

What Is Customer Relationship Management (CRM)?

- Customer relationship management includes the principles, practices, and guidelines an organization follows when interacting with its customers.
- CRM is often used to refer to technology companies and systems that help manage external interactions with customers.
- Major areas of growth in CRM technology include software, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence.

What are the CRM Implementation Challenges?

1. Cost

One of the greatest challenges businesses face when implementing a CRM solution is cost. Yes, it might turn out as a costly affair if done in haste and without a robust planning. Here, it is advisable to decide as why your business needs a CRM. This should give out a clear picture about the type of CRM system and implementation techniques required eventually helping to set a budget for the same. So simply diving in imitating your competitor's CRM strategies is a lot like shooting in the dark that might lead to total disaster. So it is always a sound thing to discuss the total cost of ownership, IT resources, hardware or software, etc. with all the shortlisted CRM providers.

2. Set Clear Objectives

Defining clear objectives that a business intends to achieve with the system is one of the secrets for a smooth and successful CRM implementation. Further, it is advisable to work towards making these objectives as measurable metrics. Failing to do so might make it difficult to evaluate the ROI or core benefits of the system. Next, it's time to reckon on the functionalities you expect from the system. For this, ask yourself: do you intend to have it for sales, marketing, customer service or all of them? What problems you aim to address with the system? Having a clear idea about the objectives and key functionalities required in the system is a crucial step towards seamless CRM implementation.

3. Deployment Type

This is all about *on-premise vs. cloud!* A perfect escape plan here is to compare the set budget vs. the total cost of ownership that should include cost for all the resources required, maintenance, upgrades, infrastructure, etc. before making up your mind of whether to go for on-premise or cloud. This further boils down to business preferences, type of industry the business operates in, etc. Form a dedicated CRM team within the organization including people from top management, IT department, senior executives, customer support and end-users to discuss about their daily struggles, reasons leading to inefficiencies in their work, suggestions to boost productivity, etc. This should give a good picture about the type of deployment type best suited for your business.

4. Training

Another widely encountered challenge during CRM implementation is the company-wide training it summons up. This calls for involving all the potential users right from the early stages itself. In fact, if possible it is good to involve all the would-be users of the system right from the decision-making process. Pick key personnel from each department, who can be trained extensively. Eureka is these personnel turning evangelists of the newly rolled-out CRM system, which helps significantly to educate their fellow team members.

5. Plan out Integration Needs in Advance

Integrating CRM system with other business management solutions such as ERP, payroll, etc. tops the 'wish list' for most of the businesses opting for CRM solution. Nonetheless, it is advisable to plan integration needs if any well beforehand to avoid CRM implementation overkill and information overload to your employees. A smart thing here is to plan a phase 2 for integration needs post company-wide adoption of the CRM system.

6. Hire the Right CRM Solution Provider

Roping in the right CRM solution provider or partner is the crux for successful implementation. Preferably, go with a partner that helps in both implementation as well as pre-implementation strategy. Moreover, it is imperative that your partner puts down all the implementation risks on the table well before you sign on the dotted line.

RM Implementation is an important and a crucial step in the CRM buying process. It is a make or a break situation where it can totally go kaput or be seamless. It is in this stage

too that all the data is migrated to the new platform and since the data is of a crucial nature, utmost care needs to be taken during the migration.

To have a successful implementation we must plan in advance as how our implementation can be smooth and successful. For most it may be the first time that CRM is being implemented in their premise, hence, we have compiled some actions that can be taken to get rid of any blunder to happen. Let's see the same one by one.