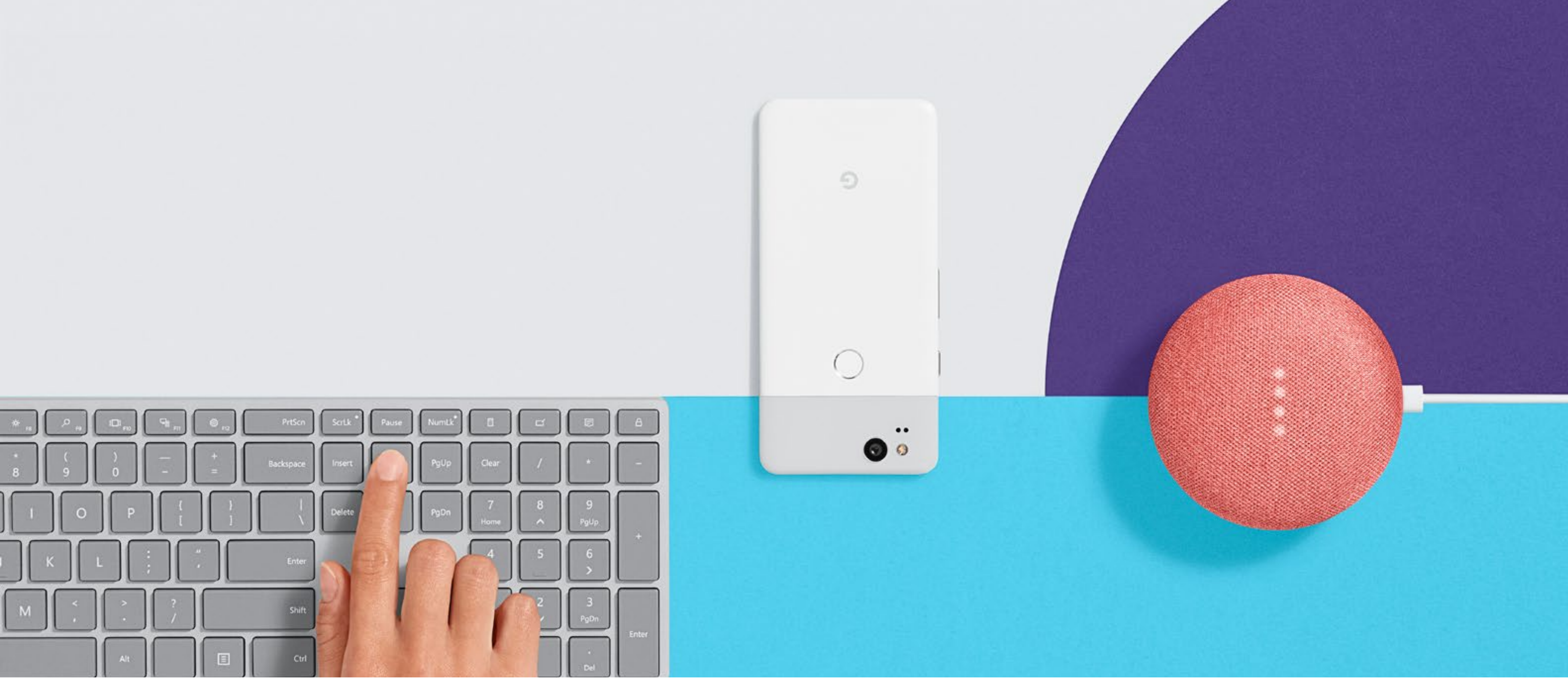

A GUIDE FOR TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

# How to Grow Faster with a CRM: Best Practices for Tech Companies.

In this ebook, we'll show you how a CRM can help you win clients, communicate more effectively, and build longer-lasting relationships.

:copper

SECTION 1

# What is a CRM?

## A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is a tool that helps your company grow its revenue by not only acquiring new customers, but also expanding within existing accounts.

This is done primarily through building and managing relationships, from new leads to long-time customers, to vendors and partners. Think of it as the ultimate contact manager for anyone who interacts with your business, equipped with the tools to make sure every stage of the customer journey is a great experience.

