DON'T DUMP YOUR CRM

The Power of Understanding Relationships through Automation

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DON'T DUMP YOUR CRM.

Instead, Make Your Sales Professionals Fall in Love with It

Find Out How from CRM Experts

It happens all the time -- sales and business development departments find their CRM too difficult or too time consuming to use, which prompts a decision to switch CRM systems. Once the change is made, management still finds low adoption and reluctance from their teams. Why is this? It's because the CRM itself isn't the problem. It's the processes and procedures surrounding how it's used that can make it seem bulky, time consuming and confusing. When the CRM isn't used, or isn't used properly, it's even more difficult to maintain the data accuracy needed for meaningful insights.

In order for your Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) to give you the highest return on your investment, your sales and business development teams need to love it. CRM use needs to be effortless. They don't spend hours entering information into it. They instantly access information to build better relationships with prospects and clients. They can close more sales, and make more money for both the company and themselves.

Unfortunately, the relationship between salespeople and their CRM is more love-hate than love, according to a survey we just conducted that includes responses from 185 sales professionals.

A whopping 70% are spending at least four hours a week entering data into their CRM and 60% are spending another four hours a week deciphering that data. Extrapolate that over a year, and the hours become monumental – more than a month's time consumed by CRM data-entry and data-analysis activities.

It would seem that sales professionals are giving to their CRM without getting enough back.

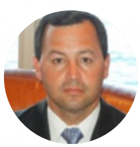
So we turned to the CRM experts for their best advice to shift the dynamics of this relationship and help your CRM give so much to sales professionals that they can't help but fall in love with it and, in the process, use it drive the highest return on investment.

Our Panel Of Experts

Brent Leary
Partner
CRM Essentials

Jody Glidden
CEO and CTO
Introhive

Chris Hergesell
Executive Director - Customer Operations Performance Improvement
Ernst & Young



Randy Batson
Executive Director
Ernst & Young

Michael Krigsman
Industry Analyst and Host
CXOTALK

Adam Draper
Director of Sales
Introhive

Kate Leggett
Vice President and Principal Analyst
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Paul Greenberg
Founder, Managing Principal
The 56 Group, LLC

Danny Estrada
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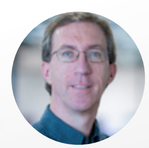
E Squared Strategy and Management Consulting



Ray Beste
Partner
Sikich

STEP 1: MAKE CRM USE EASIER FOR SALES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Most salespeople use CRM to manage their client relationships, but it's a challenge for 77% of them. Why are we making sales professionals work for information they should have at their fingertips?

The lucky 23% who say their CRM is easy to use have a definite competitive advantage with easy access to information that builds client relationships.

60% of Sales Professionals Use CRM Daily.

Only 23% say their CRM is very easy to use when looking for insights.

Kate Leggett

Vice President and Principal Analyst, Forrester

ENSURE YOUR CRM SUPPORTS MODERN, LOW FRICTION USER EXPERIENCE

Sellers want to engage with buyers, not waste their time struggling with their toolsets. They want their CRM to be effortless to use and to effectively support them in engaging with their buyers. They also want it to serve up the right data, the right guidance, the right insight at the right time to be able to connect with their buyers on an emotional level - to build trust, empathy and ultimately loyalty.

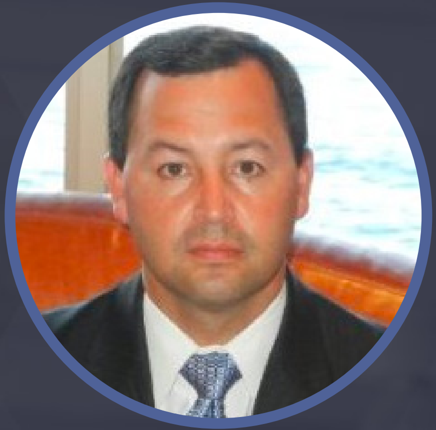
This means that CRM for sales teams must:

- Support modern, low-friction user experiences – even voice-driven ones.
- Support all forms of mobile devices.
- Provide sales teams with the right insights and information about the buyer.
- Guide the seller to the optimal outcome.

