



TYING CRM TO CUSTOMER SERVICE

ANALYSTS

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Nucleus estimates that over 70 percent of companies using customer relationship management (CRM) have not completely tied their system to customer service. Companies are missing out on opportunities to sell to customers. Implementing CRM in call centers would help them realize this opportunity, and potentially increase revenue.

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OVERVIEW

Nucleus expects that customers interact with service representatives at least five times more frequently than they interact with salespeople. This positions customer service to use its high customer touch to increase revenue by using the platform to make sales. Tying itself to CRM would equip service with the tools it needs to know more about its customers, and leverage that information to potentially upsell 5 times more frequently than sales.

With this level of customer interaction, it would behoove companies to implement whatever tools are necessary to develop relationships with customers that lead them to a sale. Especially since Nucleus found that customers are amenable to it. Out of the over 35 customers Nucleus analyzed, 80 percent would be willing to make a purchase through a service agent if the recommendation would help them avoid more problems in the future, and was not just a standard sales pitch. However, Nucleus estimates that over 70 percent of companies are still not taking advantage of this opportunity. Those that are using their customer service channels for sales deliver canned sales pitches that do not take the customer's individual needs into account. As sales becomes increasingly individualized and customers' begin to

expect as much, companies must promote products and services based on the individual needs of the customer, which makes the canned sales pitch obsolete. For service to get beyond this stale approach, Nucleus recommends integrating CRM.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SERVICE

Tying CRM to customer service would equip agents with the data they need to take a more individualized approach to sales. The most recent releases in CRM for sales and CRM for service focus on centralizing data from multiple outlets to provide a full picture of the customer and their histories. Customer data stored in the cloud populates dashboards automatically and can be analyzed within the same platform, allowing agents to make insights that are more likely to uncover real need and lead to a sale. These functionalities, once applied, could have significant impact on the sales potential of customer service departments currently failing to use CRM for that purpose.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

There are several concerns companies may have when considering implementing CRM within customer service to leverage the platform for sales, however:

- **Tone.** Customer service is utilized as a platform through which to express and resolve concerns, which is not accommodating to the sales methodology.
- **Product.** Agents have minimal time to show value in a product and show how it targets the specific needs of the customer.
- **Decision maker.** Nucleus found it is unlikely to reach a decision maker on the first call, which means the sales opportunity may be indirect.

Tying CRM to customer service will make it possible for agents to work around these challenges while still delivering an individualized sales message. Even the most basic CRM tools will give agents enough information to cater slightly more to the individual needs of the customer, field calls to agents who are most likely to communicate effectively, and avoid wasting time pitching to a non-decision maker. Even if selling through customer service requires longer call times than not selling, Nucleus predicts the decrease in agent productivity will be offset by the increase in revenue brought in through increased sales. The volume of calls and customer interactions for customer service alone connotes a higher success rate than sales. If sales had a 25 percent success rate, for example, customer service would need only a 5 percent success rate to break even.

CONCLUSION

With over 70 percent of companies failing to tie CRM to customer service, there is significant unrealized revenue potential. Tying CRM to service will help businesses make their investment in customer service worthwhile from a revenue perspective. For vendors, the decision is a no-brainer; CRM solutions already have the functionality and the size of the service market leaves lots of room for growth.

