



The Ultimate Guide to: Winning Board Support

Uncover how to convince the C-Suite that a CRM system is the right fit for your company.

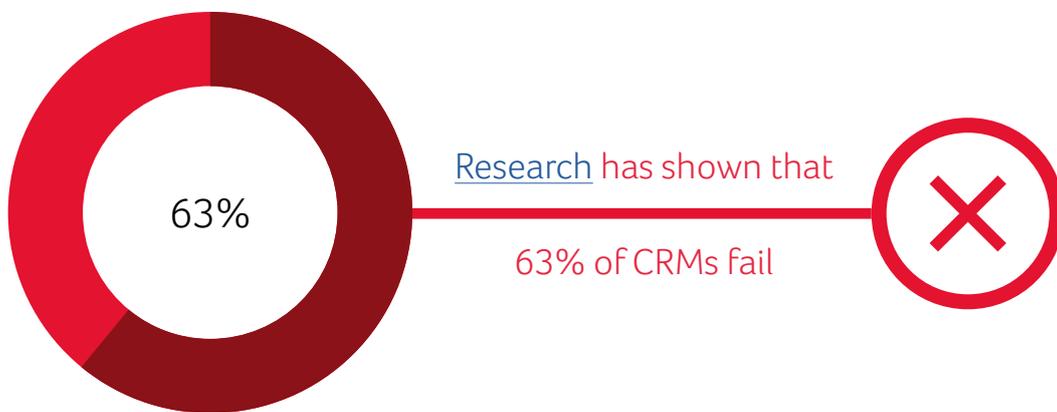


The Ultimate Guide to: winning board support

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The benefits of an integrated CRM system are well-documented but there is a problem – the need to win over the board so they will invest in your intended CRM solution.

As we know, the board can be resistant and understandably so – research has shown that [63% of CRMs fail](#) and Gartner has stated that those CRM systems that do [succeed don't always offer true business value](#).



Within this context, it's perhaps unsurprising then that winning over the board is [a major concern](#) for those intending to present a CRM solution to the C-Suite.

This guide is designed to take you through the steps needed to present the board with a clear-cut and thorough case for CRM adoption, which focuses on a business solution that will deliver on its investment via ROI.

