Alibaba Cloud

Optimize Your Digital Marketing Efforts
with Alibaba Cloud Solutions

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01 Introduction

Marketing is essential for any organization or business as it provides a channel for organizations to connect with their target audience. Today, businesses can maximize their potential at the right time and the right place by targeting customers online, which is where consumers spend a significant amount of time.

Traditional brick and mortar retail is beginning to phase out as organizations are increasingly adopting online and digital marketing tools to better engage with customers. Digital marketing is more effective because it allows businesses to easily scale marketing campaigns and target multiple audiences simultaneously. HubSpot describes digital marketing as an umbrella term for an organization's online marketing endeavors, helping businesses utilize digital channels such as social media to connect with existing and prospective customers.

Moreover, digital marketing allows organizations to better understand customer needs and buying behavior through data analysis, providing an improved customer experience deserving of brand loyalty.

According to McKinsey & Company, digital marketing solutions are multifaceted. The solutions aim at solving particular digital marketing challenges while strengthening organizational capabilities and marketing initiatives.

This white paper aims at helping CMOs, marketing managers and business owners in understanding the four basic solutions of digital marketing offered by Alibaba Cloud. These solutions cater to an organization's need to run efficient marketing campaigns, provide multiple channels of customer-brand interaction, upscale their advertisements, and offer website visitors with an internal web-search option.

02 What Makes a Digital Marketing Solution Important for Organizations

According to a survey carried out by Smart Insights in collaboration with Hubspot, organizations are increasingly adopting a digital approach to marketing. Businesses are seeking to leverage the benefits from tools such as social media marketing, paid marketing, automation, email marketing, influencer marketing, marketing automation, RSS feeds, e-commerce marketing, and content marketing. These new tools are replacing the traditional ways of marketing and increasing revenue.

Before we dive into discussing various Digital Marketing solutions, it is vital to understand the needs and challenges related to digital marketing that organizations face today. This is more so relevant for organizations that have still not evolved to accept and implement digital marketing solutions.

2.1 Challenges Faced by Organizations Using Traditional Marketing

Business owners and marketing leaders of an organization often might ponder on the actual need for a digital marketing solution. Below are some common challenges that marketing experts feel organizations without a digital marketing solution may face:

Online Market Share Unawareness

Modern consumers demand a digital presence of their favorite brands and shopping outlets. They prefer to shop, pay bills, or even provide feedback using digital channels. An organization aloof of the existence and the dynamics of an online market will remain unaware of its consumers' buying behavior pattern, consumer preference, its competitors' strategies, and the infinite possibilities that come along with taking a business into the digital arena.

Loss of Market Share

With multiple players thronging every market sector, an efficient digital marketing solution equips organizations to not just stay in the race but excel as well. On the contrary, staying aloof from the innumerable advantages of digital marketing will provide nothing else but a loss of critical market share.

Disintegrated Marketing Effort

Organizations, especially small and medium businesses are often hesitant to pursue a complete digital marketing implementation. Rather, they prefer to adopt a single aspect of digital marketing and work in silos. This often leads to a disintegrated marketing effort. Digital media works best when all of the crucial tools work in sync with each other and in union with traditional media and response channels.

Lack of Agility

An important differentiator that sets apart the world's most reputable organizations is their agility. They are open to the thought of adapting new approaches to engage their customers digitally. Ideally, adaptation and utilization of an effective digital marketing solution fuels an organization's agility. Ballantine, one of the world's leading digital marketing provider, states that brands need to adopt digital marketing tactics as part of their overall strategy to get ahead of the competition.

Failure to Optimize Marketing Resources

This particular flaw is evident across organizations irrespective of their size. According to Dave Chaffey, CEO, and co-founder of Smart Insights, organizations often ignore the effort to analyze implemented existing marketing solutions. The lack of a well-synchronized and time invested digital marketing solution will lead to failure to optimize the marketing resources of an organization. A notable victim of this problem is Boo.com. It launched in late 1999, sought to become the pioneer as a global brand selling sportswear and designer clothes. However, Boo.com had a feeble digital marketing plan, and its marketing team failed to handle its key metrics and e-commerce levers efficiently. Boo.com ignored crucial aspects such as Customer LifeTime (CLTV), Cost to Acquire a Customer (CAC), and conversion rates. Consequently, Boo.com went out of business on 18th May 2000.

2.2 Need for a Digital Marketing Solution

Below are some of the advantages of an efficient and appropriate digital marketing solution for an organization.

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Cost Effective Way of Marketing

In a report issued by Gartner Inc., 40% of the respondents claimed to have found using digital marketing more economical. Furthermore, a survey conducted by HubSpot revealed that digital marketers get better Cost-Per-Lead (CPL) compared to traditional marketing channels. Using digital marketing, organizations do not have to bear the cost of traditional marketing media such as newspapers, radios, billboards, and television. Organizations can target their marketing activities directly to customers who are already interested in their products and services.

