



DO YOU NEED A CRM SYSTEM?

5 signs it's time to invest in a CRM system and where to start.

Since our inception in 2009, TrellisPoint has focused exclusively on helping our customers get more out of their technology investment in CRM software. We believe that all successful technology deployments consider both short-term and long-term business goals and team members on the front lines who are managing day-to-day activities. People, process, and technology all must align to achieve optimal results.

The Challenge

Every business faces the task of cultivating healthy relationships with their customers. Whether you're a fledgling startup or a Fortune 500 company, maintaining these relationships is the foundation of success. The better you manage your customer data, communication with them, and serving their needs, the more your business will grow. However, keeping track of all this can be a daunting challenge without a clear process and a capable system in place to manage it.

This is where a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system comes into play.

In the past, a CRM system looked something like a Rolodex filled with names, addresses, and phone numbers of customers or leads. But let's be honest – it's hard to keep track of everything in a Rolodex as it grows. In fact, it's hard to keep track of all that information even in spreadsheets and emails.

Fortunately, today's CRM technology has made such methods obsolete.

Easy to access, leverage, and automate in order to boost sales and customer retention, the demand for CRM technology continues to grow – expected to reach \$48.4 billion by 2020, according to Global Industry Analysts Inc.

Yet many businesses – particularly small businesses – remain unaware of the existence of CRM systems, much less their capabilities. While a whopping 91 percent of businesses with over 11 employees now use a CRM system, studies show that only 50 percent of businesses with 10 employees are leveraging this critical technology.



If you're among the number of those businesses still without a CRM solution, your ability to manage customer relationships is likely suffering – and you're far behind the competition. This translates to lost leads, and ultimately, lost revenue.



What is a CRM?

In simple terms, a CRM system is a database that stores and manages any information you can imagine about your prospects and customers – from contact information to meeting notes – all in one place. But it's more than just a contact management system. By connecting customer data from a variety of sources, a CRM system enables you to analyze data strategically to give you a clear picture of who your customers and potential customers are, and what they need or want in any given stage of your selling cycle. Equipped with this knowledge, you're better positioned to build and maintain relationships and market your products and services.

In addition to giving you critical insight in an easy-to-navigate archive, a CRM system helps you automate sales, marketing and customer service processes and take action on that data. By streamlining tasks that used to be manual and time-consuming, your staff can be more productive and handle higher volume – while mitigating human error and lowering operational expense.

- **SALESPEOPLE CAN SPEND LESS TIME PRODUCING REPORTS AND MORE TIME SELLING.**
- **MANAGEMENT CAN EASILY MONITOR SALES ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE, AS WELL AS FORECAST AHEAD TO INFORM DECISION MAKING.**
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE CAN BE DONE PROACTIVELY RATHER THAN REACTING TO GROWING CASE FLOWS.**
- **MARKETING CAN CREATE TARGETED AND CALCULATED CAMPAIGNS BASED ON RELIABLE ALGORITHMS RATHER THAN A HUNCH.**

Bottom line?

A CRM system ensures your staff is working more efficiently and accurately across the organization – and leveraging client and prospect data to make more sales.



5 Signs you Need a CRM

1 | You're managing more relationships

When a business struggles with organization, it struggles with everything. Thus, if your company is managing a growing database of contacts – whether via email, spreadsheet, or another tool – it's time to consider a CRM system to centralize this data. It's no surprise that so many businesses have organizational problems because, quite simply, there's so much to organize. Alongside the need for tracking customer-specific data is all of the information on related organizations, competitors, vendors, partners, affiliates, equipment, projects, policies, reports, audits, etc. With a CRM system in place, you'll not only be able to track and enhance this data by adding to it over time, but decrease the time it takes to search for and analyze the information. You'll also ensure contacts aren't lost or overlooked throughout your selling cycle, keeping client relationships strong.

2 | Your staff is growing but collaboration is not

Beyond accumulating raw data on your leads and customers, the way each of those relationships is treated and managed depends on the effectiveness of your employees. When there is a breakdown in accountability and/or collaboration amongst staff members, the customer ultimately feels the effects.

Often, employees or departments use different tools and information ends up dispersed across multiple systems, spreadsheets, or databases, making collaboration across the company inefficient or even impossible. This is avoidable through the way that a CRM system can enable employees to work together and create reports in real time.

In addition to promoting smoother internal operations across departments, CRM systems enable better sales management, too. From a manager's perspective, you'll benefit from accurate sales forecasts that guide long-term strategy, as well as reports that provide essential visibility into the day to-day activity of your sales team for ongoing accountability. Meanwhile, automated reminders will keep your sales representatives on top of appointments, leads and tasks with clients and prospects.

