OneSignal
by Head of Product

Patient Marketing Automation

Details

Review Date	06/22/2023
Purchase Date	Q2'23
Implementation Time	N/A
Product Still in Use	Yes
Purchase Amount	N/A
Intent to Renew	N/A
Review Source	Elion

Product Rating

Product Overall	▬▬▬▬▬	5.0
Use Case Fit	▬▬▬▬▬	5.0
Ease of Use	▬▬▬▬	4.0
API	▬▬▬▬	4.0
Integrations	▬▬▬▬	4.0
Support	▬▬▬▬▬	5.0
Value	▬▬▬▬▬	5.0

About the Reviewer

Purchasing Team   User

Implementation Team   Product Oversight

Reviewer Organization

Virtual-First Provider   Metabolic Health

Reviewer Tech Stack

Hubspot   Looker   Segment   Twilio

AWS Pinpoint

Other Products Considered

Sendgrid

Summary

- **Product Usage: The reviewer uses OneSignal to enable their operations team to build custom flows for email campaigns and provide consolidated reporting for SMS and email.**

- **Strengths: OneSignal's strengths lie in its Journeys feature and analytics, allowing for custom flows with event triggers and providing comprehensive and easy-to-read analytical data.**

- **Weaknesses: Current weaknesses consist of a bug in OneSignal's SMS SDK, causing issues in setting up user journeys for SMS.**

- **Overall Judgment: Despite the bug issue, the likelihood of continuing to use OneSignal in the next 18-24 months is very high due to its comprehensive features and ability to handle scalability.**

We're talking about OneSignal and how it's being used at your company. Before we jump into that, could you give me a brief overview of your company and your role there?

I'm the Head of Product at a startup that enables providers to launch thriving practices focused on maternity care navigation. Yeah, small team, very early stage. Our end user is really the provider, so this is lactation consultants, registered dieticians, pelvic floor therapists, who actually have their own private practice that they serve with patients. We provide them with software tools to be able to manage that practice- everything from appointment scheduling, to provider notes to client intake forms. We also have a patient facing portal where they can search for providers that kind of meet their specific conditions and services that they're looking for. But I would say we've focused much less effort to date on sort of the patient care navigation experience than on the providers themselves.

When did you guys actually purchase OneSignal and how long have you been using it?

We purchased OneSignal in May. It's very recent, and I've been using it for just about a month. So it's very top of mind.

I'd love to dig in and just better understand how to use the product within your organization. So you know one way to look at this is like, what types of users interact with this product? And then what are their workflows?

So it's really two core teams within the organization. We stood it up as essentially an operations enablement tool. So that our operations team could create their own user flows and journeys and set up email and SMS flows. And those two departments are our client growth team, so that's focused on the patient experience, and then our provider network team, which is focused on provider experience. And so each of those teams is able to log in and use OneSignal's journeys functionality to build custom flows for email campaigns out to patients and providers respectively.

What are the features that you use from this product that could be worth calling out?

I think two that really stand out. One is this Journeys feature which is awesome. Being able to set up custom flows with event triggers and specific user cohorts where you can add some custom tags. For example, you can define when a user is subscribed to your product, and then fork a user journey based upon that subscription event. Journeys is great, very self service. The other is Analytics. So one of the things we were really struggling with for both email and SMS was we had it managed in Twilio for SMS and then Amazon Pinpoint for email. We felt like there was no central consolidated reporting that we had and OneSignal has been great and really pulling all of that together into a single consolidated dashboard. We can look at, click through rate, open rate, all those good things.

Just double tap, what are some of the workflows that may be enabled or what are some of the insights that may be enabled from that, that might otherwise be challenging?

Yeah, you know, Twilio is a huge company. They have a lot of great functionality. They've become a juggernaut in many ways, but one of the things I actually don't think they do a great job of is leveraging the fact that they've acquired tools like SendGrid to consolidate all of their reporting in one single place in a user friendly and intuitive way. I feel like OneSignal is just like analytics for Dummies, like anyone can do it. Anyone can log in and see all of the conversion rate stuff. And by the way, you can see overlays of email and SMS conversion rates. And so we can actually start to determine, across different channels, which one is more effective- where do we want to invest more time and effort? And ultimately, we have plans to build customization tools where users can define I want only email, I want all the SMS,

but we're not going to invest there until we have a good sense of like, one channel is outperforming and whether that customization would actually be helpful for users.

You're able to, even at the individual customer level, understand what is their marginal propensity to open a text versus open an email?

You can get down to the level of open rate for both email and SMS for an individual user. It's actually in some ways, because our volume is still relatively low to see it across all users. You know, we still are operating at a relatively small scale where you don't get to statistical significance very quickly. But I still think it like if you're interested, you can dial all the way down to the user level.

