Key Risks in Managing Oracle Licensing

An independent study into managing Oracle licensing and working with Oracle LMS.

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By Martin Thompson
Campaign for Clear Licensing
www.clearlicensing.org

Mission

The Campaign for Clear Licensing is an independent, not-for-profit organization campaigning for clear licensing, manageable license programs and the rights of business software buyers. The Campaign for Clear Licensing will on behalf of its members, work with software publishers and the reseller community to reduce the indirect costs of using commercial software by improving the clarity and usability of software license terms and conditions.

Executive Summary

This report highlights the key issues and risks in managing Oracle Licensing. This information is being shared with CCL members and is also being used as the basis of a constructive dialogue with Oracle so that positive change benefitting both the customer base and Oracle itself will result.

Key issues identified by the respondents with Oracle can be broadly grouped into three themes;
- The customer does not feel autonomous
- They receive inconsistent messages from Oracle
- They feel that Oracle realigns the goal posts to favour revenue streams over customer requirements.

This report provides feedback from customers experienced with working with Oracle LMS, explores their key issues in detail and provides seven recommendations for positive change:

1. One voice from Oracle
2. A licensing knowledgebase
3. Greatly improved communications
4. Re-engineering risk
5. SAM Evangelism
6. Audit Clarity
7. Strategic focus

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Introduction

The Campaign for Clear Licensing (CCL) is an independent, not-for-profit organization campaigning for clear licensing, manageable license programs and the rights of software buyers and users.

This report is the result of discussions and research with CCL members, The ITAM Review community[1] and the Oracle License Management Services (LMS) team[2]. Thank you to everyone that took the time to participate.

The aim of this report is to highlight the key issues and risks in managing Oracle licensing and share information and knowledge to help CCL members. The report will also form the basis of further discussions with Oracle – with a view to generating positive change.

The report consists of two sections:

- Part one shows how organizations view working with Oracle LMS
- Part two explores specific issues as prioritized by CCL members

Independence and Disclosures

- The Campaign for Clear Licensing is a membership driven organisation. It does not sell Oracle Licensing, Oracle consulting, Oracle tooling or other Oracle license management services.
- This report was shared with Oracle LMS prior to publication.
- The information in this report contains the opinion of the author and does not represent licensing or legal advice.
- This report is intended as a positive information sharing exercise. The information contained in this report is based on sources and information believed to be accurate as of the time it was created. Therefore, the completeness and current accuracy of the information provided cannot be guaranteed. Readers should use the contents of this review as a general guideline.

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[1] www.itassetmanagement.net
[2] http://www.oracle.com/us/corporate/license-management-services/index.html

Methodology

The information in this report is the result of:

- A survey of over 100 organizations worldwide conducted in March and April 2014. Survey responses were collected via electronic form and email, respondents were located as follows: 29% USA, 56% Europe, 9% Asia and 6% Oceania.
- A roundtable discussion held on the 26th March 2014. The round table meeting was held at the Home Office, UK Government, and included representatives from 3 countries, public and private sector and six FTSE 100 companies.
- An open discussion with the Oracle LMS team at Oracle Reading, UK [7th May 2014]

It should be noted in the interests of fairness that the individuals we surveyed were Software Asset Managers, IT Asset Managers, Software Licensing Specialists or IT Procurement professionals – rather than Oracle customers at large.

So you could argue that our respondents were used to dealing with the harsher 'business end' of Oracle rather than the productive technological one. Nonetheless, it is still fair to say that based on our research and conversations over the last six months customers relationships with Oracle are hostile and filled with deep rooted mistrust, a message reinforced by the results shown in the tables within Part One.

Some organizations contacted during our research were fearful of speaking up in case of any audit repercussions.

Issues with Oracle Licensing

Research into Oracle, Oracle LMS and Oracle Licensing over the last six months points to three common themes:

The customer perceives:

1. That they are not autonomous. Customers are dependent on Oracle for decision-making
2. That they receive inconsistent messaging and experience with Oracle teams
3. That Oracle moves the goal posts to suit their revenue goals rather than customer requirements

Many of the issues highlighted in this report are due to poor communications between Oracle and their customers, which often results in immature levels of trust, something that Oracle suffers from this report's input base, and a poor trading relationship.

Whilst every organisation entering into contracts must be accountable for the agreements they purchase, a disproportionate amount of risk and management overhead appears to be placed on the customer by Oracle. Similarly, many customers have not invested, or are not capable of investing, sufficient resource to manage their Oracle estate, or are aware of the investment in management overhead that they will require prior to engaging with Oracle.

On the whole, the customers we surveyed appear to have an arms length, impoverished relationship with Oracle.

Part One – Working with Oracle

Clarity of audit requests

Oracle reserves the right to audit as part of their contract with customers.

However, audit requests from software publishers can arrive in different shapes and sizes to different contacts within the customer's organization.

