000 sales users.** Forrester included vendors that have at least 1,000 users leveraging the tool for 1:1 sales social engagement.

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FIGURE 1 Assessment Criteria

Evaluation criteria	Criteria Explanation
Integrations	How well does the tool integrate with various CRM, MAP, SEA, BI, or other solutions/tools that enhance the buyer/seller experience such as video, web crawlers, messaging templates, etc.? How well does the tool integrate with the social seller's digital workplace?
Networks	How well does the tool link with and/or ingest data from various social networks? How well does the tool facilitate sharing to these networks? How well does the tool manage registration/login, content management, and user groups? How well does the tool address mobile scenarios?
Analytics and insights	How well does the tool support analytics? How well does the tool measure social networks? How well can the tool segment analytics and results by specific groups of users? How well can the client realize ROI? How well does the sales social engagement drive revenue?
Content	How well does the tool allow users to select and schedule content? How well does the tool serve up and suggest content? How well does the tool aggregate internal and/or external content? How well is the content segmented and targeted? How well does the tool manage generation of new content?
Privacy, risk, and compliance	How does the tool address regulatory requirements? How does it ensure shares meet requirements and help companies manage their reputation? How does it ensure no malware is distributed? How does it block references to the client? How does it engage with qualified audiences and facilitate dialogue?
AI	How well does the tool leverage AI or machine learning to assist and/or provide better experiences for sellers and buyers, such as surfacing recommended content to share or helping sellers create channel-appropriate profiles?
Services	What types of services accompany this tool? What types of mechanisms does the vendor provide to ensure social sellers adopt the platform during the onboarding phase and beyond? How well does the vendor get/keep sellers' attention? How does the vendor make sure sellers stay committed to the social initiative?
Product vision	To what degree does the company have a compelling and differentiated vision for its product relative to competitors? To what degree can the company execute on this vision in the next three to five years?
Product road map	To what degree will the company deliver superior business outcomes to its customers relative to competitors based on the product enhancements, commercial model, or partner ecosystem expansion on its near-term (2019) road map?
Category vision	To what degree does the company have a compelling vision for the future of 1:1 sales social engagement? To what degree can the company provide leadership and guidance to clients and the industry more broadly?

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FIGURE 2 Forrester New Wave™: Sales Social Engagement Tools, Q2 2019**THE FORRESTER NEW WAVE™****Sales Social Engagement Tools**

Q2 2019



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FIGURE 3 Vendor QuickCard Overview

Company	Integrations	Networks	Analytics and insights	Content	Privacy, risk, and compliance	AI	Services	Product vision	Product road map	Category vision
Hootsuite	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
Grapevine6	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
Sociabble	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
PostBeyond	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
EveryoneSocial	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
Facelift BBT	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
Dynamic Signal	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
Thought Horizon	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆

⬆ Differentiated ⬆ On par ⬆ Needs improvement

Vendor QuickCards

Forrester evaluated eight vendors and ranked them against 10 criteria. Here's our take on each.

