

CRM Business Plan Template

Introduction: How to Use This Template

This template will help build a living CRM business plan for the enterprise as well as document business justifications for specific near-term CRM-related projects. The goal is to quick-start specific customer projects at the same time that a corporate customer strategy begins to be defined. The resulting document is therefore intended for both initial project scoping and for future reuse, as more customer projects and strategy are defined.

Guidelines for Preparation

Prior to attempting to complete each section of the business plan, review the following suggested guidelines and recommendations.

- This tool is intended for an IT *and* business audience. It is recommended that a small team of 2-3 people write the business plan, preferably two business stakeholders and one person from IT. For example, if initial projects are focused on customer service, the team might consist of a customer website owner, a call center supervisor and an IT business architect or IT business analyst.
- The team should not spend more than two weeks to complete the first iteration of the business plan. The strategy section will be reused, or added to, in future CRM projects so the document is intended to mature and grow with subsequent projects.
- Organizations should feel free to name the business plan according to what fits best into their organization and culture. For example, if the term CRM carries a negative connotation in your organization, then terms like “customer strategy” or “customer experience” management could be substituted. If more domain-specific terms such as “customer service strategy” or “sales strategy” are used, then the strategic value of Section 1 of the plan will be diminished. Instead, use these more process-focused terms to define actual projects in Section 2.

Each section contains a description of what it is intended to deliver and example ideas in *italics*. Remember to delete this text in the final document.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Section 1: CRM Strategic Assessment at [Company Name].....	4
Market Dynamics	4
Organizational Dynamics	4
Section 2: Opportunity Assessment.....	5
Section 3: Risk Mitigation.....	6
Section 4: Project Recommendations.....	8
Section 5: Financial Obligations.....	10
Section 6: Roles & Responsibilities	13
Section 7: Business Plan Approval	14

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary will be written after all other sections have been completed. It may be the only section an executive reads: its content and tone may determine whether the rest of the plan is read at all.

Summarize each section into a concise set of statements and conclusions. Try to hook the reader so that they want to read each section in its entirety. Make sure that the project being proposed is clearly identified as a call to action at the end, intended to exploit the opportunities that have been strategized. End with a clear statement of what is needed from the reader to make it happen.

Section 1: CRM Strategic Assessment at [Company Name]

This section of the CRM Business Plan explores the strategic drivers at [company name] that define the nature of customer service, marketing, and sales processes. This section is a strategic foundation, upon which customer-oriented technology, process, and organizational projects for our company will be proposed and rationalized.

Market Dynamics

- *Is your business model direct or indirect? How does this impact your definition of customer?*
- *What role do channel partners play in interacting with the customers that ultimately use your products and services?*
- *What is the current state of your ability to retain and grow market share?*
- *What does the competitive landscape look like? What CRM projects are your competitors implementing to grow their market share?*
- *How is the market evolving? Is it emerging, mature, or declining. What other markets are shaping your market, especially markets whose products and services may be viewed as substitutes by your customers? What scenarios are likely to occur?*

Organizational Dynamics

Use this section to describe the current CRM environment at your company. For example, how is the customer lifecycle managed at your company? Are multiple channels employed when interacting with customers?

Also use this section to discuss organizational readiness. As a minimum, you should address:

