

Podcast Script: CRM 101

Welcome to this 60 second Sugar snippet. My name is Susie Williams. Today we're going back to the basics... answering the question "what is CRM." For those of you who are new to this topic, you will get a brief overview of what it is, what it does, and how it can help you make your business more successful.

Customer Relationship Management, or "CRM" for short, is a fancy name for a set of processes and software that help you interact with your customers. Elements of CRM are used by your Marketing, Sales, and Support departments. CRM allows you to see one consolidated historical view of your customers so you can effectively market to, sell to, and support your customer.

So how can you tap into the power of CRM software? First of all, take an assessment of what your processes and workflows are today. How do you communicate with your customers? How do you keep track of orders? Is there a handoff of customer information from marketing leads to sales opportunities to customer support calls? The last thing you want to do is to automate processes that aren't working in the first place. Take a moment to really think how your business works, and look for places where a CRM tool can add value.

For instance, CRM can help you consolidate redundant information. Having one repository for the whole company allows you to collaborate with your colleagues; you'll get the whole picture of your customer, not just the view from any one department. An example: a customer support rep should be able to see what products have been purchased by the customer so the rep can provide relevant product information when the customer calls in with an issue. The sales rep should know if the customer is having issues with the product so he's not blindsided by an irate phone call. Marketing should gauge campaign effectiveness by tracking which customers respond to which advertisements. Knowledge is power, and shared knowledge is even more potent!

This unified view of the customer also means that management can run reports across the whole business to get a bigger picture of how the company is doing. Reports are a key element of CRM. They provide the insight management needs to make smart business decisions.

CRM also encompasses the idea of automation. A CRM tool is effective for automating those tasks that you repeat on a regular basis. Do you send out emails to prospects telling them about your new product? Do you send a monthly newsletter to your customers? How about a reminder phone call you make to each customer whose contract renewal date is coming up next month? CRM can help you do these tasks, and can remind you to make that call. CRM can also automate the handoff between departments, so when that deal closes and the contract comes in, a welcome call is set up between the customer account manager and the new customer. When something is automated, there's less of a chance it will fall through the cracks and be forgotten. Your customers will be happier and you'll have a stronger business in the end.

And that's your 60 second Sugar snippet. Goodbye!