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Hootsuite: Forrester's Take

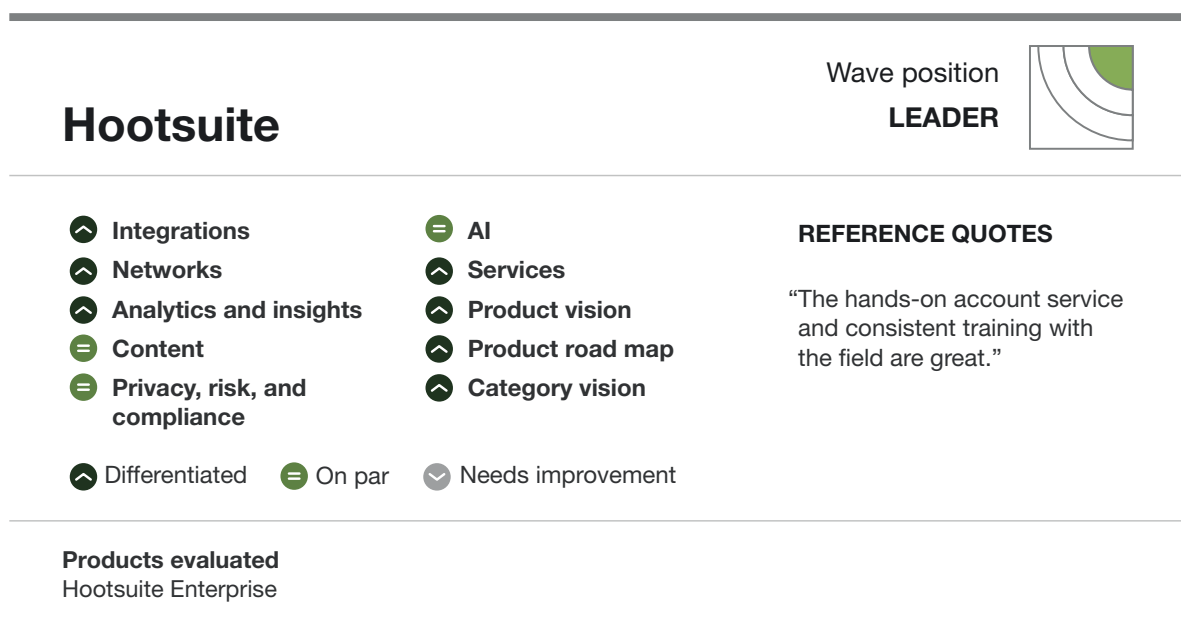
Our evaluation found that Hootsuite (see Figure 4):

- › **Leads the pack with its seller focus and scale.** With its mobile-first orientation and integrations with top-tier CRM systems, Hootsuite's Amplify has differentiated functionality including more than 150 out-of-the-box integrations, a range of global social networks, and a professional services arm with training and certifications for sellers.
- › **Needs to get more creative with AI.** Current AI functionality tags inbound messages to deepen understanding of the type and frequency of inbound queries. But the tool could better help sellers understand their contacts and interact in more personalized ways.
- › **Is a good fit for organizations with complex business models.** Hootsuite supports large global organizations, with 45% of its markets outside of the US and has deep experience with complex selling models (e.g., multiple hierarchies, distributors, agents, and franchisees).

Hootsuite Customer Reference Survey

Hootsuite's customers praise its integrations with CRM and marketing automation platforms (MAPs), the tool's ease of use, and comprehensive consultation and assistance before program rollout. But customers also want Hootsuite to recommend content to users based on their interests.

FIGURE 4 Hootsuite QuickCard



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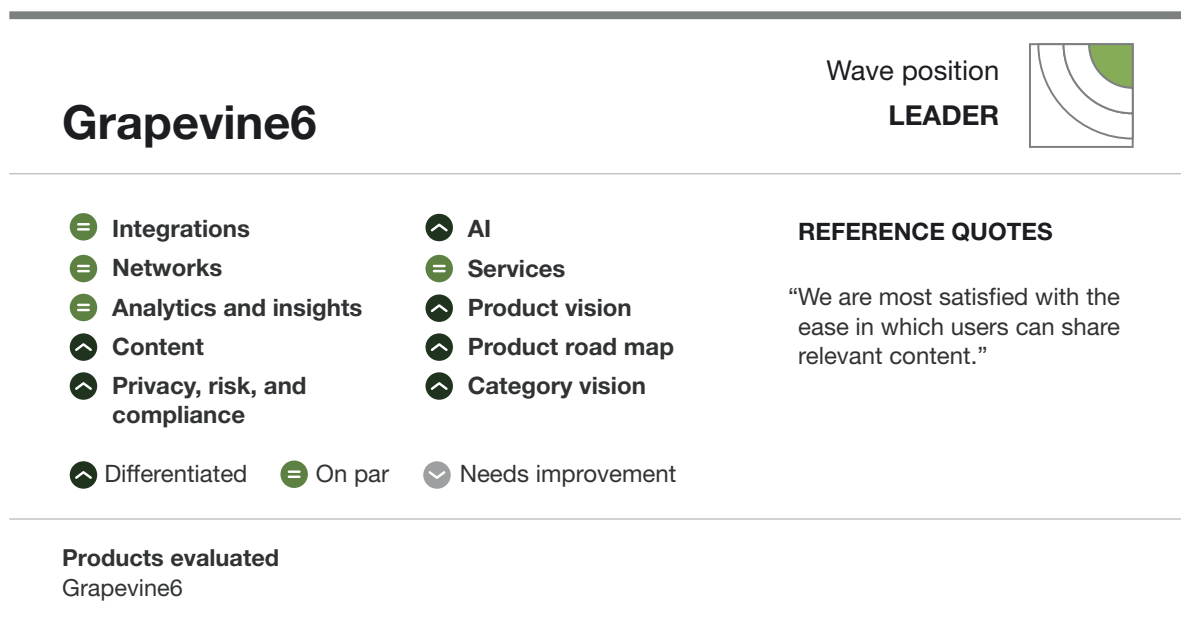
Grapevine6: Forrester's Take

