

Do you know where your deals are?

3 Easy Ways to Get More From Your Investment in CRM

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Does your organization have a CRM solution and still use paper, email and spreadsheets to get approvals for critical revenue processes such as quotes, proposals, discounts, and non-standard contract terms? The business impact of “manual processes” can be dramatic. Lost paper work, email in “black holes”, late responses to customers, and lack of visibility into pricing and discount patterns can cost you significant revenue and margin each quarter.

Although most CRM systems today give companies a valuable central repository for their information about prospects, partners and customers, they are still, for the most part, static applications that rely on good data being keyed in from reps to have the most value to a company. There are a host of sales related processes that impact the sales cycle that are still being handled by email and spreadsheets or paper and faxes. Most CRM applications are not designed to automate this transaction activity due to its variable nature. As a result, it is not unusual to see a company employing a variety of different quoting mechanisms; a combination of e-mail, spreadsheet templates and/or paper forms.

Over the past few years, some important and practical advances have been made that make it not only possible, but relatively easy and inexpensive, to take your sales operations processes surrounding your CRM to a new level of sophistication. Gartner estimates that 75 percent of Medium Sized Business (MSB) that have purchased CRM solutions will expand their CRM systems in some way in 2005.¹

This overview takes a look at 3 ways you can expand and get more from your investment in CRM and give your company a boost at the same time.

1. Automate the critical sales operations processes that drive your business.



Most organizations that have a CRM solution still use paper, email and spreadsheets to get approvals for critical revenue processes such as quotes, proposals, discounts, and non-standard contract terms. The Meta Group reported that 80% of documents that drive and support the time-to-market and sales processes within an organization are not managed by enterprise systems.² The business impact of these “manual processes” can be dramatic. Lost paper work, email in “black holes”, late responses to customers, and lack of visibility into pricing and discount patterns can cost you significant revenue and margin each quarter. As a consequence, organizations experience long cycle times, communication break-downs, poor visibility, lack of accountability and frequent failures to execute.

Corporation XYZ, a manufacturer with \$300M in annual revenues, utilizes a popular browser-based CRM solution to automate its lead and opportunity management process. At the time a quotation with a non-standard discount needs to be prepared for a prospective customer, an excel-based Quote template is completed by the sales

¹ Gartner, CRM Predicts 2005, December 2004

² Meta Group, Workplace Optimization, July 2003

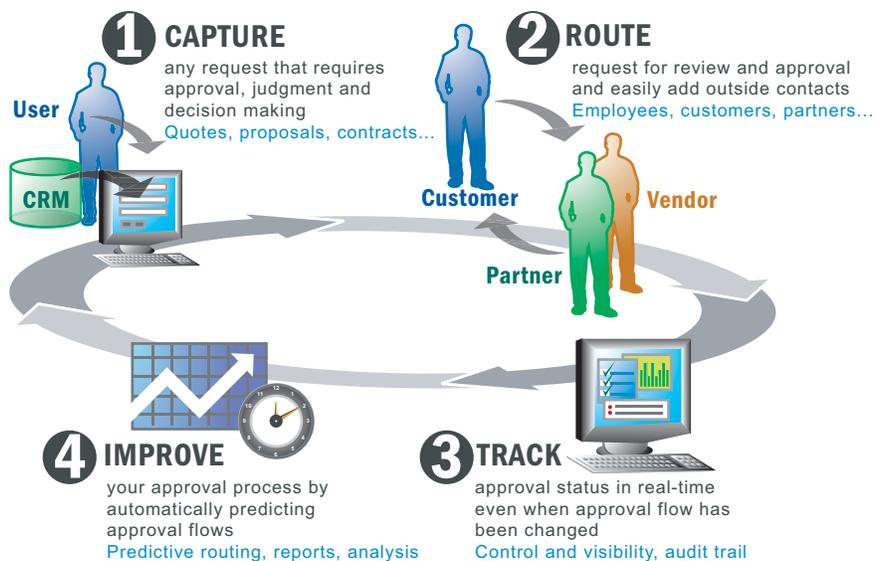
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representative and e-mailed to sales management for approval. The process, as currently designed, lacks visibility to the participants, audit trail and a closed loop. Additionally, the ad hoc nature of the approval process control would make it difficult to rely upon from a SOX compliance perspective thus placing more pressure on downstream controls in order entry and invoicing.