Intensify Customer Connection

The modern era consumer strives for personalization, attention, and trust. Digital marketing helps organizations to establish a connection with its existing as well as potential customers. Digital marketing collaterals like blogs, videos, and social media outreach have proven to be more responsive and efficient as compared to traditional ways of marketing and promotion. This is in comparison with traditional customer communication media such as billboards, help lines or direct sales activity.

Promote Conversion

The rate of conversion measures the success of any marketing activity. These conversions could be from a website visitor into a lead and ultimately into a sale. The lack of conversion would mean inconsequential web traffic without an actual increase in customer base or revenue. An effective digital marketing solution will facilitate the transformation of a customer into the next level of the customer lifecycle.

Generate Better Revenue

Higher conversion rates would have a domino effect on revenue generation. Google, in collaboration with IPSOS Hong Kong, reports that organizations that implement digital marketing solutions can expect 2.8 times enhanced revenue growth. For small and medium-sized organizations, the report claims that utilizing digital marketing techniques would yield 3.3 times better opportunities of a workforce and business expansion.

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Promotes Customer Centric Brand Image

For any organization, brand image is essential for the continuity of business. A digital marketing solution not only attracts targeted traffic but also establishes a channel for customers and the to interact. Additionally, digital marketing focuses on social media signals created through direct and personalized interactions between customers and businesses. Reliable social signals gathered through digital interactions leverage brand image and reliability.

Digital marketing solutions aim at elevating customer experiences. They enable organizations to target potential and existing customers through campaigns while striving to build an enhanced digital experience across various channels or mediums.

03 Alibaba Cloud - Your Ideal Digital Marketing Partner

Digital Marketing has emerged as a vital ingredient in the success of any organization. Through digital marketing, many organizations have introduced new marketing methods, such as product personalization, real-time bidding, and data analytics, to satisfy the needs of modern-day customers. With the rapid development of the internet and mobile technology, digital marketing has become increasingly relevant for all businesses.

Alibaba Cloud offers four digital marketing solutions to help businesses implement more effective and adaptive marketing campaigns:

- Marketing campaign sites solutions

- Multi-Channel customer experience solution

- Demand-side platform solution

- Website search solution

3.1 Marketing Campaign Sites Solution

Organizations often come across opportunities that require them to initiate an engaging customer experience for large-scale, global marketing campaigns. For this, they require a supporting mechanism that facilitates large-scale marketing promotions with highly scalable, elastic and secure infrastructure to manage rapid traffic inflows.

Such requirements may arise when businesses are gearing up to launch a new service, product or e-commerce. Furthermore, organizations intend to do this via a massive marketing campaign. Before a business begins this initiative, it becomes imperative for them to look into their existing infrastructure. Can it handle the expected website traffic? Would latency be a concern? Do they have the capability to provide a pleasing customer experience?

Past experiences and research should give the marketers and technological experts an estimation of the challenges that may arise in such events.

Handling extravagant marketing events and campaigns are not new to Alibaba Cloud. Alibaba Cloud has handled the Singles' Day Shopping Festival for Alibaba with high precision and impressive customer experience. Additionally, Alibaba Cloud is the official cloud services partner of the Olympics.

Our solutions empower organizations of all sizes to manage heavy traffic and conduct marketing campaigns without interruptions. Alibaba Cloud's highly elastic solutions make it possible for customers to meet cumbersome and low traffic demands with precision.