DESIGN CRM WITH SALES PROFESSIONALS IN MIND (DON'T FORGET ABOUT MOBILE)

Look at your CRM through the lens of the salesperson. Consider how they're going to conduct day-to-day business and what it will take for them to be successful.

Consider how salespeople operate: They wake up in the morning and use their cell phone to access email. That's how they're interacting with customers. CRM forces them to log into another system and look at screens that they don't understand or don't matter to them. We need to design CRMs with sales professionals in mind, instead of looking at it as a purely technical implementation.



Randy Batson

Executive Director,
Ernst & Young

Jody Glidden

CEO and CTO,
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THE BEST CRM IS ONE YOU RARELY HAVE TO TOUCH

CRMs are all very similar. They're simple databases for data entry and retrieval of the contacts within them. They also chronical the deals and the interactions that you have with clients to move those deals along. Since they're all so similar, switching CRMs can only accomplish so much in making a CRM easy for the sales team.

The best CRM is one that you rarely have to touch. That's why we have made it our mission for the last 5 years to automate data entry into CRM – to help increase adoption without the need to switch from system to system to find the right fit.

KEEP IT SIMPLE: ONLY ASK FOR INFORMATION YOU NEED FOR THE MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESS DECISIONS

Make sure you're only asking for information that helps you make the most important business decisions.

Anytime people ask for reporting, which is really asking for more data, clarify who is consuming the data, when and where they're consuming it, and what business decisions are being made from it. One of the major tenets of CRM is simplicity. CRM in today's world should be about presentation of information in context of how I'm doing my job, not so much to acquire data. What I like to do is have managers and executives do the $100 test where they strategically spend that $100 based on the value of a data point. One data point could be worth all of the money and they quickly discover that they can't collect everything they want. If you're not making business decisions on the information you're collecting, why are you putting people through the paces of entering it? Because the more and more data you collect, the less CRM adoption you're going to get. It's just reality.

Danny Estrada

Founder, E Squared Strategy and Management

STEP 2: FREE UP SALES & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TO FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

They're Sales and Business Development Professionals, Not Data-Entry Clerks or Data Analysts

Stop forcing your sales professionals to be data-entry clerks and data analysts. Let them spend their time doing what they do best – building relationships, meeting with clients and closing deals. They'll be happier, and so will your bottom line.

7 out of 10 respondents spend at least 10% of their work week inputting info into their CRM.

More than 6 in 10 spend at least 10% of their work week looking for insights.

45% say most important task is face-to-face relationship building.

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Chris Hergesell

Executive Director - Customer Operations Performance Improvement, Ernst & Young

STOP WASTING TIME ON DATA ENTRY: PRIORITIZE AND SEPARATE WHAT IS NEEDED IN YOUR CRM

Align the CRM around each stage of the sales process. Distill which information you absolutely must have to move an opportunity from one stage to the next: What is the opportunity, the products involved, the influencers and the decision makers? Include nothing else. One business we worked with required 150 fields to be filled out in the CRM system to create a single opportunity. Consequently, salespeople didn't put an opportunity in until it was basically sold, so the company didn't have insight into their pipeline and the salespeople hated the CRM.

Prioritize and separate the wheat from chaff. Determine what is needed when and what is not needed in your CRM, and what can be obtained elsewhere.

SURFACE INSIGHTS TO MAKE IT EASIER TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Give them the ability to speak with relevance and context to customers and prospects - it is the best way to actually cut through all the noise, get their attention and keep their attention long enough to create a relationship. There is so much information and content flying at us from any angle. Like anyone, customers and prospects are only going to focus on what's relevant to them at any point in time.

Using a system that brings to your attention and surfaces an insight that is relevant to your customer today can help salespeople build a strong customer relationship. That's why these systems are so important – you can't do it on your gut anymore, you need a system to help find a solution to your customer's problem. Just because you need to sell something, doesn't mean they'll buy. But if you can get that insight telling you what the client or prospect is faced with today, and craft an interaction opportunity around that, you'll see more success.

