Your Complete CRM Handbook

Everything you need to know to get started with CRM



salesforce

Introduction

CRM is much more than a buzzy acronym that's been tossed around the business and sales world for the past decade or so.

C-R-M stands for "Customer Relationship Management."

With a CRM application, there's no secret formula. It simply manages most of your critical customer information so that you can see it all in one place. Without leaving the app, you can view contact info, follow up via email or social media, manage tasks, and track your performance, among other benefits. Implementing the right CRM can increase sales efficiency. You can close more deals, boost sales, and improve forecast accuracy.

Is it time to invest in a CRM?

The contents of this ebook will help you determine that. Over the next four chapters, we will examine the following topics:

- Signs your business needs a CRM
- How CRM can improve your sales and productivity
- Building your CRM strategy
- How to maximize your ROI

First up, the 7 signs your business needs a CRM



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CHAPTER 1

Signs You Really Need a CRM

Businesses typically begin with a basic relationship of seller-to-customer – simple. In such an early stage, it might be fine to just maintain an Excel spreadsheet or jot down notes about customers and incoming orders. But as your business grows, this sort of record-keeping simply can't do what you need anymore. Here are some warning signs it's time to trade in those old ways and start managing your customer relationships more effectively:



1. There's no single source for information.

Storing your customer and order info in more than one location, such as a spreadsheet or notes stuck to your computer, puts your sales team at a disadvantage. They lack a single view of every customer's contact info, orders, and interactions.





2. There's little or no visibility

Not only do you lack visibility into how your customers are connecting with employees, you also lack insight into what your salespeople are doing. This makes it difficult to help them be successful – and keep them accountable.



3. Reports are hard to share

Generating reports and analytics of your sales team's monthly progress against their quota would be ideal. But creating reports manually is cumbersome, often resulting in no tracking at all.



4. You don't have a mobile solution

Your sales reps are out in the field, meeting prospects and discovering valuable info. But all this new data gets stored on handwritten notes or in files on personal computers. Great meetings happen on the road, but the sales teams don't always transfer their notes and important details get lost, especially if an employee leaves the company.



5. Resale/upsell opportunities are lost

You don't target prospects based on their value to the business. Rather, you are sending the same types of offers and messages to customers and prospects in very different stages of the buying process, as well as in different industries or geographies.



6. You lack a plan to scale fast

What if your business grew from 20 to 200 this year? Are you confident that your current processes will scale? If you know that you are going to grow, are you worried about keeping productivity up while scaling up? If any of these apply to you or your team, don't despair. These are exactly the issues that a CRM system can address.

Next up, let's take a look at how a CRM makes your business more productive.

CHAPTER 2

How CRM Improves Productivity

You probably know the old saying, “there never seem to be enough hours in the day.” This is especially true in the sales world, where time truly is money. According to a study by Mavenlink, two out of five small business owners rank time as their most valuable asset, and a quarter of those would pay $500 for just one extra hour in the day. The more effectively and efficiently you use your time, the better results to your bottom line. Small businesses grow faster by getting better at providing a steady flow of new prospects, increasing time spent selling, and arming their sales reps with the info they need to close deals more quickly. That is where a CRM application comes in.





Pipeline

Finding time to bring in a steady flow of new customers can be quite the challenge for a small business sales team. This is often caused by issues such as:

- Inability to route leads to the appropriate sales rep
- Lack of information on potential clients
- Inadequate knowledge about a prospect before calling
- Poor visibility and forecasting of future pipeline.

A CRM app allows sales reps to store the data on prospects so the information's ready at each interaction. Plus, it quickly provides metrics related to visibility and forecasting.



Selling Time

Obviously, representatives need time to sell. Some of the time traps faced by salespeople are hard to overcome, but others can be easily fixed:

Communication is a big challenge for a sales team on the go, but surprisingly few teams leverage smartphones and tablets as part of their regular workflow. Making the switch to mobile can eliminate downtime and increase communication.

- Automation of repetitive tasks gives salespeople more time to concentrate on closing.
- Providing one channel for reps to share information and connect eliminates endless email loops and phone tag.