Our evaluation found that Grapevine6 (see Figure 5):

- › **Leads the pack with its seller focus and AI functionality.** Grapevine6 enables mobile-first one-touch publishing to multiple social networks and allows sellers to automate common workflows. The tool leverages AI to help sellers enhance their personal brands and recommend the most relevant content to their audiences and unique contacts.
- › **Needs to get the word out and prepare to scale.** Grapevine6 has tens of thousands of users in North America and Europe, but no vendor mentioned it as a competitor. In addition to focusing on brand building, it needs to support more social networks in more geographies.
- › **Is the best fit for companies that want to avoid risk.** Grapevine6 has focused on acquiring big-brand financial services and high-tech customers. Two deeply embedded risk detection platforms reduce regulatory and brand compliance risk.

Grapevine6 Customer Reference Summary

Grapevine6 customers are very satisfied with its UI, personalized content recommendations, and ability to help them better understand metrics and program ROI. Customers want to see Grapevine6 expand its number of out-of-the box integrations with relevant adjacent solutions.

FIGURE 5 Grapevine6 QuickCard

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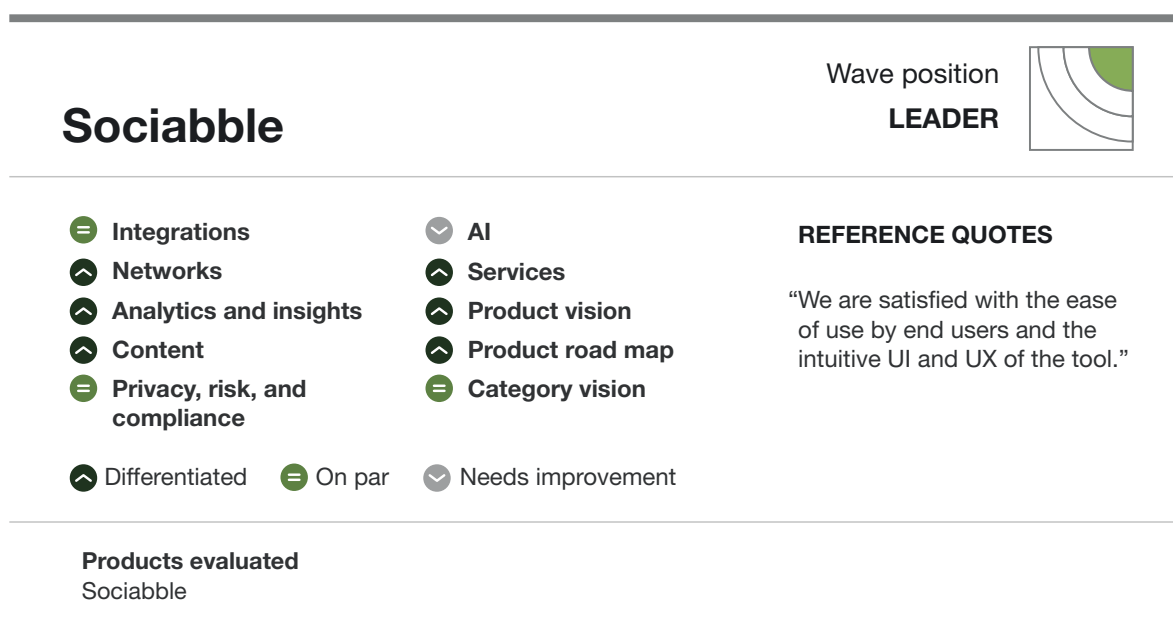
Sociabble: Forrester's Take