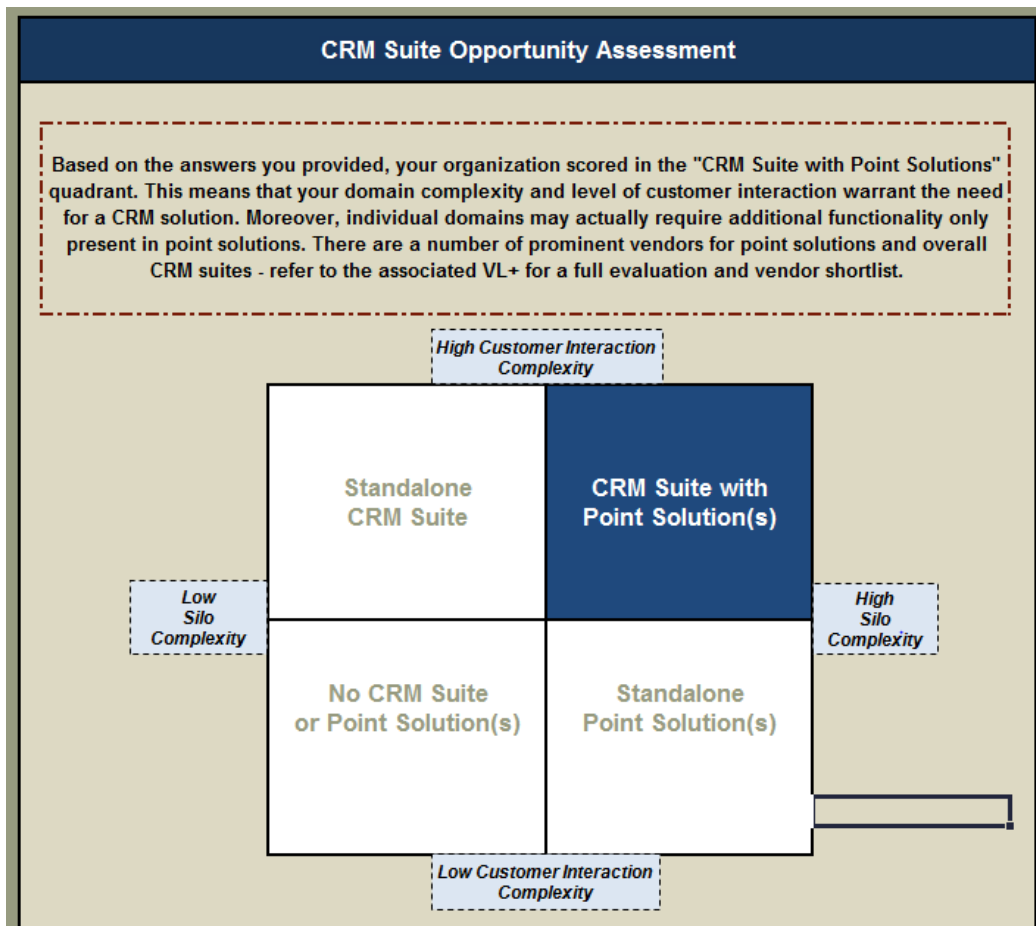
- *What do you know about your customers? Is there basic customer segmentation at your company, such that CRM projects can be designed around different customer groups to achieve goals that are unique to these groups? A lack of understanding of your customers could mean that any CRM project might require customer segmentation work up front or may require obtaining this understanding from channel partners.*
- *What are your company's competencies with respect to technology implementation and systems integration? Do you prefer enterprise software to be on premises or delivered as a service?*
- *Are the business units that own customer processes (e. g. marketing, sales and service) themselves aligned with each other, such that process integration is not a barrier in implementing CRM projects?*
- *How large is your company (by headcount)? How many users are directly involved in customer interactions?*
- *What is IT's opinion of CRM? What is senior management's opinion of CRM? Do the opinions align?*
- *Do end users seem interested in adopting a CRM Suite, or are they apathetic to existing and proposed solutions?*

Defining these market and organizational dynamics will help place rational boundaries on your company's ability to exploit CRM opportunities. It is imperative that you be candid about your company's strengths and weaknesses, in order to avoid setting the company up for failure.

Section 2: Opportunity Assessment

This section of the CRM plan explores the opportunities that [company name] has to realize a return on investment in CRM projects.

Please fill out the applicable CRM Opportunity Assessment Tool for [Large](#) or [Small](#) Enterprises first to gauge your relative strengths in each dimension. Elaborate in the space below on the areas where the organization scored yellow or green as strengths, and orange and red as areas needing improvement.



Section 3: Risk Mitigation

This section of the CRM Business Plan explores the risks that [company name] may encounter with the implementation of the suite. End-user apathy and lack of management buy-in are two main reasons CRM initiatives fail. Be sure to take steps to safeguard against these risks.

Delete any of the text in grey that is not relevant to your organization and add to the list as needed.

Risk Category	Probability	Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Cost of time and implementation	High	Selecting, deploying, and managing a CRM Suite can be a very time consuming task, representing a hefty investment to the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear strategic plan and a defined timeframe • Know your end user requirements • Put together an effective and diverse selection team
Lack of End-User Adoption	Medium	End users will be given the CRM, but will not use its features to their full potential. Adoption and use of tools is critical for creating an adequate return on investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find users who can act as evangelists for the suite and promote it to others. • Run a proof-of-concept project that will generate buzz around the suite. • Ensure that the benefits of the suite are clearly communicated to end users. • Ensure that users are adequately trained on how to use the tools. • Leverage end-user input in the selection and implementation processes.
Privacy and Security	Medium	There's the potential that confidential customer information may be accidentally or maliciously distributed. Due to offline database synchronization this information can be misused if an employee's PC or laptop is compromised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement policies and set up access permissions that bar users from accessing sensitive information unless they have the appropriate credentials. Keep a roster of active users. Put access restrictions for certain department and/or employees. • Install security on the employees' PC or laptop, database files, and hard-drive. • Ensure storage safety if CRM is installed on-premise.