I'm wondering if there are any features that you don't use that maybe you would use if they were a little bit better.

Can I caveat it to say it's not that they were a little bit better, but we're just not using them yet? Because I think there are two- one is push notifications. We don't yet have a native mobile application. But when we, if and when we do stand one up, we definitely want to use OneSignal for push notifications as well. And then the other one, which we just have not really experimented with is onboarding messaging. So like in-app messaging similar to a WalkMe or any kind of onboarding tool where you can do targeted, in-app messages based upon these like custom tags per user. And I think there's a lot we haven't explored there given time and resource constraints, but I think it seems like there's some interesting functionality there. We should explore.

Did you build on top of the product or extend the platform in any way? And if so, how easy was it to build what you needed with the APIs?

I don't know that we build that much like custom tooling, like we've really mostly just done kind of out of the box integration. But I would say the API documentation is very clear. It's clear that it's written by and for developers. And I think in general, like, one of the reasons we opted to go with OneSignal. Our senior backend architect has worked with them in the past and was like, we can stand this up in a week like no problem. And that was one of the primary driving factors in why we selected OneSignal over some alternatives.

Got it. Did you supplement the product with any additional product functionality or maybe integrate it with other parts of your stack?

Yeah, so one of the primary integrations we needed was with HubSpot as our kind of CRM tool, particularly for the marketing team. There were a few specific use cases that I'm gonna blank on now that marketing needed for HubSpot that we couldn't get out of the box with OneSignal. It turned out that HubSpot also happened to be a strategic investor in OneSignal so they play very nicely together. And so we ended up doing an integration between OneSignal and HubSpot. We've also set up an integration with Looker. So in case we want to funnel any data into our BI reporting tool, and also with Segment for like front end tracking stuff.

For the different integrations, and it probably vary for each. Did you have to write any code or did the integrations generally come out of the box? And then, you know, what was the general quality of the integration?

Generally speaking, it was very straightforward. You know, I think their kind of marketplace section where they do third party integrations and other apps is pretty intuitive. You can generate just a client ID and secret like right there in the marketplace. And I have not heard any complaints yet from the marketing team on HubSpot integration. And the Looker and Segment data seems to be flowing through as we would expect them to.

Elion

Changing gears a little bit. Were you involved in selecting the vendor?

I came in and they were down to three vendors. They were either going to build everything into Twilio, build everything into Amazon Pinpoint, or stand up OneSignal and integrate with Twilio and Amazon being our sort of ESPs service providers.

Got it. How did the different products stack up? And what made you ultimately go with OneSignal?

Honestly, the main reason was most of the criteria that we were looking at like user segmentation, email, personalization, SMS personalization, creation of flows, analytics, all of those things were available directly in the OnSignal UI. So like single login, you go into the UI, you can see all of those things and control them from that kind of control center. For Twilio, you had to toggle between Segments, SendGrid, and Twilio for SMS personalization. So that was kind of disaggregated. A bunch of different places we'd have to look, which didn't really accomplish the core goal I think of of having a centralized email and SMS CRM. And then for Amazon, they have developer tools, but you actually have to build some of the UI around personalization and SMS personalization. So it was like that was going to be an additional dev effort on top of selecting Amazon. So I think the primary reason if I had to boil it down was one centralized source of truth in the one single UI.

Got it. How did you find the sales process and kind of working with OneSignal while you were making your decision?

Great, honestly, like best in class, I felt like they were incredibly professional. Their follow up was super strong and never felt like they were dropping the ball. They set up weekly recurring technical implementation calls with me and our engineer. And whenever there was a question outside the normal course of those weekly check ins, they were on it within 24 hours. Yeah, we had a lot of questions and they were answered. In fact, it's kind of interesting. A couple of them were coming out of the Twilio organization. So like a VP of sales at OneSignal is a former Twilio guy. So it's like some of these people who've been in and around email and SMS tools for a long time.

You mentioned that Twilio and AWS would be the service providers for OneSignal. So did you have to set up some sort of relationship between OneSignal and those service providers?

Yes, I probably should have mentioned that in the integrations question. Technically, though, like the service that is sending the SMS is still Twilio and the service that is sending email is still Amazon but we are able to to control all of the user journeys and flows from within the OneSignal portal.

I see, so maybe the one way to think about OneSignal is that they're trying to act as a control plane, across all of the different possible types of communication.

I think that's right. I think they are trying to act as a control center. I think we elected not to use OneSignal as our service provider for email and SMS, but rather to use our existing Twilio and Amazon as an option. You can actually use OneSignal as your service provider for those tools as well.