Our evaluation found that Sociabble (see Figure 6):

- › **Leads the charge in global coverage.** Sociabble serves customers in more than 80 countries with a mix of locally based and partner-provided customer success managers. It supports seven languages and automated translation capabilities for more than 60.
- › **Needs more sophisticated AI functionality.** Sociabble leverages Microsoft's Azure AI capabilities for automatic translation, live transcriptions of videos, and sentiment analysis. Its basic content recommendations can extend through platforms like Linkfluence and Feedly. But it still doesn't increase sellers' ability to engage in a highly personalized manner.
- › **Is a good fit for global companies with diverse users.** Sociabble brands itself as an employee communications and advocacy platform with use cases for internal communications, employee advocacy, social selling, and HR. Sociabble is a good choice for multinationals that want to digitally empower a large and diverse group of users.

Sociabble Customer Reference Summary

Sociabble's customers are very happy with support for social sharing across networks and content sharing in multiple formats. But they want to see more focus on business outcomes versus features.

FIGURE 6 Sociabble QuickCard

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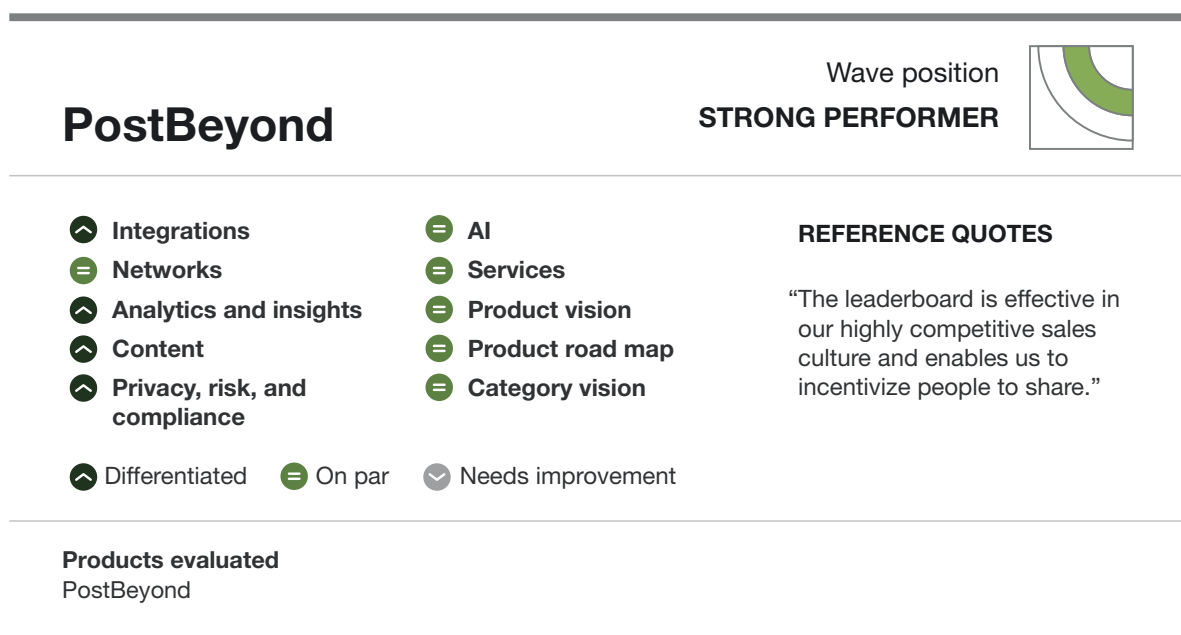
PostBeyond: Forrester's Take

Our evaluation found that PostBeyond (see Figure 7):

- › **Enables users to intelligently share content.** Through its Intelligence Post Performance Ranking, PostBeyond helps users quickly identify top-performing content. It can also analyze word groupings in posts to help program leaders understand themes that drive reach.
- › **Needs to develop more personalization capabilities.** PostBeyond has a discrete offering for sellers, but its original mission was to empower employees as advocates by sharing corporate-approved content. It now needs to extend functionality to help sellers tailor content and messaging for their 1:1 social interactions.
- › **Is a good fit for companies that want to activate all employees.** PostBeyond equips all employees with marketing-approved content, relevant news, and basic analytics. It is an excellent choice for firms that want to enlist all employees in lead generation.