## While traditional CRMs are focused on selling, technology companies today are discovering that they can use a CRM to:

**Keep track of leads:** Score the quality of new leads and route them to the appropriate sales rep, then tag them for appropriate follow-up so that no one gets lost between the cracks.

**Stay on top of conversations:** A CRM can track all interactions with all contacts, regardless of who was involved in the conversation. This gives reps complete knowledge of contacts and companies and allows them to approach every email and call with confidence.

**Personalize messages at scale:** Store data like job titles, industry, and location in any given record in order to send mass communication with personalized touches.

**Manage the pipeline:** Know which leads are progressing through the pipeline, what stage deals are at, and forecast wins to plan weeks and quarters accordingly.

**Automate:** Businesses scale by finding what works, automating repetitive tasks, and becoming more efficient at others. A CRM can help create processes that eliminate time-consuming tasks and ease the onboarding of new reps.

**Retain customers:** A strong relationship is built by being proactive about helping customers. Your team can use a CRM to get a better understanding of companies or contacts, so they can find new ways to help them grow.

**Collaborate more effectively:** CRMs have evolved from their traditional use of tracking sales reps through reports and forecasts to now being used to help reps collaborate on building relationships and sell as a team.


Tech companies like Stripe, Slack, and Square scaled by being meticulous: they knew their high-quality leads well and used information specific to their businesses to have positive interactions. Sales reps created strong relationships based on buyer personas, which allowed them to work smart and hit their quota. After closing, success managers had full visibility on new customers to onboard them smoothly, and built rapport to make them long-term customers. If there is one lesson from the best companies in tech, it’s this: amazing teams are enabled by accurate data, efficient operations, and a relentless cadence.

# Why invest in CRM software?

| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| PROBLEM | Communicating with leads and customers is time-consuming. | Managing contacts and staying on top of conversations takes up a lot of bandwidth from sales and success teams, allowing prospects to slip through the cracks. | Lack of understanding of where deals are at and what needs to be done to hit quota. |
| HOW CRM HELPS | All user data is stored in one place, and can be used in bulk email and other communications at scale. | Full history of interactions for every contact, at multiple levels (e.g. company-wide), including tags on who is part of each relationship. | Visibility on deal flow including what stage a deal is at, how long it has been in the pipeline, and any accompanying notes. |
| OUTCOME | Personalized messaging to leads and customers, creating unique interactions that require little time from your team. | Gain a strong understanding of every contact or company at a glance, ensuring every conversation gets ample attention. | Ability to analyze pipeline health, determine what characteristics lead to a strong deal, and forecast wins for a given period. |

# 1

# Save time and money.

Salespeople should spend their time selling, not entering data. Unfortunately for sales reps at most tech companies, this isn't the case. Tasks like digging through a spreadsheet to update contact information or adding notes from recent conversations are all too common, with 71% of reps stating they spend too much time on data entry.

CRMs save that time by making it easier for reps to store data on leads and access it quickly. Reps can search for leads directly or filter their records based on company, pipeline stage, or date of last contact. This allows them to focus on getting more creative with their outreach—like launching personalized campaigns at scale to increase reply rates.

Managing and accessing data efficiently becomes critical as a company scales. After LumApps, a 25-person startup, was recognized for their innovation in the G Suite Marketplace, their lead volume jumped 2,000% overnight. Reps had their inboxes flooded by leads, and the processes for managing leads and streamlining the sales process needed to be scaled quickly. With a CRM system, they were able to track the influx of new inbound leads and ensure they received the appropriate follow-up.

“As a company, we are very much into transparency, such as who’s talking to which client and where we can see the status of one deal without having to email, ping, Slack or call each other.”

——— JENNI SAMUELS, DIRECTOR OF RETAIL PARTNERSHIPS, ZIVELO

# 2

# Convert from new lead to customer without a hitch.

The customer journey can be a rocky experience for a new lead. Marketing campaigns are sent to signups to educate them on the product and gauge their interest. Those same leads are circulated to sales reps who have to backtrack and figure out what stage the lead is at, and what they need to do to move the deal along. Finally, after a signed contract, the new customer is handed off to a customer success manager who has to repeat the entire process. It's often disjointed and can lead to lower sales conversions and higher churn.