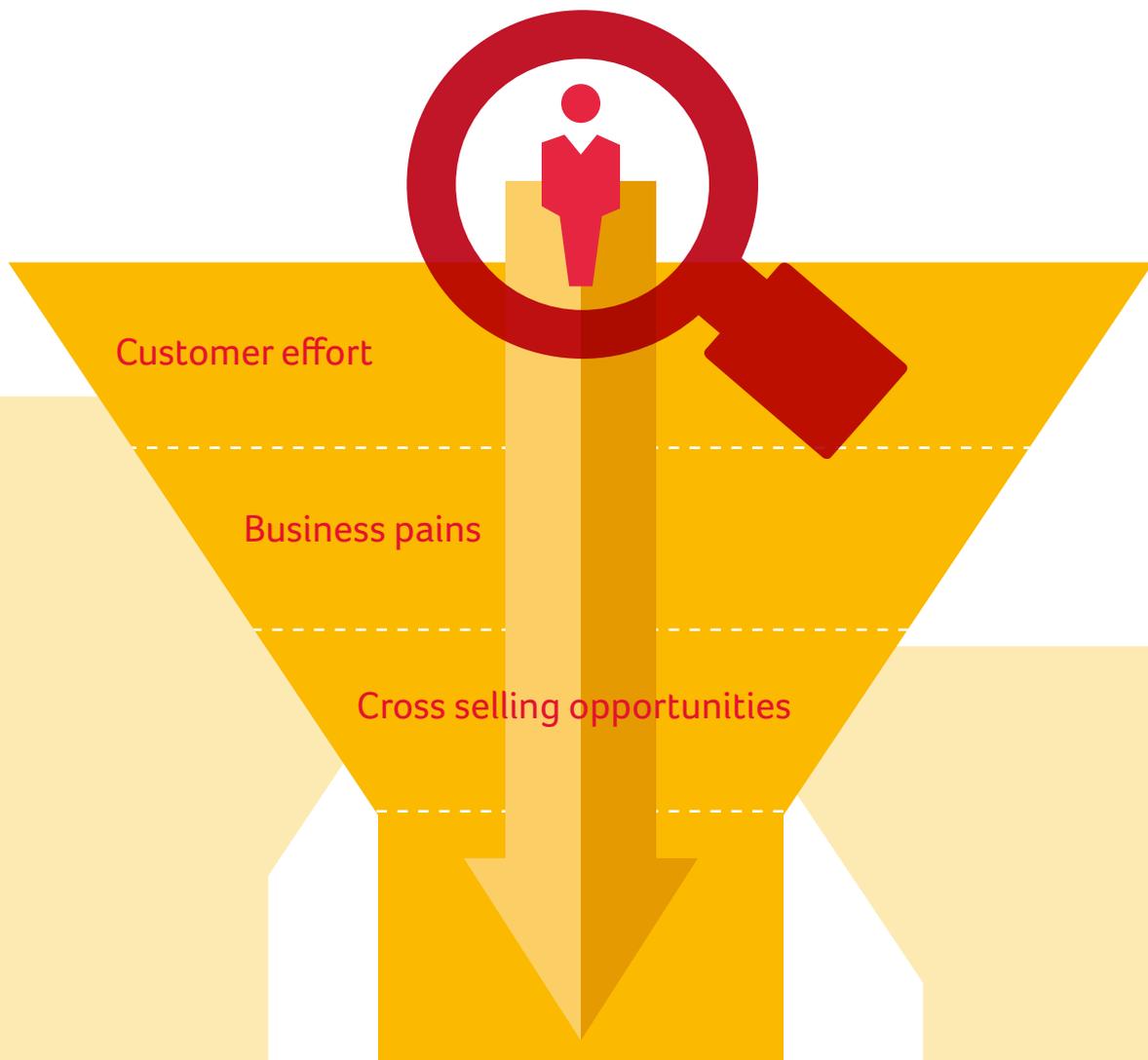
No Pleasure Without Pain

The key to demonstrating CRM's potential is to identify the company's business pains as perceived by the board, and to understand their root causes – and in turn, how CRM can help solve them.

First, analyse each phase of your customer's journey through the sales funnel and identify any bottlenecks that the board will be concerned about:

- How can our conversion rates be boosted?
- Are we making the buying process 'low effort' for potential customers?
- Are we identifying our customers' business pains effectively?
- Are we fully exploiting up and cross selling opportunities?

With bottlenecks identified, it's time to demonstrate how CRM will solve the pains that the board is most concerned about.



Go Manual Before Auto

Whether it's marketing, sales or customer services, one of CRM's key roles is to do all the heavy-lifting so departments don't have to waste time and resources doing it for themselves. At this stage, you need to prove how effective a system will be in real terms – and the best way to do this? By manually carrying out a CRM process for yourself.

For example, focus on boosting conversion rates with 1% of your client base. Following the CRM process, manually undertake the work needed to address the pain. Then look at the results – are they positive with a great return? If so, imagine

what a CRM solution could do with the remaining 99% of your client base.

It's this kind of research that the board will want to hear in the presentation – tangible, no-nonsense facts and figures based on actual findings, not hyperbole.

CRM offers a proactive, not reactive approach to running a business.

Consultant Critical No. 1

Allocate part of your marketing budget to hire in a consultant for two days – working together will prove more cost effective and efficient than doing the work solely in-house. A third party specialist will also know common business pains that can be addressed by CRM and be able to create a bespoke list to base your presentation on.



Peer Pressure?

Fear can be a powerful motivator – but it’s not one you should deploy lightly. Simply telling the board that your competitors are using CRM, so they must too, could be seen as a try-hard tactic by the C-Suite. But if you can offer genuine research on how CRM has helped competitors, then ‘peer pressure’ can help.

