

Siebel Open UI – Frequently Asked Questions

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Table of Contents

1	About this Document.....	3
2	Boxfusion Consulting and Siebel Open UI.....	3
3	Frequently Asked Questions	4
	Q. I've heard some of my users complain that Siebel is outdated and clunky! Can Open UI help?...	4
	Q: Which browsers does Siebel Open UI work with?	4
	Q: Does Siebel Open UI allow me to access Siebel via my tablet or smartphone?	5
	Q. What is the coverage of the solution? Am I able to finally get rid of the Siebel Active X control?5	
	Q. Does an upgrade to Siebel Open UI mean I need to rebuild my integration processes?	5
	Q. Is there a licence cost associated with Open UI?	5
	Q. Is Siebel Open UI costly to implement?	5
	Q. How will my IT team support this? Is it a new technology?.....	6
	Q. Will an upgrade to Open UI take up a lot of our time?.....	6
	Q. I've seen articles suggesting Siebel is dead! Should we be planning to move off Siebel?.....	7
	Q. We're considering moving to the Cloud so is there still a case to invest in Siebel Open UI?	7
	Q. Do we need to retrain our users?	7
	Q. How can I justify the cost?	8
	Q. I'm interested in learning more. What is Boxfusion's experience with Open UI?	8

1 About this Document

This document is a reproduction of information that can be found on our website blog at www.boxfusionconsulting.com/blog. The original is a “live” blog post – that is to say, it continues to be updated as Siebel Open UI matures and we encounter new questions from customers.

We hope that you find this document useful. If you would like to talk further about Open UI and what it can do for your Siebel implementation, we’d be very pleased to speak with you.

2 Boxfusion Consulting and Siebel Open UI

Boxfusion Consulting are an accredited *Oracle Siebel CRM Specialized Partner*, based out of the United Kingdom and working for clients across Europe and beyond. We have a core focus on the implementation, configuration, support and integration of Siebel CRM, and we’ve set ourselves apart through our ability to deliver systems that truly support our customers’ businesses.

Since the introduction of Siebel Open UI in December 2012, we’ve led the charge in making this revolutionary technology work for our Siebel customers. Having historically placed a huge emphasis on usability and user experience in our development of the traditional Siebel High Interactivity client for customers, the introduction of Open UI allowed our existing UX capability to truly flourish.

Correspondingly, we led the worldwide Open UI uptake by setting Panasonic live on Open UI across Western Europe in September 2013, one of the first ever multinational implementations of Open UI globally. Since then we’ve upgraded multiple further customers to use Open UI.

Of course, simply upgrading existing Siebel screens to the Open UI technology is only the first step – Open UI allows us to reinvent the way processes are performed in the user interface, through removing the constraints of the traditional Siebel UI paradigm. It is the ability to improve process efficiency (reduced clicks, reduced navigation between screens etc.) and usability that really enables organisations to drive benefit from an Open UI implementation.

To underline our expertise in this area, a great example is our recent rebuilding of the Siebel UI for a UK government agency – a 3,000 user system – to improve usability and user experience through the capabilities offered by Open UI. Following this work, we’re seeing significantly reduced clicks and a far-improved speed of process execution, while the platform offered by Siebel Open UI has allowed us to enhance the Siebel Attachment handling functionality to remove concurrent access issues historically faced by their users.

Furthermore, we’ve been able to revolutionise the user experience for their Accessibility users, through an intuitive UI and impressive speech recognition integration. This project is taking advantage of Open UI to the fullest, and the expected benefits of this work are impressive.

We are the leading Siebel Open UI experts in EMEA. If you’re considering Siebel Open UI, please do call us on +44 203 283 4315 or email us at contact@boxfusionconsulting.com.

3 Frequently Asked Questions

As a cutting-edge technology revolutionising the user interface of the most-popular on-premise CRM system, the introduction of Siebel Open UI in late 2012 was inevitably going to provoke questions. Correspondingly, we've had more customer enquiries on this topic than any other.

Having now implemented Open UI at multiple customers since its introduction, we're very familiar with the key Business Benefits (check out our article [here](#)) and also have the answers to the most frequently-asked questions. We've outlined a selection of these below.

If you have any questions that aren't answered here, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us [here](#) or add a comment to our blog post.

Q. I've heard some of my users complain that Siebel is outdated and clunky! Can Open UI help?

The short answer is yes – this is a core benefit of Siebel Open UI! In all the projects we have worked on, Siebel Open UI has completely transformed user perceptions of Siebel!

While the traditional Siebel user interface offered a navigation paradigm that was modern for its time (circa 2000, with updates in 2004 and 2007), it always put its own constraints on the manner in which business processes could be modelled, which in many cases resulted in them feeling clunky. Additionally, the emergence of new web technologies in recent years and their use in popular sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn has only served to emphasise the limitations of Siebel's traditional UI.