3.1.1 Solution Description and Architecture

The image below outlines the solution architecture of the Marketing Campaign Sites solution provided by Alibaba Cloud.
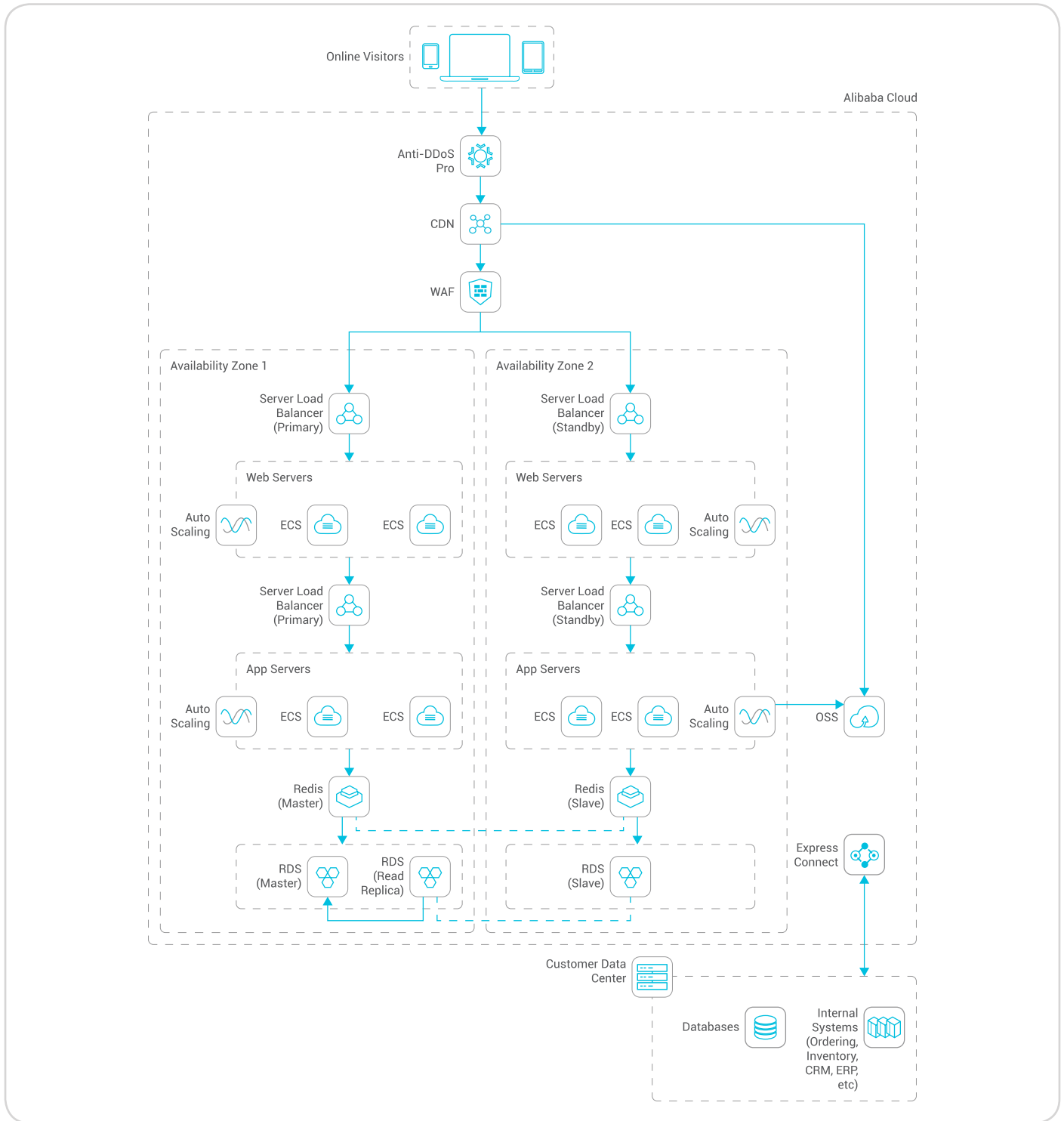
**Diagram 1: Alibaba Cloud Marketing Campaign
Site Architecture Solution**

- **Architecture Detail:** For organizations that are expecting unpredictable traffic on their website for an upcoming marketing event, Alibaba Cloud's elastic computing capabilities enable them to scale their resources to match traffic demands. Furthermore, businesses can configure Auto Scaling for both front end web servers and backend application servers of their campaign site. Additionally, Alibaba Cloud allows organizations to further minimize data response time and reduce database workload by leveraging in-memory cache services such as ApsaraDB for Redis between applications and database. ApsaraDB for RDS addresses typical database performance bottlenecks during large-scale campaigns. It also supports the read-replica feature to avoid overloading the primary node by distributing read requests to read-only nodes.

With Alibaba Cloud's 530 CDN nodes around the world, the system can accelerate media-rich files for your marketing campaign globally and ensure an enhanced experience for your global customer base. Campaign periods also translate to instances where websites are most vulnerable to cyber security attacks. To ensure holistic cyber security, Alibaba Cloud offers comprehensive security products, including Anti-DDoS and Web Application Firewall (WAF).

Organizations may also have internal systems such as CRM, ERP, or other databases running on-premise and in existing data centers. For their customized requirements, Alibaba Cloud supports a secure hybrid cloud setup to integrate the existing infrastructure with its advanced cloud products.

3.1.2 Unique Advantages of Alibaba Cloud Marketing Campaign Sites Solution

With Alibaba Cloud Marketing Campaign Sites solution, organizations can experience the unique advantages of this solution, such as:

- Anti-DDoS ensures mitigation capacity exceeding 2000Gbps.

- Alibaba Cloud CDN is easy to use and ensures automatic website traffic spikes are handled. Furthermore, it reduces the load on origin site and has storage capacity up to 1.5PB. Not only this, Alibaba Cloud CDN keeps website response time as minimal as possible.

- 99.99% business availability, thanks to the benefits offered by ApsaraDB for RDS. It is not only cost effective but also provides organizations a second level data recovery in case of system failures.

- Alibaba Cloud Express Connect offers organizations enhanced infrastructure that provides uncompromised network quality regardless of the geographical location.

- Using Alibaba Cloud Server Load Balancer, organizations can have the assurance of automatic scaling up and down depending on the load on the website.

3.2 Multi-channels Customer Experience Solution

Company branding is an aspect that no organization should overlook. When it comes to first impressions for their website, mobile app, or social media channels. Delivering a consistent customer experience across different channels further strengthens the relationship between the brand and the customers.

