

A Beginner's guide to CRM software - Everything you need to get started with CRM



Introduction

Customer relationship management (CRM) refers to the practices, guidelines, principles, and technologies that manage interactions with existing and potential customers. It can also be described as an organization-wide strategy to improve profitability and revenues, increase customer loyalty, and reduce operating costs.

All in all, the CRM philosophy is all about:

Putting the customer first

When a success-driven organization looks at every transaction or interaction through the eyes of the existing and potential customers, it cannot help but deliver engaging, value-adding, and better customer experiences. This, in turn, increases brand awareness, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and customer retention for the organization.

A CRM software brings together all information from different departments throughout the organization to provide a holistic and unified view of each customer in real-time. This allows sales, marketing, and customer support teams to make informed and quick decisions on everything from cross-selling to up-selling. It is also beneficial to improve the quality of customer responsiveness and communication and coordinating

the management of customer-driven sales and marketing campaigns.

Without leaving the app, you can view contact information of customers, manage tasks, follow up via social media or email, and track the performance of your organization and departments, among other benefits. Implementing the right CRM can help you improve forecast accuracy, boost sales, close more deals, and increase sales efficiency.

“Enterprises often have unreasonable expectations from a CRM system. It is important for them to remember that the CRM solution is not going to take care of itself and it would not magically or automatically whisper the right words to salespeople to close sales and empower the best outreach campaigns for marketing teams.”

CRM is all about a change in processes and people utilizing the technology and data for creating a positive and favorable return in multiple areas of measurable profitability. When implemented successfully, customer relationship management provides organizations with not only insights into countless and profit-centric opportunities to grow business with each customer, but also a way to measure their value.

What can you expect from an out-of-the box CRM platform?



CRM functions as a one-stop solution by facilitating the performance of critical activities, including but not limited to:

It empowers enterprises to optimize and track customer behaviors, interactions, and transactions. CRM also allows them to proactively deliver the ideal customer service at the right time and place on all touchpoints.

- It streamlines enterprise-wide sales, customer support, and marketing functions in a unified system. Sales, customer support, and marketing teams work in complete synchronization on a single platform to grow leads, identify opportunities, close deals, and support customers.

- CRM automates a big majority of sales, marketing, and customer support activities. By doing this, it frees up the time of professionals from repetitive and tedious behind-the-scenes work. In other words, it helps sales professionals do what they are best at – hardcore selling, marketing teams to utilize the collective efforts to create a better image of the brand, and customer support professionals to proactively solve the pain points and challenges ahead of the existing and potential customers. When planned and implemented carefully, a CRM system can reduce the sales cycle by 28 percent, increase deal closure by 41 percent, and reduce administrative time by 34 percent.
- A CRM system enables enterprises to appreciate the best talents at work by helping in the identification of top-quality performers in sales, marketing, and customer service departments.