We asked our respondents to rate whether Oracle audit requests were clear and easy to respond to.

88% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Specific issues regarding Oracle audit behaviour are covered in more detail in part two.

Note: All % figures have been rounded.

Oracle audit requests are clear and easy to manage / respond to

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2%	10%	44%	44%
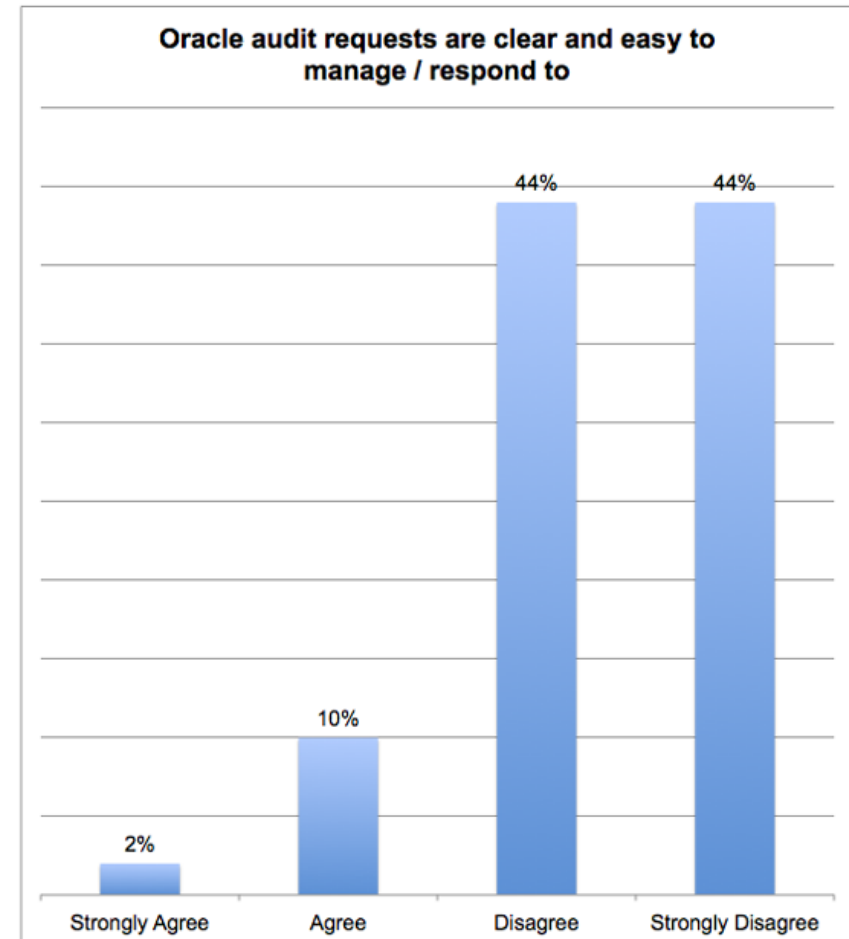
Are Oracle LMS helpful?

The purpose of the Oracle LMS team is as follows:

"Oracle's Global License Management Services is an organization that promotes the management, governance and awareness of the proper use and distribution for Oracle systems through expert services."[3]

We asked respondents whether the Oracle LMS team had been helpful during the audit, contract renewal and negotiation process.

Only 22% agreed that LMS were helpful during this process.

Oracle LMS has been helpful during the audit, contract renewal and negotiation process

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	0%	22%	41%	37%

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[3] http://www.oracle.com/us/corporate/license-management-services/index.html
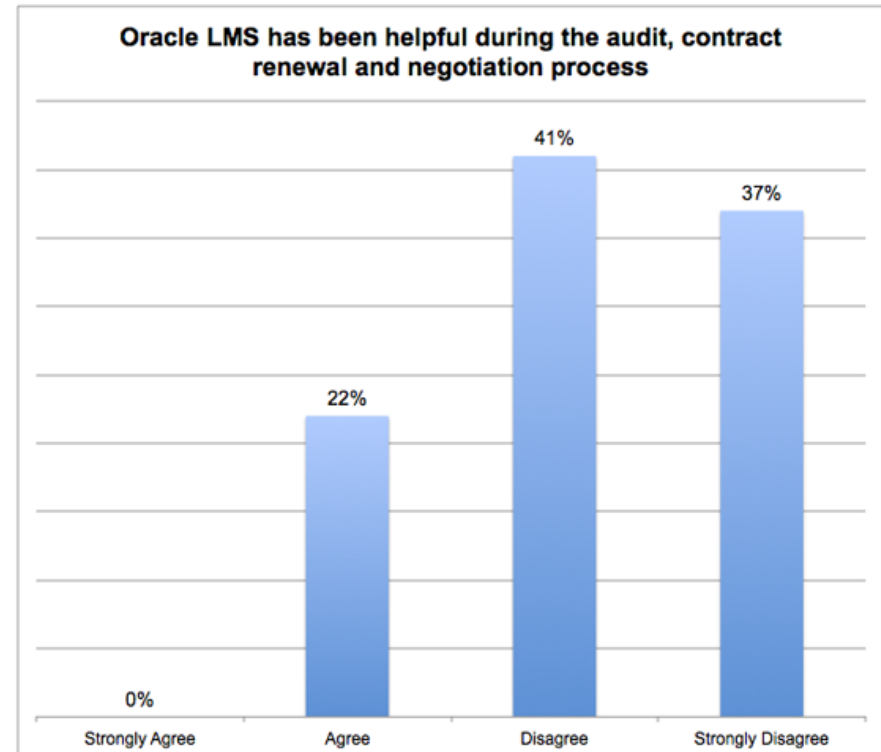
Are licensing changes communicated?