Providing a high level of service will lead to an increase in customer satisfaction and higher retention ratio. With industries witnessing intense competition from several players, a pleasant customer experience often can prove to be the deciding factor in organizations emerging as market leaders or mere followers. Below are some important features that organizations should follow to utilize multichannel customer service to their advantage:

- **Providing Multiple Channels:** Customers should have multiple choices in selecting the channel through which they would want to communicate with the business. Organizations should not restrict their customers to opt for only a single channel. Businesses can choose to provide customer channels such as phone, email, live chat, help desk, self-service and social media.

- **Establishing an Integrated Customer Channel:** Organizations that opt for multiple channels must ensure a holistic unification and integration of all of their channels. Businesses must make sure that the lines of communication are open internally and that departments share the standard systems, goals, and metrics. This should come in the backdrop of providing the frontline representatives of the organizations the authority to do what is best for customers and company. Doing so, organizations can ensure that minor issues do not blow up into social media nightmares. A unified and consistent approach to service is evidently a significant step towards enhancing customer experience.

- **Offering Only Your Best:** Organizations must ensure that they do not go overboard in providing too many customer channels. Instead, businesses should opt for easier channels and then work their way up to more instant media. The focus should be on quality and timeliness rather than mere quantity.

Alibaba Cloud enables organizations to optimize their customers' experience by providing flexible and reliable infrastructure. This includes integration across devices and global customer touch-points, empowering customers to choose their preferred channel. Alibaba Cloud Multi-channels Customer Experience solution also supports omnichannel strategy for digital marketing by providing a high-performance connection and seamless user experience.

3.2.1 Solution Description and Architecture

Below is a representation of the solution architecture for Alibaba Cloud Multi-Channels Customer Experience solution.
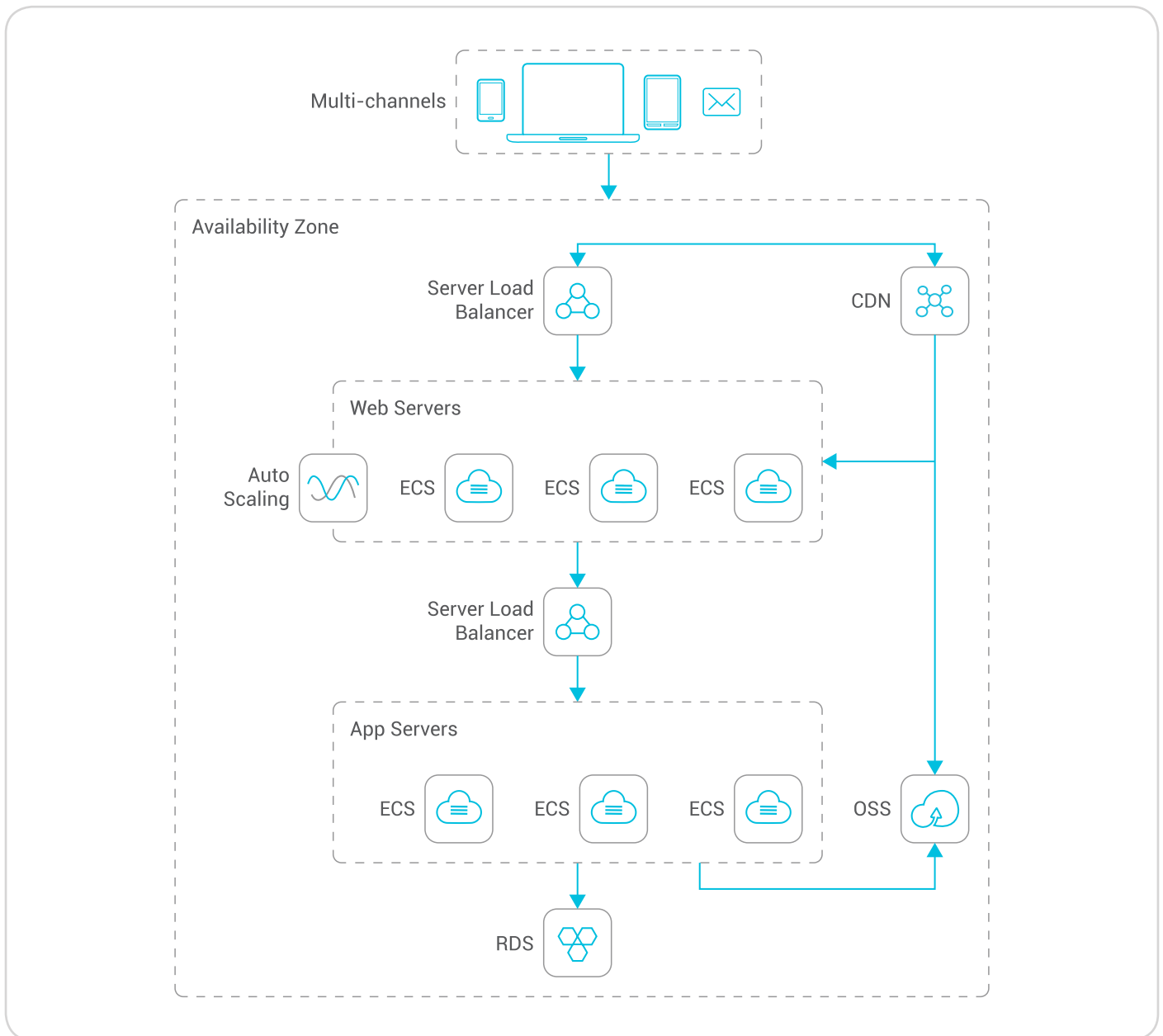
**Diagram 2: Alibaba Cloud Multi-channel Customers
Experience Architecture Solution**

