

Does Gartner Group Matter?

Notebook: Artículo - varios

Created: 23/05/2017 12:13

URL: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/does-gartner-group-matter-kevin-hunt>

Does Gartner Group Matter?

Senior Account Executive at MicroStrategy

On February 4, the Gartner Group released a bombshell on the Business Intelligence industry. It bumped six of the nine companies, that were "leaders" on last years Magic Quadrant, down to visionary or worse. The biggest surprise was to see that Oracle got booted clear off the chart, which prompted at least one Oracle employee to declare that "Gartner Group doesn't matter". That assertion inspired me to write this blog.

There are many of us in the software industry that view the Gartner Group as more than a bit of a fraud, but to suggest that they don't matter is just foolish. They wield far more influence than they deserve.

Not making it on to the Gartner Magic Quadrant is a very big deal for a software company. That is why software companies pay ridiculous amounts of money to get on (and stay on) the Quadrant. And the fact that Gartner Group accepts money from the companies that are being evaluated, makes their independence very much open to question. And yet, even people like me, who have serious doubts about Gartner's legitimacy are influenced by the Magic Quadrant more than we would like to admit.

To start with, many buyers use the Gartner Magic Quadrant as a starting point from which to make a short list of the software companies to be considered. It seems unlikely that Oracle won't be invited to present as a result of their not making it onto Gartner's Quadrant, but for many start ups, not making the quadrant effectively condemns them to obscurity.

Even if a buyer adds an "unknown" start up to the list of contenders, actually investing precious resources in a software that isn't on at least one analyst's hot list, represents a huge political gamble that many executives would prefer not to take. But even decision makers that have no such concerns, are not free from Gartner's influence.

The real power of the Gartner Group is the illusion of what the behavioural psychologist Robert Cialdini calls "social proof", which plays to our subconscious need to conform with the crowd. In his book, "Influence – The Psychology of Persuasion", Cialdini gives an example of this that totally captures the essence of Gartner's power; Canned Laughter.

As TV watchers, most of us are convinced that the canned laughter on Comedy Shows, in no way effects us. But psychologists have proven that is simply not true. It increases our acceptance and enjoyment of the show, in spite of our conscious mind knowing that it is totally bogus.

And so it is with Gartner Group, Forrester Research and BARC. We know that they present a highly skewed view of the IT landscape that they are covering, and yet our subconscious mind still allows them to impact our evaluation of the options, far more than logic would dictate.

Bottom line is that the Gartner Group matters and their business model makes their advice

highly suspect. So we all need to make a conscious effort to not let them have undue influence on our decisions. The financial crisis has shown us the damage that can be done by industry analysts with serious conflicts of interest (i.e. Standard & Poors and Moody's).

Gartner Group is unlikely to crash the banking system but the impact of any skewed assessment they make, can be no laughing matter either.

=====

Please note that this article represents my opinion and should not be taken as the opinion of my current employer. It was originally written and posted at a time when I was not in the employ or seeking employment with any software vendor.