

CRM: The Foundations of Success to Business Growth

Phil Callaghan – managing director of Batley based Caltech, one of the UK's leading suppliers & implementers of customer relationship management systems, discusses the Success of Business Growth using CRM.

World class customer experiences begin with your people. By giving your people the right tools to propel their productivity and amplify their impact, they can drive your organisation to achieve its goals and generate maximum return.

This is when the value of customer relationship management (CRM) solutions is truly experienced and is a proven way to build lasting growth.

Implementation of any CRM solution must be carefully thought through, and the support of experienced professionals can pay dividends in the long run.

CRM technology, when placed at the heart of an organisation, can have an almost immediate impact on the top line, helping organisations to win profitable customers and to better serve existing customers.

There are three ways to harness the power of CRM:

1. Acquire Profitable Customers

A well implemented CRM application will bring together multiple sources of information to support decision-making, allowing marketing campaigns to be targeted and managed most effectively.

A sales force is a valuable commodity – possibly, one of an organisation's most costly resources. With this in mind, it's imperative that sales people spend their time selling, and less time chasing fruitless leads or jumping through administrative hurdles.

The CRM tool should act as a sales force's compass. It should help the organisation understand where it stands today, and point in the direction it needs to take. The CRM tool should be an integral part of the sales team – at the start of the sales cycle it should help qualify leads, allowing resources to be directed appropriately. Automatic triggers can be built into the system to ensure the desired contact programme is fulfilled, and subsequent win-loss data can be collated and analysed, allowing organisations to continually hone their strategy for optimum success.

2. Retain and Maximise Existing Customers

It's commonly known that it's significantly cheaper to retain existing customers than to acquire new ones. So it makes sense to focus resources which help to build customer loyalty, increasing spend and longevity. Customer spend can be analysed, marketing and sales is joined up and detailed customer profiles can be built – all aiding the reduction of churn.

Knowledge – the key to effective customer service

A great customer experience must be balanced with the need to control cost. An effective CRM tool can help make service improvements whilst reducing costs associated with managing customers, both by making agents more effective, and by automating data entry processes.

For advisers, the automatic generation of service cases, complete with pre-populated standard fields means advisers have the necessary detail available to handle the query most effectively and can save valuable time. And because all information about the customer – including historic data – is held in one place, the adviser can more quickly handle the query as they have access to contextual information.

3. Gain Efficiencies

Processes Improvement

All businesses operate with a series of processes, often built around the most basic functions of the organisation and almost always repetitive tasks. These processes are vital to an organisation's success – they are what drive consistent service levels, fast decision-making and best practice.

Successful processes are key to all successful organisations. CRM reporting makes it easy to identify the most effective processes, and to ensure they are established across the organisation.

Help Employees to Excel

In an age where information is all-important, CRM tools can play an important role in ensuring employees are able to work effectively, adding maximum value to the business.

Customers want to be helped quickly, and by the first person they speak to. They want quick solutions and correct answers. CRM means employees have the right information in the right place at the right time, empowering them to be effective and provide high quality service to customers.

Simplify Your IT Assets

As organisations grow, their IT infrastructure tends to grow too. Soon, a number of disparate systems are in use, often with overlapping and conflicting data. It can be a time-consuming and costly exercise to unravel the discrepancies, and produce a less than ideal experience for the customer. In addition, it can be more complex to maintain a number of systems, and adds to the training costs too.

Providing one unified system with a single user interface, means employees can access all the necessary information in one place, without the need to switch from one application to another. This makes it easier for them to make good decisions, and reduces the risk of wasted time and effort.

A good CRM system will continue to evolve with an organisation, comprising accessible configuration tools to enable companies to further tailor the user interface. It should also allow companies to further develop their capabilities.

Conclusion

In summary, companies must keep focused on their strategy and find ways to achieve more with less. Tools which help companies maximise revenue opportunities and reduce operational costs will help strengthen the organisation and position it well for a secure future.

CRM is a powerful tool which, if fully harnessed, can play a vital role in sales, marketing and service provision. However, to produce the required impact, it must be implemented with

care. Correctly integrated with other IT applications, and aligned with business processes, a CRM tool can be immensely powerful, helping an organisation to gain better market positioning beyond an economic downturn.

Working with experts, reduces the risk of wasted time, effort and money and means you can reap the full benefit of a CRM system from the outset.

Box Out

Top 10 Tips for Implementing CRM

KISS – ‘Keep it Small and Simple’

Ensure it’s a business driven application

Look to the future

Setting & agreeing the correct processes

Choose the right system for you

Analyse the risk

Agree the correct reporting

Integrate all your data

Make sure there is buy-in

Review the system and reflect on what you set out to achieve