Open UI offers something far beyond what you would ever have expected from Siebel, breathing new life into what is – behind its traditional UI – still the most fully-featured CRM system available today and one in which many organisations have made sizeable investments in. With Siebel Open UI, expert Siebel development teams are now able to fully leverage the latest web technologies and standards, enabling them to give you modern, intuitive, sleek user interfaces that truly support your business processes.

If you've yet to see Siebel with Open UI enabled, [ask us for a demonstration](#).

Q: Which browsers does Siebel Open UI work with?

This is the key question that every CIO or Service Manager has for us. As the browser has become the "client" of choice for more and more enterprise applications, so must any change to browser version be carefully considered.

Siebel Open UI is built on the latest standards-based web technologies, and JavaScript is heavily used. The most recent browser versions have much-improved JavaScript processing engines, so newer browsers definitely offer a performance advantage.

Internet Explorer is often the preferred browser in enterprises: if this is the case, we'd recommend IE10 as a minimum for the best user experience. Typically the most current browsers such as IE11,

and current versions of Chrome, Safari, Firefox and Opera, record the best benchmark figures for JavaScript processing in tests and therefore would be preferred.

Q: Does Siebel Open UI allow me to access Siebel via my tablet or smartphone?

One of the transformational improvements of Siebel Open UI is that it enables Siebel to be accessed from mobile devices via a mobile-optimised UI. This takes advantage of “tap and swipe” navigation and device-specific functions such as click-to-call and location awareness. This module is called Siebel Mobile.

Siebel Mobile thus enables your users to access your customer information while on the move, leveraging your tablet or phone’s 3G/4G signals and wireless capability where necessary. Additionally a “disconnected” version of Siebel Mobile is also available, ensuring that when signal drops, you can still access data and continue to make updates.

Siebel Mobile works on any mobile devices equipped with modern browsers, supporting any Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiative within your organisation. For a demonstration of Siebel Mobile, please [get in touch](#).

Q. What is the coverage of the solution? Am I able to finally get rid of the Siebel Active X control?

The coverage of the latest release of Siebel Open UI (currently 8.1.1.11/8.2.2.4) is “complete” for the vast majority of customers. There is virtually no area of Siebel that still requires the HI Client, which means that the challenge of rolling out the ActiveX control to user desktops has disappeared.

Q. Does an upgrade to Siebel Open UI mean I need to rebuild my integration processes?

No. Open UI is a UI framework which sits on top of the existing Siebel architecture, working in conjunction with your existing configuration. It does not affect the integration layer at all.

This question may stem from some complex Siebel upgrades in the past which involved architectural changes and required integration re-work to fit within the new environment. That is not the case with Siebel Open UI.

Q. Is there a licence cost associated with Open UI?

No, there is no licence cost of upgrading your application to use Siebel Open UI. Siebel Open UI is available as part of your Support & Maintenance Agreement with Oracle.

There is only a licence cost where you wish to roll out the mobile-optimised version of Siebel Open UI (“Siebel Mobile”, see previous question) to users with tablets and smartphones.

Q. Is Siebel Open UI costly to implement?

No. However, if you are not currently on v8.1.1.9/8.2.2.2 then you will need to perform a regular Siebel upgrade before enabling Open UI, and the cost and complexity of this upgrade will depend on a number of factors, in particular the level of complexity in your application.

However, although users will see the enablement of Open UI as offering a transformative user experience, the cost associated with delivering Open UI is small compared to the costs you might associate with historical upgrades such as those of Siebel 7.7 to Siebel 7.8. By way of an example, Boxfusion Consulting upgraded a customer from Siebel v8.0 to Siebel v8.1.1.10 with Open UI in under four months for the full project lifecycle.

Oracle's new approach to upgrades is for them to be lower-cost, and there are now [one step upgrades](#) available from SIA repositories on v7.5 through v8.0, as well as the new Incremental Repository Merge facility for all upgrades from v8.1.1.0 upwards.

Q. How will my IT team support this? Is it a new technology?

All of the traditional technical components of Siebel still exist and Open UI is simply a thin layer on top that utilises standard web technologies.

When upgrading to Siebel Open UI, "vanilla" JavaScript and CSS objects are deployed which will render all of your existing Siebel Tools configurations in the new UI framework. Thus in-house support teams can continue to support your Siebel application with access to the same Oracle Support channels you use today.

If/when you start to look at leveraging the real power and flexibility of the framework's web technologies (for example, to rebuild your views to take advantage of advanced visualisations), a different skillset is required – that may mean using web development skills from elsewhere in your organisation, or using complementary specialist Siebel Open UI consultancy skills (such as those we provide here at Boxfusion Consulting).