The right CRM system syncs with mobile devices anywhere, anytime via the cloud, so the entire team is on the same page and has the most current information at their fingertips.



Better Intelligence

Companies that embrace the AI opportunity will be able to create the modern experiences their customers expect. For the first time, businesses have access to the analytics, computing power, data, and ease of use that will transform how they approach their customer relationships. AI will help these leaders discover critical insights about customers and their preferences, predict the best actions to move relationships forward, and recommend and automate actions to increase sales productivity.

What does AI for CRM look like? Imagine being able to capture real-time signals, wherever they occur – from a customer's support request to a prospect's tweet. Then imagine being able to analyze every data point, pulling together data from your CRM, to create a complete view of every customer. It's a whole new way of connecting to your customers and prospects, with intelligence powering a new era of customer success

Artificial intelligence is creating more powerful opportunities for sales reps everywhere. Here's three ways in which sales reps can leverage AI to close more deals:



Data is automatically captured, enabling reps to focus on the most valuable leads first.



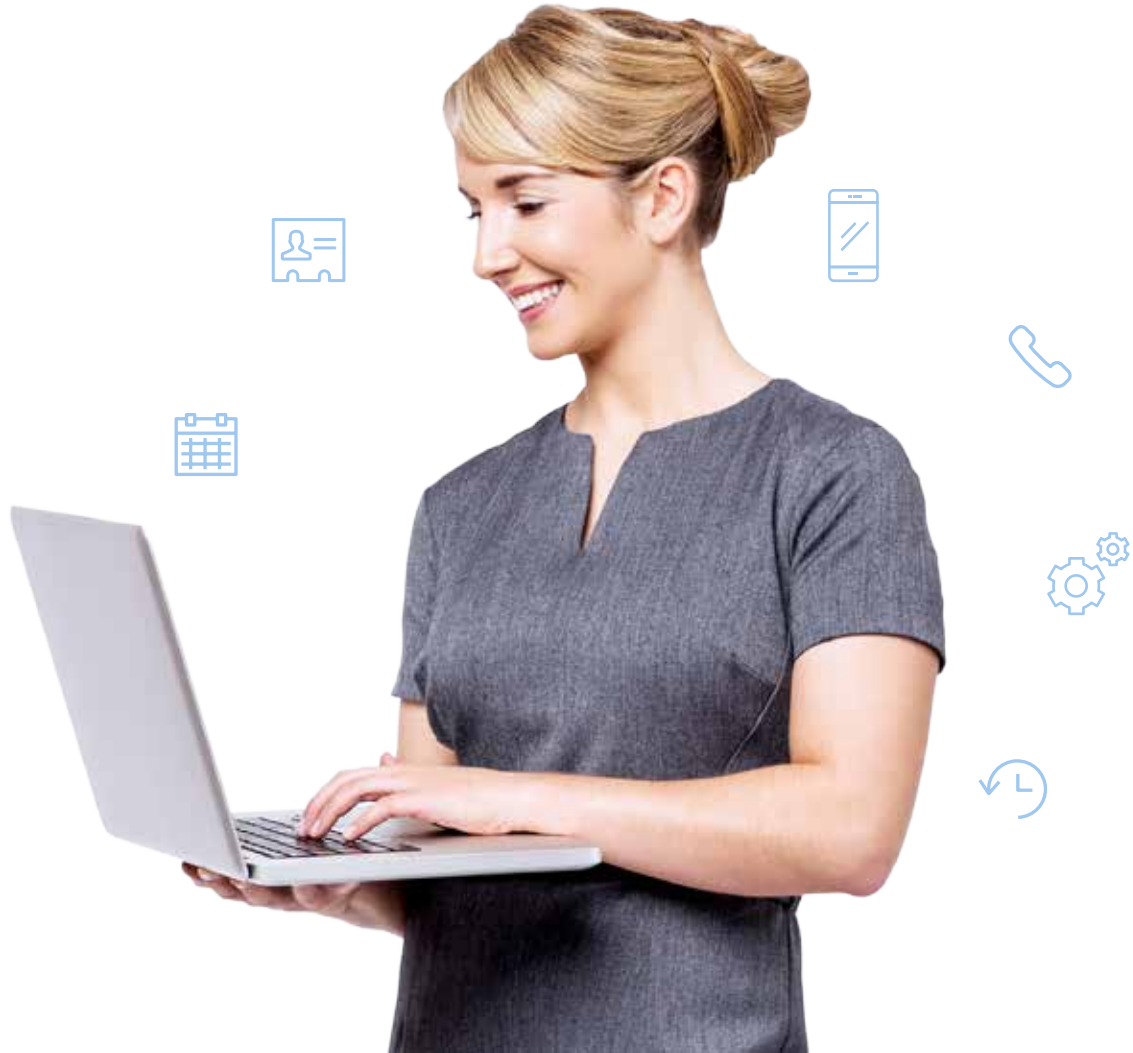
Predictive sales helps reps capture new opportunities and forecast potential sales.