3 | You're struggling with customer retention

If you offer post-sale support, detailed account visibility is necessary to maintaining a loyal – and lucrative – customer base. After all, at the most fundamental level, CRM is built around the customer, making the state of customer satisfaction and retention a crucial metric.

Ask yourself: Do your customers keep coming back? How long do they stay with your business? Have you performed surveys that reveal how happy they are with your service? Do you have a way to monitor and track service cases and service contracts? If the answers to any of those types of questions are less than optimal, a CRM system can help get you back on track.



A robust CRM system tracks account histories, service and billing issues, marketing campaign analytics, and more. With that 360-degree view of a customer's relationship with your organization, your staff can proactively address at-risk accounts to maintain customer satisfaction and identify potential new business opportunities to meet evolving demands.

4 | You're trying to grow

Your company may be shrinking, scaling up, or sitting at a plateau. Each of these situations comes with challenges, and a CRM system provides a solution in every case. Have sales fallen off or hit a ceiling that you can't get past? More than likely, the way you manage your customers has something to do with this. Using a CRM system can help you reign in your losses and begin to cultivate relationships with prospects and customers that reinvigorate

your sales. Or maybe instead, your business is growing rapidly. This can present the massive hurdle of managing more information than your business was able to handle when you first started. Implementing a CRM system that scales with you removes the danger of falling behind and helps you stay on top of the growth. Common challenges that might be stifling your ability to encourage or stay on top of business growth include:

- **TIME CONSUMING, MANUAL METHODS OF CREATING QUOTES AND ORDERS**
- **UNTRACEABLE SALES ACTIVITIES SUCH AS PHONE CALLS, APPOINTMENTS, TASKS AND EMAILS**
- **LACK OF CUSTOMER SEGMENTATION AND TARGETING**
- **INADEQUATE TRACKING AND MANAGEMENT OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS**
- **DEFICIENT REPORTING CAPABILITIES NEEDED TO ANALYZE CUSTOMERS, SALES, AND**
- **SERVICE ISSUES THAT INFORM MANAGERS' BUSINESS STRATEGIES**

Each can be addressed in a way that makes sense for your business with the right-fit CRM solution.

5| Your investing in other technologies

As your company grows, so will your technology portfolio. Perhaps you've invested in a more advanced ERP system to improve billing or are generating leads through marketing automation platforms like HubSpot or MailChimp.

But if these different systems aren't talking together, you're missing the bigger picture. Most CRM systems have advanced integration capabilities to talk with just about any software solution you use within your workflow, increasing the efficiency and accuracy of your data. This improves communication both internally and with your customer base.

Additionally, systems that don't talk together place significant burden on your staff to serve as middle men. CRM solution automation and integration features can streamline these low-level tasks between systems, such as duplicate data entry, freeing up staff to focus on high-priority work.

ROI Worth the Investment

Regardless of your unique growth challenges, efficiency and productivity are essential to success – even for small teams – and a CRM system provides it. With the right scalable solution customized to your defined processes, your business can not only better manage its existing workload, but ensure your team is equipped to foster and manage future growth. But while the benefits described certainly sound worth the investment, do the numbers back it up?

According to research by Nucleus Research, they do. Based on their 2014 study on the return on investment (ROI) of the average CRM platform, businesses earned back approximately \$8.71 USD for every dollar spent on adoption and implementation – including the cost of the software, installation and rollout, and employee training.

While the actual ROI on a CRM system investment will vary by company, doing your due diligence to choose the best-fit solution and properly roll it out to your company will ensure you can count yourselves among the many businesses who see a high return on their investment.

Take the First Step

If you're among the businesses who have yet to adopt a CRM system, the above benefits may have you convinced – yet unsure where to start to find that best-fit. But the first step is easy: Consult a CRM system implementation expert.

A CRM system implementation partner can help you define your existing business processes and needs – and take you through the subsequent steps to choose and implement the right solution for your business. When evaluating potential partners, look for a one-stop shop who can see you through the entire process from start to finish, including:

- Discovery
- Design
- Implementation
- Customization
- Integration
- Training

With many of your competitors already leveraging CRM, now is the time to catch up – or risk falling irreparably behind.

Schedule a free consultation today!

Contact us for a FREE personalized CRM Assessment to see how Microsoft Dynamics 365 can benefit your organization.

Visit www.trellispoint.com for more information