



Oaklins



Accelerating growth in the customer engagement software sector

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DEAL SNAPSHOT

Netherlands-based OBI4wan, the all-in-one solution for customer service, chatbots, online and offline social media monitoring, and media insights, has been acquired by Spotler Group. By joining forces, Spotler and OBI4wan will be able to extend their respective current product offerings and expand their position as a group to a truly omni-channel, data-driven marketing communication software provider.

OBI4wan is the Benelux leader in the customer engagement software market. The company offers a comprehensive, fully integrated and modular product suite consisting of three main solutions: customer engagement management, AI chatbots, and social media monitoring, both offline and online. OBI4wan's omni-channel presence and powerful AI technology complements Spotler's dominant email marketing and data products, opening up significant cross-sell opportunities. Hence, as a whole, the two companies are well-positioned to make for a highly valuable combination.

Founded in 2016, Spotler is a SaaS group that provides cloud-based email marketing, marketing automation and transactional email solutions. The group has companies in the Netherlands, the UK, Spain and Sweden, and customers in more than 15 countries. Spotler Group has a client base of over 2,500 customers and a network of 385+ partners, which together send more than nine billion emails per year. The group is strategically positioned in the mid-market segment with products for B2B, e-commerce, retail and NGO customers.

“Having achieved significant growth and a strong market position in recent years, we are now looking forward to accelerating this growth together with Spotler.

Throughout the entire process, the experience of the Oaklins team in the SaaS space, together with its pragmatic approach, has helped us achieve the best deal possible.”

ALEXANDER DE RUITER
CEO AND CO-FOUNDER
OBI4WAN, NETHERLANDS

OAKLINS ASSISTS IN FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER

Oaklins' team in the Netherlands served as the exclusive financial advisor to OBI4wan's shareholders in its sale to Spotler, including majority shareholder Main Capital Partners and the management team of OBI4wan. This transaction emphasizes Oaklins' deep expertise both in SaaS and in advising founders and private equity on monetizing industry-leading businesses.

OBI4WAN

MARKET TRENDS & DEAL DRIVERS

Customers increasingly expect companies' customer service to be available 24/7, respond within a minute of sending a message, and connect across multiple digital and social media channels — all with a friendly and personal tone of voice.

In addition, due to the increased popularity of e-commerce and digital transactions, especially during the COVID-19 crisis, demand for digital customer engagement rather than face-to-face service has increased further.

On the other hand, due to working-from-home trends resulting from COVID-19, companies' customer service employees need access to company systems remotely instead of on-premises. This increases the need to go digital and work from cloud-based systems.

The above trends are pushing companies to invest more in their digital customer engagement channels, to align them better with fast-changing customer demands as well as employee work-from-home expectations. Companies with good digital customer engagement can differentiate their brands from the competition, attract new customers and generate new revenue.

This has resulted in a global customer engagement solutions market with an estimated value of US\$15 billion in 2020, and which is expected to grow to US\$31.3 billion by 2026.

M&A VALUATION ASPECTS

Financial details are confidential. However, the customer engagement M&A market is consolidating fast as companies seek to become the leading company in their sector. Important consolidating drivers are product portfolio differentiation and back-office synergies. The winners will be those companies that have the capital to build the most comprehensive, relevant and cost-effective solution. These are usually PE-backed or listed companies.

Valuations in this market have an extremely wide bracket as they depend on many factors, including a company's growth path, its customer engagement solutions traction and sales growth path, percentage of recurring sales, M&A strategy, the complementarity of the solutions between target and acquirer, and whether the company is publicly traded or private.

The lower a company scores on these factors, the more EV/EBITDA valuations are in the single to lower double-digit range. Companies that score high on all factors will see high double-digit EV/EBITDA valuations.

TALK TO OUR ADVISORS



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Frederik leads the firm's TMT team and has broad experience in sell-side, buy-side, merger, capital raising and advisory assignments, with a specific focus on large corporate and TMT situations. Transactions he has advised on include the sale of Vabi by Vitec Software Group, the investment of Capital A Investment Partners in QS Solutions, the fundraising for Rodeo Software provided by No Such Ventures, the sale of GAC Business Solutions to Broad Horizon, the investment of The Carlyle Group in HSO and the sale of RVC Medical IT to Nexus.



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Martijn's key area of M&A expertise is in enterprise SaaS, in which he continuously follows market developments and maintains regular contact with the major players in this sector. Consequently, he has a deep understanding of the market dynamics and value drivers in enterprise SaaS. Notable deals he has worked on are the sales of RVC Medical IT to Nexus and of ScreenPoint Medical to Insight Partners.

OAKLINS HAS CLOSED 1,172 DEALS IN TMT

United by a strong belief that we can achieve the extraordinary. Oaklins is a global team of 850+ financial advisory professionals in 45 countries providing M&A, growth equity, ECM, debt advisory and corporate finance services to support entrepreneurs, corporates and investors in reaching their goals.

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