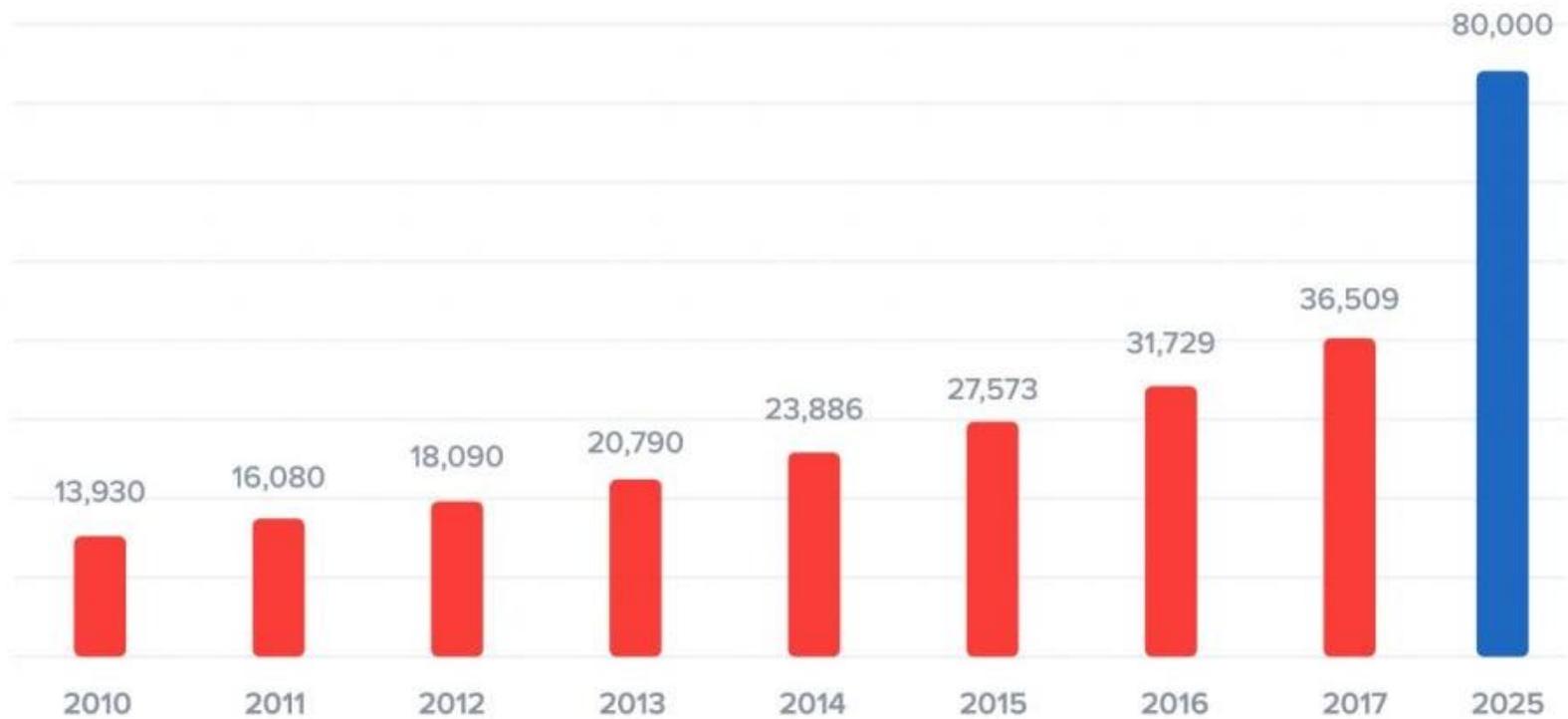
CRM Statistics You Need to Know for 2020 and beyond

CRM is at the heart of every business that wants to be future-proof.

Today, CRM constitutes the biggest software market in

the world and the growth isn't going to slow down any soon. In fact, CRM is expected to reach more than \$80 billion in revenues by 2025.

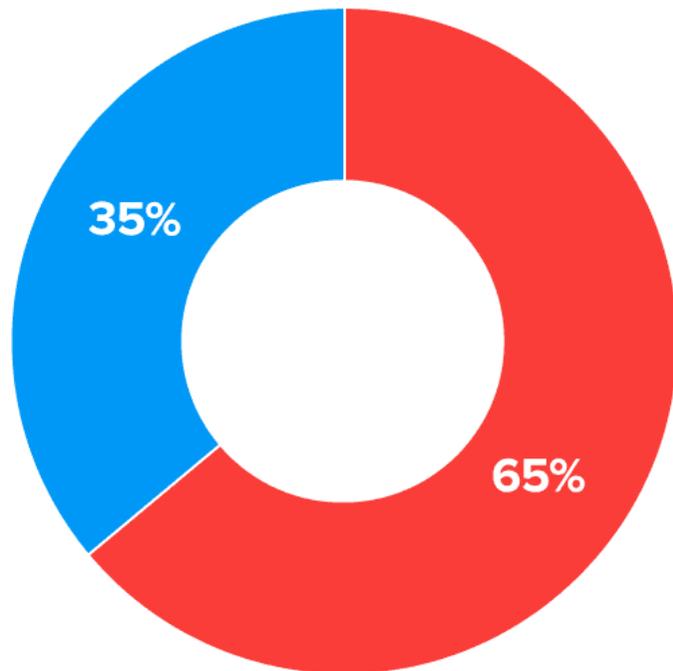
CRM software revenue forecast (millions of U.S. dollars)