PostBeyond Customer Reference Summary

PostBeyond customers are particularly happy with the tool's ease of use and ability to access content. Customers asked for more training throughout the program life cycle. PostBeyond's time-to-program-value was slightly longer than category norms.

FIGURE 7 PostBeyond QuickCard

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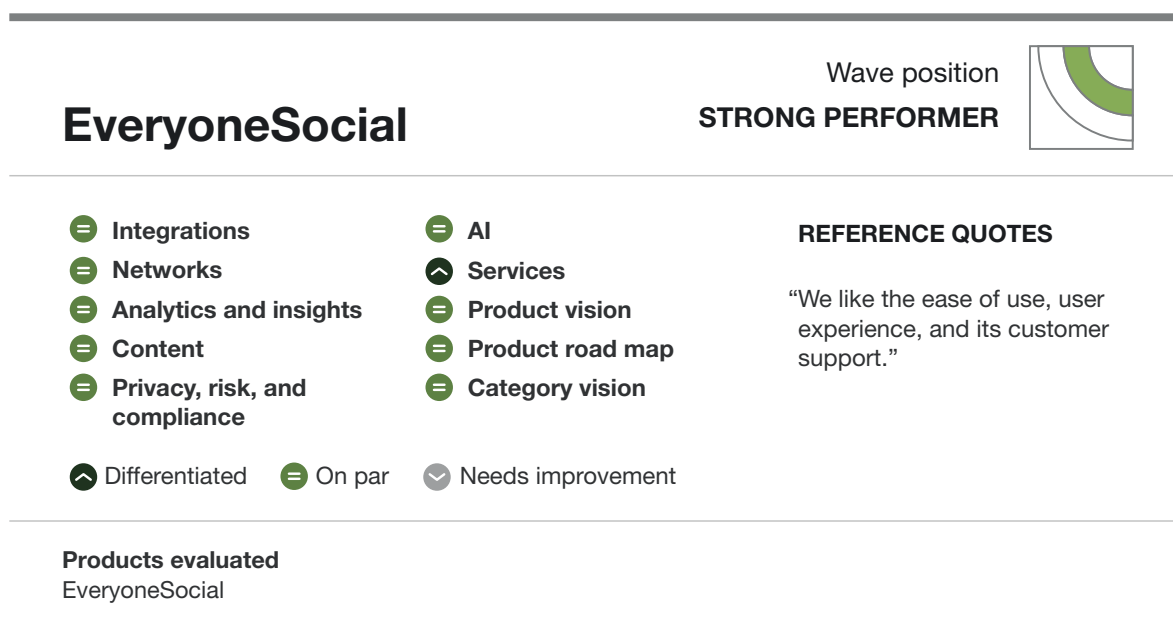
EveryoneSocial: Forrester's Take

Our evaluation found that EveryoneSocial (see Figure 8):

- › **Prioritizes users' experience.** The tool is engaging and easy to use. Gamification like leaderboards and badges further drive engagement for sellers. Customer success managers reside at headquarters and support customers throughout the entire program life cycle.
- › **Needs to extend integrations and networks.** EveryoneSocial's integration partners reflect its origins as a marketing tool. To shore up its value for sellers, it should extend integrations to more CRM and adjacent solutions. It doesn't support a full range of social networks.
- › **Is a good fit for tech and services companies.** The tool's ease of use and engaging UI, combined with a white-glove approach to service, make the vendor an appealing choice for tech and services companies looking to digitally activate marketing, sales, and HR personnel.

EveryoneSocial Customer Reference Summary

EveryoneSocial customers are very happy with its core capabilities (e.g., easy access to content and ability to share in multiple formats). Customers want improved analytics and the ability to link analytics to their CRM to better understand the impact of social on deal progression and revenue.