Clear communication from software publishers is often a key concern.

The goal of Oracle LMS is to:

"Provide the most up-to-date knowledge, best practices and tools to manage and maximize your Oracle license investment."

A key concern raised regarding working with Oracle was gaining access to clear, easy to understand and reliable licensing information and updates.

Another key issue was Oracle's internal silos. Do we seek licensing updates from LMS, or sales, or contracts? Respondents felt that their enquiries often result in a failure to secure accurate information from Oracle, as Oracle is not certain who should be able to answer the queries satisfactorily.

We asked respondents regarding the communications about license program changes from Oracle.

An overwhelming 92% disagreed or strongly disagreed that communication from Oracle had been clear and straightforward.

Communication from Oracle regarding licensing changes has been clear and straightforward

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2%	5%	46%	46%
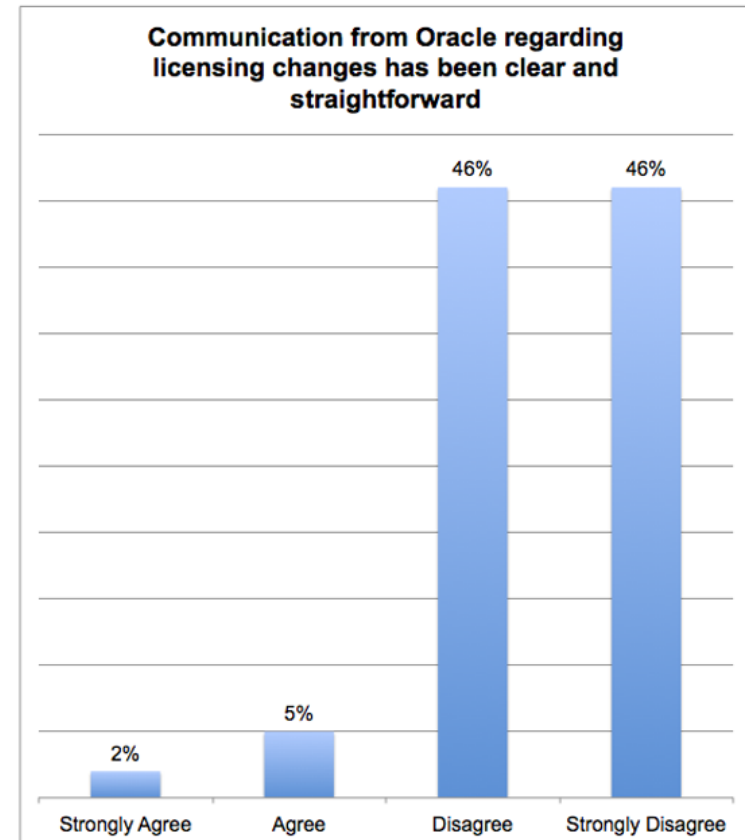
Will working with Oracle LMS lead to a better relationship?

The next question to respondents attempted to ascertain the business value of working with Oracle LMS and whether it would lead to a better relationship with Oracle and ultimately more spend.

In this case Oracle LMS faired only slightly better than in previous questions with 24% stating they agreed that working with Oracle LMS would lead to a better working relationship and increased spend with Oracle. However the vast majority disagreed, but felt that if there were an improvement in the way LMS operated that could influence the quality of their relationship with Oracle.

