

## First Contact

Generating new business by developing new customer relationships

**CRM is fundamental to enhancing relationships with existing customers but first you need to attract those customers...**

### Setting The Scene

OK, so all the ingredients to maximise business growth are in place. You've got a great product or service, a reputable brand, great people and a winning sales team. Your existing customers are happy but you're still not getting the new business you know you should be. Why?

### First Impressions Count

Sales specialists are highly skilled in capitalising on first contact with potential customers.

However, customers are busy people. They don't have time to listen to elaborate sales speak and don't respond to hard sell. They want to know what you can do for them and gain confidence that you won't let them down. They want to know this in minutes.

Tightly rehearsed elevator pitches help to sum up the competitive benefits of your offering but how do presenters substantiate their claims? How do they present the evidence that shows a customer what you can do for them?

Sales presentation support rarely extends beyond slides that promote a company's brand and values. This isn't enough to differentiate you - customers have seen it all before.

### Here and Now

What if your sales team could present your offering so that it matches a customer's unique needs? What if they could respond instantly to questions, not just with words but with specific examples of your solution to their problem?

Arguably you can achieve this with an interactive multimedia presentation but content changes and this format can be costly to update. PowerPoint is flexible but lacks finesse in the hands of the inexperienced user.

### The Third Way

Leeds based Walnut Media has developed Showsuite™ - a complete presentation design and production service delivered using their own software platform.

Walnut Media's producers focus on creating a robust sales case for an organisation's product or service before designing screen based material to support it. A case study format is often used, utilising video and sophisticated screen graphics. It's an integrated approach that leverages Walnut Media's core skills as presentation designers and video producers.

Showsuite's software platform is a flexible presentation support tool that allows content to be called up interactively. Presenters can seamlessly tailor a presentation to an individual customer and Showsuite content can be augmented with an organisation's own sales material such as PowerPoint presentations and PDF files.

### The Bottom Line

The investment in a solution like Showsuite needs to be set in context with the value it offers through measurably increased sales. You only get one chance to make an impact on a new customer and the cost of Showsuite is marginal relative to the considerable costs of running a large sales team. At a time when businesses are spending vast sums on CRM strategies, budgets for other marketing projects are being squeezed. However, the best CRM strategy in the world won't grow your business without customers in the first place...

**You'd need to have taken an exploratory trip to Mars to have missed the latest buzz phrase enveloping the corporate world. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is big news.**

### ABOUT CRM

CRM is about understanding customers and their interactions with an organisation and then using that information to gain competitive advantage.

Like most good ideas, CRM isn't a new one. It's always been there it's just that until fairly recently it was an unspoken part of doing business, rather than an explicit part of corporate strategy.

Software companies like Microsoft have started to bang the CRM drum quite hard in recent times. This has helped to create a clearer frame of reference for CRM but software itself is simply a mechanism for collecting data about customers - it's what companies do with that data that delivers value.

Organisations with a successful CRM strategy are those that can:

- ▶ collect the right data about their customers in the first instance
- ▶ turn that raw data into useful knowledge enabling them to maximise business opportunities with those customers

Much has been written about CRM and sites like [www.crmcommunity.com](http://www.crmcommunity.com) are an excellent information source for those interested in learning more.