Brent Leary

Partner, CRM Essentials

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Paul Greenberg

Founder, Managing Principal, The 56 Group, LLC

USE SALES OPTIMIZATION TOOLS TO ADD VALUE AND CLOSE THE SALES

There are a lot of value-adds in SFA and CRM apps right now – you can call them sales optimization, enablement or acceleration – these tools add value to a salesperson's ability to close a sale.

Relationship identification and building is extremely valuable to a salesperson. It gives them better insight into how to close a deal. If they have a tool that maps out relationships and gives insights into how to approach something or someone to get a deal closed, then the data entry becomes interesting because they need to put the data in to use the enablement, acceleration or optimization tool. Humans provide insight, but the right tools and technology provide the data that gives salespeople the differentiators needed to close deals.

ENABLE THE SALES TEAM VIA TECHNOLOGY

You have to do it in such a way that it doesn't burden the salesperson. We pay our salespeople to spend time in field talking to clients, presenting, crafting the perfect pitch, etc. At the end of the day that's what they should be doing. The challenge is that CRM has become the technology hub of many salespeople's tool kits and to make it work we need strong data. We all know that we can't rely on salespeople to come back to the office after a busy day of meetings and add to the system every new contact, note, and demo.

So the question becomes: "How do we enable our salespeople without wasting their time?" The answer: Automation and ensuring that the technology our salespeople use fits within their current workflow, process, or toolkits. If you make it easy for them and the data is useful, they will adopt it.