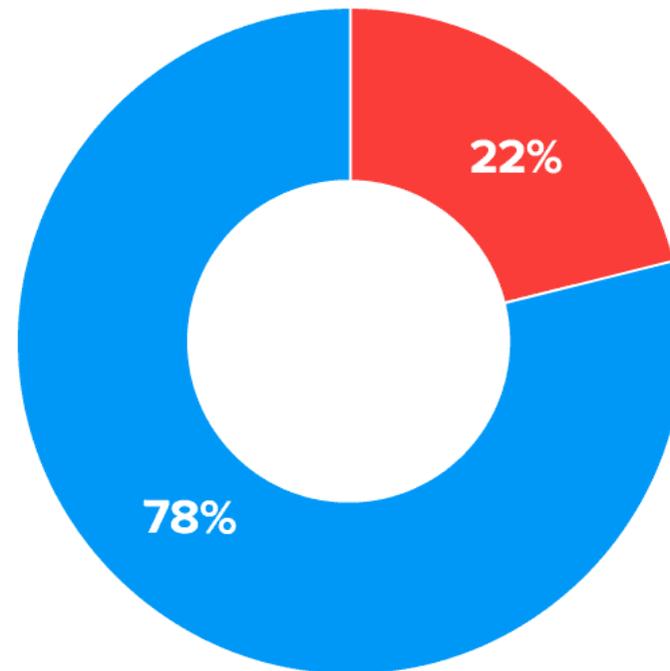
A recently-concluded report by Nucleus Research revealed that 65 percent of companies using a mobile

CRM are achieving their sales quotas. Conversely, only 22 percent of reps who are using non-mobile CRMs have reached the same targets.

Companies with Mobile CRM



Companies without Mobile CRM



● Achieved sales quotas

● Non-achieved sales quotas

- The average return on investment for customer relationship management is \$8.71 for every dollar spent. (Source: [Nucleus Research](#))
- CRM is the fastest growing software market today. In 2010, it was a \$14 billion industry and is expected to reach \$80 billion by 2025 - an increase of 600%. (Source: [Grand View Research](#))
- 91 percent of businesses with 10 or more employees now make use of CRM software. (Source: [CRM Magazine](#))

Let us now examine the following topics:

- Top signs your business need a robust CRM
- How to build a powerful and out-of-the-box CRM strategy
- How can CRM improve your sales and marketing efforts
- How to maximize your sales, profits, and ROI consistently

Top Signs Your Business Need A Robust CRM

As a growing organization, you probably rely too heavily on emails and spreadsheets to lock in all your customer data. But is this primitive method still and really working for you?

CRM lets you take back control of your sales, marketing, and customer service processes while still staying organized, relevant, and profitable.

If you aren't getting these results from your existing systems, it's probably the right time for you to switch on to CRM.

Your spreadsheets are too difficult to manage

Initially, organizations start tracking clients by recording basic details such as contact information, name, and their position in the sales funnel. With passing years, change happens at every level - customers, processes, technologies, and more. This means that the column count is also growing exponentially in your spreadsheets. Over time, more data is relevant to make the sale but accessing that information is cumbersome and frustrating.

If the search box is unable to access the customer information you require, the entire concept of spreadsheet systems of the bygone days is no longer effective.

CRM Systems are meant to be intuitive so that identifying and locating customer data is painless, quick, and easy.

Your business is far from organized

Every client interaction is important. However, a corkboard cluttered with visiting cards or a desk covered in sticky note reminders isn't the solution. Or, worse, deadlines and follow-ups slip through the cracks.