Also, highlight how CRM plugs you into your customers’ online activity. From social media through to email, you can reach out, connect and stay in touch with your consumers via personalised digital communications that talk directly to them, their needs and pains.

Many companies are already exploiting this potential to decisive effect. Ignoring its power could leave your company trailing in the years ahead – perhaps the argument shouldn’t be “our competitors are doing it, so we need to be doing it as well” but instead, “our customers are doing it, so we need to be doing it”.

When Average Is Good

Look to industry averages to uncover key insights into your own funnel – are you under performing in certain areas compared to your competitors? If so, could a CRM solution help tip the balance in your favour?

“If you make customers unhappy in the physical world, they might each tell six friends. If you make customers unhappy on the internet, they can each tell 6,000.”

Jeff Bezos, Amazon CEO highlights the risks of not staying connected to your customers/clients in the digital space.



Board Concerns

You've done your initial research and pulled together key figures and examples of how a CRM system can help locate, identify and address your company's pains.

Now it's time to focus on what the board will expect from you during the presentation itself.

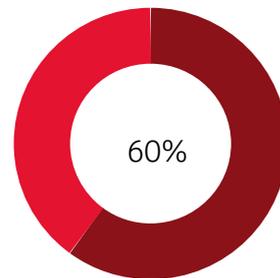
Clear, incisive information must be presented during the pitch – what is the company going to do with CRM? What is the objective? What is the C-Suite going to see from their investment?

Consider the following five questions the board will be asking themselves – and you – during the presentation:

£ 1. “How much is it going to cost us?”

Cost is a primary issue – according to Sales Initiative's CRM survey 2014, 60% of respondents saw cost as an issue that needed to be overcome when preparing a CRM business case.

It is essential then to be upfront about the level of investment that the rollout will require. If there is any 'fogginess' about costs, you will lose their interest.



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📊 2. “What about our ROI?”

Costs aside, it all comes down to ROI. The board will want to know how they are going to make their money back so you need to boil down to

the basics, offering projections and predicted percentages so the board know what money they will make back from their investment.

3. “How will CRM help us get inside our customers’ heads?”

Tell them what levels of insight they will get; CRM offers live feedback and it’s always-on, accessible via reports and dashboards that are designed to help you spot emerging trends and issues at a glance. There’s also no waiting for month- or quarter-end reports, therefore boosting the speed of any decision-making.

Just as importantly, you can highlight how a CRM system can help identify emerging pains. When deployed correctly, you can in effect ‘look’ into the future and spot potential pains on the horizon. You’ll be able to start dealing with them in the present.

4. “What benefit will we see in the short term? We want a quick hit as well as long term payoffs...”

A CRM system can start delivering almost straight away by [segmenting your database](#). For example, client email addresses can be imported into a CRM system and organised. You can immediately begin identifying which customers have bought which products in the past, the last time you communicated with them, what customers enquired about, and so forth.

This will enable marketers to quickly push out personalised marketing to any individuals who have previously expressed interest in your organisation – and increase the chances of a return on the board’s investment from the off.

5. “How will CRM boost department performance?”

A properly deployed CRM solution will bring marketing and sales together so customers can be targeted more efficiently, which in turn will lead to increased sales. Another benefit is that while the sales department’s success can be

easily measured by the board, marketing’s is not so quantifiable – but a CRM system can help the board monitor your marketing operations’ performance far more efficiently.

The Big Day

You've done your research. You've located the business pains. You've got answers to all the board's potential questions. So now it's time for the meeting – but how should you approach the presentation?

⚡ Pain First

Always start with the business pains and show how CRM will resolve each problem.

⬇ To the Point

Keep your presentation succinct, straight-talking and jargon-free with a maximum of half-a-dozen key benefits. This can include how CRM is going to be good for the company, how it is going to make the company better and what return and new business it is likely to generate, based on hard research.

📁 In Hand

Most boards will want a pack handed to them when you walk in – so create one that isn't overly wordy and features all the key aspects/facts that you're going to cover during the presentation.