Implementing a CRM system addresses this issue by acting as the source of truth for everyone involved in the customer journey. Sales reps can see all communications with leads as soon as they're assigned, so they have context on what the leads know (or don't know). Likewise, Customer Success teams can easily review how the deal progressed and if there were any issues along the way, tackling them immediately to give the new customer a warm welcome.

Essentially, CRMs allow interdepartmental teams to work together in building relationships with leads and customers. This was reflected in the CRM Benchmark Report, which found that U.S. tech companies value CRMs for more than simply sales, with 67% using CRMs for activity management, followed by 44.5% for relationship management and 40% for sales forecasting.

Zivelo, a technology consultancy for retail stores, used a CRM for a similar purpose when attempting to scale their team. Their Business Development Pipeline was complex, involving multiple members of their team as well as external partners. Sales reps found themselves frantically pinging their colleagues to get details on a lead or ongoing deal—a time-consuming process that lengthened deal cycles and hurt existing relationships. By using a CRM, they were able to get their entire team aligned on outreach, where a rep at any stage knew (or could easily find out) what was happening with the relationship, reducing the friction in lead hand-off.

# U.S. tech companies value CRMs for more than simply sales

**67%**

USING CRMs FOR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

**44.5%**

USING CRMs FOR RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

**40%**

USING CRMs FOR SALES FORECASTING

# 3

# Close more deals.

Pipeline management can be challenging for sales reps. They need to know how many leads to prospect, what it takes for a deal to move forward, and how everything plays into hitting their quota. It often involves nurturing leads, knowing what questions still need to be answered, who is waiting on a demo, and whether follow-up is needed—even when there are multiple deals at different stages happening at the same time.

CRMs store contact fields such as email, location, job title, and employee count, which can be aggregated to understand which leads are higher quality than others. For example, some tech companies consider seniority (like having a Manager or Director job title) a key factor in whether a lead converts to a deal, and will implement scoring models based on these fields to help reps prioritize their outreach.

But closing deals encompasses more than the final steps of a sales processes. It's important to consider the early stages as well. For example, relying on individual rep knowledge alone to gauge lead quality isn't transferable and makes onboarding new reps considerably harder. Their knowledge is often stored in a cluster of documents and personal email inboxes, which isn't accessible or conducive to figuring out which types of outreach scale well and how your business can grow its sales team effectively.

Ultimately, a CRM can give your reps a strong understanding of where their deals are at in the pipeline and which relationships they need to give more attention to in order to hit quota. No more last-minute demo requests, missed follow-ups, or sent contracts that are long past their due date. Instead, they have full control over their deal volume and can easily share their results with their manager or other stakeholders.

"What's key to our growth is that our sales agents are fully using one CRM, so we have this one consistent, easy flow."

ROGER, VP OPERATIONS, ONESUPPORT

SECTION 2

# How should your tech company implement a CRM?

Here's how to set it up and get everyone on board.

# 1

# Set your goals.

A CRM system is meant to solve issues for your business, and that starts by identifying what you want to solve and capture. Ideally, goals should be **SMART**: **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ssignable, **r**ealistic, and **t**ime-related. Here are some examples of goals that a CRM may help you achieve:

- **Decrease time-to-first-touch for sales reps by one day**
- **Reduce length of sales cycle by 35%**
- **Accelerate ramp-up time for new customers by one week, by having your success team be more aligned on deals and reach out sooner**
- **Implement a lead scoring model that identifies 10 high-quality leads per week**

# 2

# Determine your budget and who will be using the CRM.

Good CRMs are rarely—if ever—free, and should be accounted for in your existing budget. While you want wide adoption for a new CRM system, not everyone needs to be an active user. In order to determine your budget, you'll need to find out the following:

- **Which teams will need access to the CRM? How many users?**
- **What relationships are you capturing in your CRM? (Customers, partners, vendors, suppliers, etc.)**
- **What features are essential to a dependable CRM?**
- **What is your anticipated date for going live?**
- **What is the service cost to deploy?**
- **Does the CRM require a full-time admin or not?**

Many CRMs price their products in tiers based on the value provided. Usually, basic offers get you 80% of the way there so it's generally recommended to start with that package and upgrade when necessary.

