

GUIDE

Getting Started with CRM

The Beginner's Guide for Banks & Credit Unions



The Growth Platform
for Banks & Credit Unions

Introduction

With 2020 radically shifting business focus from in-person to remote experiences, both for customers and employees, interest in CRM adoption has significantly increased in the latter half of the year. Many institutions that did not have CRM in their current or upcoming strategic plan have made speedy adjustments to get on board.

But even as more and more financial institutions incorporate CRM into their organizations, if you have not made the leap, it can seem like a daunting process. Or, if you are upgrading a long entrenched or outdated CRM, it can seem like starting over as technology is constantly changing. If this is you, this guide offers welcome answers to important questions that you may be asking.

In light of this, we created **Getting Started with CRM: The Beginner's Guide for Banks and Credit Unions** to help you better understand the basic tenets of what makes for a good CRM while highlighting areas where this technology may best complement your growth and service strategies. This information should prove beneficial to you whether you are already a user of CRM or looking at CRM solutions for the first time.

Let's start by exploring five basic questions:

1. *What is a CRM?*
2. *What are the signs that you need CRM?*
3. *Why is CRM important and what are its benefits?*
4. *How do you evaluate CRM solutions?*
5. *What are common challenges when adopting a CRM?*

1

What is a CRM?— Your “one-stop” place to see everything important about your customer.

A New Method

CRM stands for Customer Relationship Management. A good CRM should be your “one-stop” place to see everything important about your customer. Before today’s modern CRM solutions, there was the rolodex, appointment books, Excel spreadsheets, the sticky note, email, and MCIF (*Marketing Customer Information File*) systems.

Today, CRM refers to software you license to help your organization better track and manage customer information from various sources (e.g. core account information, online banking, bill pay, merchant card services, Outlook, demographic data, and more). It then re-organizes this information into one easy-to-understand customer relationship. CRM helps your organization better track and manage customer relationships, referrals, sales pipelines, customer touches, case management, customer segmentation, marketing on-boarding campaigns, employee incentives, and much more.

The true power of a good CRM is in helping you better understand the value of your customer’s relationship with your bank or credit union, while empowering you to be more responsive to the changing needs of your customer over time. It’s the one place where you can see every customer touch and stay informed in real-time

about your customer — empowering everyone in your organization to seem like the customer’s primary relationship manager.

Gartner predicts that by 2021, CRM will be the single largest revenue area of spending in enterprise software. This prioritization reflects CEOs’ growing understanding of the limitations that older technologies have been putting on their businesses. [Ray Birch at CUPresent](#) says, “As is now well-documented, among the lasting effects of COVID-19 is the mass migration to digital services by consumers across numerous platforms, including financial services. Even many of those who were previously slow to adapt to digital are now on board.”

But to pigeonhole CRM as technology and just another software application to be managed by your IT department is a mistake. CRM is so much more. Its greater purpose is that of a management tool to help streamline and consolidate work processes in effort to ensure a more consistent experience for your customers.

While there may be as many definitions of CRM as there are CRM systems, you should focus less on what anyone else tells you CRM is and more on what processes your organization feels are important to your growth and service strategies, then define CRM by which system can best complement those strategies.

2

What are 8 signs you need a CRM?— Multiple channels can lead to more room for error and increased levels of stress.

Symptoms of a Bigger Need

Now that you know what a CRM is, **here are 8 signs that it is time for you to implement one.**

- 1 You use multiple communication, information, and reporting tools—for example, core account system, Excel, email, instant messenger, or desks littered with post-it notes.
- 2 You have limited or no visibility of sales, marketing, and service efforts across departments.
- 3 Your reporting is siloed or painful.
- 4 You have work processes that would benefit from automation and process consistency.
- 5 You want to deliver actionable service and sales messaging directly to your frontline employees during that moment of opportunity when they are interacting with your customer.
- 6 It is difficult to access customer information, service tools, and work processes when you are on-the-go.
- 7 You manually track your employee goal and incentive plans.
- 8 You feel your work processes will not easily scale as you grow.