Digital assistants will analyze pertinent news about each prospect and customer.

For successful prospecting and pitching, you must gather vital information on potential clients. But finding time to do that can be hard when you're also trying to make your month. CRMs help solve this problem by collecting valuable customer data, including:

- Client history
- Current client preferences
- Client social media presence
- Past interactions with a client
- Client infrastructure details
- Client social media presence
- Past sales interactions



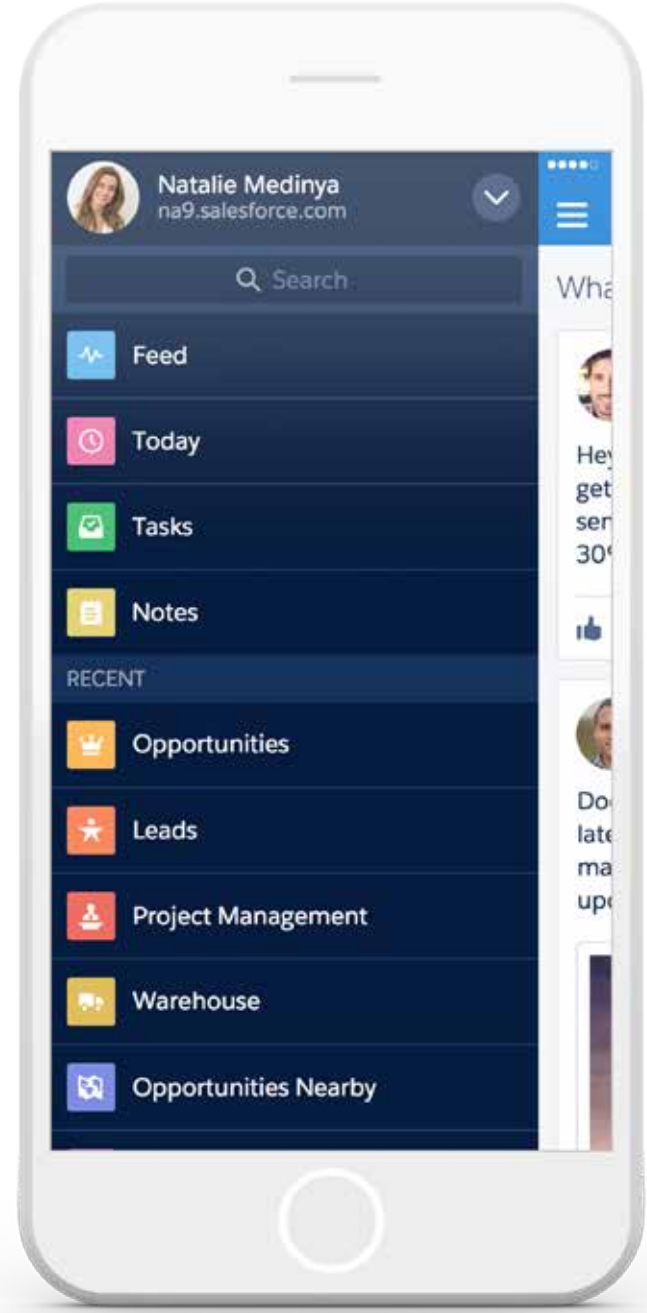
Dont Forget to Think Mobile

The Mobile Sales Team

As you consider CRM solutions, it's important to consider that the modern sales team is no longer confined to their desks for 8 hours a day. They are always on, always connected, and incredibly mobile. When considering any new tool, including a CRM, you should make sure the technology enhances this shift in productivity, and fits into your sales team's existing workflows.