- **Architecture Detail:** The architecture is a typical Multi-channel CMS (Content Management System) deployment on Alibaba Cloud. The CMS application effectively empowers organizations to manage content for various channels. Doing so, organizations can personalize their customer experiences by keeping track of customer interactions across channels.

  Organizations may deploy the CMS backend system on a single or cluster of ECS instances. This depends on the number of internal users (e.g. author, editor, and approver) involved during content contribution and distribution cycle. The backend database installed on ApsaraDB for RDS is by default on a hot/standby mode to avoid disruption to CMS

operations caused by database failure. Content contributors can also save rich media files such as images or videos on OSS instead of traditional disks during content editing for reduced storage costs.

The CMS front-end system consists of a cluster of ECS instances whose purpose is to cater to the presentation layer of all channels. Alibaba Cloud Auto Scaling allows organizations to handle visitor traffic fluctuations easily with scaling rules.

Additionally, Alibaba Cloud provides global coverage around the world. This gives organizations the ability to deploy front end instances to a region closest to their audience. This ensures delivery of an uninterrupted and smooth experience across touch points.

3.2.2 Unique Advantages of Alibaba Cloud Multi- Channels Customer Experience Solution

- Organizations can seamlessly integrate with Auto Scaling using Alibaba Cloud Server Load Balancer.

- Elastic Compute Service scales capacity automatically depending on real-time requirements to improve overall performance. Additionally, it instantly upgrades network bandwidth. It also provides 12000 Random IOPS & 300 MB/s ephemeral SSD volume.

- OSS guarantees up to 99.9% availability and is a perfect fit for global teams and international project management.

3.3 Demand-Side Platform Solution

A Demand-Side Platform collects user access behavior data and performs correlation computing. The DSP fetches user preferences for advertising from the Average Directional Index (ADX) system, and in-turn accurately pushes suitable advertising to the user. The DSP requires large-scale online and offline computing resources. Additionally, streaming computing clusters may require temporary resources as well. While this model may increase hardware and operational costs as computing resources require added flexibility and temporary performance, However, it provides the scalability and intelligence to communicate exact advertisements that the targeted audience wants to see.

3.3.1 Need for Demand-Side Platform Solution

Businesses are on a constant quest to deliver customer services and goods that stand apart from their competitors. This requires a better understanding of the customer and buying patterns, and then delivering a corresponding service or product. DSP helps businesses to understand customer needs through the following advantages.

- **Enhanced Display Campaign:** Many organizations are bombarding the digital advertising world with advertising campaigns. This makes it increasingly difficult for your advertisement to stand out from the rest. DSP gives advertisers and organizations analyzed and relevant data to create an optimum advertisement campaign. DSP integrates the efforts of media ad bidding, buying, distribution, and analysis into one central user.

- **Real Time Bidding:** The driving force of a DSP is its access to an unlimited amount of data. Furthermore, DSP helps to place bids in real-time across several ad exchanges. This would imply that businesses possess the latest updated information on the impressions available for their advertisement display. DSP allows organizations to reach out to their customers across devices. It also equips businesses to determine which, space is most imperative for their campaign.

- **Facilitated Budgeting:** Advertising campaigns can be costly, and therefore budgeting is a critical factor for most organizations. DSP determines which impression will determine the most value for an organization's advertising campaign. The amount set for the campaigns is in relation to the value that holds for the organization. Using DSP would mean businesses are not spending an extraneous amount of money on ineffective advertising spaces. Additionally, DSP also ensures that an organization's investment on advertising campaigns lead to an increase in return on investment.

- **Advanced Targeting:** Businesses can reach out and connect with their target audience on the channels they may occupy. DSP's advanced targeting feature enables this possibility for its users. Moreover, DPS's several targeting tools comprise of features that help organizations to target contextually, geographically, behaviorally and the ability to retarget.

- **Transparent Data Analysis:** DSPs ability to offer transparent data strengthens its significance to organizations. DSPs give organizations open and granular statistics on aspects such as click-through rate, website traffic, and page view lift. Such detailed data helps organizations analyze the effectiveness of an entire advertising campaign. DSP further allows businesses to consolidate performances across all services and provide results based on a broader network of media.