FIGURE 8 EveryoneSocial QuickCard

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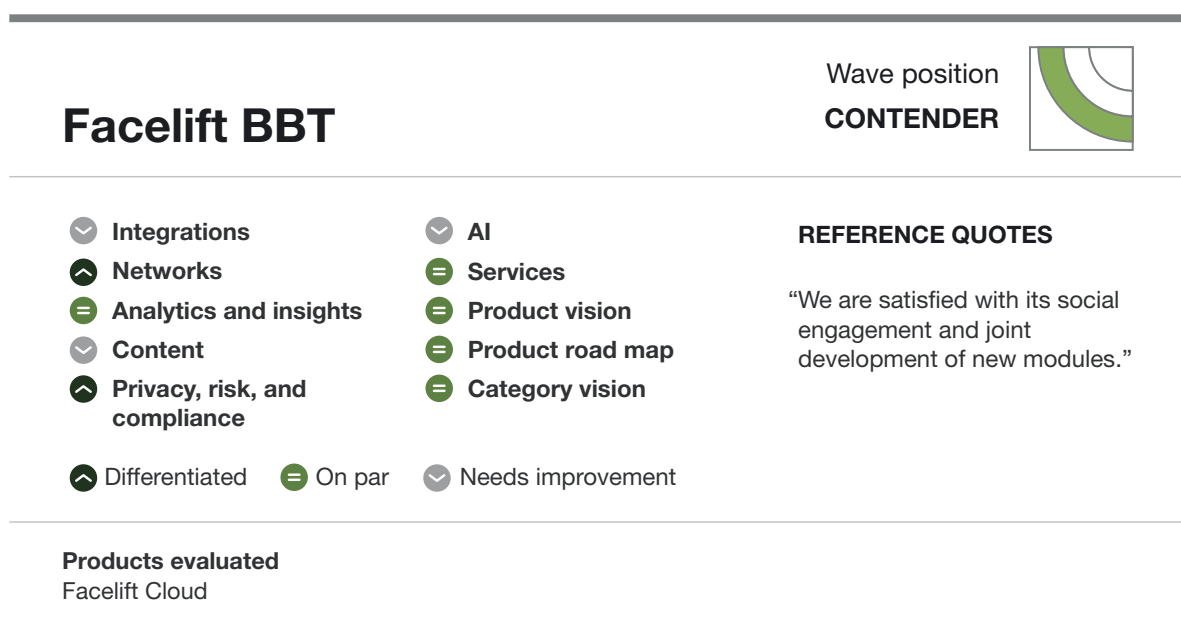
Facelift BBT: Forrester's Take

Our evaluation found that Facelift BBT (see Figure 9):

- › **Takes a modular approach to supporting social activities.** Facelift Cloud has 12 modules to assist marketers, sales, and customer service reps. One module allows reps to communicate with customers via chat while another aggregates channel communications into a color-coded inbox to eliminate missed inbound queries.
- › **Needs to develop more personalization functionality.** The seller-oriented modules allow reps to operate in omnichannel buying environments. The tool could go further in leveraging AI to provide deeper insights about buyers' interests and behaviors.
- › **Is a good fit for large global consumer brands.** Facelift BBT is a relatively well-established vendor. It has three offices in Europe and one in the Middle East, and most of its customers sell to consumers. It's a good fit for brands with a strong presence in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia Pacific.

Facelift BBT Customer Reference Summary

Facelift BBT's customers are happy with its core functionality but want more social networks. They also seek advanced analytics to better understand the impact of social media on pipeline progress.

