CRM Can Increase Your Sales

A local small business CEO asked me what do you mean by “CRM” and I was reminded again that we get accustomed to using abbreviations and sometimes assume that people know what they are. This discussion was focused on how to improve the company’s sales by using a good data base to keep track of current and potential customers.

CRM is different from contact management software, which you may already use in your business. Contact management software lets salespeople access and manage their accounts and contact information. Think of these as a computerized rolodex. While contact management software can be helpful for managing data, it generally can’t be used to generate informational reports and typically can’t be shared across users.

CRM software is much more comprehensive and provides the same contact management tools, but also can include detailed customer information that allows you to see the life cycle of the entire customer relationship, buying history, past correspondence and interactions. CRM software allows you to create sales reports and forecasts easily, and to share data among the entire team.

Depending on what information you gather about customers, CRM software can help you spot trends based on your customers’ demographics, ages, interests, locations or industries. This helps you target them better and add new services or products to meet their needs.

Thousands of small and medium-sized organizations and businesses use some kind of CRM every day to manage critical sales, marketing and customer service activities, helping them to find new customers, close sales faster, and build lasting, profitable relationships. Some of the more popular companies include: Infusionsoft CRM, Intuit QuickBase, Oracle CRM OnDemand, Plaxo, Sage CRM Solutions, Salesforce, SalesNexus, and Zoho.

Some CRM companies have products that are optimized specifically for small and medium businesses and usually are easy-to-use and quick to deploy in the cloud or on-premises. If used effectively the CRM delivers a rapid return on investment so you see a positive impact on your business. Plus, they can usually be easily adopted by your organization to fit the way you work, saving you time and money, both now and in the future.

CRM software also helps with time management by allowing users to track, automate and schedule things like client contact, follow-up and report generation. Last, but not least, it creates a consistent sales process for your sales team to follow. When choosing CRM software, keep it simple and scalable—simple enough that your sales team will actually use it, and scalable so it can grow with your company.

_________________
Dean L. Swanson
Southeast Minnesota SCORE
c/o Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce
220 South Broadway, Suite 100
Rochester, MN 55904
www.seminnesota.score.org/
*Dean is a volunteer SCORE Mentor and District Director of SCORE Minnesota