

The Benefits of CTI

Introduction

Organisations today are faced with many challenges. It's a highly competitive world in which our customers have many choices when it comes to buying any goods and services.

Retaining existing customers, controlling costs and seeking competitive advantage have always been difficult goals and a challenging economic environment only adds to that difficulty.

Many companies and organisations however, thrive in such circumstances and this guide seeks to show one way of achieving those goals through the effective use of communications.

There can be no doubt that the pace of technological developments and change within the communications world has accelerated in recent times – the Internet alone has demonstrated this to us all and opened up a myriad of commercial opportunities – and threats for business.

For small to medium enterprises (SMEs), often without in-house technical skills and experience to determine which communications products and applications are best suited to their business, the prospect of using technology for commercial advantage can be daunting.

Get it right and the business could be transformed. Get it wrong and it could be an expensive mistake that could have more than a financial cost.

Contact Management

It would be fair to assume that every organisation would like to improve the service they offer their own customers - all they need is the right tools to do the job.

A common factor amongst most businesses is the need to maintain or improve customer service levels to ensure the customers you have remain with you – after all it is cheaper to look after the business you have, than it is to seek out and gain new business.

In the past, many organisations have shied away from implementing customer service and contact management applications, as they had a reputation for being unwieldy in the extreme and the degree of difficulty in implementing those applications effectively, was only matched by the high cost associated with their purchase.

As a result most SME users were bypassed in the scramble to sell customer management systems as they would not have had the budget or the internal resources to implement them.

One problem with this type of top down user strategy is that the smaller customer is not entirely well catered for when the vendor starts to scale their product for the SME. Feature sets remain complex, implementation times are still lengthy and the skill sets required internally by the SME to manage and run the applications, are a frightener for most small companies. Shoe horning rarely works.

However, some software application developers have now catered specifically for the customer and contact management needs of the smaller business and developed systems that are cost effective, easy to implement but yet fully featured.

Simple Questions Easy Answers

Contact Management software should be simple to use. ‘Do you really know who you are talking to on the phone?’ If you don’t then you need a solution that can tell you the answer and a whole lot more information you need to retain customers.

Here’s a check list of desirable features for Contact Management systems.

1. **The software should integrate easily with existing software such as Microsoft Outlook for example, and be intuitive to use.**
2. **The customer contact system should integrate with call recording and call management software so that all the elements are ‘joined up’.**
3. **The system should be able to recognise who is calling and use this information to search through your database or application to find the matching contact. It will then screen-pop the contact details, all before the caller has been answered.**
4. **The system should be capable of working with outbound calls to dial clients automatically.**

Benefits

1. **Reduce Costs** - Call handling time is reduced because you have all their details to hand and don't need to ask for them again.
2. **Improve Service** - By knowing who the caller is before answering the call you can offer a more personalised service.
3. **Increase Sales** - Telephone calls can be made automatically from your database or application thus speeding up connection and avoiding mis-dialling.
4. **Improve Productivity** - By opening your application or database on the correct screen, you can enter notes right away without losing seconds finding the correct screen or tab to use.
5. **Share** - If a call is transferred, all the caller's details are shared with the next person.



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