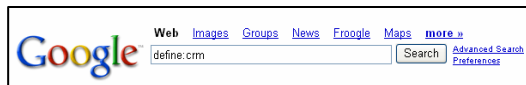


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## CRM, what's in a name?



“The overall process of marketing, sales, and service within any organization.”

[www.adobe.com/products/vdp/glossary.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/vdp/glossary.html)

“The entire process of a pre-sales, sales and service relationship with a customer. Many software applications are now available that permit you to record this relationship from the time the clients asks their first question. Good CRM software is much more efficient than fragmented records as it can save time in tracking communications and transactions with a particular person.”

[www.hostqueue.com/ecommerce/glossary.html](http://www.hostqueue.com/ecommerce/glossary.html)

“Customer relationship management. A generic term that means to build long-term customer relationships by offering incentives for customers to remain loyal instead of taking their business elsewhere.”

[www.marketconscious.com/dict.htm](http://www.marketconscious.com/dict.htm)



So it recently dawned on me that CRM systems are indeed becoming the hot new trend for businesses in Bozeman. Considering Stratum Solutions has helped install, configure, and implement 3 new systems in the last few months, I'm warmed up to this belief. At a Microsoft seminar in Billings a few months back, it was announced that over 60% of small to medium sized businesses would implement some type of CRM system in 2006.

Skeptical of this percentage, I attempted to perform my own investigation. Most research that I have found claims the CRM market will experience annual growth of 9-10% with annual customer investments of \$2.5 billion (<https://partner.microsoft.com/40025385>). While this growth rate significantly disputes the previous claim, I was interested to discover that Microsoft's Dynamics CRM, the same CRM system that we use, has experienced growth over 100% annually.

So is CRM just hype or a valid strategic business system? While the benefits of CRM can be disputed by some, I can personally attest to the benefits of a well implemented system. A good system can provide a 360 degree view of your leads, contacts and customers, track marketing campaign effectiveness, and predict your sales pipeline. All of which are immensely important to small businesses.

Are you interested in a CRM system? I suggest you contact a competent information technology partner or systematically study the plethora of systems available on the market. Good luck!

-Lance Tinseth, President

## Ways to Reduce Stress at Work

### ○ Work on things that are important.

*This may sound obvious, but many of us are tempted to work on easy tasks first so we can have a sense of accomplishment.*

### ○ Set daily goals.

*When scheduling your time, assume that something unexpected will come up and build a cushion of time to deal with it. To minimize the stress of meeting self-imposed deadlines, avoid making promises about when tasks will be completed.*

### ○ Keep an "activity log".

*This will help you figure out what your time is being spent on. Every time you start and end a new activity, including a break, make a note of the time.*

### ○ Be gentle with yourself.

*Aim to meet or even exceed expectations, but don't try to achieve perfection. Whenever possible, delegate routine tasks, even if you think you can do them better than someone else.*

### ○ Avoid interruptions.

*Unless you are expected to be on call, select a time of day when you will return phone calls and e-mails. During other times, let your voice mail take messages for you. You can also create an auto reply for your e-mail to let people know that their message has been received.*

### ○ Don't let other people's problems become your own.

*As Richard Carlson, author of Don't Sweat the Small Stuff at Work, says "If someone throws you a ball you don't have to catch it." When someone comes to you with a problem that isn't yours, try limiting your contribution to advice instead of taking on the task yourself.*

### ○ When you're overwhelmed, say so.

*Companies want to keep good employees, so most bosses will want to know when you are having difficulty. However, instead of saying "I can't do it", offer some possible solutions.*

[www.msn.careerbuilder.com](http://www.msn.careerbuilder.com)

## Customer Relationship Management

### What is CRM?

Most commonly, CRM is defined as the technology and business strategy that gives an organization a 360 degree view of their customers in a way that continually enhances and strengthens the relationship. CRM is used to increase the customer base, provide exceptional service, increase customer satisfaction, improve customer relationships, and create loyal customers who will make repeated or related purchases. Building and maintaining customer relationships is critical to holding a competitive advantage and staying ahead of your competition.

### CRM involves:

- ◆ Measuring both inputs across all functions including marketing, sales and service costs and outputs in terms of customer revenue, profit and value.
- ◆ Acquiring and continuously updating knowledge about customer needs, motivation and behavior over the lifetime of the relationship.
- ◆ Applying customer knowledge to continuously improve performance through a process of learning from successes and failures.
- ◆ Integrating the activities of marketing, sales and service to achieve a common goal.
- ◆ Implementing the appropriate systems to support customer knowledge acquisition, sharing and the measurement of CRM effectiveness.
- ◆ Constantly flexing the balance between marketing, sales and service inputs against changing customer needs to maximize profits.

