

FAQ – Customers

SUGARCRM ACQUISITION OF NODE

Who has Sugar acquired?

SugarCRM has acquired Node, creator of the first AI-as-a-service platform designed for applications that leverage people and company data. Node's technology delivers uncannily accurate predictions that enable companies to make smarter decisions. With Node's groundbreaking AI technology as part of our innovative time-aware CX platform, Sugar is poised to deliver a truly innovative and differentiated offering to mid-market businesses.

What does Node do and how do they do it?

Node created the industry's first AI-as-a-Service platform. The Node platform enables companies to build AI applications and features quickly, without the usual time, money, and risk associated with AI projects. Node focuses on enabling AI for applications that rely on customer and people data – exactly the type of solutions that Sugar offers.

Node's key differentiator is the accuracy of its predictions. That accuracy is made possible through data enrichment. Node augments the data they get from their customers with people, company, and market data sourced from a variety of public sources. This data enrichment enables Node to deliver exceptionally accurate predictions, even with limited or incomplete CRM data, and to consider factors in its predictions that aren't typically represented in CRM data. When you combine Node with Sugar's time-aware customer experience platform, companies can achieve an unprecedented view into the past, present, and future of their customers and customer-facing functions.

Where is Node located?

Node is headquartered in San Francisco and has a development office in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Why has Sugar acquired them?

Last year, Sugar unveiled its innovative time-aware customer experience platform. We introduced a number of new products and technologies for automating or managing all customer-facing functions of a business, while capturing and analyzing every change event in the customer journey. This complete historical customer record is unique in the market and enables a true 360° view of the customer – a wider, more encompassing view than our competitors had yet envisioned. That "time-aware" vision and message resonated with customers, analysts, and press.

This year, Sugar will introduce HD-CX (high-definition customer experience) as an amplification of the time-aware vision. HD-CX builds on that message to express a vision for what is possible with a time-aware CX platform as a foundation. A key component of the HD-CX vision is *predictive insight*. With this acquisition, Sugar is expanding from capturing every historical customer detail to analyzing that trove of information to make predictions that empower better business decisions. It's still time-awareness, but it incorporates the other direction of time: the future. Node's AI platform is the vital technology enabler for extending time-aware into the future and is the latest in an ongoing series of innovations that realize the HD-CX vision.

In addition to time-aware, Node also offers the ability to supercharge each of our other key differentiators by further removing user effort in the data management process, fully embracing the power of AWS, and providing prediction capabilities to greatly enhance our own customer service efforts.

Is Node available for sale?

Our plan is to integrate Node-powered predictions into our other products, such as Sugar Sell. You should start to see these features in one or more Sugar products before the end of 2020. What's great about this is that cloud customers will receive the value of AI-powered predictions in their current products without having to buy and implement a standalone AI platform. AI features will be embedded into your SugarCloud products, at no additional cost, and work right out of the box.

I am interested in learning more. What should I do?

That's great! Contact your partner or Sugar sales rep. Your rep will bring in the right people from Sugar to tell you more about the technology and what we are doing with it.

Will the Node platform be added to the Sugar price list?

We want to focus on embedding AI into the user experience of our existing products and so we do not plan to offer a general purpose AI platform at this time. Instead we will leverage the Node technology to build new prediction features directly within Sugar products.

What does the future look like for AI and Sugar?

At a high level, Node's technology provides a number of options for integration into the Sugar portfolio. Initially, we will be using Node's platform to power AI prediction features in our core products, such as Market, Sell, Serve, and Discover. For example, creating an AI-based sales forecasting capability in Sugar Sell would be a highly valuable feature for customers. The use cases possible with Node are vast and highly valuable, so you may also see premium editions of our products with more advanced AI prediction features, as well as other advanced features. But rest assured that highly valuable AI features will be part of our base level products as well. Finally, Node also presents the possibility of offering professional services-based, custom-developed, AI enhancements to our customers' implementations of Sugar products. The variety of options is one of the strengths of Node as a Sugar technology component.

Is there any product overlap between the companies?

We've long had a vision at Sugar of delivering AI-powered insights and solutions and we have been making incremental progress for quite some time. With Sugar Hint, we started addressing the common data quality issues in CRM's that would inhibit our ability to generate useful models and insights. We acquired Sugar Discover, our analytics solution for analyzing data for trends, anomalies and providing insights into past and current performance. We've also taken our first steps in applying machine learning to our core Sugar products as well.