Adam Draper

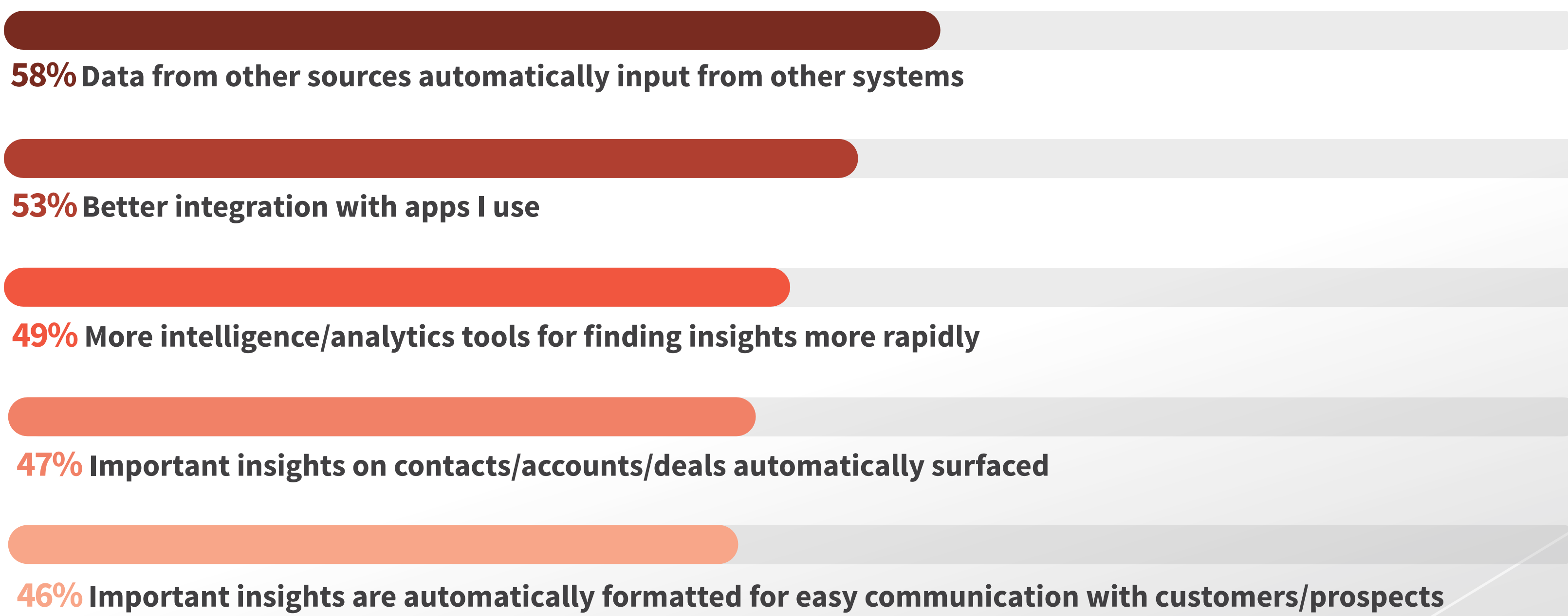
Director of Sales, Introhive

STEP 3: MAKE CRM DATA REALLY HELPFUL FOR SALES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAMS

They Want CRM to Help Them Close Deals

Salespeople are single-minded and they should be. They want to close more deals and they want their CRM to make it easier for them to do so. They want it to automatically give them the information and insights they need to move relationships forward, delivered to them in a way that's easy to access and understand.

What Makes CRM more helpful:



USE CRM TO ENRICH CLIENT AND PROSPECT DATA

Ray Beste

Partner, Sikich

CRMs should be a real-time consolidator of information, so you don't have to go online and research 20 sources and social media sites to find out what's happening with a prospect or client.

CRM should automatically enrich client and prospect data so you have a bigger vision of who you're trying to sell to. It just takes too much time to do that research yourself. Yet, it's critical information to have because relationship selling is what it's all about. Having this information embedded in your CRM is the differentiator that will help sales people do their jobs better.

PROVIDE DATA IN “NORMAL” LANGUAGE

First, make the SFA look better and easier to navigate by making the user experience enjoyable and consistent across devices and channels. Salespeople want to feel good when they use the system and they need to be able to use it in a frictionless way. The other thing I would suggest is the use of sales optimization tools that can help the salesperson with closing deals. For example, AI and analytics tools are now available that provide the salesperson with what is called “best next action.” The algorithms go to work and assess the current opportunity, similar opportunities from the past, what succeeded and what failed and combined with the sales intelligence about the companies, people, products and markets that the opportunity covers, comes up with what would be the next thing that the salesperson has to do to optimize his or her advantage in closing the deal. This is best done with the suggestion(s) being provided in “normal” language rather than trying to interpret data to understand what to do. That way, the sales rep can decide on what they want to do with the best next action suggestion - because they could actually understand what it was. Technology and systems that can do that right give salespeople a huge advantage.

Paul Greenberg

Founder, Managing Principal,
The 56 Group, LLC

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Brent Leary

Partner, CRM Essentials

EASILY INTEGRATE DATA ACROSS CHANNELS AND ACROSS CONVERSATIONS

Make it as easy as possible for salespeople to work in a few, critically important systems, and not have to go through a bunch of them to get things done, like integration with email and messaging apps. That way, you're able to really help them manage the interaction wherever they take place. Then have that information available for those opportunities to generate insights.

From a sales perspective, managing interactions with customers or prospects becomes more challenging every day. There are more channels and more devices. There's even data in the information coming from device to device interaction that could be helpful. Being able to pull in data from wherever the conversation is taking place, and bringing that back to the salesperson in one or two systems that they can depend on, will help them get the information and insights they need. Do this instead of constantly adding new channels - every time you add another channel or app, they'll be spending that much more time trying to figure things out and application hop instead of focusing on what matters – building the customer relationship.

STEP 4: USE RELATIONSHIP INSIGHTS TO MEET SALES OBJECTIVES

Even though CRM is ponderous to use for 77% of the respondents, nearly half consider it very helpful in meeting their revenue goals and objectives. That's good news, considering that's why we invest in CRM. Salespeople value CRM because it provides relationship insights they can't get anywhere else. However, if you want to ensure that your sale team wholeheartedly agrees that CRM helps them achieve their goals, you must automate it with relationship insights delivered to them precisely when and where they need it, without data entry or data analysis, even without logging into the CRM system.

