

YOUR COMPLETE CRM HANDBOOK



INTRODUCTION

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What is CRM?

CRM is much more than a buzzy acronym that's been tossed around the business and sales world for the past decade or so.

C-R-M stands for "Customer Relationship Management."

With a CRM application, there's no secret formula. It simply manages most of your critical customer information so that you can see it all in one place. Without leaving the app, you can view contact info, follow up via email or social media, manage tasks, and track your performance, among other benefits. Implementing the right CRM can increase sales efficiency. You can close more deals, boost sales, and improve forecast accuracy.

Is it time for your company to invest in a CRM?

The contents of this ebook will help you determine that.

Over the next four chapters, we will examine the following topics:

- Signs your business needs a CRM
- How CRM can improve your sales and productivity
- Building your CRM strategy
- How to maximise your ROI

First up, the 7 signs your business needs a CRM.

CHAPTER 1: SIGNS YOU REALLY NEED A CRM

Small businesses typically begin with a basic relationship of seller-to-customer — simple. In such an early stage, it might be fine to just maintain an Excel spreadsheet or jot down notes about customers and incoming orders. But as your business grows, this sort of record keeping simply can't do what you need anymore.

Here are some warning signs it's time to trade in those old ways and start managing your customer relationships more effectively:

1. There's no single source for info.

Storing your customer and order info in more than one location, such as a spreadsheet or notes stuck to your computer, puts your sales team at a disadvantage. They lack a single view of every customer's contact info, orders, and interactions.

2. There's little or no visibility.

Not only do you lack visibility into how your customers are connecting with employees, you also lack insight into what your sales people are doing. This makes it difficult to help them be successful -- and keep them accountable.

3. Reports are tedious and painful.

Generating reports and analytics of your sales team's monthly progress against their quota would be ideal. But creating reports manually is cumbersome, often resulting in no tracking at all.



CHAPTER 1: SIGNS YOU REALLY NEED A CRM

4. You are losing data.

It's hard for you to schedule follow-ups with customers and prospects. Great meetings happen on the road, but the sales teams don't always transfer their notes and important details get lost, especially if an employee leaves the company.

5. It's hard to stay in touch on the go.

Your sales reps are out in the field, meeting prospects and discovering valuable info. But all this new data gets stored on handwritten notes or in files on personal computers, instead of being shared with the team.

6. Every customer is treated the same.

You don't target prospects based on their value to the business. Rather, you are sending the same types of offers and messages to customers and prospects in very different stages of the buying process, as well as in different industries or geographies.

7. You lack a plan to scale fast.

What if your business grew from 20 to 200 this year? Are you confident that your current processes will scale? If you know that you are going to grow, are you worried about keeping productivity up while scaling up?

If any of these apply to you or your team, don't despair. These are exactly the issues that a CRM system can address.

Next up, let's take a look at how a CRM can make your business more productive.



CHAPTER 2: HOW CRM IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY

You probably know the old saying, “there never seems to be enough hours in the day.” This is especially true in the sales world, where time truly is money. According to a [study](#) by Mavenlink, two out of five small business owners rank time as their most valuable asset, and a quarter of those would pay \$500 for just one extra hour in the day.

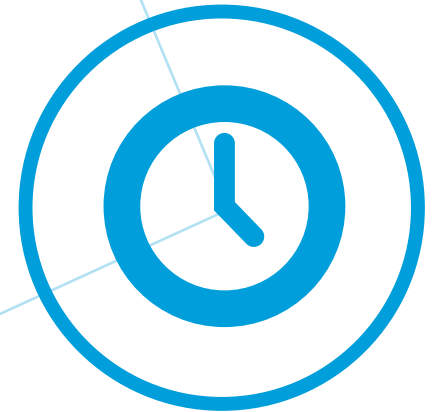
The more effectively and efficiently you use your time, the better results to your bottom line. Small businesses grow faster by getting better at providing a steady flow of new prospects, increasing time spent selling, and arming their sales reps with the info they need to close deals more quickly. That is where a CRM application comes in.

Pipeline

Finding time to bring in a steady flow of new customers can be quite the challenge for a small business sales team. This is often caused by issues such as:

- Inability to route leads to the appropriate sales rep
- Lack of information on potential clients
- Inadequate knowledge about a prospect before calling
- Poor visibility and forecasting of future pipeline

A CRM app allows sales reps to store the data on prospects so the information's ready at each interaction. Plus, it quickly provides metrics related to visibility and forecasting.



CHAPTER 2: HOW CRM IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY

Selling Time

Obviously, representatives need time to sell. Some of the time traps faced by salespeople are hard to overcome, but others can be easily fixed:

- Communication is always a huge challenge for a sales team on the go, but surprisingly few take advantage of smartphones and tablets, which eliminate downtime and increase communication.
- Automation of repetitive tasks gives salespeople more time to concentrate on closing.
- Providing one channel for reps to share information and connect eliminates endless email loops and phone tag.

The right CRM system syncs with mobile devices anywhere, anytime via the cloud, so the entire team is on the same page and has the most current information at their fingertips.

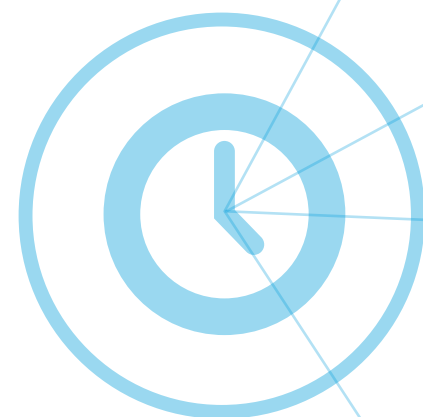
Knowledge

For successful prospecting and pitching, you must gather vital information on potential clients. But finding time to do that can be hard when you're also trying to make your month.