The opportunity that Node brings us is twofold:

1. A full deep learning platform that will enable us to rapidly build, test and deliver prediction models for all of Sugar's products, each of which can focus on specific use cases that have challenged business people for decades.
2. Node also brings a rich database of CRM-related information for embedding and enriching those models, to provide information-driven insights and tangible information that can help drive a business forward, providing information that a human simply can't otherwise synthesize.

How is Node different from Sugar Discover?

There are two primary ways in which Node is different than Discover.

First, is the packaging. Sugar Discover is a standalone product. Node on the other hand, will power new prediction features in existing Sugar products.

The second difference is in technological approach:

- Sugar Discover has some AI-based capabilities embedded in its Discover Insights feature which shows related data insights contributing to anomalies that it detects. However, on the whole Discover is primarily a *descriptive data analytics* product focused on processing Sugar data from the past and the present to find insights, relationships, and trends, along with related factors contributing to those insights.
- Node is an *AI platform* that uses mathematical models that generate predictions by finding patterns in data. What distinguishes AI from analytics is the ability to form assumptions about the patterns, test them, and improve the models, without the intervention of a human. In other words, AI learns. AI is able to exhaustively form and test assumptions to improve its model in a way that is not feasible for people.

Finally, we should point out that Node's AI capabilities are very complementary to Discover. In fact, it is easy to envision Node enhancing Discover's descriptive analytics with AI-based predictive insights about the future.

How is Node different from Salesforce Einstein?

There are three key differentiators with how Sugar AI is different from Einstein and they are a combination of Node's and Sugar's capabilities.

- **Time-Awareness** – With Sugar's ability to provide a full historical record of all change events related to customers and customer-facing processes, our AI technology has customer and process data to work with that is more historically complete, accurate, and up to date, which results in unprecedented levels of accuracy in predictions.
- **Data Enrichment** – Node augments a customer's Sugar data with a curated repository of people, company, and market data sourced from a wide variety of public sources. Competitive solutions, such as Einstein, rely solely on the information available in the CRM. Einstein is limited to the information that a company had the foresight to collect and is biased towards the data the company felt was relevant at the time they implemented their CRM. By contrast, Sugar's AI will deliver exceptional predictions, even with limited or incomplete CRM data, and it will consider factors in its predictions that simply aren't represented in CRMs. Sugar's AI will surface answers that the CRM data didn't cover and raise questions that customers didn't even know they should be asking.
- **Embedded Delivery** – Another differentiating aspect is in packaging. Sugar will deliver AI capabilities as fully embedded functionality within our core applications. With some exceptions, Salesforce is largely trying to sell Einstein as a general-purpose AI platform, in which customers take on the effort, cost, and risk of defining their own AI capabilities, building out the models, identifying and cleansing the data, training the models, and deploying the solution. By embedding AI into our core products, Sugar enables customers to avoid the time, cost, and technical expertise required by Einstein.

When you add all these together, the Sugar solution democratizes the power of AI-based predictive insight. It makes phenomenally accurate predictions obtainable to all companies, regardless of size, business maturity, or technical sophistication.

Will Node's data enrichment feature create a GDPR or other privacy issue?

Node will not create a GDPR issue. The data enrichment is used only to generate predictions and the enrichment data is never exposed to users. In fact, Node uses innovative technology to abstract such information from its training data set, ensuring that even Node doesn't use such information. End users will only see predictions and associated probabilities.

Will Node's data enrichment feature be relevant for non-US companies?

Yes, Node's company, people, and market data was designed to empower global use cases.

Will the Node brand carry on, or will it be fully integrated into Sugar?

Node will be fully integrated into Sugar. Sugar marketing will create a plan for the branding of Node technology going forward. Stay tuned!

So, what happens next?

Our plan is to integrate Node-powered predictions into our other products, such as Sugar Sell. You should start to see these features in Sugar products before the end of 2020.

In the meantime, we'll be doing a number of things to inform you and the rest of the market about our vision and our plans. There will be a lot of useful content and webinars over the next several weeks that talk about the technology, how it fits into our portfolio, and our vision for the future of customer experience. Stay tuned in to our website for details as they come, send any questions you have to node-dl@sugarcrm.com and don't forget to join us at [Sugar Connected on Oct 7](#).