3.3.2 Solution Description and Architecture

Below is the representation of the solution architecture for Alibaba Cloud Demand-side Platform solution.
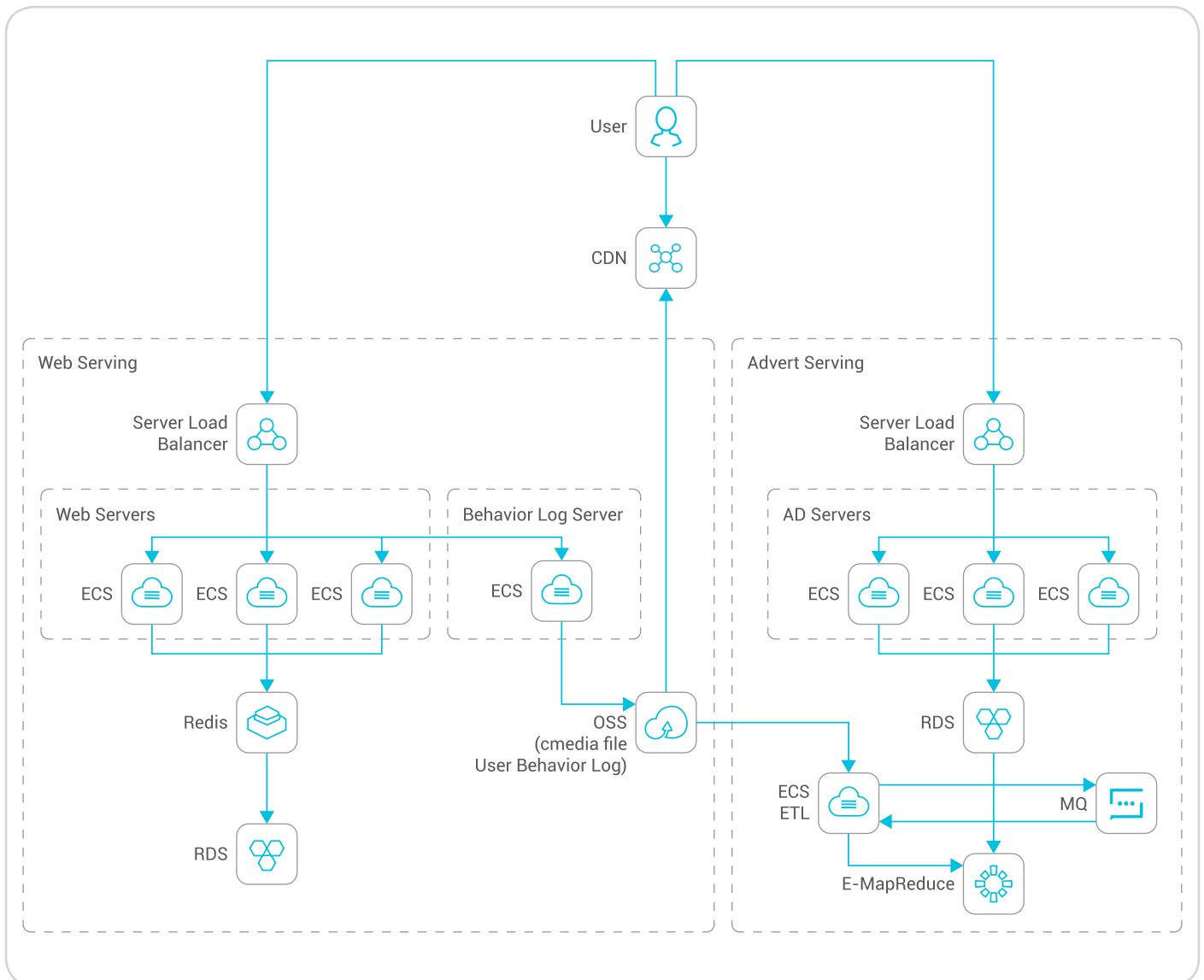
**Diagram 3: Alibaba Cloud Demand Site
Platform Architecture Solution**

- **Architecture Detail:** The DSP Solution is capable of fetching rapid updates to the organization's marketing website based on customer feedback, user behavior, or competitor moves. It also integrates them into the advertisements that users see.

Businesses can use Server Load Balancer and Elastic Compute Service (ECS) while displaying advertisements. These products facilitate the deployment of the web server, for collecting cookies of users' access behavior and providing insights on what is working and what you should remove. Users can store the user access behavior log in Object Storage Service (OSS) for subsequent offline calculations and other online data in the ApsaraDB for RDS database.

Alibaba Cloud DSP Solution allows picture storing, videos and other static resources in the web server with OSS to reduce storage costs. Once stored, one can use Alibaba Cloud CDN to accelerate those static resources. Alibaba

Cloud CDN also has the capability to push and pull resources from OSS directly, effectively reducing the latency of content delivery to the user.