Working with Oracle LMS will lead to a better relationship and increased spend with Oracle

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0%	24%	44%	32%
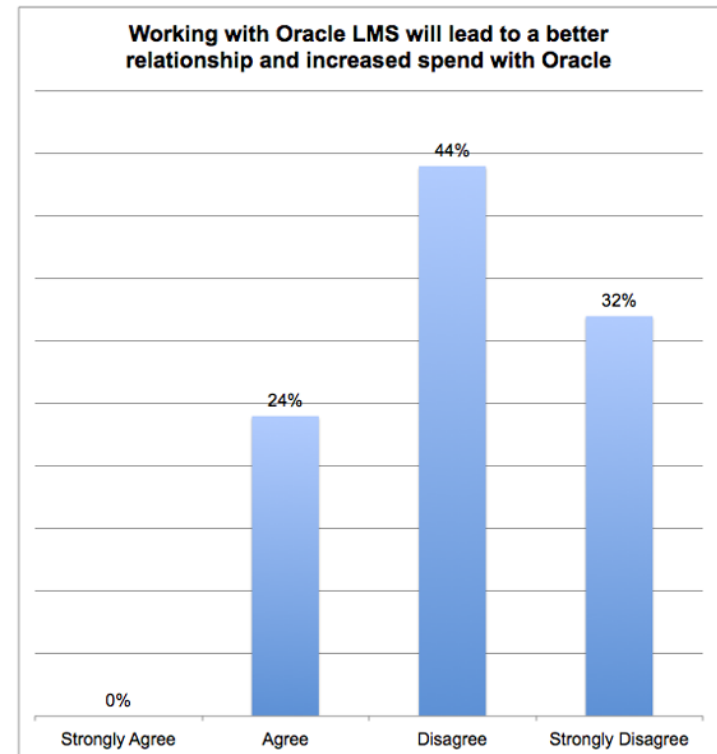
Part Two – Specific Issues

This section includes specific issues regarding working with Oracle, Oracle LMS and Oracle Licensing.

Positives

Firstly we will explore the positive aspects of working with Oracle. The table contains three columns: The key issues, feedback from the Oracle LMS team and general guidance from The Campaign for Clear Licensing (CCL).

	Positive Commentary	Oracle Feedback	CCL Feedback
1	LMS is formal, professional, helpful and generally provide timely responses[4]	Oracle LMS operates a customer survey mechanism for collecting feedback. Oracle LMS states that questionnaires are read and acted upon but they have experienced difficulties in getting customers to complete them.	We would urge any Oracle customer with poor experiences to escalate issues to at least country manager level. Please also escalate concerns to CCL.
2	Customers like the fact that Oracle verifies third party tools[5]	Oracle has placed the tool verification process is on hold subject to further review. Oracle doesn't provide scripts to customers because they contain sensitive information. If the customer develops scripts Oracle LMS is happy to verify.	Tool verification was a positive step from Oracle; it would be a shame if it were abandoned. Tool verification allows customers to interpret Oracle script data without consulting Oracle themselves.
3	There is lots of public information available on Oracle.com "It's not very structured and sometimes hard to find, but it is there"	The overhaul of the website is planned and Oracle would welcome feedback on how to make licensing information easier to understand.	Feedback suggests that whilst LMS may work well at an international level, Oracle customers may experience silos between other Oracle departments.
4	True up across regions helpful for those managing international practices	Oracle have taken steps to internationalise and globalise LMS	In particular LMS can advise on licensing but can't help with renewals, sales can help with renewals but don't set pricing etc.
5	Less country-by-country silos than other software publishers	As above	

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[4] We also received feedback which stated the complete opposite
[5] A list of tools is available on this page http://www.oracle.com/us/corporate/license-management-services/index.html

Negatives – The customer is not autonomous

This section addresses the negative concerns organisations experience when working with Oracle.

	Customer is not autonomous	Oracle LMS response	CCL Feedback
1	Compliance is not known – the customer cannot complete or finds it very difficult to measure compliance or complete their own self-assessment	Oracle LMS state they are there to help customers.	The customer wants to measure compliance without being dependent on Oracle. However it appears that rather than a highly scalable set of autonomous customers – Oracle does not want to lose control for fear of losing sight of the next sales opportunity. No audit, no data, no deal.
2	License measurement techniques are not outlined in the contract (what does compliant look like in easy to interpret contractual terms)	Oracle LMS suggest that customer work collaboratively with Oracle to pick a metric they could measure or a metric that is easily understood.	The bottom line is this: 1. If you can't measure it don't deploy it – or face the consequences. 2. If you can't quantify (within the contract) how costs will change and how costs can be reduced in the future and under what terms – don't sign the agreement.
3	Poor contract terms defining license requirements	License terms are defined in the OLSA or OMA. Oracle LMS suggested that customers check the terms and conditions of contracts. Oracle LMS also stated that some customers don't have time to read contracts.	