FIGURE 9 Facelift BBT QuickCard

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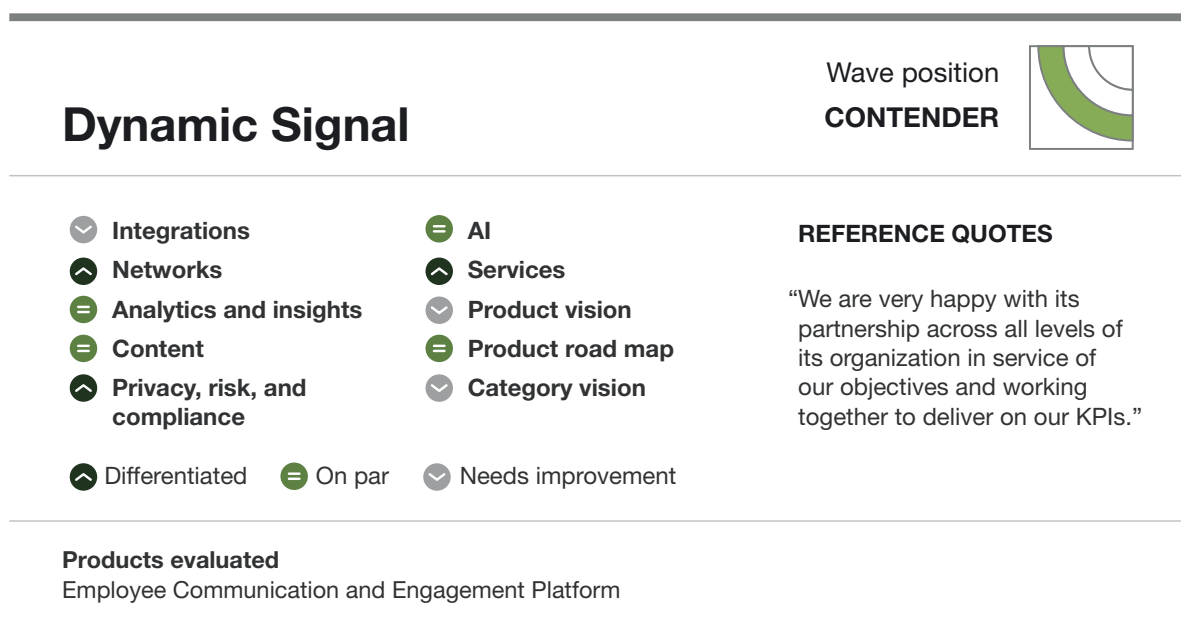
Dynamic Signal: Forrester's Take

Our evaluation found that Dynamic Signal (see Figure 10):

- › **Stands out for its open APIs.** Dynamic Signal publishes all its APIs so that customers can integrate with existing business tools and systems and pull in other functionality to further customize the tool to meet their unique business needs.
- › **Still needs more discrete functionality for sellers.** To better support the sales use case, the vendor needs to enhance its AI capabilities for contact-level recommendations and improve personalized interactions between sellers and their contacts.
- › **Is a good fit for companies that want to engage and activate their workforce.** Dynamic Signal suits companies that want their workforce actively engaged — internally and externally — on multiple social networks and don't require a discrete sales social engagement tool.

Dynamic Signal Customer Reference Summary

Dynamic Signal's customers are very happy with its core functionality and accompanying services. Customers want the vendor to enhance its AI and personalization capabilities and improve product innovation cycles to enable more differentiated functionality.