Another variable activity in the quote-to-cash process is contract review and approval. For companies that have a moderate to complex contractual negotiation cycle, the process of multi-department collaboration regarding non-standard transaction terms and conditions can be time consuming and error prone. Even for companies that have deployed a sophisticated contract management system, collaboration is difficult. Most contract management systems are not designed for collaboration across departments or with external constituencies, such as customers or partners.

Now, imagine you could generate a quote or proposal, could track approvals every step along the way, and then forward it to the customer for their approval, all from a single dashboard. Nsite, a leading provider of sales process automation, makes it easy to automate sales and service processes requiring judgment, decision making and approval that are currently being done with email and spreadsheets. The hosted Nsite service integrates seamlessly to your CRM system. You have complete control, visibility and traceability of every step in the process and it easily extends to reach partners and customers.

How Nsite Automates Dynamic Sales Processes



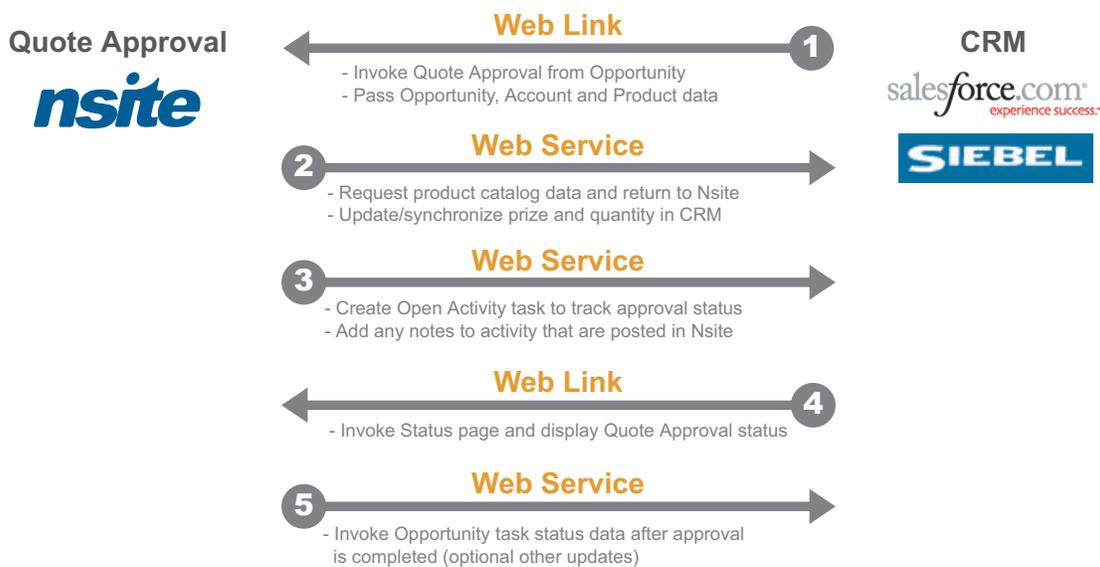
2. Integrate your CRM, collaboration systems and business process systems using web services.

Automation of manual sales processes is the first step, but in order to create and maintain an accurate, timely and complete view of sales operation processes across multiple channels, business lines and enterprises, synchronization and sharing of data is critical. Integration in the past was mostly difficult, expensive and time consuming.

