



WHY CHOOSE A CRM (CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT) SYSTEM?

Customer relationships can make or break a business. These relationships ensure your customers return and purchase more products and services from you and this could prevent them from falling victim to your competitors. This can be made easier by implementing a CRM system.

CRM is basically, understanding what keeps your customers coming back to you and allows you to:

- Build and strengthen customer relationships to ensure repeat business.
- Provide value added services that are difficult for competitors to replicate.
- Increase your staff's awareness of customer needs.
- Reduce customer frustrations by not asking the same questions over and over.

By integrating marketing, sales and customer service functions, a well structured and correctly implemented CRM system makes it easier for everyone within your organisation to work and share critical information.

The Benefits.

- **New sales opportunities.** Market to new prospects and existing customers from within the CRM system.
- **Improved customer service.** Allows you to take a proactive approach with complete customer information at your fingertips.
- **Better decision making.** Have a single view of customer details across all contact points, giving a comprehensive analysis on customer behaviour, marketing campaigns and sales activities.
- **Greater efficiency.** Gain immediate access to your critical customer information.

How do I justify it?

Most organisations need to build a Business Case for a CRM system and this involves:

- **Forming a core project team.** These key individuals should know and understand your business, be from functional divisions such as marketing, sales, customer services and technical departments and will be responsible for the CRM project.
- **Examining current processes.** Analyse existing business processes from many viewpoints and how they impact on both your organisation and customers.
- **Scoping the requirements.** The team must identify your organisations objectives, focusing on business processes that require re-engineering and discuss the appropriate courses of action.

How do I implement it?

To make the implementation a smooth and successful process, you must set definitive and achievable milestones. These include:

- **Create a blueprint.** A document that gives the team a pre-determined plan and a set of guidelines to reach the CRM scoping requirements.
- **Implement the solution.** A successful implementation requires buy in from all members of staff.
- **Provide good training.** Proper training is essential to any successful software implementation. This training will provide staff with the information, practice and involvement to ensure they get the most from the CRM system.
- **Test the solution.** With something as valuable as customer data, you will want to test the system to make certain it is functioning correctly before going live.

Finally, although a correctly implemented CRM system can increase the turnover of your company, a lot of time and money can be wasted if not thought through and implemented properly.

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