Mobile CRM Tools

When considering CRM tools, you'll notice that a rare few have functional mobile components. Make sure the technology you are considering does not just add mobile functionality as an afterthought. Solutions like Salesforce1 were built mobile-first with a team's productivity in mind. Designed with apps and features that streamline the sales process and enhance everyday operations, a true mobile CRM can mean the difference between a solution that merely helps your business, and one that revolutionizes it.



CHAPTER 3

How to Craft a CRM Strategy

Building a successful CRM system isn't just about choosing the right technology, as significant as that is. You also need the right plan in place from a business perspective. Here are seven basic steps to build a winning plan:

1. Define Your Vision

Some people dismiss vision statements as a waste of time, but successful sales leaders know the value of having a clear, repeatable, action-oriented vision that your team can rally around. Your vision can be many things, from becoming market leader for sales in your region, to redefining customer service within your industry. Make it both aspirational enough to have an impact, and clear enough that the entire organization can understand it.

2. Define Your Strategy

Strategy is what makes your vision achievable. Say you want to be market leader for sales. Do you do this by competing on price, or by offering different products, or by emphasizing your great after-sales service?





3. Define Your Business Objectives

Business objectives are where vision and strategy get translated into the dayto-day work. A common mistake when implementing a new CRM system is to replicate in it all the old business objectives and processes, complete with their inefficiencies. Instead, view your implementation as an opportunity to review and optimize how you work.



4. Get Your Team On Board

Executive sponsorship is vital for your CRM vision, strategy and business objectives, and for a successful rollout. A lack of executive sponsorship is one of the top five contributing factors to CRM failure.



5. Identify the Metrics

“You can’t manage what you can’t measure” is an adage attributed to many business thinkers. Metrics should be visible to everyone, and this means creating dashboards for all levels of the organization, from sales reps and managers, to the executive team.



6. Prioritize Your Initiatives

You’re not going to get everything done at once, so decide what’s most important to deliver first. Training is often the priority, so everyone is ready to use the new CRM system as soon as it is available.



