GUIDE TO

Successfully Implementing a CRM

salesnexus

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Introduction

Some studies say that the average Return on Investment of CRM solutions is at least $5 per every $1 invested in the CRM system. Studies also show that 50% of CRM implementations fail to reach management expectations.

Obviously, it's all in the planning and execution. The following are the key areas to consider and plan for when planning to select and implement a CRM system:

1) **Leadership and Accountability**—the results you get out of a CRM solution will only be as good as the information that goes into the CRM. Management must identify the minimum requirements for each involved team member for entry of customer data into the CRM and management must be willing to make those minimum requirements a job requirements. In other words, "This is what we expect you to enter or keep up to date in the CRM system and if you can't do that, your job is in jeopardy."

2) **What's in it for the user?**—Management must be able to clearly communicate to the users of the CRM system how they will benefit in their own daily lives from use of the CRM solution and following the requirements defined. These benefits must be meaningful and significant to each different type or role a user of the CRM may have.

3) **Data is virtually useless if it's not consistent**—you won't be able to rely of the CRM system to extract analytics about your business and processes or for up to date and comprehensive lists for marketing purposes if the data you use as criteria for this analysis is not consistent. In other words, if you say to your team, "You can put your sales opportunities in the system here.", they'll use it inconsistently and you won't be able to run meaningful sales pipeline or forecast reports. If that type of reporting is important to you, then you must say "Every time you engage with a customer and their situation meets these specific criteria, then you are required to create a sales opportunity in the CRM system." An example of this would be—When we have identified the decision maker and their current budget and their "pain" or reason for switching to our solution, then we always enter a sales opportunity.

4) **Analytics and Reporting Out is Limited by Data In**—if you choose to keep the data input requirements for the users at a minimum, this will limit the depth and

breadth of the reports and analytics you can extract from the system. The more comprehensive and varied the reports and analytics you require from the system, the more data you'll need to require the users to input and keep up to date.

How To Sell It To Your Sales People

It's always best to begin involving your sales team in the process of selecting and implementing a CRM as early as possible. However, even if you've already selected and purchased your company's CRM solution, there is still plenty of time to ensure the sales team will benefit from the solution and feel involved in the process. And that really is the point isn't it? If your sales team will be the primary users of the system, if it takes up too much of their time, that could harm sales results. They need to see the CRM solution you've chosen as helping them do their jobs more effectively, another tool for them to use.

There are several common areas that are usually ripe with opportunity to streamline things for the sales team –

Leads—when new leads come in, how do you distribute those to the sales team? Could it be faster? Could it include more detailed information? Can you automate the initial response in case your sales rep is out in a meeting? No question that if your CRM system is the place salespeople go to get new leads, they'll be very interested in learning to do that! The fringe benefit is that you'll also be better able to track leads in terms of source, follow up and results.

Documents—in every sales organization, there are certain documents that every salesperson needs access to on a regular basis. This could include current pricing, current inventory lists, product specifications, policy manuals, presentations, brochures, product images, etc. Make your new CRM system the place they go to access this information. How many times has a pricing mix up occurred because the sales person was using an old price list stored on their notebook instead of the new one emailed by your marketing department last week? Make the CRM solution the place new information like this is put first so that the sales team will always be confident that if they logon to the CRM system to access these files, they're guaranteed to have the latest and greatest.

Correspondence—every sales person sends emails, letters, proposals, contracts and agreements to customers regularly. They call this paperwork. However, it's going to be seen by customers so, it's in everyone's best interest that it be well written, professional looking and include the proper messages about your company, products and services. Get the sales team together and ask them what the most frequently emailed or mailed correspondence is. Then get a few samples they've written and create a mail merge template in your CRM system for the entire team to use. This will save them time and allow them to delegate simple follow up tasks to an assistant. In addition, when things change, you can simply change the template and instantly, the entire team will be sending out the proper messages.

Marketing—sales people like leads. Salespeople understand how marketing benefits them. Use your CRM system to generate leads and market to existing leads using email campaigns. In order to get started with this quickly, keep it simple. Create a simple campaign that "nurtures" new leads that the sales people enter into the CRM system or a campaign to stay in touch with existing clients. This gives the salesperson a strong incentive to enter leads into the CRM system and to keep contact records up to date.

Deciding Upon Fields to Create

Fields in the system will be the pivot points for all analytics, reporting and marketing efforts. As above, if it's not required that the users complete a field consistently, then they won't. Also, simple is usually better. Therefore, if you're not going to require use of a field in some circumstances, then it's probably not worth adding.