43% of respondents say CRM is very helpful in meeting goals/objectives

USE DATA AS THE STARTING POINT FOR LASTING RELATIONSHIPS

People do business with people they know, like, and trust. Given the intense competition we all face, trust is a critical differentiator. Smart salespeople use relationship data to help understand their buyers' personal goals and business objectives. There is no substitute for a relationship established in a trusted partnership with a customer. However, data is only the starting point. Genuine relationships are based on helping the other person meet their goals; it's genuine concern for the customer rather than little tricks to help close a sale.

Michael Krigsman

Industry Analyst and Host, CXOTALK

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Jody Glidden

CEO and CTO,
Introhive

MAKE IT EASY TO FIND RELATIONSHIP INSIGHTS WITH AUTOMATION

Relationship insights can help you find the right person to help you at the right time. This means shortening many parts of the sales cycle such as prospecting, negotiating, and more. You can find points of leverage and use them to help grease the wheels. But relationship insights are of little use if you're making people log into a system and click through a bunch of screens to retrieve them. This is why industry expert Brent Leary advocates for relationship intelligence automation and we agree very strongly.

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TAP INTO WARM RELATIONSHIPS TO MAKE THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS

Buyers want to have the right conversation at the right time – to answer their questions – to explain their situation – to help get information about how to solve the problem that they are experiencing.

To do this well, a seller must understand who the buyer is, what their sphere of influence is, what their relationships within and outside of an organization are. They also want communications to build on one another – so that the same information isn't rediscovered over and over again.

These relationships, connections and conversations are a company's most valuable assets, but they are hard to surface and harder to monetize. For example, in B2B sales, warm introductions have five times the likelihood of achieving engagement with buyers when compared to cold calls. Tap into these relationships, and identify the right people within their organization's network who have existing relationships with a client or prospect who they can leverage to provide a warm introduction to a prospect. That's a lot more successful of a strategy than cold calling. Warm introductions help the seller quickly get to the right individual that they need to connect with inside of an organization.

There's a new category of intelligence solutions - relationship intelligence solutions - that companies are using to give them insights into these connections. These solutions complement and extend traditional CRM solutions. They provide sales teams with relevant real-time connection strengths about communication activity between them and customers.

Kate Leggett

Vice President and Principal Analyst, Forrester

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Danny Estrada

Founder, E Squared Strategy and Management

USE DATA TO KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER AND ACT ON THE INFORMATION

According to the latest statistics, when CRM is done correctly:

- Sales reps are three times more likely to hit their numbers
- Customer retention increases by 27%
- Customer spend goes up 20 to 40%.

Why are these things true? Consider your experience as a customer of a wireless communication company. If you call customer service about an issue, and they send you to a store to resolve it, two things are going to happen: You're either going to be really impressed or you're going to be ready to drop your carrier. You'll be impressed if you walk in and the customer service professional already knows your issue and you don't have to explain yourself again. However, you'll be ready to move on to someone else if they don't have any earthly idea why you're there.

Customers know you are collecting their data and expect you to act on it. CRM is a consortium of marketing, sales and service in one engine. Marketing provides the promise of what we will do for you if you entrust us with your money, sales takes it from a general to a specific promise, customer service is there to make sure that promise is fulfilled.