Based on Alibaba Cloud E-MapReduce service, or starting a Hadoop and Spark cluster for offline calculation, the system sends results from the online data back to the ApsaraDB for RDS database. E-MapReduce service helps users maintain the computing cluster such as cluster scale-out and node failover operations. It is possible to release the cluster at any time after the calculation of resources while storing the calculated data in the OSS to reduce the cost of temporary calculation.

Alibaba Cloud also provides the NAT gateway service to help DSP implement SNAT and source data for third parties. Moreover, it pushes insights on advertiser data to the visitor based on the results of an offline calculation.

3.3.3 Unique Advantages of Alibaba Cloud Demand-side Platform Solution

- Alibaba Cloud ECS allows businesses to choose network tiers and provides them the ability to scale in real-time during campaigns.

- Using Server Load Balancer ensures system's stability, reliability and significantly enhances user availability.

- Object Storage Service (OSS) enables organizations to store, backup and archive a large amount of data in the cloud. Additionally, it reduces costs and simplifies maintenance.

- Alibaba Cloud E-MapReduce processes data at lightning speed. It untangles big data processing, making it easy, fast, scalable and economical.

3.4 Website Search Solution

An efficient site search is the foundation of a pleasant user experience by catering to what customers want in one of the most accurate manners. A website search option empowers the customers by giving them the option of searching what they want. This would result in satisfied customers, who in return will spend a longer time on the organization's website and have a higher probability of converting into a lead.

Website Search solution provides different stages of infrastructure for website search engines. This enables users to reduce the complexity of search engine development as well as IT costs. Moreover, search solution also enhances the accuracy of site search results for visitors.

Typically, website search engines require NLP (Natural Language Processing) and reverse indexing to process search requests. Websites also require data-intensive computing to optimize search results consistently.

However, this calls for infrastructure with high CPU computing power and I/O capacity. Regarding NLP, the system will need to use Hadoop or Spark to build a computing cluster. Additionally, source data also requires Bigtable storage.

3.4.1 Significance of a Website Search Solution

In today's modern market scenario, websites are often laden with text, figures, and images. Online shopping websites may also have thousands of pages. Businesses are evolving to be more customer centric and are going beyond traditional means to empower potential and existing customers. A website search solution allows businesses to achieve these goals through the following means.

- **Fulfilling Customer's Urgency:** Customers are habituated to receiving speedy service and solutions, and they will not spend hours surfing websites to get the desired information.

- **Promoting Customer Centricity:** A differentiating factor between a good website and a great website are the features of being customer centric. A website having a search option reflects a brand image of being empathetic towards its customers and website visitors. It transforms websites from "one size fits all" to a more tailored approach.

- **Obtaining Crucial Marketing Data:** Using appropriate analytical tools, organizations can collect data from their site search function. This form of data gathering provides valuable information such as the type of visitors, user navigation patterns, and buying behavior of visitors. The information gathered can be crucial when organizations plan their marketing strategy.

- **Triggering New Product Ideas:** Analyzing website users' searches can help organizations come up with new product ideas. If a large number of customers search for a product not currently offered by an organization, businesses can consider offering that product. A closer analysis of search options will also reveal product characteristics and features that customers want.