FIGURE 10 Dynamic Signal QuickCard

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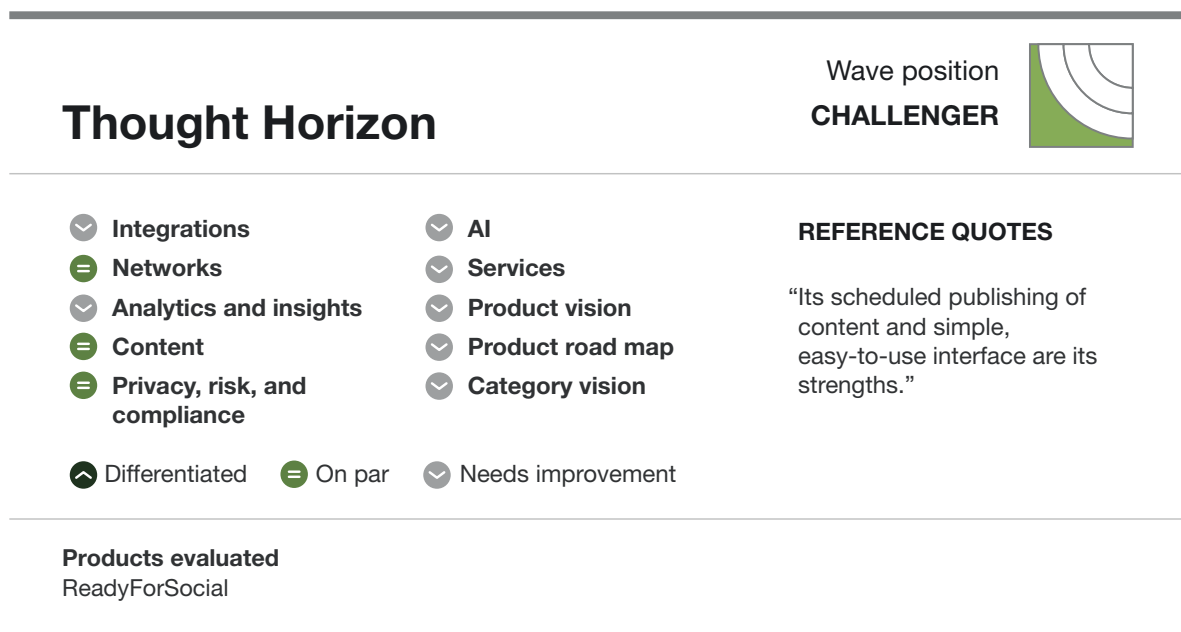
Thought Horizon: Forrester's Take

Our evaluation found that Thought Horizon (see Figure 11):

- › **Focuses on the B2B seller.** The bootstrapped boutique's ReadyForSocial tool aggregates external content, and its recommendation engine surfaces and prioritizes content. The vendor's thought leadership and training focus exclusively on the sales use case.
- › **Needs to round out its functionality.** If the scrappy vendor wants to scale, it needs to more fully develop its functionality and partner ecosystem, increase the networks and languages it supports, and integrate with more than one CRM solution.
- › **Is a good fit for companies that want to work with a boutique.** Thought Horizon has a few big-brand telco customers. As it expands into other industries, it will most appeal to companies that enjoy working with small boutiques and having a voice in shaping product directions for their vendors.

Thought Horizon Customer Reference Summary

Thought Horizon's customers are very satisfied with the vendor's functionality and services. Customers want more out-of-the box integrations with CRM and MAP solutions and enhanced analytics so that they can better understand the impact of sales social engagement on the pipeline.

FIGURE 11 Thought Horizon QuickCard

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Supplemental Material

The Forrester New Wave Methodology

We conducted primary research to develop a list of vendors that met our criteria for the evaluation and definition of this emerging market. We evaluated vendors against 10 criteria, seven of which we based on product functionality and three of which we based on strategy. We also reviewed market presence. We invited the top emerging vendors in this space to participate in an RFP-style demonstration and interviewed customer references. We then ranked the vendors along each of the criteria. We used a summation of the strategy scores to determine placement on the x-axis, a summation of the current offering scores to determine placement on the y-axis, and the market presence score to determine marker size. We designated the top-scoring vendors as Leaders.

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Integrity Policy

We conduct all our research, including Forrester New Wave evaluations, in accordance with the [Integrity Policy](#) posted on our website.

Survey Methodology

Forrester conducted its Q3 2018 Global B2B Marketing Sales Enablement Online Survey to B2B sales and marketing professionals who met the minimum standard in terms of company size, content knowledge, and job responsibilities. Forrester fielded this survey between June and August 2018. It resulted in 86 partial and complete responses. The sample consisted of organizations across industries and included third parties for relevant questions because third parties become deeply entrenched partners for many marketing initiatives. Please note that there may be some sample bias. This survey used a self-selected group of Forrester contacts knowledgeable about B2B marketing and is therefore not random. Respondent incentives included a summary of the survey results and a copy of a previously published report. The data from this independent study is not guaranteed to be representative of the population, and unless otherwise noted, statistical data is intended to be used for creative and not inferential purposes.

Endnotes

¹ See the Forrester report "[B2B Consultant Sellers Reign In The 21st Century.](#)"

² Source: Forrester's Q3 2018 Global B2B Marketing Sales Enablement Online Survey.

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