FIVE REASONS
TO ADD COMMUNICATIONS TO YOUR CRM TODAY

twilio
CLOUD COMMUNICATIONS

How can you get more out of your CRM system? That's the inevitable question that arises at the end of a successful deployment of a customer relationship management solution (CRM). At that point, you've seen how optimizing your business processes and workflows around a cloud-based tool can increase productivity. You know there's more you can do—there are other apps to integrate and social tools to try—and you want the option with biggest payoff.

One thing to consider is adding communications capabilities like click to call or a softphone to your CRM system. These are small, or relatively small projects, that deliver immediate business results. By leveraging a cloud API platform, companies can avoid investing in traditional telecom hardware and software, and still reap all the benefits of streamlined customer interactions and higher performing teams. Companies also gain access to a wealth of data that can be used to optimize business operations. In the rest of this white paper, we'll examine five common benefits from the point of view of five companies that have experienced them.

Prevent hot leads from going cold

Teeing up good leads is hard, often expensive work. No company would intentionally squander the labors of its lead-generation team. Yet many businesses throw good leads away every day simply out of benign neglect. Instead of calling a lead right away, salespeople typically delay a day or two. According to research published by the Harvard Business Review, a study of 2,241 US companies found the average response time to a web lead was 42 hours.

The delay in calling hot leads can cost businesses more than they realize. A review of 1.25 million sales leads received by 29 business-to-consumer companies and 13 business-to-business companies found that a salesperson who contacted a lead within an hour was more than seven times as likely to qualify the lead as a peer who waited an hour or longer. That advantage rose to 60 times as likely to qualify a lead over peers who waited 24 hours or longer.

Josh Reznick, founder of Datalot, wants to help businesses eliminate call-back delays. DialDrive, Datalot's sales and marketing communications platform, integrates communications directly into the sales funnel. It replaces a patchwork of unrelated processes, making it easy for a web lead to be passed almost instantly to sales as a phone lead. The result? Call response time increases by a factor of ten leading to a 25 percent increase in qualified leads, according to Reznick.

Help reps call the most valuable leads first

Sales reps whose main job is to work the phones often face a daunting task. Every day dozens, sometimes hundreds, of leads are dumped into their queues. The leads are associated with multiple campaigns and sometimes with multiple products. Reps can strive to call hot leads right away, but what happens if they don't make contact? How can reps prioritize which leads to call and when to call them amid a growing backlog?

The short answer is they can't—not without help from an automated system and preferably one with communications built in.

Matt Lautz, the founder of CorvisaCloud, decided to tackle this challenge by extending the functionality of Salesforce, the leading cloud-based CRM. By embedding a softphone, Lautz ensured Salesforce automatically receives intelligence on which calls are successful without requiring a rep to manually input extensive notes. CorvisaCloud then combines this data with its own technology to automatically create call-back plans.

Make customer interactions more meaningful

When Home Depot customers call the store's Redbeacon hotline looking for a house cleaner, a plumber or a yard worker, they don't have to repeat their address if they've called before. And if they're looking to engage the same professional they've used on a previous job, the agent will have that information handy, too. If they are calling to complain, the agent won't need to ask them whom they hired or when the job was completed.

RedBeacon's customer interactions are more personal and fulfilling because they built communications into their CRM from the ground up. "If I talk to a customer, I want that to be part of my application," says Redbeacon CEO Anthony Rodio. "I want all the interactions from the website to the phone call to be one record so that I can look at how you enjoyed your experience with us. I can see the job request you put in, how many times you spoke with us and how long it took to get what you needed or to resolve a problem."

Agents with automated access to customer records have higher credibility. It's easier for them to establish trust because they are familiar with the customer and his or her history. Customers are more likely to open up to these agents and more likely to listen to them make a pitch upselling or cross-selling another product or service. Meanwhile, these pitches are more likely to be successful because they can be targeted to a customer's

history—their purchases, their customer service requests, even their behavior on the company's website.

Increase your data's IQ

If you've completed a standard implementation of CRM, chances are your data is reasonably comprehensive. It can tell you how many deals you signed over the last quarter, what your forecast is for the next quarter, and who your best performing reps were.

But what if your data knew more? What if it could tell you how many minutes your best performing rep spends closing a $10,000 deal versus a $50,000 deal? What if it could compare the working styles of your best and your worst reps? What if it could tell you how much time your most valuable customers spent on the phone with customer support versus your least valuable customers?