Once you know what features you need, you'll be able to effectively evaluate different CRMs and determine the true cost of each one.

# 3

## Take an inventory of your business data.

Good data is the backbone of any CRM system: it can help users understand who leads and customers are and more importantly, how to build strong relationships with them. This wealth of data is stored in the various software and apps you use, which makes integrating them with your CRM a priority. A lot of tech companies have trouble finding the right fit in this area, as 41% of them state that one of the biggest inconveniences of using a CRM is the inability to integrate with current tools

Here are some examples of useful integrations whose data you might want to connect to your CRM:

- **Gmail and G Suite (Docs, Slides, Sheets, Hangouts)**
- **Mailchimp, Outreach, Apollo, Constant Contact or other email software**
- **RingCentral or other VoIP software**
- **Dropbox or other storage platforms**
- **Typeform or other form creators**
- **Quickbooks, Xero, Stripe, or other payment-related apps**

Good data is the backbone of any CRM system: it can help users understand who leads and customers are and more importantly, how to build strong relationships with them.

# 4

# Choose a CRM.

Once you've set your goals, established a budget, and decided on your desired integrations, you're ready to choose a CRM. In order to make the best decision, you need to determine which one fits your specific business needs the best. CRMs used at large corporations like Square or small tech startups will differ drastically in terms of features (and pricing).

Here are some best practices for choosing a CRM that works for your company:

## Dig into what you need

The first search result on Google may just be the company that spends the most on SEO. Review sites like G2 Crowd or Capterra can give you a good idea of what users are saying about the CRM, but it's important to read into their use cases and qualms. Some CRMs have long lists of features but lack flexibility or adoption, which may raise red flags to some reviewers but not to others.

## Try a couple of options

Most CRM systems will give you a trial of their software before you need to commit to a paid plan. Start a few different trials to compare the interfaces, determine if features are beneficial (or off-putting), and see how much time it takes to set things up. Include team members, especially those who will be actively using the CRM, in your trials to get their feedback. Some CRMs are self-serve whereas others may have you go through a sales rep. They may tempt you with limited offers or discounts, but weigh these factors carefully: choosing the wrong CRM, even if it's cheaper upfront, can end up costing more time and money in the end.

## Ask your industry peers

Tech companies differ drastically, and what works for one business model may be terrible for another. Ask similar companies in your industry (size, sales model) about their experiences in finding a CRM, particularly what they wish they knew before committing to a contract. Consider going to industry meetups, posting a question on Facebook or Twitter, or asking questions on a message board like Quora or Reddit. Rely on your team as well—see who may have insight or skill sets that will help you identify useful functionality in a CRM, and bring them on board to help. Even getting a second opinion from a few people at your company on your initial findings can be helpful for confirming what you know or discovering new questions to ask.

## Look for customizability and quick deployment

CRMs typically offer some level of customization, so find one that can be easily tailored to your needs. The majority of tech companies report CRM implementation taking anywhere between two weeks to a year—when typically it should take a few days to a week at most.

Avoid hiring expensive developers; instead, read through documentation to figure out how custom fields or reports can be created, and how complicated it is to do. If it takes longer than an hour or requires outside help, you should probably find something that's more user-friendly.

## Get a demo

Many CRMs have unexpected functionality that can benefit your business if you have a bit of background knowledge. Don't be afraid to reach out and get a walkthrough from their product experts. Make sure to ask specific questions to get a demo of the product in a way that applies to your everyday workflows.

# 5

# Assemble your CRM dream team.

In an ideal organization, everyone who needs to use the CRM will be easily onboarded. However, the reality is that for many companies, it takes some help to get there. Smaller tech companies may have one person champion the implementation, whereas larger ones may have a variety of players at the table. Here are some questions to ask in order to build your CRM swat team:

- **Who will lead this project?**
- **Will that person be the administrator of the CRM, or will it be someone else?**
- **Who will be responsible for importing existing data?**
- **Who will be responsible for integrating the CRM with software we're currently using?**
- **Who will build our standard reports and dashboards?**
- **Which teams are going to be using the CRM?**
- **Who is the best point of contact on each team?**

Another good way to think about this is to look at the goals you've set and ask who will be responsible for achieving each one.