To identify the key fields, it's usually a good exercise to define the characteristics that makes a lead a qualified prospect for your business. What are the questions you must ask every new lead in order to know if they're likely to buy from you and if so, how much and when?

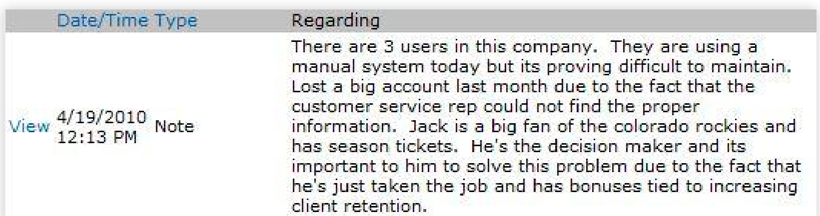
Also, what do you need to know about existing customers in order to maintain and grow those relationships?

You may have several markets or profiles of customers you target. In that case, you'll need to define these fields for each of those target markets.

Remember, it's going to be much more useful to your sales team and your business if data is entered consistently into fields than as anecdotes and stories in notes. It's faster to enter data, quicker to retrieve the information and enables more exact searching and reporting.

This…

rather than this.



	Date/Time	Type	Regarding
View	4/19/2010 12:13 PM	Note	There are 3 users in this company. They are using a manual system today but its proving difficult to maintain. Lost a big account last month due to the fact that the customer service rep could not find the proper information. Jack is a big fan of the colorado rockies and has season tickets. He's the decision maker and its important to him to solve this problem due to the fact that he's just taken the job and has bonuses tied to increasing client retention.

Finally—relax! Keep it simple in the beginning and additional fields can always be added in the future. In the beginning, it's most important to establish some momentum in using the CRM system that you can build on. Often it's difficult to decide upon all the fields, reports, etc. because you're just not sure until you've used the system. A good approach is to focus on the one type of customer or lead or business process where you believe the CRM system could have the most impact for your business and your team. Get the CRM solution working well in that situation and then build on that success.

CRM Field Customization Worksheet

To get you started, below are some ideas for fields to track things that matter in most businesses.

Role in Decision—decision maker, user, influencer, information scout, etc.

Current Solution—list solutions you compete with including the typical status quo and common partial solutions

Make Decision When?—could be just a date or perhaps a drop down of triggering events that would necessitate the purchase

Size (How do you quantify the opportunity size?)—list possible answers

How much have you budgeted?—currency value or list other options

Value—how will the client calculate the ROI on this purchase?—savings?, increased production, other measures? List all the possible answers as specifically as you can

Where did this lead come from?—website, tradeshow, direct email, cold call, referral, etc.

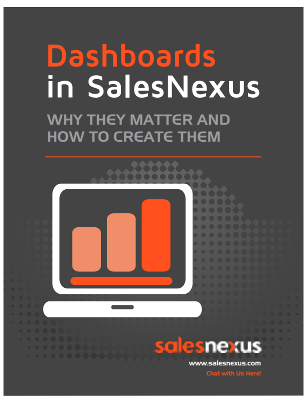
Field Name	Drop Down Items	Other Notes

Reports and Analytics

At SalesNexus, our approach to analytics is different from most CRM vendors. We understand that the way you run your business is unique.

Even two competitors within the same market normally have very different processes that are the essence of their competitive edge.

So, directing you to one size fits all reports would be a disservice. Sure, there are some very generic reports on calls and contacts added built into SalesNexus CRM but, to truly measure what matters in your business, you've got to create reports that use the unique information that you're tracking in your CRM solution.



With SalesNexus CRM, you can create your own reports and dashboards easily for Sales, Activities, Notes/History and Campaigns. **Our Dashboard User Guide explains exactly how to set up your custom dashboards.**

It's one thing to know how many calls each salesperson completed but, it's far more valuable to know how many of those clients were thoroughly qualified as indicated by the information in your custom fields.

If you have a unique report in mind that you're unable to create using the build in Activity, Sales, Campaign and Notes/History dashboard wizards, then we can help you create a custom report that uses your specific business logic to query the database for the correct contacts, then groups, sorts and sub-totals the data just the way you want it.