7. Define Your Roadmap

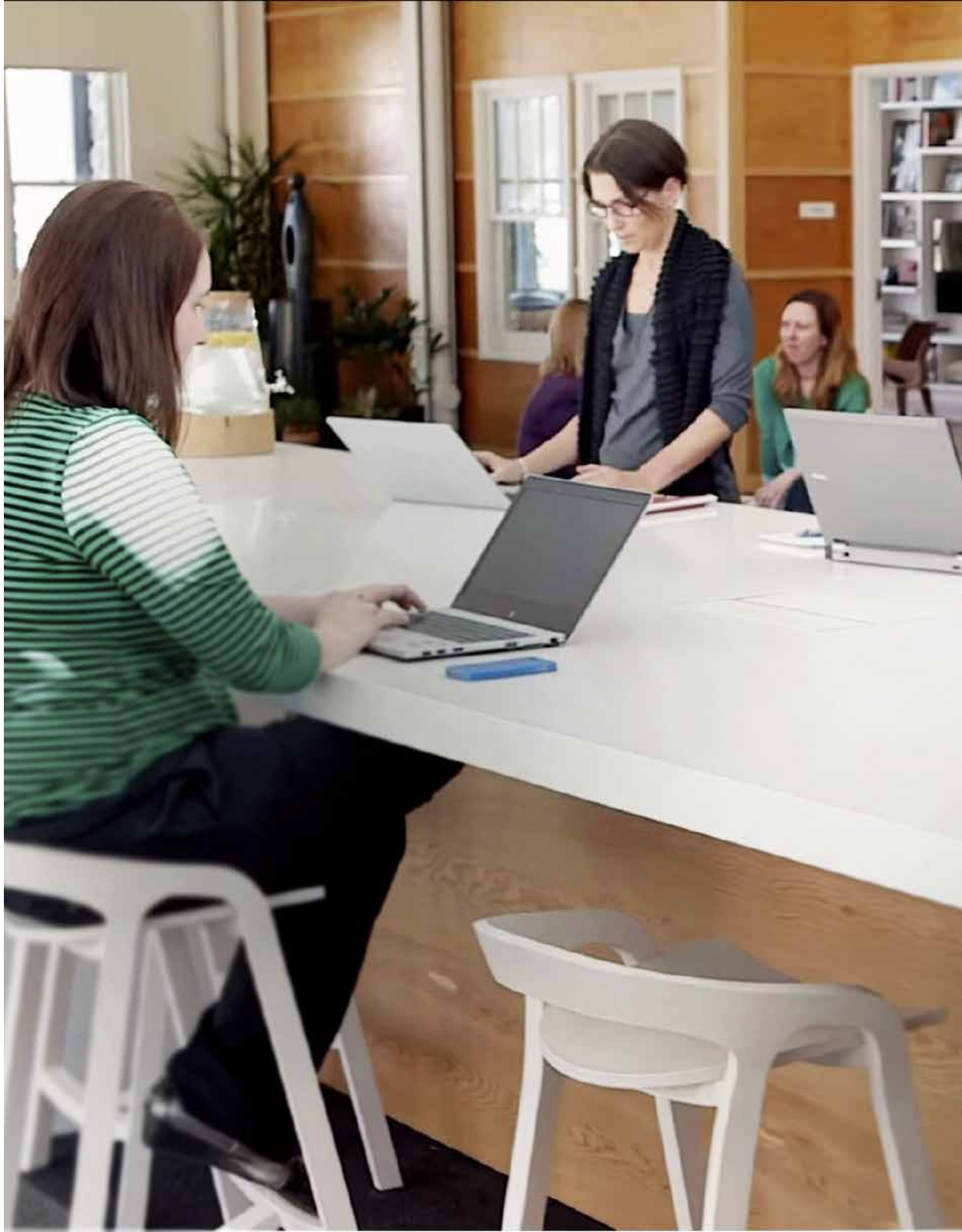
You shouldn’t look at building an effective CRM system as a “big bang” event. Yes, a successful rollout is vital, but being able to deliver enhancements and new features after you go live is equally important. Plan beyond launch day and consider what other capabilities you need to deliver for the business. Now that your CRM system and strategy are in place, it’s time to see the best ways to measure and maximize the technology.

Customer Spotlight:

HermanMiller

When global furniture manufacturer Herman Miller was looking for a tool to help them grow and modernize their business processes, they turned to Salesforce to help them do it. With new insights into their sales cycle, enhanced mobile functionality, and cross-company collaboration, Salesforce now allows Herman Miller to understand their customers like never before.

WATCH THE FILM



CHAPTER 4

Maximizing Your ROI

Here are several best practices to remember when working to maximize your ROI, from CRM Search's Karen D. Schwartz: `

Choose a Cloud-Based CRM Solution

All major CRM vendors offer cloud versions of their apps. Choosing this software as a service (SaaS) model means companies no longer have to deal with things that on-premise CRM apps demand, like servers, software issues, and new version upgrades.





Integrate with Applications that Provide Value

Take advantage of the new business and social applications that are out there, and integrate them with your CRM system. These include marketing automation and accounting software, plus key social tools, which allow your company to follow people, information, and groups on social networks, and capture real-time data.



Allow for Mobile Integration

Make everything accessible on mobile devices for your salespeople so they can work on the road – things like reviewing correspondence, managing contacts, and accounts. The integration should also ideally work with back-office systems, social networks, and web conferencing.
And so you are fully covered, here are some practices to avoid when working to maximize your CRM ROI, from CRM Buyer's Christopher Bucholtz:



Infighting Between Sales & Marketing

CRM data is valuable when used to qualify leads for the sales department and to show which marketing campaigns lead to closed sales. But these insights can be missed if sales and marketing don't work together. Before you do anything else, get both departments in a room to map out common goals, and to discuss how to use the data.



Generating Reports for the Sake of It

The right CRM application can present data in an almost effortless preformatted report. But this analysis will do you no good if it is ignored. Take the time to not only read the reports, but to understand and act on them when needed.