# 6

# Create properties, pipeline stages, and customize fields.

A CRM system is the machine that can propel your organization forward, but it needs to reflect how your organization functions in order to make a difference. To do this, make sure your CRM encompasses your sales process and customer onboarding accurately by configuring the various fields and stages in the CRM.

HERE ARE SOME KEY THINGS TO CONFIGURE AND WHAT THEY MEAN:

## Properties

CRMs usually come with a set of default properties. These are essentially categories of information about a lead, deal, or current customer that you want your CRM to store. For example, common properties include Contact Name, Deal Stage, and Contract Value. When setting up your CRM, choose properties that represent information critical to your sales process and onboarding. Also, think about the information you'll want to analyze when you build reports and dashboards.

## Pipeline stages

Pipeline stages allow you to track the progression of deals. Once you've defined your sales cycle, assign a name to each stage. When in doubt, keep it simple: only set up stages that you need in order to keep track of a deal's progress. These can often help your sales reps determine what needs to be done for each deal. Zivelo, the company we mentioned earlier, has four stages: Initial Contact, In-Person Meeting, Due Diligence, and finally Negotiation and Contract.

## Custom fields

CRMs provide basic default settings—you may love some and never want to use others. For example, the lead source (i.e. organic search) may be very relevant for you, but the type of deal (i.e. outbound) is not. For crucial information that doesn't have a place, create custom fields. Some examples might include Plan Type, Type of Subscription (annual vs monthly), and Renewal Date.

# 7

# Explore existing reporting dashboards.

Once you've imported your data, you're ready to start analyzing your business via dashboards and reports. This is where you can see the health of your business and discover trends that inform future business decisions and strategy. Some CRMs have out-of-the-box reports that already give you a good amount of visibility into organizations, so make sure you explore them before spending hours creating your own. Here are some examples of reports that tech companies commonly use to grow their business (note: the time period can easily be adjusted by day, week, month, quarter, or year):

- **Number of leads contacted**
- **Number of contacts with no activity**
- **Lead-to-deal conversion ratio**
- **Opportunities created**
- **Closed lost deals (including lost reasons)**
- **New revenue**
- **Days from contract signed to success reach-out**

SECTION 3

# How do you get the team to actually use a CRM?

A 4-step checklist

## 1 Meet with your team.

You're almost home free—you found the right CRM, your team has been working tirelessly on implementation, now you just need everyone to use it. Before you start inviting users, think about some common questions they might have, or what they need to know to get started. This may differ from team to team, and your dream team will be a huge help in spreading the word. Many CRMs offer an option to invite your teammates with a standard onboarding email, but consider sending a separate, more personalized email with more details.

## 2 Establish buy-in from key stakeholders.

Employees often look to others for guidance, especially when a new tool is introduced. If your top rep isn't using the CRM, then others on the team won't feel pressured to do so either. Think about who has the most influence at your company and get their buy-in, both in a general sense and from a team-specific lens. For smaller companies, this may just require getting your CEO onboard.

## 3 Create incentives to encourage adoption.

Teams may not jump at the idea of using a CRM, despite the benefits that you've outlined. One way to incentivize adoption is to tie daily activities to CRM usage and acknowledge success when it's recorded in the CRM. For example, have dashboards only show successful deals that are marked 'Closed Won,' or give a new list of leads to reps who have no untagged leads under their name.

## 4 Hold in-person training sessions.

Emails are great, but nothing beats in-person interaction. Get your team together so you can show them what the CRM does and field any questions they have. CRMs usually have existing content you can alter and use to introduce new concepts and processes to your team, so this is often actually easier than it seems.

SECTION 4

# How can tech companies use a CRM to grow their business?

## Used correctly, a CRM isn't just another addition to your tech stack; it can be the catalyst that aligns your team and fosters better relationships with your customers.