CRM compiles all the information of your organization systematically as you're collecting it. What does this mean? You stay organized and perfectly placed to take critical decisions at the right time and place.

You are losing leads

Crucial details such as important follow-up data can get dismissed unknowingly or mistakenly as your team doesn't have the time to enter them in your spreadsheets. But this can mean loss of critical data that could cost you deals worth thousands and millions of dollars.

The worst part is that this could also mean your employees are not on the same page and your customers are not happy with their experiences. Ultimately, your organization would lose potential sales and customers. This downfall is, however, evitable.

Choosing the right CRM could have easily helped you enter your customer data and when and what to follow-up with potential clients and vendors. Remember, you don't have to grow your to-do list but your customer relationships.

You can't stay in touch when away

Managing data while remaining on the move can be difficult. However, you just cannot pause on your business just because you are on the move. That's where spreadsheets limit you.

If a customer calls you while you are on the move, getting access to the details of your customers can be challenging, if not possible.

This is where CRM comes into the picture. It lets you access and updates the details of customers from any smart device to help you always stay updated and connected.

Your wish list is getting longer

Do you regularly say, "*Wouldn't it be great if we could _____?*" more than "*It's so amazingly great that we can _____.*" Wouldn't it be great if we could have applied a bulk action to certain customers or have our contacts organized in groups or automate specific email responses? If the answer is in the affirmative,

it's time for you to migrate your system to CRM.

It's Time for a CRM Solution

Congratulations. Your organization is growing and it's just the right time for you to add a robust CRM system to the mix.



How To Build A Powerful And Out-Of-The Box CRM Strategy?

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software could be the most powerful tool to acquire new leads, improve customer relationships, and drive customer loyalty - but only if you know how to use it. Alarmingly, only 12 percent of sales reps actually leverage the full capabilities of their CRM. Conversely, 35-65 percent of CRM projects end with low to poor adoption rates, little or no integration with existing tools and strategies, and ultimately lead to a poor return on investment.

There just could not be anything worse than investing money, time, and efforts into a CRM system and failing to use it efficiently and properly. All in all, you must always prepare for success adoption by creating a powerful and out-of-the-box CRM strategy before you decide to get started with CRM implementation.

Building a successful, powerful, and state-of-the-art CRM system is not about selecting the right technology. You need to have the right plan in place from the perspective of a success-driven organization like yours.

Here are some basic steps to create a winning CRM strategy:

Define Your Vision

Without a clear and crystal-clear vision, your business is in danger of drifting with no direction. This is simply because the vision outlines what the business does, what it offers, and who they do it for. All in all, it is the mission of an organization that helps it in articulating short- and long-term goals and operational tactics.

In other words, the vision statement of the organization outlines the core activities, the goals, and the strategy for achieving those goals. It emphasizes more on where the organization is as of now and the future ahead of it.

Step 1: Identify CRM Strategy Goals

The first and foremost step in the quest to create an effective CRM strategy is the identification of key goals. You must have answers to questions like:

- What will be the primary and secondary purposes of using the CRM?
- What are your expectations with the CRM?

It is important to keep in mind here that the CRM will be used extensively and collaboratively across multiple departments of your organization. Therefore, the primary goals should remain the same for the entire

organization as a whole. However, the approach to deliver these goals will, undoubtedly, depend on departmental roles and responsibilities.

For this reason, it is important for all departments of your organization to collaborate on the goal-setting process. Breaking down large goals into actionable CRM tasks aligning different departments with their specific roles and responsibilities would be the first and right step ahead.

One of the first things that you should emphasize upon is to be specific in the context of your goals (e.g. increasing recurring revenue every month by X percent over the next quarter or the next six months). Specific goals are always easier to break into actionable and proactive CRM tasks.

Some of the possible examples of actionable tasks for increasing monthly recurring revenue (MRR):

- Planning and executing efforts to reduce the time it takes to respond to customer inquiries or tickets.
- Send targeted offers for new products or upgrades to existing and potential customers based on their purchase history.

