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Customer relationship management (CRM)
Business Intelligence



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Applications and Processes Must Span Across Departments

By Mark Powers, Center for Computer Resources

Recently, I met with the vice president of operations for a midsize commercial fulfillment and distribution company in Detroit. During our meeting, I quickly learned that each customer touch-point in marketing and sales was a manual process and the company was spending incredible amounts of time managing, tracking and monitoring its customer activities.

It was a clear example of a business in need of both embracing CRM and creating an alliance between marketing and sales. In my role as a CRM strategic advisor, I have seen how such an alignment can form a significant competitive advantage over your competitors. Truly loyal customers form a market share base that is unquestionable to the competition.

Competitive environment

In today's highly competitive environment, productivity gains must be sought at all points across the marketing and sales value sequence for the small, medium, and large sized companies. Efficient collaboration and communications between marketing and sales is critical. Building this requires applications that can seamlessly support business processes as they span across departments throughout the entire organization, delivering the right information to the right people at the right time. What's wrong with this approach?

Marketing doesn't know that the sales department is using a pitch that doesn't touch on key elements of the campaign. The sales team doesn't know where its leads are coming from and misses important links to in the relationship chain. Customer service hasn't been informed of new product and service promotions—or the wave of new calls they will bring. Each time a customer interacts with the company, that department has to provide the same information over and over again, duplicating effort and wasting time.

This is an example of how most companies are structured and why I spend a great deal of my time meeting with businesses to help solve these types of business problems. By taking the time to understand their business process and developing a strategy I'm able to help them drive productivity, profitability and growth.

Strategy and solution

A key component for marketing in the Detroit fulfillment company was the ability to track where leads came from and to monitor if the sales department was using the right messaging for a new lead or customer retention.

On the other side, sales didn't have an efficient way to stay in front of the customers and to know what message marketing was sending out to these customers. This was mostly because of the lack of cross-functional planning and the lack of formal CRM business strategy. After I met with the vice president of operations, I met with the company president to discuss how Center for Computer Resources would be able to help create a true CRM alliance between marketing and sales.

By meeting with the president, I was able to demonstrate how we would be able to shift the business from a disjointed organization to a fully aligned and connected workplace. The president is the strategic thinker, the person who is responsible for it all and, for the most part, the board of directors' fall person if something goes wrong with the revenue. We earned them as a client and then the fun began.

We started the project by taking a thorough examination of how the marketing and sales departments' business processes evolved around the customers. By implementing a formal CRM business strategy, marketing and sales were able to communicate and see every touch-point made on a customer account.

Marketing was able to track where leads were coming from and monitor what messaging the sales department was using to communicate to its customers. In addition, marketing can now source its leads, which helps the marketers make smarter decisions as to where to invest marketing dollars to gain the most ROI.

Sales can now manage, track and monitor all of its activity, which helps the sales team stay in front of the customers and ahead of the competition. Also, having the ability to know what messaging marketing is



sending out to customers has improved the communication process between the two departments.

As I predicted to the president, having a formal CRM process in place differentiated the organization from its competitors, and since the new CRM solution has been implemented, the company has seen an increase in customer service and revenue.

Mark Powers a well respected CRM strategic advisor of Center for Computer Resources. With more than 15 years of marketing and sales experience, he understands what it takes to learn about the types of business problems that his customers have so that he is able to integrate both direct and indirect interactions of a customer along the entire lifecycle, from prospecting to acquisition to service to retention. At the same time, he delivers insights through customer analytics. Powers lives in Michigan, where he covers CRM, helps businesses become truly connected workplaces and searches for the perfect wine. Email Powers at markp@ccr1.com.



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Specialists at Altimum IMS work closely with your key personnel to build customer loyalty and optimize your company's business processes and growth.

Consultation

Evaluation of your needs and identification of your goals. Analysis of your unique service offer and business processes.

- Sales
- Marketing
- Customer Service
- Business Intelligence

Integration

Selection and customization of a CRM solution to meet your corporate goals.

Training/Coaching

Customized training of your personnel to link technology and processes.

- CRM application functions
- Business processes
- Corporate culture

Altimum IMS provides solutions which strengthen the relationship between your company and your customers.

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