👤 Get a Sponsor

The savvy marketer knows that to win over the board, it's best to have one of the board onside before the presentation. Identify who you feel would be a strong sponsor for your project beforehand and pitch to them one-to-one.

They will be able to go through your plans, point out potential problem areas and advise you on what the board will expect to hear from you.

With a sponsor on board, it also means when you walk into the board room, you'll already have someone on the other side of the table who has bought into your vision and can back you up during the presentation – and most importantly, after you have left the room.

😬 You Think It's All Over... It's Not

Expect more than one meeting with the board – they may want to see examples of the reports and dashboards, or even a working demo as a follow-up.

Always plan ahead so if they request further information, you'll already have follow-up materials in place.

Consultant Critical No. 2

A quick, short demo will help the board see what a CRM system can do for the business with the consultant taking them through key features including reporting and dashboards. The demo is also an opportunity to introduce your intended CRM partner to the board so they will know who you'll be working with if they greenlight your project.

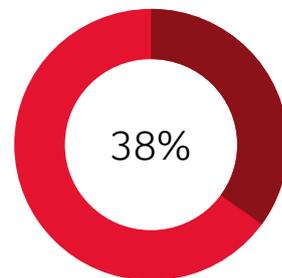
And Don't Forget...

... there are many companies who have rushed to embrace CRM – but then don't know how to fully exploit its potential. Employees might not have been fully trained or educated about its benefits, or worse, the CRM solution was simply shoehorned into the company's existing structure and not fully bled into every aspect of its day-to-day operations.

It's imperative then that you not only highlight the strategic benefits of a CRM system but also touch on how the CRM system will be implemented. You should include brief plans for training staff and the benefits of bringing a consultant onboard.

Finally, you need to make clear to board members that to ensure maximum user adoption across the company, the board must show itself to be behind

the CRM rollout. This official 'stamp of approval' is essential to the long term success of your CRM rollout.



of CRM projects fail due to a lack of senior level/exec support.

The CRM Cheat Sheet

Here's a list of some of the fundamental CRM benefits that you can use as potential talking points during your presentation:

Customer Pains

By closely tracking customer feedback, you are better positioned to spot an issue that is becoming a concern for existing or potential buyers. The issue can be acted on, showing customers that you're proactive and keen to listen to their feedback, strengthening your relationship with them in the process.