Additional feedback from Oracle LMS on License Management:

- The customer should have knowledge of the metrics they have
- We provide them with information before we 'handover' the running to them. This information contains;
    - Where they are with regards to compliancy
    - Processes to help keep on top of compliancy
    - We provide the 'Oracle Server Worksheet'
    - We also provide formal advice to customers at any time
- We agree and understand that the data customers have to read is difficult and a struggle to read
- Customers typically lack someone to manage the Oracle licenses & Oracle contracts
- Oracle LMS believe contracts aren't managed correctly or stored correctly by customers. "They float around different departments without communication from the customer"

Negatives – Inconsistent messaging and experience from Oracle

	Inconsistent experience from Oracle	Oracle LMS response	CCL Feedback
1	Questionable sales tactics, good experience with technology being ruined by questionable sales strategies. Oracle sales teams, under competitive pressure, are not advising customers to the full implications of licensing choices. This causes irritation, frustration and damages the relationship.	Oracle LMS argue that this is sales activity and not the within the remit of LMS. Customer satisfaction is recorded; if issues arise speak to your account manager. Despite the position above, Oracle also state that if sales have a lack of licensing knowledge, speak to LMS.	The silo approach and passing issues between different departments within Oracle is very frustrating for customers.

Organisations must accept that working with Oracle is difficult and involves significant due diligence and management overhead when doing deals and managing on-going risk.

See vendor management choices in a later section. |
| 2 | Poor Communications
• People not available, sales people not up to speed on the contract terms they are selling
• Poor communications regarding licensing changes | Oracle LMS admit that customer's documents are not updated regularly, again this is the remit of sales and not Oracle LMS. Oracle LMS stated that they don't always receive updates on new products either. Oracle LMS don't own Oracle licensing documents so can't change communications or content. | |
| 3 | Audit Activity
• License reviews (voluntary) positioned as legal audits (mandatory)
• LMS enquiries trigger reviews rather than advice
• LMS activity leading to sales engagement | Oracle LMS state there are three different types of LMS communications – 1. Advisory, 2. Review, and 3. Audit.

Questions don't trigger an audit, however if it is believed something is missing they will audit.

Oracle LMS typically have the contractual right to audit every 12 months

Data received from customers during review / advisory is not passed to sales. However if any shortcomings exist the account manager will be notified. | Seek clarity on audit requests. Only accept audits or sign contracts if Oracle adheres to the CCL Software Audit Code of Conduct [6] or similar terms that are negotiated between the customer and Oracle and documented in the agreement. |

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[6] http://www.clearlicensing.org/audit-code-conduct/

Negatives – Moving goal posts

	Moving goal posts	Oracle LMS response	CCL Feedback
1	Renewals strategy (retiring an item from an order)	Renewals belong to the sales team not Oracle LMS	Oracle likes to offer big discounts on bundles or consolidate renewals and then not allow organisation to break up bundles at a future date. So for example organisations typically find it difficult to drop an item from an Oracle contract at renewal because you are no longer using it. For efficiency savings at renewal time – separate out every product onto a separate order or get assurances in writing that bundle discounts will continue if items are removed at renewal time.
2	Oracle changing licensing policies, customer's business does not change – yet the onus is on the customer to decipher changes and rectify issues.	Licensing does not change from an order.	Oracle can't change the terms of your agreement without your knowledge – but things may change at renewal time and those helping you renew, such as your account manager, may not be aware of the license changes. Proactively seek out changes and their ramifications or use a specialist – as you are unlikely to receive clear updates from Oracle. Oracle often include a statement about the product licensing terms as quoted on their website and include the link to the site. This allows change at times that Oracle control and not just at renewal. Terms can also change when you upgrade a version of the products you are using. See also point 4 regarding upgrades triggering chargeable features.
3	Oracle terms referring to URL's, which change, broken links in documents.	Please take screen shots and report any bad links	Study contracts, ensure any metrics or contractual terms are binding and clearly understood.
4	Installs and upgrades triggering licensable changes	New features may be installed as part of an update or upgrade. If you do not update then performance may suffer or you may not be able to use certain features. Communication is required	Most organizations have some degree of Change Control in place for controlling risk in the datacentre, but unfortunately change control does not typically include the risk of software licensing errors.

		internally to advise Oracle database staff members not to use certain features. Customers are only charged when that feature is used. This is not Oracle LMS responsibility it is with the customer.	Ensure your change control and governance procedures include licensing and are robust enough to capture rogue Oracle installs or changes for high-risk software titles such as Oracle databases. Accept that Oracle is difficult to deal with and requires significant management overhead. Budget accordingly or vote with your feet – See vendor management choices.
5	No definitive source of information available for licensing policies / policy changes	Oracle LMS does not control the change in features of licensing.	As mentioned previously, passing the buck between internal Oracle departments is very frustrating for customers. Proactively seek out your own licensing knowledge, as it is unlikely to come from Oracle.

Vendor Management Choices

As mentioned in the introduction, whilst every organisation entering into contracts must be accountable for the agreements they purchase, Oracle places a disproportionate amount of risk and management overhead towards their customers.

Historically organisations have not allocated sufficient resource for managing Oracle and have been on the back foot in negotiations.

Modern audits with software publishers are no longer only about reducing compliance (not in developed countries at least). Modern audits are more about revenue generation for Oracle. Typically, due to a poor working relationship and mistrust, software publishers must audit their customers to build sufficient data to drive the next sales deal. Similarly, organisations typically have insufficient governance controls in place to defend themselves.