### Benefits of CRM include:

- ◆ Having all of your important customer information in one place, and available for anyone within the company who needs to see the data.
- ◆ Saving time and increasing employee productivity by having the data you want tracked readily available.
- ◆ If there is an issue with a customer, they can expect you to know about it and have a solution or be working on one.
- ◆ Being more productive with your time and more effective at your job using automatic reminders.
- ◆ Following up in a timely manner to help increase customer loyalty and gain new customers.
- ◆ Management and decision makers have access to deals in the sales pipeline at any given time.
- ◆ Increasing sales productivity and revenue by making the necessary adjustments to reduce the number of lost sales.

### How can CRM help my business?

CRM can help almost any business that needs to maintain a relationship with one or more groups of people. The most obvious use of CRM is in a sales situation, either business-to-business or business-to-consumer. CRM can also be used where other relationships need to be managed such as donors, contributors, or members.

So, how can CRM help your business? Ask yourself the following questions, and if any answer is "yes", CRM can definitely help your business.

- ◆ Do you want to grow your business?
- ◆ Do you want more customers or more sales?
- ◆ Do you want to be able to provide a better level of customer service?
- ◆ Do you want your customers to be more loyal to you?
- ◆ Do you want your customer to always think of you when they have an opportunity to refer business?
- ◆ Do you want your current customers to purchase more products, more often?
- ◆ Do you want to make sure that everything that needs to take place does, and nothing falls through the cracks?
- ◆ Do you want an increased number of sales opportunities and make sure that all of your sales opportunities are followed through to completion?
- ◆ Are you in a competitive industry and want to stay ahead of your competition?

# Desktop Computer Best Practices

There are several things that end users can do to optimize the capability of their desktop computer or laptop and keep things running smoothly.

1. Have an anti-virus installed that updates on a daily basis.
2. Make sure that you are set to receive automatic updates from Microsoft.
  - a. To do this go to [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com) and click on Microsoft Update under Product Resources and run the installation.
3. Uninstall programs that are not needed by going to the Control Panel and Add/Remove programs.
4. Make sure your computer tower is stored in a cool area.
  - a. If it's stored inside a cabinet, either leave the door open when in use or drill large holes for ventilation.
  - b. If your computer runs in a dust filled environment, make sure to have canned air around to blow out the dust inside the computer tower on a regular basis.
5. Use a strong password and change it at least every 90 days.
  - a. Strong passwords are typically at least 8 characters long, and use a combination of upper and lower case letters as well as digits and symbols.
6. Clean out your temporary Internet files on a regular basis.
  - a. To do this open up your Internet Explorer and go to Tools > Internet Options.
7. Run Microsoft Disk Defragmenter and Disk Cleanup on a regular basis.
  - a. To find it go to Start > Programs > Accessories > System Tools, and Disk Defragmenter or Disk Cleanup
8. Backup important information either to a server or an external hard drive.

- Sunny Hardeman, IT Technician



## Customer Spotlight:



**BioScience Laboratories, Inc.** was formed in 1991 to serve the needs of the healthcare profession and allied fields, as well as pharmaceutical, cosmetic and over-the-counter product manufacturers and developers. Their primary goals are to assist clients in meeting regulatory requirements, strengthen clients current market positions and aid clients in developing new markets. BioScience Laboratories, Inc. achieves this by offering state-of-the-art laboratory services, including guidance regarding Federal and State Regulatory Agency Requirements.

Stratum Solutions is the IT solution provider for BioScience Laboratories, Inc. Since the beginning of our relationship, Stratum has strived to improve the reliability of the network and productivity of the workers. By subscribing to our Outsourced IT Service, computer users are more willing to come forward when they have a problem because there is no additional cost to get the problem resolved.

Stratum also monitors the BioScience Laboratories, Inc. network 24/7 to ensure that all critical services are running at their optimal performance. We can also detect and repair system errors before they cause unnecessary downtime.

“Our computer support specialist from Stratum Solutions is always there for us and he seems more like a member of our team than a vendor. “

-Alex Gallub, Comptroller

# 5 Industry Buzzwords

## Blogs

Weblogs, or “blogs” are personal Web Sites where people can write entries and post photos on a specific topic of their choosing. They can also be used as online diaries or scrapbooks and are a great way to share news and photos with family and friends around the world.

## VoIP

Voice over Internet Protocol allows people to have PC-to-PC voice conversations, or enables a person to talk with someone who has access to a regular phone.

## Beta

Beta is a term used to describe Web sites or products that are still in test, or preview, version before they are officially released. The main benefit of making a Beta version of a Web site available to the public is that people can provide useful feedback on how to make it better.

## RSS

Real Simple Syndication allows Internet users to subscribe to the information that appeals to them online, such as a blog or newspaper Web site they like. Once they subscribe to a Web site's RSS feed, they can receive real-time updates to their e-mail inbox or a special Web site set up specifically to receive feeds from their favorite sites.

## Tagging

Internet tagging helps people categorize information on the Internet. With so much to find online these days, this is a useful tool for discovering information. Tagging is similar to the bookmarks people make on their personal Web browsers, except that Tagged Web pages are stored on the internet.

[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)





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