Risk Category	Probability	Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Upgrade Risks and Costs	High	The more you customize the suite, the more complications an upgrade can bring. Making the suite un-upgradable is also costly and difficult since future upgrades will be expensive and resource-draining.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigate these issues by having good foresight of how to prepare and making your suite easily scalable
Transitioning off Cloud can be difficult	High	If you choose to go with a cloud CRM solution and later decide to switch back to on-premise, there is a risk of being unable to retain your data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with your vendor of choice; some vendors will let you own your data even in the cloud.

Section 4: Project Recommendations

This is the section where you tell the reader what needs to be done, what can be done and recommend that it be done. For the opportunities identified in Section 2:

- Detail the benefits and risks, including the risks of doing nothing.
- Estimate project costs.
- Ask for executive approval to proceed with the highest priority project.
- Recommend the remaining projects be submitted for future budgeting.
- Recommend the CRM Business Plan be reviewed and revised quarterly.

Please refer to the applicable CRM Suites Storyboard for [Large](#) or [Small](#) Enterprises for more details on how to create this section.

Domain	Opportunity	Tools	Description
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer impressions - Mind share - Top-of-mind awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted mass marketing - Social media monitoring 	<p>CRM Suites provide tools for campaign tracking and management, email management, and in-depth analytics. These features help with the implementation of current campaigns and provide useful insight for directing future ones.</p> <p>Integration with social media is increasingly recognized as essential to competitive marketing solutions. It allows the monitoring of customer interests, trends and feedback..</p>
Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of leads - Lead warmness - Average time to deal close 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Automatic lead assignment - Lead optimization tools - Sales Support Decision Tree 	<p>Leads accumulated through marketing campaigns will be automatically assigned to the appropriate representatives. Moreover, various lead optimization tools improve lead to sales ratios.</p> <p>Creation of a decision tree eliminates the risk of your sales agents not complying with sales protocol standards and improves the average closing time.</p>

Domain	Opportunity	Tools	Description
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of first contact resolutions - Average time to resolution - Increased customer satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media for customer service - Knowledge management - Account management 	<p>By decreasing average time to resolution, CRM Suites also decrease cost-to-serve.</p> <p>Having a top-down view of your customer gives your business the ability to manage and analyze customer information and can allow for customizable solutions.</p>
All the above domains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer attraction and retention due to the unified information flow between the three domains 	Points of Integration	<p>The points of integration will ensure that the channels in the three domains of the business can all accept and receive information from each other seamlessly; this will contribute to overall business efficiency and customer satisfaction.</p>

Section 5: Financial Obligations

Include a description of the technology investments that will need to be made to support your CRM project. In addition to the applications themselves, be sure to include the costs of any required infrastructure upgrades.

Please refer to the storyboard “CRM Suites” for more details on prominent vendors in this space.

CRM Suites	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Hardware				
Software Licensing				
Third Party Software				
Application Licensing				
Documentation & Training				
Maintenance				
Installation				
Integration				
Legacy Data Loading				

CRM Suites	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Project Management				
Application Staffing				
Misc.				
Other (specify)				
Total:				

Point Solution(s)	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Hardware				
Software Licensing				
Third Party Software				
Application Licensing				

Point Solution(s)	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Documentation & Training				
Maintenance				
Installation				
Integration				
Legacy Data Loading				
Project Management				
Application Staffing				
Misc.				
Other (specify)				
Total:				

Section 6: Roles & Responsibilities

This is the section where you tell the reader who needs to be involved in order to accomplish the proposed projects outlined above. Below is a sample table; feel free to add or subtract roles as required.

Duty	Owner	Others Involved
Defining CRM goals	- Business management	- IT management should be involved
Managing CRM security	- IT Director	- Business
Providing CRM technology support	- Infrastructure Manager	- Business
Managing CRM integration with existing applications	- IT	- None

Section 7: Business Plan Approval

Gain executive approval prior to moving to the next step of project planning.

Project Approver Signature

Date

Project Sponsor/Lead Signature

Date

Project Manager Signature

Date

Info-Tech Research Group tools and template documents are provided for the free and unrestricted use of subscribers to Info-Tech Research Group services. Use this document either in whole or in part as a basis and guide for document creation. To customize this document with corporate marks and titles, simply replace the Info-Tech information in the Header and Footer fields of this document.