Oracle customers should think carefully about their choice of vendor. Senior management should be aware that any Oracle purchase includes a significant management overhead and should budget accordingly.

Vendor Management Choices:

1. Do nothing – accept the risk and budget for the worst.
2. Vote with your feet – find alternative technology to Oracle with less management overhead, simpler licensing terms and customer-focussed ethic. Ultimately hitting Oracle in the wallet will force change.
3. Manage it proactively – if you can't manage the metrics in an agreement on an on-going basis you shouldn't be deploying it. Assign resource for proactive management.
4. Change the agreement – Work with Oracle to pick a metric or a framework you can manage. Pick a game you can win. Renegotiate your audit rights. Seek clarity on who the notice is sent to, the timeframes between notification and audit, the requirement to work within customer confidentiality agreement of results, How disputes will be managed etc.

Priorities for Oracle

The Campaign for Clear Licensing, acting on behalf of members and those who participated in this study, recommends that Oracle focus on the following issues:

1. **One voice please** – organisations want clarity over Oracle license management from one voice. They don't want to be passed around between departments who don't communicate with each other.
2. **Knowledgebase** – Oracle needs to invest in a well-organized knowledge base to educate its customers
3. **Communicate** – Oracle is not being invited to participate in key business conversations because of mistrust. Oracle needs to step up conversations and provide clarity to regain trust.
4. **Re-engineer risk** – As more organisations mature in their governance processes, more will shy away from Oracle as an unnecessary burden to manage. Oracle needs to engineer its products and license programs to reduce unnecessary risk. The focus of control needs to be placed in the hands of the business not developers.
5. **Software Asset Management Evangelism**– Oracle needs to help educate its customers to assign appropriate resource for managing software and proactively assist with licensing training and management practices around Oracle software.
6. **Audit Clarity** – Oracle needs to be crystal clear with audit activity and adopt the Campaign for Clear Licensing code of conduct
7. **Strategic Focus** – Customer satisfaction, relationship strength and strategic value should replace audit revenue as a key performance indicator.

Appendix – Anecdotal Feedback

Anecdotal feedback regarding the general working relationship with Oracle:

- "Installing Oracle version upgrades sometimes turns on software features, such as the diagnostic and features packs, which trigger an associated increase in licensing cost. A company can significantly increase its Oracle spend during version upgrades without knowing it."
- "Oracle do not offer licensing training - is there a reason for this?"
- "A sudden change in policy has happened. There was always a strong 'commercial' relationship between us, which allowed us to base all our solution on Oracle tech without much thinking. Now the policy change is to pure 'letter of the law' behaviour. So it made us think seriously about our Oracle investments. We now choose Open Source where possible to be as vendor independent as possible."
- "The behaviour changes between customers. In some cases the Oracle LMS teams are truly partnering and very helpful in the entire process. In others very deconstructive and almost blocking any commercial process. I guess it depends on what role Sales would expect from the team. This is why many customers see them as 'puppet' of the sales team. Why not a more independent behaviour?"
- "It cannot be that any software option that might once have been activated (by accident or for testing or for any purpose) leads to fee payments as if it were definitely and forever in use, while on the other hand the software with all its options is freely available. It cannot be that audits take 2 years, with new questions from time to time that go deeper and deeper, until finally LMS discovers some licensing breach. For now our strategy is clear: any new solution as long as it is not from Oracle; slow but consistent out-phasing of Oracle products for cost and licensing risks mitigation."
- "It is my experience that the LMS representatives have a direct relationship with sales. So it is very hard to trust them with sensitive information. For instance, in a recent ULA certification process, I have shared a preliminary report especially meant to make clear what types of data we will pass on to Oracle. A while later, those figures ended up as a compliancy claim."
- "Commonly, it is a good practise to build a trusting relationship with your supplier, but with Oracle that has proven to be very tricky."
- "LMS don't understand that a lot of the information LMS request from us is confidential - they were reluctant to meet our confidentiality requirements and didn't really understand our concerns. We also found that the data Oracle request from us in order to determine the number of users of our e-business suite was a bit odd - for instance, they wanted data from caches that would be regularly deleted etc. The decision around what we were using felt very subjective."
- "LMS submitting license review letters, which are worded so that company's can easily mistake as a legal audit request. LMS seeking out CIO with misleading information that they believe company is over licensed and if they are invited in to do a license review they could save substantial sums of money."
- "After co-terminating agreements into a single renewal with multiple CSI's, Oracle declaring that a single CSI item could not be removed at renewal the following year."
- "Named user licensing is not clearly defined. For example: Is someone who briefly looks at a display generated through data from an Oracle DB considered a user?"
- "No comments for fear of repercussions"