- Check in more often with existing customers to find out if they need any assistance or have any feedback or suggestion about the products and services offered by you.

Step 2: Identify core challenges and weaknesses

It is important that you identify the core challenges and weaknesses ahead of your team early on to ensure that your CRM strategy is not reactive, but proactive.

For instance, you may find out that cross-department communication is one of the biggest core weaknesses of your team. To counter this, your organization will need to be highly proactive to ensure the CRM strategy utilizes transparency and highly collaborative processes. This will also help you prevent any unnecessary friction down the line during the stage of CRM strategy implementation.

Step 3: Map out the customer journey

The ultimate goal of your CRM is to improve the overall customer experience and this would require an understanding of each instance a customer might connect or interact with your brand. It is worthwhile to note here that each interaction would be a touchpoint in the journey of your customers and a wonderful opportunity

to leverage your CRM strategy with a predefined purpose to improve it.

The customer journey can be mapped out in the following ways:

1. Firstly, you need to carefully and precisely identify all the instances when a prospect or customer might interact with your brand. This could include seeing a paid advertisement on social media, receiving an email from a sales representative, or signing up for your newsletter.
2. Once you've taken care of the first step, the next is all about evaluating which stage of a typical sales funnel each interaction usually occurs within. For instance, your paid advertisements may be targeting the audience unaware of your products and/or services - put that straight in the Awareness bucket. Your newsletters? It may be sent to customers and primarily used for retaining or upselling to them. Put that in Evaluation.

Why is mapping out the customer journey so important? That's a great question for many reasons. Mapping out the customer journey is a wonderful way to assist employees to take a step back and then visualize the entire customer journey. It also helps them understand they (as an integral part of your

organization) fit within it.

The key objective is to provide clarity to employees on where a customer is (both financially and emotionally) at the first point of contact. This knowledge will help employees have a crystal-clear idea on how to best approach members of the target audience to achieve optimal results.

Step 4: Analyze touchpoint channels

After you are done with identifying the various instances in which a customer could interact with your brand on multiple channels or platforms, the next step is all about identifying **the "how"** and **the "where."** This will help you evaluate gaps and leverage opportunities to improve your CRM strategy.

The "How"

How do customers and prospects utilize the channels (your blog, website's chatbox, LinkedIn, Yelp, Email, Social Media, etc.) to interact with your brand? Let us say that you were able to identify that a big majority of your leads come from users who sign up to receive resources on your website's blog. Now it is time for you to ask yourself - am I capitalizing on this amazing opportunity?

Your marketing team should then emphasize on creating more content with lead generation forms. Conversely, the sales team should have its eyes on new leads coming in through these forms and follow up accordingly.

The "Where"

CRMs have this unique ability to integrate with different platforms to optimize customer interaction. The identification of common customer touchpoints will help you understand which all processes to be improved or streamlined. For instance, you should consider including targeted email marketing and automation if emails and newsletters are the strong touchpoints of your organization. You can also use this process for identifying new, lucrative opportunities for positive and holistic customer interaction.

Step 5: Align cross-department communication

Once we are done with identifying key customer touchpoints, the next step will be all about ensuring that every single interaction is dependable, positive, holistic, and in line with the brand identity. Now comes the most crucial aspect - your support, sales, and marketing teams must be on the same page for this to happen. This is simply because your customers should feel that

whenever it happens, whoever it happens with, and whatever happens, they will always get the same level of unmatched products, services, and capabilities from you on the same values.

Remember, the ultimate goal of your organization must be to create a consistent, futuristic, and reliable experience that your customers can count on.

Step 6: Create CRM processes to streamline workflow

By default, most CRMs include capabilities, features, and integrations. Your CRM strategy, depending on the capabilities of the tools you use, would improve the efficiency, internal communication, and efficiency of your teams. It is important for you to note here that creating this process **before** you proceed with CRM implementation is vital.

