

No communication = death to CRM

 By [Scott Cundill](#) 19 Mar 2015

Let's face it, CRM is now a buzzword and the space has become cluttered and somewhat over-traded. For CRM to make it to the plateau of productivity, it needs to be properly integrated into customer communication. If CRM processes and systems can find their way to deliver intelligent communication, there is unprecedented potential for businesses to hit the customer growth curve.

Sadly, without the communication element, CRM as we know it will continue to be a drag rather than an accelerator of value. Once the system is up and a reservoir of customer data is in place, it seems only natural to then communicate in a relevant and engaging manner to the customer. But this is not where it ends. Real-time communication turns traditional push marketing campaign tactics on their head by establishing an authentic connection with the customer in his/her world at a point of relevance or importance in their lives.

Getting integration right

Real-time marketing and communication is the next evolution, and this brings us to the issue of integration. Are we ever going to get it right? The answer is yes. Thanks to integrative tech platforms, that have made the deployment of integrative communication an accessible, easy and cost-effective part of our reality - different technology platforms such as Zapier and Task Centre allow a variety of technologies to connect and communicate with one another in order to transmit relevant, real-time messages to multi-tiered and diverse market segments.



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Further to the issue of real-time communication, smart systems integration will enable businesses to leverage operational issues in order to better market the business as a whole. This takes CRM and integrative technology to a new stage.

An example of an integrated, real-time communication episode could be: You have just invoiced a customer, and a predetermined query raises the flag that this customer has not been invoiced in at least 12 months. Furthermore the value of that customer is extremely high. In simple terms, it is clear that an old customer, who is very valuable to the company, has returned. Such a flag should immediately trigger a personal "welcome back" email from a senior manager, or possibly even a phone call.

Intelligent integration also takes away the need to enforce push marketing tactics such as mail shots or SMS campaigns, which can be a shot in the dark. Authentic customer communication is not linear at all. It is about multi-dimensional real time marketing Journeys that connect with customers through the right communication channel at the right moments in order to obtain meaningful information. This in turn will drive even better intelligence and relationship building going forward.

Relevance of POPI

To end off, let's explore the relevance of POPI within in this context. POPI is so much more than a simple opt in, opt out mechanism - it is about leveraging customer data relevantly and responsibly. The proper management of customer complaints can also yield valuable data and insights to leverage for improved customer communication. Another cautionary issue is taking care with the type of information sourced, such as gender, race and sexual orientation - you need to have a valid reason for requesting sensitive info and an even better reason for using it. Authentic use of data in general is essential. How it is processed and who processes it are also imperative elements to get right.

The bottom line, quite literally, is that businesses that are expecting a solid return for their investments in CRM systems need to be equally invested in real-time, intelligent customer communication in the long run. There are quick fixes in the CRM world, it is an ongoing evolutionary process.

ABOUT SCOTT CUNDILL

With 18 years of personal experience in the internet communications field, Cundill researches and pioneers communication and technology solutions that have proven potential to change the face of business. Fiercely authentic with a drive - he is passionate about empowering any kind of business with the technology to inspire and cultivate sincerity and relevance through original 'Communication Journeys'...
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