CRMs help solve this problem by collecting valuable customer data, including:

- Client history
- Current client preferences
- Client social media presence
- Past interactions with a client
- Client infrastructure details
- Client social media presence
- Past sales interactions

Now that you've seen the value of a CRM system, let's investigate best practices for getting a CRM strategy in place.



CHAPTER 3: HOW TO CRAFT A CRM STRATEGY

Building a successful CRM system isn't just about choosing the right technology, as significant as that is. You also need the right plan in place from a business perspective. Here are seven basic steps to build a winning plan:

1. Define Your Vision

Some people dismiss vision statements as a waste of time, but successful sales leaders know the value of having a clear, repeatable, action-oriented vision that your team can rally around. Your vision can be many things, from becoming market leader for sales in your region, to redefining customer service within your industry. Make it both aspirational enough to have an impact, and clear enough that the entire organisation can understand it.

2. Define Your Strategy

Strategy is what makes your vision achievable. Say you want to be market leader for sales. Do you do this by competing on price, or by offering different products, or by emphasising your great after-sales service?

3. Define Your Business Objectives

Business objectives are where vision and strategy get translated into the day-to-day work. A common mistake when implementing a new CRM system is to replicate in it all the old business objectives and processes, complete with their inefficiencies. Instead, view your implementation as an opportunity to review and optimise how you work.



CHAPTER 3: HOW TO CRAFT A CRM STRATEGY

4. Get Your Team On Board

Executive sponsorship is vital for your CRM vision, strategy and business objectives, and for a successful rollout. A lack of executive sponsorship is one of [the top five](#) contributing factors to CRM failure.

5. Identify the Metrics

“You can’t manage what you can’t measure” is an adage attributed to many business thinkers. Metrics should be visible to everyone, and this means creating dashboards for all levels of the organisation, from sales reps and managers, to the executive team.

6. Prioritise Your Initiatives

You’re not going to get everything done at once, so decide what’s most important to deliver first. Training is often the priority, so everyone is ready to use the new CRM system as soon as it is available.

7. Define Your Roadmap

You shouldn’t look at building an effective CRM system as a “big bang” event. Yes, a successful rollout is vital, but being able to deliver enhancements and new features after you go live is equally important. Plan beyond launch day and consider what other capabilities you need to deliver for the business.

Now that your CRM system and strategy are in place, it’s time to see the best ways to measure and maximise the technology.



CHAPTER 4: MAXIMISING YOUR CRM ROI

CRM applications have a proven track record of increasing:

- Sales by up to 29%.
- Sales productivity by up to 24%.
- Forecast accuracy by 42%.

In addition, a [study](#) by Nucleus Research found that the average CRM return on investment (ROI) is \$5.60 for every dollar spent.

Here are several best practices to remember when working to maximise your ROI, from [CRM Search's](#) Karen D. Schwartz:

Choose a Cloud-Based CRM Solution

All major CRM vendors offer cloud versions of their apps. Choosing this software as a service (SaaS) model means companies no longer have to deal with things like servers, software issues, and new version upgrades, that on-premise CRM apps demand.

Integrate with Applications that Provide Value

Take advantage of the new business and social applications that are out there, and integrate them with your CRM system. These include marketing automation and accounting software, plus key social tools, which allow your company to follow people, information, and groups on social networks, and capture real-time data.



CHAPTER 4: MAXIMISING YOUR CRM ROI

Allow for Mobile Integration

Make everything accessible on mobile devices for your salespeople on-the-go, so they can work on the road — things like reviewing correspondence, managing contacts, and reviewing accounts. The integration should also ideally work with back-office systems, social networks, and web conferencing.

And so you are fully covered, here are some practices to avoid when working to maximise your CRM ROI, from [CRM Buyer's](#) Christopher Bucholtz:

Infighting Between Sales & Marketing

CRM data is valuable when used to qualify leads for the sales department and to show which marketing campaigns lead to closed sales. But these insights can be missed if sales and marketing don't work together. Before you do anything else, get both departments in a room to map out common goals, and to discuss how to use the data.

Generating Reports for the Sake of It

The right CRM application can present data in an almost effortless preformatted report. But this analysis will do you no good if it is ignored. Take the time to not only read the reports, but to understand and act on them when needed.

Building "Relationships" with Customers

CRMs are an excellent tool to connect with your customers and build relationships that grow over time. But don't just assume that everything is fine and well. Be aware that customers evolve and change, and your business may need to change with them.



CONCLUSION

Any successful enterprise should start with a foundation of great customer relationships, with you the seller, connecting with people who need your product or service.

As your company expands, these connections become more sophisticated. It's not just a transaction between the buyer and seller. You also need to share information across various teams within your own organisation who are making contact with the same customers. A CRM system can serve as a vital nerve center to manage the many connections needed in a growing business.

In a world where the most successful companies are customer-focused, CRM apps make the customer king. In short, CRM apps are how businesses truly become "customer companies."





SALES SOLUTIONS THAT WILL MAKE YOUR BUSINESS MORE PRODUCTIVE

If you want to grow your sales and establish a transparent sales process, you need an easy-to-use Customer Relationship Management system. Salesforce allows you to store customer and prospect contact information, accounts, leads, and sales opportunities in one central location.

[See Demo](#)

[Guided Tour](#)

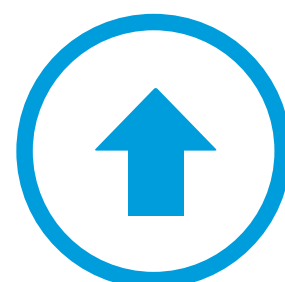
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