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The new generation of web links and web services based integration in conjunction with On Demand solutions allow fast and low cost integration that can deliver fast ROI. Long lasting and complex integration projects that don't return an ROI are history. For example, the integration of Nsite with leading CRM vendors such as salesforce.com and Siebel CRM OnDemand helps resolve a significant and long-standing business problem for sales people: manual review and approval of contracts, proposals, quotes, discounts and other revenue driven activities. Customers of both CRM systems can almost instantly "switch on" the appropriate weblinks and web services, allowing them to launch a Quote Approval right from the Opportunity tab, share product and price data, check approval status in real-time and synchronize and update activities throughout the process. This bidirectional integration makes the entire process seamless to the users.

Example of closed loop integration between a CRM solution and a Quote Approval process:



3. Use the important data you've captured about your business to improve your top and bottom line, while also increasing your compliance.

The Gartner Group reported recently that "The first and largest component of any company's profit-and-loss statement is its sales revenue. However, many companies lack visibility into the activities of the sales organization. This could have an adverse effect on accurately reporting revenue, liabilities and costs." Even if companies have the data (e.g. in multiple spreadsheets) this data is often not actionable and reportable, meaning the effort to aggregate the data is too big. Also performance data, such as how long it takes to approve a quote, or how many get rejected is not available at all since email or paper based processes can hardly deliver those.

Now, imagine, that right from your dashboard, you could not only see your typical CRM metrics such as pipeline, but also know how many quotes you are making in any given period, with which sales channels, for which products, and to which customers. You also would see the competitors you are quoting against, and get closure on all of your quotes, whether you win or lose them. Undoubtedly that would have a huge impact on your revenues, margins and bottom line.

³ Gartner, SOX for Sales, How technology can help, December 2004

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Case Study: Using Nsite to Streamline Price Quoting, Smart Modular Wins More Business

Smart Modular Technologies, Inc., is a leading designer and manufacturer of memory modules, memory cards and communication products. Like most companies in its field, Smart Modular works with rep firms to get its wares spec'ed into its customers' products. Yet the vital processes of receiving RFQs from the rep firms, and delivering price quotes back, were based on an ERP application that was ill-suited for following-up on submitted proposals, and offered no information to analyze why deals were won or lost. Smart Modular needed a better way. Smart Modular's rep firms also wanted historical data to inform the shaping of their services. And because they could not track the progress of their RFQs, productivity was lost while the reps made phone calls and sent emails to see where their bids were. Across the board, valuable time was being diverted from finding new business.

The Solution: Smart Modular now uses Nsite to close the loop on two crucial RFQ processes; 1) the rep firms' submission of RFQs to Smart Modular, and 2) Smart Modular's delivery of price quote proposals back to the rep firms. Using Nsite, Smart Modular's rep firms now complete an HTML form, route the RFQ to Smart Modular, and track the progress of the forms. Anyone with an email address can be included in the process, and there is no longer any need to make phone calls and send emails to track down quotes-in-progress. Using Nsite, Smart Modular quickly responds to each incoming RFQ, and can then follow the quote's progress through to customer acceptance or rejection. Nsite enables Smart Modular to prepare reports on all pending RFQs instantly, enabling them to follow-up with the rep firms to help win the business.

"With Nsite, we've gained the visibility we needed to win more business. We now know how many quotes we are making in any given period, with which rep firms, for which products, and to which customers. We know which competitors we are quoting against, and we get closure on all our quotes, whether we win or lose them"

Mike Robinson, Director Business Development, Smart Modular

Conclusion

These 3 ways and the examples in this document are just the tip of the iceberg. The potential for companies to improve their customer-facing processes is huge. If you need to automate manual sales operations or customer service processes, Nsite can deliver additional value of your CRM investment, while getting:

- More visibility into deal structures, win/loss and margin analysis to increase profitability and win more deals
- Powerful analytics of critical review and approval processes, reducing cycle times and operations costs
- Improved sales productivity by freeing up time for sales people, avoiding the chase of paper, emails and spreadsheets
- Performance metrics and a complete audit trail ensuring compliance with sales, discounting and other policies

Experience for yourself how you can make sales operations more efficient. Sign up for a Free Trial now.

[30-day Free Trial](#) 