Here are some factors that you must consider:

1. Clearly defines roles, activities, and responsibilities. By providing a crystal clear framework of how things would be handled, you can prevent confusion around workflow and assignments.

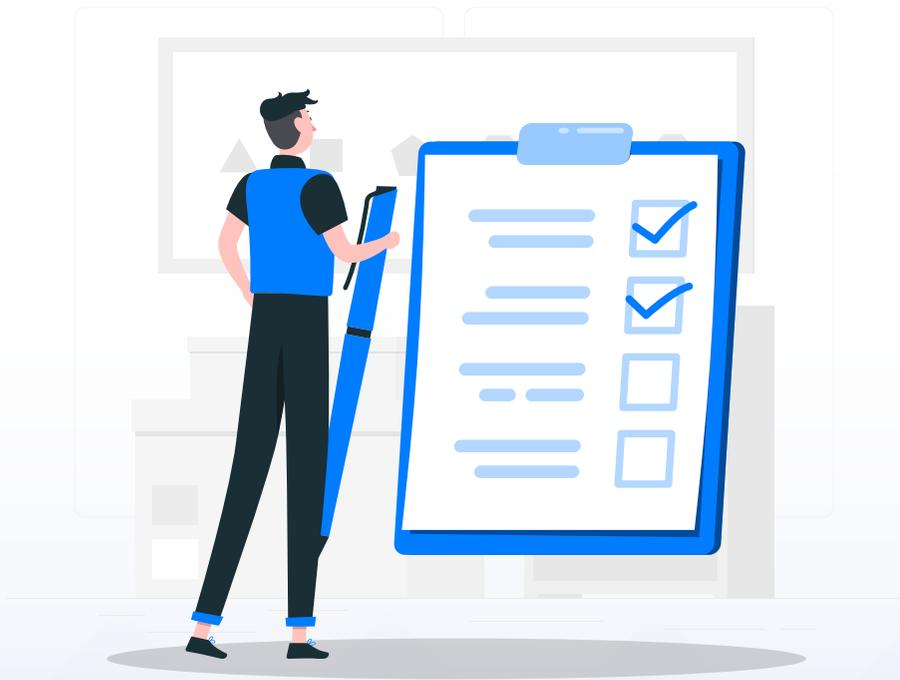
2. Create segments to sync and organize leads and customers into manageable groups. Customer Relationship Management segments let employees efficiently and effortlessly organize their customers and leads into the right categories based on their position in the funnel. This helps in improving the quality and efficiency of customer communication.

3. Automate wherever required and useful. Your teams may get occupied with multiple tasks and the change in priorities may cause unintentional delays in some activities. Therefore, it is important that automatic notifications are facilitated so that team members can ensure all available and potential opportunities are utilized promptly.

4. Eliminate multi-platform confusion by integrating internal tools. Always remember that the primary goal of every CRM on this earth is to streamline workflow and not make it more complicated. For this to really happen, you need to consider value-adding third-party tools that are vital to the functions of your team. Thereafter, you need to integrate them into your CRM for eliminating any additional steps and minimize the amount of time required to make a response to a customer.

5 . Customize your CRM dashboard. The CRM dashboard should be customized to display emails, performance metrics, reports, and tasks. You need to identify which insights are most valuable for your teams and customize the dashboard accordingly.

How Can CRM Improve Your Sales And Marketing Efforts?



“Customers expect you to understand their business needs better than they do.”

You probably have heard the proverb, *“There never seem to be enough hours in the day.”* This is especially true in the sales and marketing world, where time truly is money.

Every business, irrespective of its line of operations or the size of business, grows faster by getting better with each passing day by offering a steady flow of new prospects, arming its team of sales reps with the info they require to close deals faster, and increase time spent selling. This is exactly where a CRM application comes into the fray.

Get to know your target audience

The expectations of sales leads have never been higher than today. With more data available than ever before, your target audience expects you to know exactly who they are, what their specific requirements are, and how you should tailor your sales pitch according to their pain

points and specific requirements.