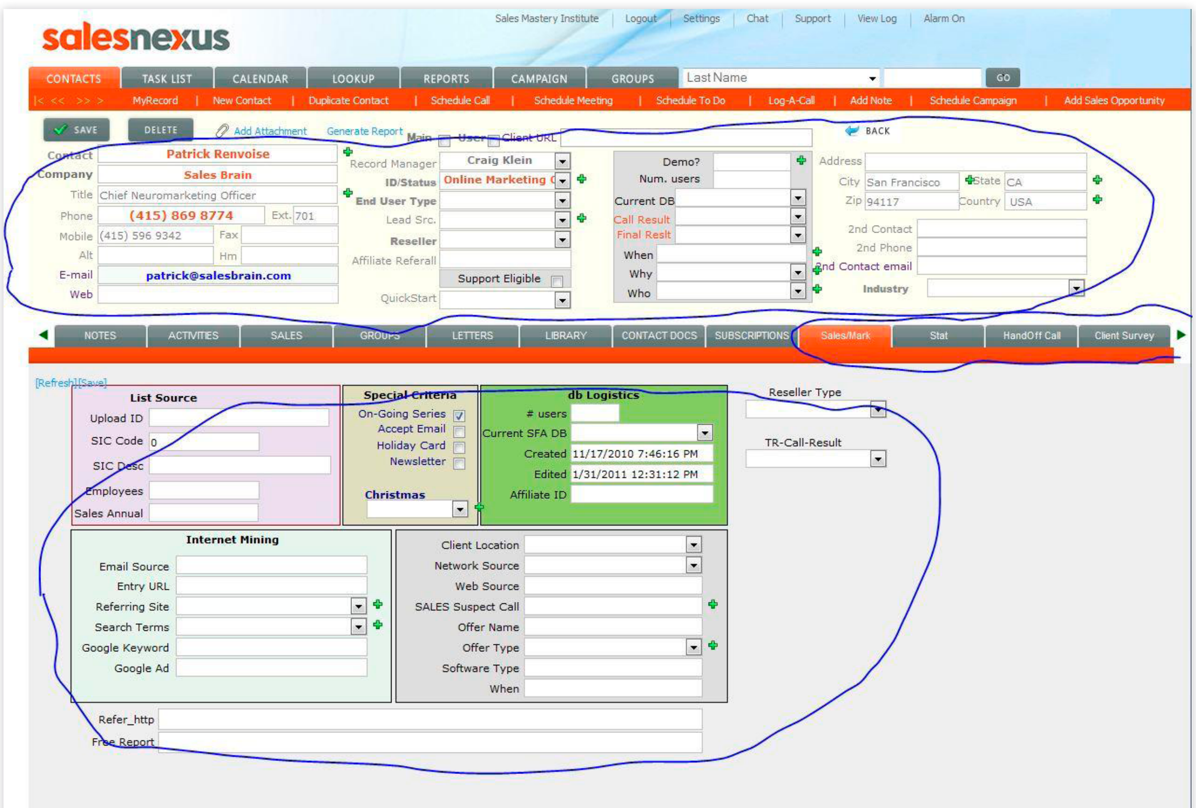
Regardless of how unique or detailed the information you wish to see in a report, it is crucial that you share at least one or two reports with your users regularly. They need to see that the information they're taking the time to input into the CRM is being looked at. They need to hear your thoughts about what they're entering in your new CRM solution. At a minimum, run a call report (cleared activities for last week?), print it out and review it with the team in your regular sales meetings.

Regular reporting will initially help you cement the notion in the minds of the users that complying with the requirements for input of information in the CRM system is crucial and that you're watching. After all, salespeople are competitive. Just seeing their stats next to the rest of the team will motivate them to be more thorough in entering information in the CRM system.

You'll also begin to envision more meaningful analytics as you begin seeing very simple reports. Sometimes it's difficult to put your finger on just the right information to include in your reporting from the CRM solution. Seeing very basic reports from the CRM will cause you to envision what's missing.

Which Parts of SalesNexus CRM Can I Change?

Many new CRM users are unclear just which parts of the CRM solution can be modified to fit their needs. In the screenshot below, any of the areas circled in Blue can be changed by you, to fit your individual needs.



In addition to modifying the fields and layout of the main contact data in the upper half of the screen, you can modify, delete or add your own tabs at the bottom of the screen. Users can only modify the tabs to the right of Subscriptions tab.

Finally, you'll want to customize the fields that appear in your Lookup screen. If you perform Advanced Searches regularly, you'll want to be sure and save them so they can be reused. And as discussed above, you'll want to save any customized reports you create.

All of this will lead to a tool that gives you a custom CRM for your business to grow with. You will have more control and it will take less time to get the results.