- "Oracle did not take any effort to understand the needs of the customer. They were completely wrong in understanding their own license policy and did not want to admit it. Oracle is over ...forever..."
- "Oracle has always conducted itself poorly and without consideration for its customers who made the company (and its founder) as rich as it is today. Their negotiation practices are shady, intended to confuse and keep the customer off-centre and powerless. They regularly slip language into ordering documents that deliberately overrides established master contract terms and conditions. Untrustworthy, shady, inconsiderate, bad corporate world citizens are all descriptive terms for this much reviled company."
- "Oracle LMS is not educating customers before the Sale."
- "Oracle's cycle times to produce documents that simply state their standard terms and conditions in an unacceptable bottleneck to our business. Lead times are anywhere between 2 and 4 weeks to get paperwork which is inevitably wrong in at least one detail and then it takes Oracle another significant amount of time to correct the error, all the while the business cannot get what it needs. Oracle sales people position the delays as something that a company's procurement group causes as a strategy to divide the business and its procurement group. Oracle contracting's motto seems to be, "we don't care, we don't have to"."
- "Oracle's primary focus is their on-going revenue stream and little consideration for their customer's budgets and expense lines. There is too little flexibility in Oracle's approach to running systems in parallel when migrating systems or from one version of an Oracle product to another. The timeframes available are too small for any practical IT environment changes."
- "The way that Oracle defaults on installation to including expensive options being installed."
- "Please develop a script that allows all active *and inactive* licensable components to be captured and aggregated for reporting and compliance purposes. Make this script freely available for all licensees to download and build into BAU SAM processes."
- "Slow responses to information requests in general (except if it is sales related) Audits are being misused in order to sell new products"
- "They do not help their customers. Example: virtualization is still an area that gives lots of frustration. No clear communication from Oracle."

Anecdotal Feedback: What do you like about Oracle licensing and the way Oracle LMS operates? What practices do Oracle deliver that you wish other software publishers would adopt? Please provide your feedback on the positive aspects of working with Oracle:

- "A very formal way of working"
- "Depending on relationship they can be flexible"
- "I do not have anything positive to say about Oracle and don't fully understand LMS"
- "I find it hard to find anything to like about the way in which Oracle operate"
- "In our case Oracle LMS have been our "Friends" in the Oracle organisation. Oracle sales folks have no knowledge of their own products and try to intimidate people."
- "Lot's of publically available information on Oracle.com"
- "Other publishers should certify 3rd party tools"
- "Nothing, such practices should be considered illegal"

- "Oracle SMEs are readily available to answer questions. The fact that they're willing to true up across regions is very helpful for those of us managing SAM in a global environment. Finally, unlike other big software vendors, they're not as siloed."
- "The Oracle LMS Team are very helpful and professional."
- "The Oracle people I work with generally provide timely response to questions."
- "There are no Pros here, except that Oracle products we use are of good and proven quality. Other suppliers give the customer tools allowing him to do a self-assessment."
- "Unfortunately, there is nothing positive to say about Oracle's licensing and the way Oracle LMS operates."

What do you NOT like about Oracle licensing and the way Oracle LMS operates? What practices are unclear or detrimental to your relationship with Oracle?

- "A very rigid procedure with a lot of spoken and unspoken threads. It's not always clear what are the rights and what aren't and even the Oracle contact person don't know it always. There are often bugs in the applications reporting wrong information. After a discussion on that, the bug is stated in the final report."
- "As for Oracle licensing, is it not clear when you pay for installations only, and when usage only. Total Recall for example is always there, but is only paid for when it is in use. I still hope to receive a list of all database options behaving like that."
- "Companies should be able to pro-actively manage their Oracle licences and not have to resort to using Oracle LMS."
- "No training is available to customers."
- "I am unaware of any changes to the Oracle licensing. Our current agreement gives us a UDP (Unlimited Deployment Program) this makes for simple accounting but sloppy administration. What do we have and where?"
- "I would like to see better documentation of licensing requirements. The policy for use of named user licenses is unclear and the Oracle Licensing Guide doesn't even refer to the Oracle Processor Core Factor Table."
- "It feels like it designed to always extract licensing and penalties. License positions move from one day to the next and we're expected to react. Oracle changes the rules and we are suddenly unlicensed and business wise nothing changed. When this happens, it's down to us to find and resolve."
- "License prices are exorbitant and highly inflated. Unlimited licenses are expensive. I cannot unbundle my CSI. I have been asked to "terminate use of licenses that are not being maintained"."
- "No ability to find an efficient solution for consolidation products and finding an optimal license model"
- "Once the negotiation team takes over, all happiness with the company ends. The LMS team in my experience is not in place for the customer's convenience or benefit. Licensing models are increasingly and intentionally confusing. Old and new licensing models are not compatible and are intended to quickly erase previously negotiated "good deals" a customer may have achieved initially."
- "Oracle does not provide editable documents thereby extending the time it takes to complete paperwork, particularly if there are errors, even simple errors such as spelling a contact name wrong."