LEVERAGE DATA WITHOUT BIAS

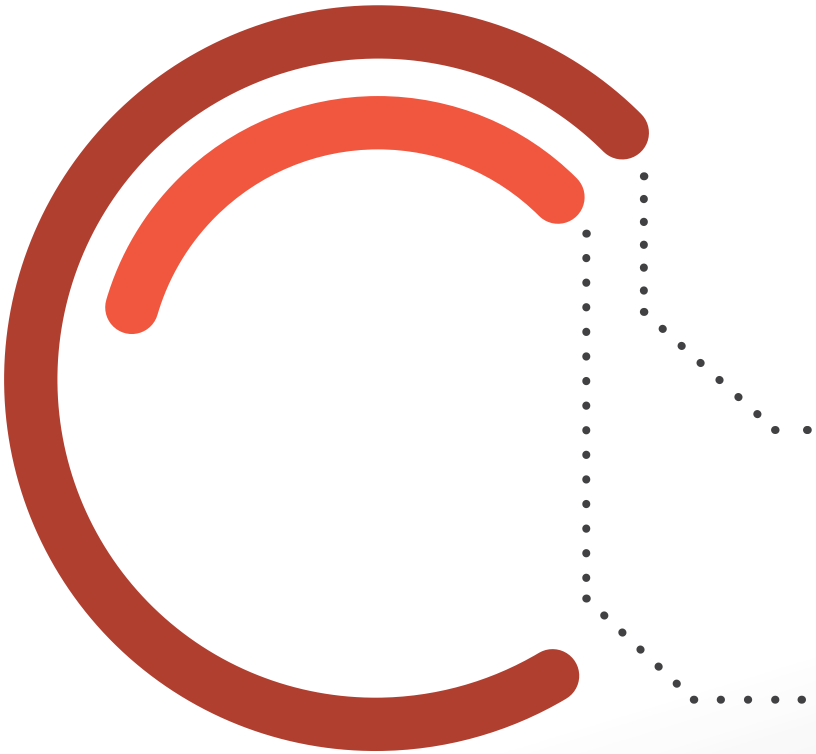
It's twofold – timeliness of information and a lack of bias that leads to unexpected insights. In terms of timeliness, an insight could surface about something that's really important to the client today which would help your salespeople start a conversation, but 3 days later it might not. If you never got the insight, that's a missed opportunity. But, if you did get the insight but you got it at a time that the shelf life passed, then your opportunity to interact is not as good, either. It's not just about getting the insight but getting the right insight at the right time.

The second benefit of automated relationship insights is that machines don't have the biases that we have. We look at data based on our own biases, which could lead us down the wrong path. Just because we think an insight or opportunity is great doesn't mean it's actually great – we can get an insight based on that bias, so it might be wrong. With even more ways to communicate, more and more data gets created. And we have less and less time to connect with customers. We need systems that can handle millions of new daily records and can find patterns in a split second - and can find things people won't find due to their own biases.

Brent Leary

Partner, CRM Essentials

THE MORE SALES PROFESSIONALS USE CRM, THE MORE THEY LOVE IT



Sales professionals who spend at least 10% of their time looking for insights in CRM are more than twice as likely to say it's very helpful in meeting their goals. That's because they've made the effort to unearth the information that builds better relationships and revenues. They see the value their CRM provides, no matter how unwieldy their CRM may be.

The reason other sales professionals haven't fallen in love with CRM is simply because they just don't want to work that hard to capture and use the data it contains.

71% of sales professionals who spend 10% of their time looking for insights on CRM say it's very helpful in meeting their goals.

Only 33% of sales professionals who don't spend time looking for insights on their CRM say it's helpful in meeting their goals.

MAKE CRM EASY TO USE WITH AUTOMATION

There is one solution: Make CRM effortless by installing CRM automation with your existing CRM system. It resolves all the issues that turn sales and BD professionals off by:

- Providing an accurate, crystal-clear, 360-degree, real-time view of the customer by aggregating information from internal and external sources, without any data entry whatsoever.
- Delivering these critical customer insights in Outlook or the platform your sales and BD professionals use most. They don’t have to enter the CRM system at all.
- Compiling data so they can instantly understand and use it without having to log into a CRM and page through screen after screen.
- Automatically integrating client information into reports and dashboards so it’s fast and easy to identify at-risk clients and respond appropriately.

So don’t dump your CRM. Automate it instead. Be ready to fall in love with the results – and revenues – that it produces.

WANT TO SEE HOW CRM AUTOMATION REALLY WORKS?

Schedule Your Personalized Demo