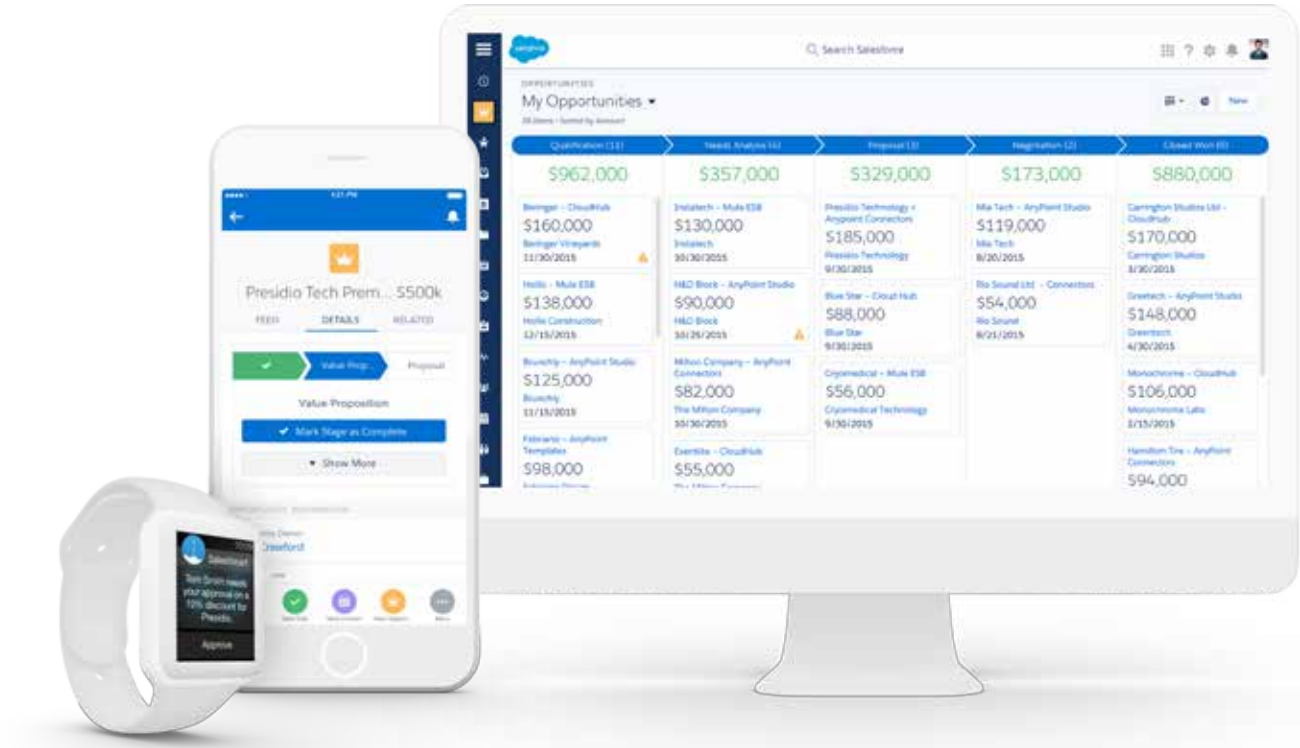


Building "Relationships" with Customers

CRMs are an excellent tool to connect with your customers and build relationships that grow over time. But don't just assume that everything is fine and well. Be aware that customers evolve and change, and your business may need to change with them.

Conclusion

Any successful enterprise should start with a foundation of great customer relationships, with you, the seller, connecting with people who need your product or service. As your company expands, these connections become more sophisticated. It's not just a transaction between the buyer and seller. You also need to share information across the various teams within your own organization that are making contact with the same customers. A CRM system can serve as a vital nerve center to manage the many connections needed in a growing business. In a world where the most successful companies are customer focused, CRM apps make the customer king. In short, CRM apps are how businesses truly become "customer companies."



Products used in this solution

salesforce sales cloud

Sales Cloud

Salesforce IQ

Einstein

salesforce1

Salesforce1



CONNECT TO YOUR CUSTOMERS
IN A WHOLE NEW WAY



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