- "Oracle documents refer to URLs when have other references to URLs which have other references to URLS which can all be changed daily making it impossible to know what terms cover your relationship."
- "Oracle can change terms unilaterally. Oracle documents often list URLs that are wrong or do not open"
- "Oracle often states in documents that one can learn more about Oracle terms at www.oracle.com which is like saying you can learn more about your government by reading everything in the Library of Congress."
- "Oracle dictates when contract should expire and/or when new terms apply but will not make people available to have honest discussions about contract terms. Oracle's sales people do not understand and cannot explain the contract terms they are obligated to foist upon customers."
- "Oracle starts every conversation with "we are getting close to the end of our quarter and so everyone is really busy so not sure if we can get this done"
- "Oracle LMS operates from the tagline "we don't care, we don't have to".
- "Oracle's practices truly require a company to have 5-6 full time people who can monitor Oracle's terms and conditions if the company really wanted to know what the were entitled to under a contract."
- "Oracle is kidding itself if it thinks it negotiates in good faith and at arms' length."
- "Oracle has not designed its products so there is a clear way of measuring usage. The tools they provide only really work with their Database products. For Apps we were constantly being asked for data and Oracle could provide very little information about how they would interpret it. Fortunately we have an extremely skilled technical team who were able to teach LMS a thing or two about interpreting the data, but it would have been very difficult to have confidence in the accuracy of their results had we not had the very skilled team in place that we do."
- "Oracle is one of the most difficult software vendors when it comes to licensing; they have made it very difficult for customers to move licensing as customers consolidate data centres or move to the cloud."
- "Oracle licencing metrics are difficult to understand for business people hence a business case is difficult to make."
- "Oracle's cancel and replace restrictions when more than one product is included under a single CSI seriously hinders their customer's ability to reduce the payment streams even when products included in the CSI are no longer being used. Again the focus is on Oracle's revenue streams and not the customer's positions."
- "Sometimes, the approach of LMS is abrasive, which affects the client perspective on Oracle."
- "The licensing is complex and extensive. Also due to the high number of products and markets Oracle operates in, but Oracle could do more proactive activities to their customer to help. Licensing changes are rarely communicated and it should not be hard for Oracle to find out what customers could be affected by this based on product & metric. Oracle has a strong focus on finding customers who do it wrong, but offer little support to clients / partners who try to do it right. A more dual approach would be appreciated."
- "The way that products install they enable all the features instead of just the licensed features. Ridiculous year on year price increases for renewals, complete lack of negotiation."
- "Not using SKU's"
- "Complex licensing terms which are non transparent. Changing licensing models, making it difficult to increase user licensing for older/specialist products."
- "Their support terms i.e. that you cannot retire a license support from an order without having to do the same for the whole order. Their inflexibility around pricing. Which is evident when you meet one of their soulless sales men who hardly know their products and their licensing terms."

- "There are no License measurement techniques outlined in contracts."
- "There tends to be a lot of turnover in the company, so even though the SMEs are knowledgeable about Oracle the institutional knowledge they have on our company is lost."
- "There was information on the processor factors that they hadn't made public and that affected our licencing. They used that table when they were looking at what we had installed, but they didn't share it with us."
- "They did not look to the real needs of the customer. Even when you run a single-user software on a server that has a lot of other functionality just to be compliant with 7 years of fiscal coverage they count that server for 50 or 100 Named Users just of some processors present even if it is clear that only one user can use the software. Ridiculous is the only word for that attitude."
- "They pretend LMS is a service and bring 'optimization specialists' into the game, while all they do is maximize revenue while disregarding the clients arguments, and outplaying them with the good guy/bad guy audit game (positioning LMS & Sales) And it's difficult to negotiate with an LMS/Sales/Legal rep who really doesn't know he's lying. Can be quite frustrating, but its part of the game."
- "To win against the competition, Sales are not providing full clarity to Customers on day 1. Probably later a year or two they are enforcing Customers LMS due to which Customers get frustrated and some are not considering Oracle even though technically it is ranked high."
- "Lack of clarity for technical staff who may activate options with licensing consequences."
- "Inquiries with LMS on licensing of existing configurations rather lead to an audit instead of advice"
- "Very difficult to understand licensing documentation, consisting of a combination of contracts, standard licence documentation and standard support terms, including documents which regularly change."
- "Oracle people themselves often unclear what it all means. Appears to be designed to trap the unwary (and even arguably the wary) into paying more."
- "Virtualization."
- "You cannot stop the maintenance of a single item from a former order. LMS has no value to customers; they do not help customers with licensing optimisation; unless you do no more use any product, any audit will always result in additional costs for the customer - the customer is not given any chance or advise to put himself in conformance with license rights he owns. The customer is unable to do a self-assessment with his Oracle products."