# 54%

INCREASE OF BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS LAST LONGER THAN TWO YEARS COMPARED TO FIVE YEARS AGO

Tech companies are seeing longer-lasting commitment from customers, with almost 71% of respondents in the CRM Benchmark Report stating that their business relationships last longer than two years: a 54% increase compared to five years ago.

By using your CRM in the ways outlined below, you can better understand individual sales rep performance, make smarter decisions with data, and produce happier customers with lower churn.

# Empower your team by automating workflows.

Unlike spreadsheets, CRMs don't rely on individual habits (like manually checking which leads have yet to be contacted) to yield action. Instead, task completion is encouraged through preset workflows, which keeps sales reps on track and helps them spend more time selling instead of checking and entering data. This is a crucial issue for sales teams, who currently waste 33% of their time on data entry. To combat this and make reps more productive, a CRM can be configured to quickly surface this information to them. Many CRMs also automate the data entry process by scraping email signatures for contact details, pulling in company descriptions from the internet, and auto-filling linked social profiles. Here are some examples of automation triggers that do exactly that:

Here are some examples of automation triggers you can create:

— **Send an alert to reps after one day if a 'Qualified' lead has not received a first touch**

— **Create a custom view of leads who are currently in an active deal cycle**

— **Send new customers a default welcome email when their deal moves to 'Contract Signed,' and send an internal message to the relevant success manager**

**33%**

OF THE SALES TEAMS' TIME WASTED ON DATA ENTRY

# Become more data-driven.

Scaling an organization requires a strong understanding of how sales, marketing, and success teams are performing, including what works and what doesn't. This means knowing what indicates a high-quality lead, how long it takes for a lead to close, and what the biggest reasons are for lost deals.

A CRM can reveal all of this information if it is configured correctly. You can create a report that automatically imports data to discover what characteristics are most impactful in the deal cycle, such as industry and seniority. These reports can show your team where to focus to build stronger relationships and create data-driven buyer personas. An additional benefit? Your sales reps will start caring more about lead data and their daily practices if you can prove what behavior (e.g. consistent follow-ups) leads to more wins.

Consider getting each team together to understand their key performance indicators (KPIs) and how this can be tracked in your CRM. Which specific data points are relevant to success? Is this data readily accessible to everyone? Is it easy to create clear reports? Regardless of mathematical aptitude, everyone on your team should be able to use a CRM to make data-driven recommendations and decisions instead of operating on gut instinct.

*See:* 6 Sales Metrics You Should Be Tracking (But Probably Aren't)

# Minimize churn.

Businesses with a subscription model thrive by giving customers a great product with consistent support and feature updates. One of the biggest challenges for tech companies is losing customers, whether it's because they no longer receive value from the product or a competitor has lured them away. This can be prevented by building a strong relationship with customers, which includes being responsive and anticipating common questions.

A CRM can assist with this process in a variety of ways. The easiest indicator is the 'Last Contacted Date,' which tells you which customers haven't been engaged with recently. A customer who hasn't interacted with your company in a while may have run into challenges and given up on finding a solution. To prevent this, you can configure your CRM to send alerts to your reps so they can reach out regularly and see how the customer is doing. Simple check-ins can be a lifesaver to subscription businesses, especially when renewal or payment dates are approaching.

## Simple check-ins can be a lifesaver to subscription businesses, especially when renewal or payment dates are approaching.

Tech companies often use the reporting functionality of their CRM to automate this process and enable reps to go a step beyond what's expected. For example, a company may have a report that surfaces its highest-value customers who haven't been contacted in the last two weeks. Reps can then go into their profiles, see relevant information on those companies, and provide contextual advice on how those companies can improve usage that goes beyond a typical script. This builds a stronger relationship and greatly reduces the likelihood of churn.

SECTION 5

# What kind of relationships can a tech company nurture with a CRM?

The days of the rolodex on the desk of a sales rep, with notes written on the backs of business cards, are gone. Information is now widely accessible to both the sales rep and the customer, which makes each interaction in the customer journey even more important. Today, CRM systems are allowing businesses to scale efforts that were once confined to individual reps, which frees them up to focus on building relationships with leads instead of just making sales.