3.4.2 Solution Description and Architecture

Alibaba Cloud offers Website Search solution that complements the significance of a website search. Below is the description of the solution architecture.
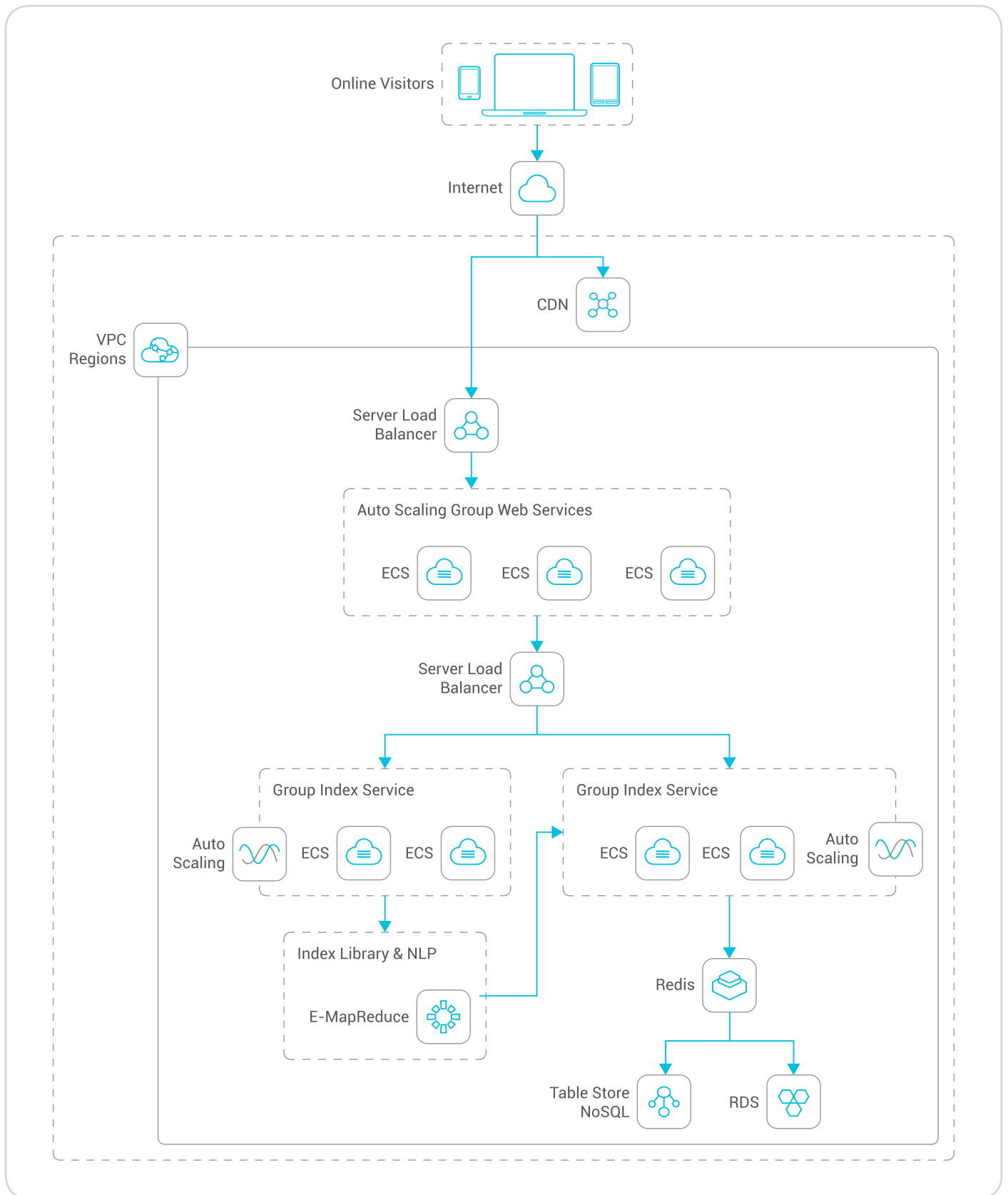
Alibaba Cloud

Online Visitors

Internet

CDN

VPC Regions

Server Load Balancer

Auto Scaling Group Web Services

ECS   ECS   ECS

Server Load Balancer

Group Index Service

Auto Scaling   ECS   ECS

Group Index Service

ECS   ECS   Auto Scaling

Index Library & NLP

E-MapReduce

Redis

Table Store NoSQL   RDS

**Diagram 4: Alibaba Cloud Website Search
Architecture Solution**

- **Architecture Detail:** Using Alibaba Cloud Website Search Solution, organizations can deploy the front end search service via Server Load Balancer, Elastic Compute Service (ECS), and Content Delivery Network. To build the backend search web-service, businesses can use Server Load Balancer, ECS, and ApsaraDB for RDS.

The backend search service performs Natural Language Processing (NLP) on incremental data and generates a reverse index from the indexing framework. The ECS Input-Output (IO) optimization instance provides high-performance network IO and disk IO. This helps the index framework to complete the index operation faster. The Table Store accumulates the processed data for subsequent searches. The Alibaba Cloud Table Store NoSQL database service is similar to Hbase and provides storage and real-time access to massive unstructured data.

When website visitors initiate a search request, the backend search service obtains relevant content through the indexing framework and fetches the complete content from Table Store. This provides results to the user through the front web service. The search results use ApsaraDB for Redis to accelerate the turnaround time for the user.

The NLP model regularly analyzes the corpus base on E-MapReduce and provides the latest data model to the search framework.

3.4.3 Unique Advantages of Alibaba Cloud Website Search Solution

- Alibaba Cloud Server Load Balancer is 60% more cost effective as compared to traditional methods of load balancing. It further creates internal cloud load balancer to route traffic using private IP addresses within your VPC (Virtual Private Cloud).

- Alibaba Cloud CDN enables website response time in milliseconds.

- ECS provided by Alibaba Cloud empowers organizations to a one-click deployment for all resources.

- Table Store is a fully managed and scalable NoSQL database service based on automatic data partitioning and load balancing technologies. It offers processing capacity of over 10,000 queries per second for each node in the cluster.

04 Conclusion

Organizations across the globe are evolving towards a more cost effective, dynamic, and digital way of marketing.

Alibaba Cloud, the world's fastest growing cloud provider, offers a wide variety of digital marketing solution for all kinds of organizations. With Pay-As-You-Go options and maximum digital availability, Alibaba Cloud digital marketing solutions are set to change the way organizations globally market their product and services. In addition, a large variety of back-end products enable businesses to focus on factors that really matter, rather than worrying about latency, automation, and analytics.

Alibaba Cloud digital marketing solutions help transform your business into a customer centric brand while keeping marketing campaigns cost effective.

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