

## CRM – THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL CALL CENTER

# 1. Introduction

All services and commodities are market driven and the success of a company depends upon the number of satisfied and loyal customers. There is a lot of after-sale follow up with customers in order to keep them satisfied. With the boom in Internet usage, customers have gone past the time-line of day and night. The mantra now is 24 x 7 @ 365 days. And, it's the same all over the world. With such pressures and competition to satisfy your customers and render services up to their expectations in terms of your interactivity and their query, doubt or simply service application, it's a must that one must have a very well managed, compatible, compact, precise and to-the-point data about customers and their past dealings with the company along with general database in the form of contact management.

Hence, due to the growing need of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives in just about every type of industry, call centers today have outgrown the image of being mere cost centers. They are now strategic business entities. Call centers assist companies in achieving customer-centric objectives, apart from providing world-class customer service and technical support. Thus, a CRM solution is designed to optimize profitability, revenue and customer satisfaction in the long run. It facilitates growth by organizing business around customer segments and by inducing customer commitment and loyalty.

Life today is fast and precise, evolving at a rate that makes most things become obsolete in a matter of few months. The shelf value for any given piece of knowledge or product is shrinking, just as new knowledge makes old knowledge obsolete faster. This fact sets pressure on the speed of process deployment. With this fast changing scenario in all areas of developments, it is extremely tough to keep a tab on all the trends and predictions. If useful knowledge is not applied instantly, it becomes obsolete before it can generate a return on your investments. Hence, there is a perpetual pressure on the speed of knowledge diffusion and a focus on the anticipation of new knowledge needs.

On the other hand, it's valuable to know that an organization may well manage information and it will never control it. Smart CRM solutions enable quick learning and fast reactions, and transforming your responsibility thus, is *response ability*. The ability of a CRM to undergo changes is not enough; it should be inherently compatible to changes.

For most companies the principle link between business and their customers is represented by a call center. An effective call center with a well designed CRM directly impacts a company's annual turnover and competitive position.

Call centers use three building blocks as key elements in CRM, to satisfy their customers:

- People
- Technology
- Process

## 2. People

The human element is definitely the most important one for the functioning and success of a call center. It depends upon the right application of the CRM software to practically satisfy different queries rising up from customers.

### **3. Technology**

Call centers use network services to connect customers, telecommunications systems including Automatic Call Distribution (ACDs) and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems; and IT products such as workstations, computing platforms, Local Area Networks (LANs) and Computer Technology Integration (CTI). It is crucially important to choose the right technology keeping in mind the growth of the company and an ever-evolving CRM with an increasing customer base.

### **4. Process**

To make everything work harmoniously and in a cost effective manner, and to satisfy CRM objectives, a series of processes are needed to define how systems and people work together.

It is very important to understand that today's high-tech call center have truly integrated the key factors - people, technology and process. In such a scenario, accidental or deliberate loss of any of the key elements can put call centers at risk, finally affecting the business continuity and its competitive presence in the market.

This is where a CRM becomes critically important. It should have advance features integrated in it to CC database and hardware configurations to a standby module waiting to be activated at the touch of a button. Most importantly, the CRM should be able to integrate the service-end to the customer in order, to ensure that every interaction is an outstanding customer experience.

Since call centers cater to complete customer communication— sales calls, after-sale service and grievances, it is important that all independent data of these heads is well organized. In such places, a smart and intelligent CRM is needed in order to segregate the data and post it to the right department in order to increase customer satisfaction on follow ups.

It is notable that a change in level of proficiency in all systems of business dealings determines the ability to effectively deploy your knowledge base. Simultaneously, any knowledge management practice (CRM) spurred into existence to deal with the knowledge explosion must acknowledge and recognize its own needs for being change proficient.

In real-time, call center one must also evaluate the situations arising out of the risks to the three key factors:

### **5. Risk to People**

Success of a call centers depends on how well their staff performs. If call center staff members are unable or unwilling to perform their assigned tasks, the call center may be at risk, and your business can suffer eventually.

### **6. Risk to Technology**

Call center systems and hardware are at risk from natural and other factors ranging like fires, floods, loss of power, system failure, component failure, loss of data (with no backups), vandalism, and human error. While a lot can be done to prevent these errors (except the natural disasters) or at least setup a quick rescue

mode in case of a SOS situation, there is not much that be done about the human errors, viruses, security breaches and data theft.

## **7. Risk to Processes**

Without documented procedures on how to operate, call centers may not be able to function smoothly. The overall business process i.e. the CRM comprises of many processes and further more sub processes and functions, each of which work in tandem in various orders to complete the data management.

So, the over-all scenario gives an insight on the fact that a smart CRM must be installed right from the beginning, so that the CRM grows with the company, and evolves in tandem with the development and future projections of the company. This would ensure that the CRM process is built on a solid business continuity foundation, and such an CRM solution has the least chances on being compromised, thus aiding deliverance of better service to customers and increased profitability to management.

### **About Boss CRM**

BOSS CRM (<http://www.bosscrm.com>) offers you the most comprehensive Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution to streamline the customer qualification, acquisition and retention process. BOSS CRM helps organizations large and small maximize marketing effectiveness, accelerate sales processes, enable single view of customer, lower operating cost and improve customer satisfaction. BOSS CRM is created, designed and optimized with the marketing and sales departments in mind. Our products and services simplify the customer identification, qualification and acquisition process, allowing your marketing and sales departments to focus more of their valuable time and effort in efficiently reaching the best and most effective customers. BOSS CRM, a division of Sohodo, Inc. is a leading provider of easy-to-use, on-demand applications for contact management, lead generation, online group calendar, tasks management, marketing campaigns, document management and helpdesk. Headquartered in San Jose, California. Sign up for free CRM trial at <http://www.bosscrm.com/free-crm-software-trial.html>