

business trends

Today's Customer-Centric Technology Extends The Season of Growth



(NAPSA)—The challenge: Growing a business is expensive. Finding a new customer can cost seven times more than retaining an existing one.

The reality: If small or midsize businesses don't grow, chances are they won't remain viable.

The solution: Enlist customer-centric technology to deliver superior customer service while helping secure new sales.

Technology developed for customer relationship management (CRM) is on the market today. It's affordable, it can be easily configured according to your business requirements and it's easy to use.

When employees aren't bogged down with manually processing service requests or using technology that's clunky, difficult to navigate and generally unreliable, they can devote their full attention to what differentiates a stellar business from a mediocre one: a genuine, sincere human touch that lets customers know they're valued.

Growing a Business With The Help of Technology

Businesses that select the appropriate CRM product can grow by adhering to one simple concept: Focus more on customers and less on processes.

"With our new CRM system, we're going to be able to contact customers in a way we haven't been able to do in the past," said Jeff Merten, regional sales coordinator for AFLAC Inc., a leading writer of voluntary insurance coverage marketed at the work site. For example, because many of AFLAC's insurance policies are sold to employees through payroll

deduction, AFLAC often has little individual policyholder data.

"Since the policies we sell are individually purchased voluntary benefits, our customer really is the individual, not the company," Merten explained. Microsoft CRM is the perfect place to store that information, allowing AFLAC to begin providing individualized customer service. "We can even have a birthday card go out on the customer's birthday, which is obviously something we've never been able to do before," Merten said. "With that type of information, our customer service efforts can be virtually limitless."

Renewing Customer Loyalty

There's no doubt that winning new customers is important to every business. But keeping existing ones coming back is even more so.

"It's those everyday experiences of superior service or experiences where we receive that personal touch, that drive our loyalty to certain companies and brands," said Dave Batt, senior director of Microsoft CRM. "The right CRM technology can help small and midsize businesses make superior customer service a standard by streamlining processes and procedures, joining areas of a business that were once incompatible, and putting the right information at employees' fingertips so they can provide highly efficient service. It all makes a positive impact on the customer."

To learn more about growing a business with the help of CRM technology, please visit <http://www.microsoft.com/businesssolutions/crm/default.aspx>.