Though relationships can be tracked, stored, and shared in unprecedented ways, tech companies still agree that customer data lives predominantly in their CRMs, many keep this data in other systems as well such as Gmail and accounting software. With a CRM, employees can gain full understanding of different relationships, regardless of their role. A customer success rep doesn't need to spend an hour on a call with a new customer to get up to speed; all they have to do is review the activity log to see what's been discussed. From day one, it's possible to develop a strong connection with leads or customers who need some extra help getting started, all using data and automation.

## Communicate better with leads.

Addressing someone by their name or giving relevant information based on their job title or company location can make all the difference in making a deeper connection, even during the early stages of getting to know a lead. What's even better, reps can do this without writing time-consuming individual emails; instead, they can use mail-merge in combination with their CRM to send unique emails at scale.

Tools like TextExpander integrate well with most CRM systems, allowing reps to give detailed responses with a keyboard shortcut, just from quickly looking at a relevant data field in the contact's record. Even Customer Success teams can use CRM data to welcome new customers and send onboarding information specific to their industry, starting the relationship off on the right foot and making those customers feel like they are using a product that really cares about their success.

# Keep partners and contractors happy.

Having satisfied customers is always a good thing, but there are other areas to focus on if you want to scale your business successfully. One of these areas is partnerships, which hinges on the ability of your company to empower others to represent your brand and deliver value (and revenue) to your business through direct integrations. Building strong relationships with partners is essential to this process.

Another area to focus on is working with contractors and vendors. A lack of communication here can lead to misunderstandings of the purpose of a project, which delays its completion and ultimately results in poor execution. Your CRM can prevent such issues by providing a full record of interactions, so your team can keep contractors in the loop—and all parties on top of exactly what is expected.

# Foster better relationships with channel partners.

When you make a great product, you want others to hear about it. Channel partners are a perfect avenue for that—not only are they fans of your product, but they may also see direct applications of your product for their customers. In many cases, these companies actually offer more value to their customers if they pair their solution with your product. This can be a strong revenue channel and a way to grow your business without additional hiring.

Unlike bringing on direct integration partners, building strong channel partners is quite similar to the sales process. Likewise, a CRM can shine here too, by allowing you to create a process for channel partnerships where you can track progress and allocate time and resources to ensure success. The backbone of this is a good relationship; channel partners need to know who they can reach out to on your team, and your team needs to know when to jump in to help. Starting a channel partnership can be difficult, but once they have the resources to easily share your product with others, they can be a strong source for referrals—and even close full deals for you.

Traditionally, sales is seen as a role that is based on “hammering the phones” and doing whatever it takes to get a deal done. This can be especially challenging with subscription and SaaS businesses, where signing customers who are a poor fit actually loses the company money when they inevitably churn.

With the birth of the internet and accessibility of information, this has changed. Leads have more visibility into what a product is capable of doing, what they’re looking for, and what they should expect once they become a customer. Customers anticipate a strong relationship with the product and its team, not just good functionality.

CRMs have embraced this change by giving teams a tool that makes them more organized, data-driven, and efficient with their time by automating time-consuming tasks that are prone to human error. Now, relationships are finally prioritized as they should be, at all stages of the funnel.

Everyone from marketing to sales to customer success can leverage the data in a CRM to create the best experience possible, not only for prospects and customers but also for vendors, contractors, and channel partners. CRMs have enabled companies like Slack and Square to sustain unprecedented growth, and opened the door for other tech companies to do the same. How will you make sure that your business thrives in the Relationship Era?

# Copper + Tech Companies

**13**

HOURS PER USER PER WEEK SAVED ON MANUAL DATA ENTRY

**50%**

MORE ACCURATE REPORTING

**43%**

INCREASE IN TEAM COLLABORATION WHEN CLOSING DEALS

**36%**

FASTER RESPONSE TIME TO PROSPECTS AND CLIENTS

# Request a demo.

Interested in learning more about how Copper can help your technology company build better relationships?

Enter your info in the form here and a Product Expert will be in touch shortly.

:copper