Trend Spotter

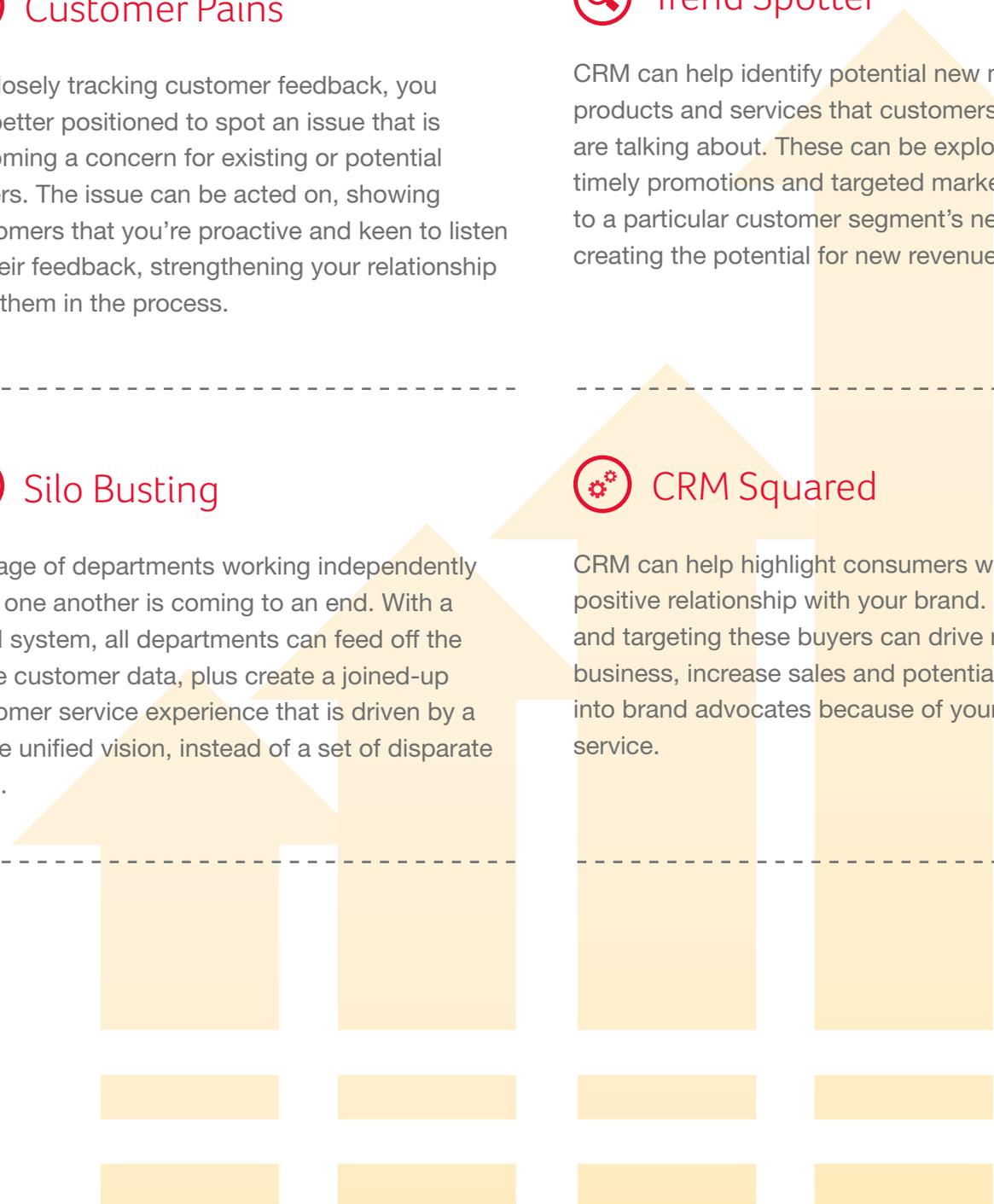
CRM can help identify potential new markets, products and services that customers want and are talking about. These can be exploited via timely promotions and targeted marketing tailored to a particular customer segment's needs - creating the potential for new revenue streams.

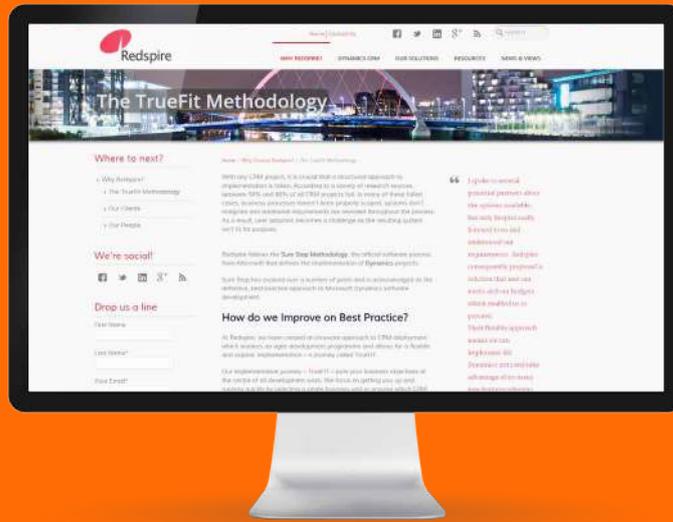
Silo Busting

The age of departments working independently from one another is coming to an end. With a CRM system, all departments can feed off the same customer data, plus create a joined-up customer service experience that is driven by a single unified vision, instead of a set of disparate ones.

CRM Squared

CRM can help highlight consumers who enjoy a positive relationship with your brand. Identifying and targeting these buyers can drive repeat business, increase sales and potentially, turn them into brand advocates because of your always-on service.





CRM isn't software; it's what great salespeople do. Discover a new methodology with the TrueFIT experience.

Learn more