If you have only one of these signs, then you may not yet be ready, but **if you have two or more, then there is a good chance you will benefit from CRM.** Let's take a closer look at some of the benefits you can expect from using CRM and at areas where CRM may best complement your organization's growth and service strategies.

3

Why is CRM important and what are its

benefits?— Developing and nurturing existing customer relationships is the point; the powerful tools CRM uses to track and respond to customer activities are the benefits, and unlike old methods, these are actually scalable.

The Heart of CRM

It has been proven time and time again that developing and nurturing existing customer relationships is far less expensive and provides for a higher ROI than expensive marketing to attract new customers.

At the heart of CRM is an engine developed to help you build better relationships with your customers. And better customer relationships are best built through a series of positive experiences, each building on the other, that prove to your customer that you not only know who they are and that you value their relationship, but that you understand and are willing to meet all of their

sophisticated needs. Building better relationships with your customers will translate into more wallet share and a strong and loyal customer base who will become your best advocates for new customers.

CRM systems are designed to make customer information understandable, transparent, and actionable to all your employees while providing managers information about employee activities. With so many institutions relying on CRMs today, employees have begun to expect these tools to best perform their jobs. These tools give your employees quick and easy access to a history of customer information and interaction in order to properly service your customers; they are benefits that empower.



Benefit #1

Easy-to-Use, All-in-One Communication and Reporting

Are you still using Excel to crunch data and create your reports? Do you find your inbox overflowing with tedious back-and-forth emails that could be stored elsewhere? What about post-it notes and checklists? These forms of “CRM” just don’t cut it today. And moreover, they aren’t easily accessible.

If a long-term customer is on vacation in another city and visits one of your other locations, he or she still expects that location to have a complete history of his relationship with your bank. The old school methods of keeping track of customer activities simply aren’t scalable.

CRM allows you to provide the kind of service customers expect while give you a competitive edge. Having all your communication and reporting tools in one easy-to-access system will ultimately ease your workflow processes, improve your quality of customer service, and grow your business.

Benefit #2

Complete Transparency into All Customer-Facing Activities, Across All Departments

Everyone from frontline to top management will have access to your customer information and complete interaction history. You can keep track of what’s already been offered or communicated and avoid duplicating efforts and potentially alienating your customers.

What does this mean in your day-to-day? Here’s an example of one possible scenario: your Loan Officer sits down with an existing customer. After some initial small talk, he pulls up her relationship in the CRM and reviews her account history to see what products/services she

already uses, which new ones she has already been offered and her response to past marketing offers, as well as which other products she is eligible for now. There is no need for your Loan Officer to make a phone call, search through other systems, or to re-offer the customer a product she doesn’t want or miss out on offering her a new product that she might really need. All the information the Loan Officer needs to understand the customer’s relationship and needs is right there in real time, in CRM.



With a CRM, there is no need for your Loan Officer to make a phone call, search through other systems, or to re-offer the customer a product they don't want.

Benefit #3

Easy Reporting Makes Pulling Information Simple and Consistent

Managers will have quick access to standard reports that are easily understandable and consistent. Let's take a branch manager for example. It's her job to make sure all customer interactions are being carried out consistently with high standards, build and foster customer loyalty while growing wallet share, and to meet the expected

growth of her location. Often much of the information she needs to do her job is communicated through Excel files, emails, and disparate reports.

CRM can provide managers with a series of standard reports that can be run and shared with only a couple of clicks. This ability to see and share information from within one system that everyone has access to drastically eases the workflow bottlenecks and improves the quality of the data itself.

Benefit #4

Automating Workflows Means Less Time Wasted on Tedious Tasks and More Time Focused on Your Customers

Time is often your most wasted organizational asset.

Managers and employees spend too much of their time attending to internal work processes and communication and not enough time servicing and communicating with your customers.