Today, customers don't succumb to manipulative sales tactics or generic sales pitches. In fact, these tricks of the bygone days drive leads away. A CRM solution like Salesforce can help you conquer leads *like a breeze*.

Contact Management

Customer Relationship Management software lets you do much better and more than just a name, phone number, and physical address. It allows you to capture insights from conversations on social media accounts such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube, providing you the absolute picture.

The embedded tools and features of a CRM can also be used to monitor internal account discussions, customer interactions, and account histories in a unified place. So if a potential customer calls, any employee with the required access can quickly catch up on relevant details in absolutely no time.

How to maximize your sales, profits, and ROI consistently?

Is the hype around CRM just mumbo-jumbo without substance for enterprises selling the CRM products or is it really possible to measure your Return on Investment (ROI) in a CRM initiative? It is important to answer the ROI question once and for all like the ease of use and results regularly rank as two of the biggest factors for companies when choosing a CRM product or service.

Now comes the big question - how do you measure ROI? Before we start this journey, it is important to first find answers to the following questions based on facts:

- What are your current appointment, show, and closing ratios?
- What is your average advertising cost per sale?
- Average gross per sale?
- Percentage of repeat business?

You must know where you are now - a good starting point - to measure ROI. After all, you just cannot improve something that you don't monitor, measure, and evaluate. Measuring in the organizational data is tracking meaningful data over an extended period of time. You will find difficulty in designing a CRM strategy

You must know where you are now - a good starting point - to measure ROI. After all, you just cannot improve something that you don't monitor, measure, and evaluate. Measuring in the organizational data is tracking meaningful data over an extended period of time. You will find difficulty in designing a CRM strategy if you have been failing to track this invaluable data.

Now comes the interesting part. If you have not properly measured your organizational progress or don't know where to get started, it's not the end of the world. However, it is important for you to remember that measuring success in different areas makes much more sense as a CRM suite is not just about an increase in the number of sales made. It is more about creating and nurturing ongoing relationships with customers to increase brand awareness, acceptability, and loyalty that ultimately translates to the bottom line from different avenues.

Ideally, you should take your starting-point data and compare it to your performance while using an out-of-the-box CRM product, service, or capability in 30 days, 45 days, 60 days, and 90 days. You should remember here that all enhancements would not appear in the same time frame.

However, you will be able to evaluate the ROI in many of the following areas:

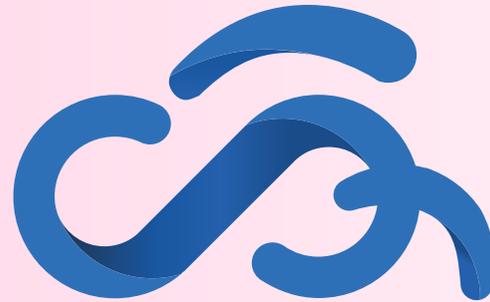
- Reduced advertising cost per sale
- Increase in employee productivity due to automation
- Improved response time to Internet leads
- Improved appointment set ratio
- Increased gross profit on sales
- Increased repeat or referral business
- Increased sales or close ratio

All these areas of improvement will eventually lead to higher profits that would make the otherwise complicated task of measuring ROI a possibility. CRM, in itself, will not solve any problems in your company but any CRM initiative should be measurable and must have a clear ROI.

Conclusion

Customer relationship management is an approach for managing the interactions and communications of a success-driven organization with its existing and potential customers. CRM utilizes data analysis about the history, behavior, and preferences of customers with the organization to create and nurture business relationships with customers, specifically focusing on customer retention and eventually more sales and profits.

It is not a triggered bullet or robot that can improve customer relationships without any human effort. Therefore, it is important for enterprises NOT to consider CRM as the end but rather the start of a journey. The onus is on enterprises to analyze the CRM data on a consistent basis throughout this journey to extract insights out of it and act accordingly. Start enjoying the ROI as soon as the CRM software is up and running.



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