We have a lot of experience of providing one or two experts to supplement wider in-house teams on such projects, and knowledge handover is a core part of our offer, so do get in touch. We can also provide "ad hoc" support if necessary, and you may also wish to take advantage of our [expert Siebel Open UI training courses](#) for your internal team.

Q. Will an upgrade to Open UI take up a lot of our time?

No. Purely upgrading to the Open UI platform (maintaining the view layout and processes you currently use, but enhanced with a more intuitive, modern UI) is relatively low-touch for the Business and the IT department.

If upgrading from Siebel 8.0, for example, we have delivered the full Siebel upgrade and enablement of Open UI in less than four months, with the main client effort being in acceptance testing the upgraded application.

Once your Siebel application is live with the Open UI platform, you can then plan to really utilise it to its full potential, for example by reworking the UI to better support your key processes and user needs, or integrating with [Google Maps and other services](#). We'd always recommend this to be a second phase of your project, and it is the phase in which we'd look to work closely with business representatives to build a UI that truly supports them in their work, and which they'll love to use.

Due to the highly visual nature of the work being done, and the rapid turnaround of prototypes, businesses are able to easily link each investment of time to a clear benefit.

Q. I've seen articles suggesting Siebel is dead! Should we be planning to move off Siebel?

The short answer is no. Oracle have stated that Siebel is their flagship on-premise CRM platform in their Customer Experience (CX) applications architecture. They are investing heavily in the platform, and have committed to a [roadmap](#) stretching into the 2020s.

Oracle's commitment to Siebel is underlined by the major advancements we've seen in the last couple of years, such as the introduction of Siebel Open UI, integration to Oracle Social Relationship Management (SRM) and Oracle Commerce Cloud, usability improvements, improvements to search, Siebel Chat, and much more that you may have been aware of previously. With the roadmap to 2020 and beyond, there should not be any concern about a lack of investment, or innovative new features and solutions, coming to the Siebel application.

Q. We're considering moving to the Cloud so is there still a case to invest in Siebel Open UI?

Boxfusion specialise in both Oracle Siebel and Oracle Customer Experience Cloud (Fusion CRM for Sales, Eloqua for Marketing and RightNow CX for Service), and would be pleased to help you to understand your options for both Cloud and On-Premise CRM.

In most architectures we are seeing clients moving to now, Siebel has remained the core on-premise platform, with Cloud applications providing "complementary" functionality. In such cases, where groups of users continue to use Siebel, the benefits of upgrading to Open UI are naturally still valid.

If you are looking to move entirely off Siebel and onto Cloud applications, ensure that you've a detailed view of functional mapping between Siebel and the Cloud applications, as well as timelines, effort and cost of migration – this is something we can help you with. Your Siebel system will have taken time and effort to get the logic and processes to the position it's at, and Siebel as a platform offers a huge amount of functionality, so a decision to "replace" should not be taken lightly. It may be that any move off Siebel will take a longer than you expect, in which case enabling your users to work on Siebel more effectively now through going to Open UI will be beneficial.

[Get in touch](#) with us for help in understanding how Cloud can help, and what your options are for a future architecture – with or without Siebel.

Q. Do we need to retrain our users?

No – this should not be necessary in the first instance. As the initial upgrade to Siebel Open UI results in an application based upon the key Siebel navigation principles with which your users are already familiar, but with better keyboard shortcuts and more intuitive controls (which they'll recognise from popular websites), training effort is minimal.

When you move beyond the initial upgrade to Open UI and start building new processes in Siebel (or reworking existing processes), you should be careful to follow best practices in User Experience (UX) design. This will ensure that any training needs are kept to a minimum as the user interface should be intuitive – in fact, due to the nature of Open UI, your training costs for new users may actually reduce when compared to training them on the traditional UI.

Q. How can I justify the cost?

Upgrading to Siebel Open UI brings you clear business benefits that can form the basis of a business case, including improved usability, improved user adoption, device flexibility, lower cost of ownership and more. As mentioned in a separate FAQ, the cost of moving to Open UI is relatively low too.

A good starting point for developing your business case is [here](#). If you would like expert help in developing the business case and articulating the vision, [get in touch with us](#).

Q. I'm interested in learning more. What is Boxfusion's experience with Open UI?

Boxfusion are at the forefront of Siebel Open UI implementation and development, and through heavy investment in web technology and UX training, we are now the leading Siebel Open UI experts in Europe.

We bring with us onto our projects our Siebel Open UI Accelerator Pack, which is a set of prebuilt JavaScript and CSS libraries that cuts time, effort and risk when implementing Siebel Open UI, and we've also developed powerful plugins to enhance the user experience (such as our Siebel Document Management solution).

We have implemented Siebel Open UI in a range of industries – all to budget and project timelines – and we have close links with the Siebel development team, working with them to further improve the Open UI offering.

If you're looking for Open UI expertise that you can rely on, [get in touch with us today](#), and start to transform the way your business is supported by Siebel!