If there is a process at your organization that could be made more efficient and take less time, would that be valuable to you? What if it freed each employee so that they were able to get two more tasks completed each day? Now multiply that by each of your employees—how valuable would that time savings be to you? Having a CRM system will allow you to create consistent workflow processes to support your business needs and then track these processes to ensure proper follow-through. It will make assigning tasks, creating referrals, tracking sales pipelines, performing case management all more consistent, easier, and less time consuming.

It is vital to your organization, to have a customer relations solution that is both accessible and flexible.

Benefit #5

Customer Data is Available to you Anytime, Anywhere

CRM should be mobile. It needs to go where you go. After all, you want your most successful salespeople out in the field meeting with customers and prospects more than you want them in the office toiling over Excel worksheets and email inboxes. And with the difficulties brought by the pandemic-induced shut downs, it's not just your sales team who need remote access. When offices and branches are unable to be open for in-person service, customer-facing employees need consistent accurate information for every phone and digital interaction.

CRM will allow your employees access to the customer information they need when working remotely and still securely protect the sensitive information you don't want exposed in a mobile environment. It will also allow them to stay in constant connection with the rest of the team while being alerted to opportunities and issues that come up that they need to attend to immediately. They will also be able to access workflow processes, such as pipelines, and update those throughout the day so that their managers can track their progress in real time.

Benefit #6

Know Immediately Who Your Best Customers Are

It is vital to your organization to know who your best customers are and to treat them accordingly. A CRM will help you determine customer profitability. A good CRM will allow you to tie in general ledger costs and allocate soft and hard costs across products, processes, and customers for one single transparent level of customer profitability.

Once you understand customer profitability, you can then segment your customers into varying service level groups. You can also build service standards and track the success of your growth and retention programs. For example, perhaps you want your very best customers to get a quarterly call from their primary relationship contact as a general check-in, regular email invites to sponsored events, and taken to lunch twice a year. You can set these standards in CRM and track and report on your team's results.

Manual workflow processes, create bottlenecks that waste your organization's valuable time.

Benefit #7

Marketing Automation is a Game Changer When It Comes to Targeting and Personalization

You need the ability to scale personalized outreach throughout the customer life cycle. A good CRM offers you the ability to automate your most effective and repeated marketing efforts. You want the ability to mine your customer data, segment customer groups, personalize the marketing effort, and deliver to the customer automatically.

Find a CRM that allows you to create your own marketing campaigns and report on successes.

Strategically placing the right product or service in front of customers at the right time, whether it is during personal interactions or through digital communication, is the secret to successful cross selling. These types of data-driven interactions offer real results.

Benefit #8

Automate Your Goal and Incentive Plans to Motivate Employees and Improve Performance

It's hard to imagine anyone not interested in motivating their employees to work harder, to provide better customer service, and to ensure that employee success and compensation is aligned with that of the organization.

Creating goal and incentive plans is not an easy thing to do and automating them is even more difficult.

For these reasons many organizations are still tracking their incentive plans and payouts manually. Manual

tracking makes it difficult for employees to know where they stand in relationship to their goals at any given moment and often the lack of transparency of manual processes actually decreases individual motivation.

A CRM can automate your employee incentive plans and make the process more efficient, accurate, and transparent to all. This in turn will drive better results from your employees and further employee "buy-in" to using a CRM system.

4

How do evaluate CRM solutions?— There is a right system for you; evaluate and choose thoughtfully.