How do you think about that particular decision? Like why did you opt for a couple of different services?

Honestly, convenience. Engineers are just at a premium right now. And we need them to focus on the highest value stuff and we're willing to pay a little bit extra every month, if it means we don't have to do a full migration. That we may, by the way, we may still in the future, but didn't have the luxury of time.

Maybe we can chat briefly about kind of getting the product setup since I think that's basically what we were just talking about. What was kind of like the onboarding and implementation process, like, how long did it take before the product was deployed?

So I should caveat by saying we're actually still in that deployment process right now. Like we've gotten across the hurdle of granting the sandbox. We are in the process of actually deploying from sandbox to production environment. So I can speak to what that process has been like, I don't know if that's helpful. They've been very on top of providing both technical and non-technical support whenever we need it. We've got an account manager. We have a sort of specific solutions engineer who's available to us if we have questions about API responses, not making sense or things you know, erroring out. I would say that we have run into a couple of hiccups in the actual deploy process because they had a bug with their SMS user journeys with their SMS SDK that I guess they had not seen before. And I'm still to be honest, it's not entirely clear on what was causing it and timeline to resolution. So we are currently working through that issue with their technical solutions team right now. But they're on top of it like they've been responsive. We're still trying to figure out what was causing it and hopefully we can get to resolution in the next couple of days.

Do you feel like the account management team is strong and they're, they're responsive and generally able to solve issues?

Pretty quick. Yeah, I mean, like, it's pretty amazing. Actually,we've had these recurring weekly calls, and every once in a while the VP of sales would just drop in because he was interested in healthcare use cases, which is great.

How does OneSignal stack up from a healthcare vertical specific point of view? How are they in terms of the compliance and the different requirements that you might have working with patients and providers?

Yes, we are as you might imagine, we are handling personal health information and PHI, which means that under HIPAA compliance, we need a BAA agreement in place. And OneSignal signed that agreement assuming that you go with this sort of customized pricing. So you do have to pay a little bit more, which I think is actually pretty typical from what I've seen, just in order to check all of the legal and compliance boxes and do an actual legal review on their ends. So we pay a little bit of a premium but they've been able to check the box for HIPAA and BAA compliance.

How did you think about pricing between the different services? Are they all pretty comparable? What should folks know about pricing when they're starting to think through their communications platform?

Yeah, so we did a pricing comparison. I believe what we were quoted for Amazon is they're a huge organization. They don't necessarily need the extra revenue emails for the and then it was like half a cent per SMS. So very, very low. SendGrid was free up to 6000 emails per month. And I think as part of the Twilio package Segment was free up to 1000 active users, which would have, I think, accomplished our needs for right now. OneSignal, at the professional pricing level, I think is like 99 bucks a month. And then for our custom pricing for BAA it was like 175 a month with two active or three active seat licenses. So it's, you know, it's more expensive, but I think, for what we needed and for the observability and analytical capabilities, and frankly, just ease of use. So far, it's been super useful, and I've gotten positive feedback from the operations team.

That makes sense. Maybe we can kind of go and recap the discussion. Is there any particular aspect of the OneSignal that really kind of makes the product for you?

Yeah, just to recap, I think journeys is really this journey, where you can drag and drop models for specific user journeys and add custom tags. It's just very intuitive. And I'm a very visual learner and I think it just works well with my brain. Yeah, I'd say that's probably number one. In my book.

Anything that you dislike about the product that you would want them to improve?

Really the only negative that I can identify right now is this bug with their SMS SDK, which we uncovered in the implementation process. And I think we're just still not entirely clear what was causing it, but as a result, we have set up user journeys for SMS specifically that are not getting sent via Twilio. So there's some integration issues there. They're on top of it, and they are responding. But we haven't figured out what's going on yet.

What do you think is the likelihood of you continuing to use the product in 18 to 24 months?

I would say very high based on what we've seen so far. I think one of the other considerations that we had was like scaling and volume because, when you think about Twilio or Amazon, they can handle hundreds of 1000s and billions of sends,no problem. I think it remains to be seen with OneSignal. But they have assured us that when you get to a higher volume, you shouldn't see any latency or issues. So we'll keep monitoring and checking it on that but I think so far, so good.

Well, I think that that's about it. I'm curious if there's anything else that we haven't covered, or any advice you would have for someone who's thinking through their communications platform strategy?

I think this is gonna sound kind of self-evident but maximize customizability to allow your users the most options possible to choose when and under what circumstances they receive communications. So I think for us right now, that's SMS and email. Eventually, it may also be push notifications, but I think standing up a tool that gives you the capacity to maximize the number of channels that are available to users, but also to learn iteratively from insights from each of those channels.