As one of the world's largest DIY (do-it-yourself) website building services, Wix responds to well over a thousand calls from customers a day. After trying to field these calls using a hosted call center service, Wix decided it could provide more value to its customers by building its own tools for routing calls and capturing customer information.

The custom-built Wix Call Center is a state-of-the-art application that streamlines agents' workflow and makes sure they have customer information at their fingertips. Most important, it can deliver real-time reports. Smarter data makes it possible for Wix to offer a better service. Because it has its finger on the pulse of its business, Wix can respond immediately to spikes in demand. It can also use call data to fine-tune other processes, making sure customers are getting the help they need to be successful on the Wix platform.

Get the best out of your sales team

It's easy to determine who the best people are on your sales team—they are the reps who sell the most. But it can much harder to pinpoint why they are so good. Is their secret something as elusive as charisma, or is there a pattern to their success that can be replicated? Conversely, it also can be a struggle to determine why other reps consistently underperform. And after you have figured that out, it can be especially difficult to get them to change their behavior.

Adding communications to your CRM can help you get more out of your team by giving you the tools you need to track how your reps communicate. Richard Keith Latman, the founder of iMagicLab, a leading CRM for auto dealerships, attributes the popularity of his product to the fact that it has communications built in.

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Richard Keith Latman
Founder, iMagicLab

"The big problem car dealers have is getting somebody who is supposed to make a call to make it," Latman said. With iMagicLab, salespeople make calls directly from the CRM. Both the calls and the recordings are automatically logged, helping sales managers to stay on top of their teams' performance. "This is a great value proposition for dealers, and we're the only ones who do it," Latman said.

Integrating communications and CRM can be especially powerful for businesses that want to double down on sales coaching. According to the Sales Executive Council, the manager activity most associated with sales rep success is coaching. Good coaching can improve core performance by as much as 19 percent.

How to integrate communications into your CRM using Twilio

Twilio is a communications API platform that leverages the cloud to make it easy and cost effective to add voice, VoIP or messaging to any application. Because Twilio virtualizes all the infrastructure needed for business communications, including the hardware, software, carrier connectivity and phone numbers, a single developer or small team of developers can add communications simply by writing software in their favorite programming language.

The time to complete an integration will vary depending on the complexity of the project. You can read A very simple integration with an existing CRM can be written and tested in a day or two. In contrast, writing a custom application that combines CRM and communications can take as long as a few months. At Home Depot, a team of three engineers built the contact center/CRM application for Redbeacon in a month. Within 90 days the contact center had handled over one million minutes of calls and expanded the number of ticket types from three to sixteen. "Twilio gave us the ability to get up and running faster than any other solution on the market," Redbeacon CEO Rodio said.

In addition to fast deployment, businesses say that Twilio-powered solutions offer a lower total cost of ownership than traditional telecom solutions. That is because with Twilio businesses end up paying only for the communications services they use. They don't have to maintain extra infrastructure to accommodate spikes in traffic, and they don't incur any costs associated with maintaining their own equipment. Jamison Moore, Wix's director of U.S. sales and support, said the decision to power Wix's call center with Twilio will save the company an estimated $500,000 over three years.

Conclusion

Companies that deploy CRM solutions often hit a productivity plateau where notable increases in worker effectiveness level off. This is especially true for companies with mature implementations who've achieved widespread employee adoption and optimized

their business processes and workflows. How can these companies get more out of their CRM? The answer is by embedding communications capabilities like click to call.

By upgrading your CRM solution to make and receive calls and to send and receive messages, you'll streamline your employees' workflows and gain new insights into your business operations. You'll have unprecedented access to data about how often customers and would-be customers are contacted, or conversely, are contacting you. And you'll also be able to correlate that information with sales records, customer service requests and marketing campaigns so that you can further optimize those areas of your business.

You'll see a return on investment similar to what you saw from investing in CRM or related systems, such as enterprise resource management, but without the large capital outlays, contractual commitments, complicated deployments and external consulting fees. By choosing to leverage the cloud and the Twilio communications API platform, your costs will be limited to the voice minutes you use, the text messages you send and the phone numbers you buy.

Adding communications will improve the effectiveness of your CRM, and it's something you can get started on today.