

## How to get more from your Customer Relationship Management

Customer Relationship Management is a term that is widely used and *misused* today. Before you consider implementing a CRM solution, whether it is your first, or a replacement for an out-grown system, you need to understand what it means today, and what it means for your organisation.

Customer Relationship Management can mean many different things to different people. In simple terms, it is a means of collecting information about your contacts (customers, leads, prospects, competitors, suppliers) in a structured system which allows the information to be shared and used by different people and departments within your organisation. It could be called your “**company memory**”.

A new system can be difficult to visualise, “How will it work in the context of my business?” “Can I be sure it will do everything I need it to?” To overcome these concerns you should ensure that you are able to see a prototypes of the proposed system, so that you can see what **your** data will look like and how your processes work. You can then be confident that when the system is installed it will meet your objectives.

When implementing any new system, ensure that key people from all departments likely to use or be affected by the system are involved. By letting people “have their say” they are more likely to welcome the new implementation and be ready to gain benefits from it immediately.

### Follow these 6 simple tips to a better customer relationship management -

1. Minimise the levels of customer attrition by implementing strategies to keep in regular contact with customers. (Over 50% of customers switch suppliers because of “perceived indifference”)
2. Improve the effectiveness of marketing activities by improved targeting of potential clients for new business and existing clients for cross and up-selling opportunities.
3. Obtain more new customers by refining the sales process, enabling more effective use of sales resources, reducing lead times between enquiry and order and higher conversion rates.
4. Simplify internal communications by providing an easily accessible database of all the communications and commitments (Calls, letters, meetings, documents etc) between the company and its external contacts.
5. Make yours the consistent and reliable company that people want to do business with. Be confident that all the commitments you make are done on time, even when staff members leave, are off sick or on holiday. No more nasty surprises.
6. Reduce administrative costs by simplifying routine administrative tasks such as producing letters, emails and faxes.

Implementing a system that will provide these benefits may sound an awesome, expensive and difficult task. Potentially it is; however RD Associates (MK) Ltd has extensive experience of implementing these systems for 100's of clients both large and small in a wide variety of industries which minimises the risk and costs to you, as well as the time it can take to implement a system.

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