Choosing a CRM

There is no one CRM system right for everyone. There are all-purpose CRM's and ones for almost every niche you can imagine. It can be daunting to know which one is best for you. **Here are 6 simple tips to help you choose a CRM that's right for you.**

- 1 Look for a CRM that grew organically from within your industry. These are often the best fit for your unique industry needs right out of the box without a lot of expensive customization. Pay attention to scalability, because you want homegrown, but you don't want the risk of a start-up or a mismanaged cottage business.
- 2 Evaluate your strategic sales and service processes and look for a system that is best aligned with how you do business— instead of you aligning your business processes to best suit their software. This can be accomplished by assembling a committee to help identify your current processes and workflows that can be automated by implementing a CRM.
- 3 Choose a CRM that's user friendly and intuitive. When it comes to adopting an important technological change, the ease of adoption is a big deal. Look for a system that is user friendly, integrates with your core system, offers an expeditious implementation, and offers easy expandability.
- 4 Find a CRM that easily integrates. Consider a proven track record of successful integrations to be essential. Think twice before engaging with a provider that has little to no experience integrating with other technology solutions or a variety of core systems.
- 5 Pay close attention to what type of customer support the CRM vendor provides. Is there project management assistance provided during the implementation phase? Is on-going support by email only, or does it also include phone support? Is professional services or consultative support available? Be wary of a provider who out-sources your technical support to a third party; this type of arrangement often includes a communication gap. The best way to learn the true level of a vendor's customer support is to have reference calls with existing users during which you can specifically ask about their customer support experience..
- 6 Look for a strong user community. You want to be part of a like-minded community of users that will help support you when asked and also collaborate with you and other users in strong advocacy for any future developmental needs for the CRM.

5

What are common challenges when adopting a CRM?— Prepare and plan thoroughly to meet the process and cultural changes that come with implementing a CRM.

Ensuring a Smooth Transition

With any important technological addition or change, there is a transition time. The best medicine for curing the potential challenges that can be a part of your move to CRM is thoughtful preparation and an executable plan. Here are 5 important areas to consider as you plan.

- 1** **Secure Buy-in**

You may already be aware of the importance of executive buy-in for success in adding a CRM at your financial institution: after the purchase is not the best time. The executive team should be a part of the evaluation process including setting and taking ownership of top-level goals for the system. Lack of top management support is a common reason for a slow or unsuccessful adaptation of CRM. Also, be sure to get buy-in from every business team at your organization. Take the time to help them understand the benefits for their team as well as the entire organization. Everyone on board makes for a much easier, successful launch.
- 2** **Determine Goals for the CRM**

Take the time up front to decide what your institution wants out of the CRM system. What are areas in which you require improvement or what are specific problems you want to solve? When you articulate these clearly at the beginning of the evaluation process, it helps set achievable goals and can also direct you toward particular CRM partners
- 3** **Assign an “Owner” to the CRM Project.**

Adopting a CRM at your financial institution is usually a multi-phased process that often involves more than one business team, if not the whole organization. Your CRM “owner” could be a team or a committee or a single person. It does not necessarily mean creating a new position, but it does mean assigning a driver to the project—someone who is a central contact and responsible for milestones along the way.
- 4** **Be Cognizant of the Cultural Shift that comes with CRM.** Implementing a CRM is more than a technology change. Lay the groundwork for the organizational change that accompanies the adoption of the new technology. Cultural shifts involve people and process, and promoting this cultural shift ahead of time aids in the implementation of the CRM tool.
- 5** **Be Encouraged**

It’s not unusual to have skeptics at large undertakings. You could hear the standard, “We are about to spend a lot of money, nobody is going to use it, and it’s going to be a big waste.” Be encouraging to the skeptics--big changes can feel risky, but a good plan and the right CRM partner will mean sure success.

Conclusion

Choosing the right CRM for your organization is not easy, but we hope this beginner's guide will lessen your burden, help you focus your search, and prove beneficial in finding the right CRM for you.

About 360 View

360 View is the growth platform developed for banks and credit unions, providing all the tools necessary to maximize their team's performance. The solution goes beyond CRM, allowing the user to automate marketing campaigns, use analytics to capitalize on cross-sell opportunities and track goals and incentives, all while providing richer relational experiences that are personalized to every customer's unique needs. 360 View was developed by bankers specifically for financial institutions and has been serving the financial community since 2001. 360 View was recently named in the Top 10 Customer Experience Solution Providers by Banking CIO Outlook.



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