

CRM PROJECT-

Where do you start



Step one:

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

You need to gain an understanding of the outcomes you want to achieve from your CRM initiative and the level of investment needed to reach those. In broad terms, there are four types of outcome that result from CRM: revenue growth, enhanced customer service leading to improved customer retention, streamlined business processes delivering lower costs or greater efficiencies, and improved management of information allowing for better decision-making.

Your task is to take these broad outcomes and focus in on the aspects that align with your specific business strategy. You need to be able to see the precise ways in which you want your business to improve. Focus in on the specific outcomes that matter to your organization and you are far more likely to achieve them. For help with building a business case for CRM [click here](#).

Step two:

QUANTIFY OUTCOMES

You have now pretty much defined your requirements and these should be put down in writing in the form of a requirements document (for help with this [click here](#)). However, for a ROI calculation you need to go further: you need to quantify the outcomes you want to achieve.

This is a fairly detailed and time-consuming process that involves measuring how well your sales, marketing or customer service functions perform now, then assessing how much a new CRM platform could improve that performance, and then ideally linking that to new business or renewal sales and so indicating an anticipated financial return. After that, you need to go through the same process on the costs side: what are your current costs and how could CRM streamline processes and so reduce those costs? To fully understand your potential return

you'll need to go through all aspects of the business in granular detail (for example, understand how long it takes your finance team to raise invoices, how much of their time could be saved by automating the process, and what saving of salary and loaded costs could be achieved by that automation etc.) then move to other departments and see how they could also benefit from a change in process.

Step three:

GET HELP

Once you know your expected return you can move on to quantifying the cost involved in achieving it. What will the CRM licenses cost? What about implementation and ongoing support? You will almost certainly need to speak to vendors at this point, and many people actually choose to bring them in at the previous steps – vendors have many years' experience of CRM implementations and so are well-placed to advise on the improvements CRM could make to your organization.

Before you bring in vendors you may want to have a go yourself at calculating your likely ROI (for guidance on how to do this [click here](#)).

CONCLUSION

Once you know how to get started, taking the first steps to improving your organization through CRM is easy. Doing these successfully will ensure your implementation is aligned to specific business outcomes; your business requirements are clearly understood and defined; and all involved have clear and realistic expectations. It also allows you to allocate an appropriate budget and then check periodically to ensure you are achieving the expected return.

