

It's about serving Canadians



Newman says...
CRM is key to the effectiveness and success of e-government

In many ways, it's what government is all about: serving the individual's interests as a member of society. Customer relations management (CRM) is the world's oldest profession – OK, maybe the second oldest. And, at its most basic level, applying the e-concept to the salesperson's little black book is perhaps one of the most direct e-applications – a straight line automation of an accepted, established management function. In terms of government, there are three basic levels of e-CRM as a tool for personalization or customization:

- Customizing for customer or citizen groups or categories,
- Facilitating customer self-customization, or
- Customizing for individual customers.

In this chat we have a number of different takes on e-CRM in both private and public sectors. Jim Stonehouse of Oracle provides a viewpoint from a key supplier and developer.

Sit down, take a deep breath, sip a beverage, open your mind and stay awhile while we chat with:



Aaron Nichols
General Manager
Business Transformation
Canada Post Corporation (CPC)



Jim Stonehouse
Director Business Development,
Public Sector
Oracle Corporation



Pierre Sabourin
Director, Export Development
Division
Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade (DFAIT)



Kevin Griffiths
Manager, Business Operations
City of Calgary

Aaron Nichols from Canada Post understands public interests, but looks at the world from a very corporate business perspective. DFAIT's Pierre Sabourin has experience with an innovative federal government e-CRM service. And Kevin Griffiths works in the intimate municipal government e-world. Let's see what they have to say!

ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE
E-CRM applications cover the waterfront

Griffiths: Calgary's e-CRM application manages municipal permits, such as plumbing, gas, heating or electrical, and related inspections. Contractors can apply and manage the permits electronically. We have taken a coordinated approach with the City of Edmonton because our systems are similar and many of the contractors work in both cities. It also allows us to share code and bill faster with less expense. We are looking at business permits and licensing for the next e-CRM application.

Sabourin: At DFAIT, we have an e-CRM application in our Virtual Trade Commissioner that provides a full range of services for exporters, from information to contracting opportunities and beyond, on an individually customized basis. The client provides extensive registration information that builds a secure, personalized window tailored to individual client needs.

Nichols: Our CRM [at Canada Post] was part of an overall SAP conversion of our organization. In 1999/00 we set out on a full ERP [Enterprise Resource Planning] program, not just an e-CRM initiative. That represented a change in the way we do business, a fundamental change, not just incremental tinkering. We undertook a competitive process in 2000 for a full transformation of the end-to-end business process – from order to cash – and SAP was selected. This included all CRM processes including software, call centres, care centres and account management.

Stonehouse: Oracle supplies our e-CRM Suite to federal, provincial and local government customers in Canada. Our software is comprehensive, covering a full range of call centre and customer contact needs. A Citizen Interaction Centre provides log information, website applications and multi-channel access at all hours.

TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY
How much do you have to customize customization?

Nichols: The approach we took was off-the-shelf, but with a great deal of influence on the development of the software. The development of our e-CRM has been very individually customer focused. Our goal is a fully integrated ERP system including e-CRM that is better than the best of the breed. In 2000, the SAP e-CRM offering was in its infancy and we had to decide whether to buy a different system or to grow with SAP and help develop the applications we needed most. As a result, we have been growing together and, while it was almost like a "beta," we are now looking to upgrade our e-CRM software to version 3.0 in February 2003.

Sabourin: The Virtual Trade Commissioner is based on off-the-shelf ATG e-CRM Personalization Server software. Our experience suggests that it is best to use off-the-shelf to

the largest possible degree. Select a very robust available engine, then tailor it with your own identification.

Griffiths: Our system is an off-the-shelf offering from Oracle that has been up for a year now in a staged rollout. Of our first group of several hundred clients, 90 percent now use the Net exclusively and we have a waiting list to get on our system.

Stonehouse: CRM was born in the private sector as Customer Relations Management and was a technology that was all about attracting customers. In the public sector context, it is often better seen as Citizen Relationship Management. There, it is about personalized and self-service, improving the delivery and reducing the cost of providing service. After all, customers are often happier to serve themselves. Self-service is the key to improving customer satisfaction. Though that can be internally developed, there are several established programs, such as Oracle's e-CRM Suite, that offer very robust applications and high degrees of adaptability.

CONFIDENCE IS THE KEY Are e-CRM security and privacy showstoppers?

Sabourin: Security, validation and a password are the keys to the system. In regard to privacy and access to information, the information we collect is corporate, not private. Identification and certification are part of the ATG software function. We stress that information is provided on a voluntary basis, explain why we ask for it and how it will be shared. We have an agreed disclaimer on registration. We also do a telephone follow-up on registration to confirm identity and validate.

Nichols: We deal with issues such as privacy and security to the same high levels we always did. Our CRM system collects basically the same information we would

have previously and we are doing largely contract and case management, but we are also looking at e-CRM as part of a much greater ERP overview.

Griffiths: The drivers are different in governments. The level of scrutiny requires a very solid business case. Security and privacy are key issues for which there is strict legislation on the use of information. Governments have to hold the bar up higher on these issues.

Stonehouse: Measuring the success of e-CRM in government is a new frontier. Traditionally, the measure of success for e-government is access, but increasingly it will be necessary to look at value and results in terms of effectively translating policy. Privacy is clearly an issue but it is largely a political one. The technology of secure data bases and scalability exists, but it is a question of public and user confidence.

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE How government and business applications meet and part

Nichols: We approached e-CRM the same way we approached customer relationships in the past. Though public trust is an important component, Canada Post operates very much in a corporate commercial business milieu. We are putting in place the right infrastructure for future needs, but right now we are at the stage of automating and optimizing existing processes through one system rather than its multiple predecessors. In the future that will allow us not only to better leverage the capacity of our existing network, but to leverage all of the business resources inherent through one system and one contact.

Sabourin: Governments have a number of different requirements. For example, for us, offering bilingual service is a go/no-go factor. We also have to comply closely with Treasury Board "common look and feel" considerations – an onerous and sometimes limiting

factor, such as posting in html rather than pdf file formats. We believe that the reason our strategy is working is because it is designed from a customer perspective. Backend needs are secondary and can be developed as the application matures.

Griffiths: There are several differences in public sector e-CRM. For one thing clients don't really have a choice. They have to deal with government. But that doesn't mean that governments don't have to keep service levels up. Governments are responsible to citizens for delivering mandated services within defined cost parameters.

Stonehouse: Public sector customers don't often have the option of whether or not to deal with government. So while customer satisfaction is certainly nice to have, it doesn't necessarily drive revenue or reduce cost. Major issues related to the use of e-CRM in the public sector are cultural, change management issues. Governments are not typically risk-takers or change-makers in relation to technology. They tend to copy success in technology, not lead it. After all, for government the consequences of failure can be so much greater.

Sabourin: In the future, e-CRM use will be very widespread in the public sector, a gateway leading to full personalization of a full range of applications. After all, e-CRM is personalization, but it is a lot more than that. It is providing to citizens, or customers, what they want at the right time and the right place.

Next Chatroom discussion:

Defining the differences
between public and private
sector purchasing.