

Accelerate Sales, Marketing and Service Success with Best Practices

Customer relationship management (CRM) is more than a technology – it's a *business strategy* for improving your business

In the past, the notion of customer relationship management (CRM) has been limited to the set of applications that help customers, employees and partners. But CRM is not just software – it's a *strategy* designed to optimize profitability, revenue, productivity and customer satisfaction. Gartner defines CRM as a business strategy that fosters customer-satisfying behaviors and embraces customer-centric processes.

A successful CRM strategy takes into account a company's:

- **People** who will need to adopt and use the solution
- **Processes** that are critical to business operations
- **Technology** to support the processes and people who use them

CRM Consists of People, Process and Technology

Successfully executing a CRM strategy depends on the combination and alignment of a company's people, processes and technology to deliver tangible business results. Therefore, a successful CRM strategy takes into account a company's methods and practices around people, processes and technology. In addition, best practices and implementation methods play key roles in CRM strategies by enabling companies of all sizes to achieve their business objectives through the effective use of limited resources.

The Role of Best Practices

While a business process is simply a series of activities organized to achieve a specific business objective, best practices represent proven methodologies for consistently and effectively achieving a business objective. Best practices are documented strategies and tactics that leading companies have developed to sell to, market to, and deliver services to their customers successfully. They play a crucial role in CRM success for companies of all sizes.

CRM Implementation Best Practices

When deploying CRM, companies must identify those best practices that are most relevant to their business and put an implementation plan in place. They must also select a company that can guide them through each step of the implementation process.

How Do Best Practices Benefit Companies?

By borrowing the best from outside the company, organizations can learn from others' success and emulate that success. Best practices can help:

- **Reduce risk** – Organizations can borrow ideas, strategies and tactics used by admired, best-in-class companies. They can learn how these companies perform business processes and gain insight as to

how to replicate that success in their own organizations.

- **Save time** – Because best practices are documented and proven, they can be adopted without significant investments of time and resources. By implementing best practices, organizations can achieve the business results they want faster.
- **Reduce and avoid costs** – Organizations do not have to spend money on testing new ideas, because they have already been proven. Best practices help organizations avoid potentially costly mistakes.

The following implementation best practices have enabled companies to achieve measurable business benefits.

- **Establish measurable business objectives** – Design strategic CRM initiatives to drive specific, achievable objectives that produce quantifiable results. Partner with a solutions vendor that can help identify overall strategic goals, not simply implement software.
- **Align the organization with the CRM initiative** – Get support for the CRM initiative through securing executive sponsorship; ensuring that managers support the intended business change; and ensuring that all stakeholders understand the impact on the company's people, processes and technology.
- **Define best practices and map them to application functionality** – Identify the key best practices that are relevant to the organization and focus on implementing those specific best practice business processes in the CRM system. Choose a CRM solutions provider that understands industry-specific business processes and select a CRM application tailored to the industry. Avoid the time and cost of extensive customization and purchase an application that will meet needs out of the box.
- **Train, reinforce and reward for 100% user adoption** – Develop an adoption strategy and reward plan up front to ensure that you can achieve the critical success factor of user adoption. Select a CRM solutions provider that offers an easy-to-use, flexible application with embedded analytics to promote high user adoption. CRM applications that enable users, and the company as a whole, to achieve specific business outcomes will necessarily have high user adoption rates.
- **Use a phased implementation plan** – Plan and execute the implementation in phases to ensure that goals are manageable and achievable. Work with a vendor that has the most experience in successfully implementing CRM solutions for companies of all sizes.
- **Monitor progress and measure results** – Define and monitor performance metrics, assess end user adoption, and regularly measure and analyze business impact. Select a CRM solutions provider with strong real-time and historical analytics capabilities that allow companies to gain insight into the current environment, as well as historical trends. These capabilities will help organizations to make better, timelier business decisions.

About Oracle CRM On Demand

Oracle CRM On Demand is a comprehensive hosted CRM solution that is delivered over the Web as a subscription service. It is designed for companies seeking an easy-to-use CRM solution that can be deployed quickly, easily, and affordably, without any up-front IT investment. Oracle CRM On Demand is part of Oracle's wide range of on demand and on premise CRM offerings. Oracle is the world's leading provider of CRM.

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