



**Customer Relationship Management is not just a software solution, it's an organizational strategy.**

Does your organization need software that supports collaboration across departments and its customers and sales channels?

No technology, regardless of its sophistication can be successful without a strategy to guide its implementation and use. CRM is first and foremost a strategy and CRM technology enables and supports this strategy. Identifying and meeting customer needs should be the primary goal of relationship management. Successful CRM strategies consider the customer's point of view and build it into the organizations business processes.

The challenge many organizations face is how to effectively manage interactions to best serve customers and prospects while staying aligned with evolving business goals. Customer-centric companies achieving the greatest success today use flexible CRM solutions to both manage the customer-facing processes of their business and implement their customer-centric vision.

To develop a solid CRM strategy an organization must understand the market, industry, and customer drivers that influence selection and use of the products and services offered. Equally important is a thorough understanding of the competitive landscape and a unique approach to differentiate you from the competition.

A CRM strategy must be consistent with an organization's goals. While each CRM strategy is unique there are often similarities in the kinds of goals organizations look to achieve, some of these include:

- Automating and managing sales-related processes
- Accelerating the sales cycle
- Improving collaboration and efficiencies
- Managing leads more effectively, and
- Deriving greater insight into sources of value and opportunities for cross selling within the customer base.

Automate the entire customer lifecycle including

- Lead generation
- Inquiry/Prospect Management
- Marketing programs/campaigns
- Management of sales process activity
- Waitlist management
- Initiation of customer contracts
- Sales forecasts/analysis
- Customer experience, service, and retention

Organizations need to define their business needs first to ensure alignment of their CRM investment with the people and processes that support their objectives. Understanding your customers' needs allows you to provide a relevant and differentiated experience. Building this understanding into your CRM system and processes can also improve the effectiveness and efficiency of your interactions with customers.

Gathering information about customers' needs and preferences through your CRM system enables organizations to focus on providing customer solutions rather than pushing products. Understanding clients' needs can fundamentally change how an organization thinks about customer relationships and how they provide their services.

CRM needs to be a unified customer information repository that can be accessed by corporate and regional employees alike, while creating a personally and culturally relevant experience that will strengthen the customer relationship and improve customer experience and satisfaction.

**Eldercare Customer Relationship Management: A scalable, integrated CRM solution that supports real-time distributed environments and multiple customer interaction channels.**

A CRM solution needs to support the way your employees and business operates without changing processes and workflow that make you unique and supporting an adaptive, agile organization under the umbrella of a single, integrated system.



Within security guidelines employees should have access to all the customer data they require, when they require it to do their jobs. While CRM may bring about process refinements and new efficiencies, it should adapt to the unique characteristics of your business processes and support an agile enterprise.

Organizations increasingly create value using CRM to standardize, streamline, and refine unique business processes, integrating them into enterprise solutions to make information available, minimizing distinct information silos that create inefficient processes. CRM will enable organization to create visibility in managing marketing campaigns, referral and opportunity management, as well as tracking resources to support sales, and manage customer/prospect contacts.

### **Measurable CRM Business Benefits**

Many organizations understand that a CRM system is a necessity for their business, but fail to set quantitative goals or metrics for tracking results. The need to report on customer acquisition activities, conversion of prospects to customers, and improved efficiencies requires organizations to benchmark and pre-set targets from the projects outset as well as having a plan for measuring the same key performance metrics over time to demonstrate results.

Comparing actual results to pre-established goals will help you decide if your CRM strategy is working. If actual results aren't meeting expectations then a deeper dive and further analysis should assist in understanding if an approach isn't working and allow for course corrections to improve performance. This deeper dive also helps to assess if the original goals were realistic and to reset them if necessary.

Every organization has a different vision for their CRM project. Every vision brings with it a variety of business value propositions that can be attached to bottom-line results.

A senior care healthcare company identifies the following as criteria for CRM success:

- Successful integration of processes, people, and tools
- Elimination of prospect and customer information silos
- Improve internal and external collaboration
- System able to drive customer acquisition and retention
- Increased overall health care delivery system efficiency

It is necessary to measure CRM return on investment in terms of overall business value, and how the system supports a vision and yields both hard and soft benefits and not exclusively on metrics. Integration is a key to achieving the ROI results customers expect from CRM.

Integration between CRM and core applications allows CRM to create downstream value from sales and marketing business processes, strength collaboration and improve customer sales cycle times and operational efficiencies.

### **CUSTOMER INSIGHT: Industry-specific CRM lowers total costs.**

Selecting an industry-specific CRM solution meeting the majority of your needs from the start allows you to focus your implementation expenditures on higher-value activities such as modeling the processes that make your company truly unique.

Customization typically accounts for a large share of CRM implementation costs. Finding a solution that more closely matches your needs "out of the box" can significantly reduce the cost and time it takes to roll out a CRM solution. While all companies have unique processes, those within the same industry share similarities in the data they need to capture, workflows used, and the processes they want to automate.

When selecting a CRM system, consider the kinds of services needed to achieve project goals. Companies with demonstrable knowledge and experience in an industry will add value by applying best practices and benchmarks gleaned from past industry experience.