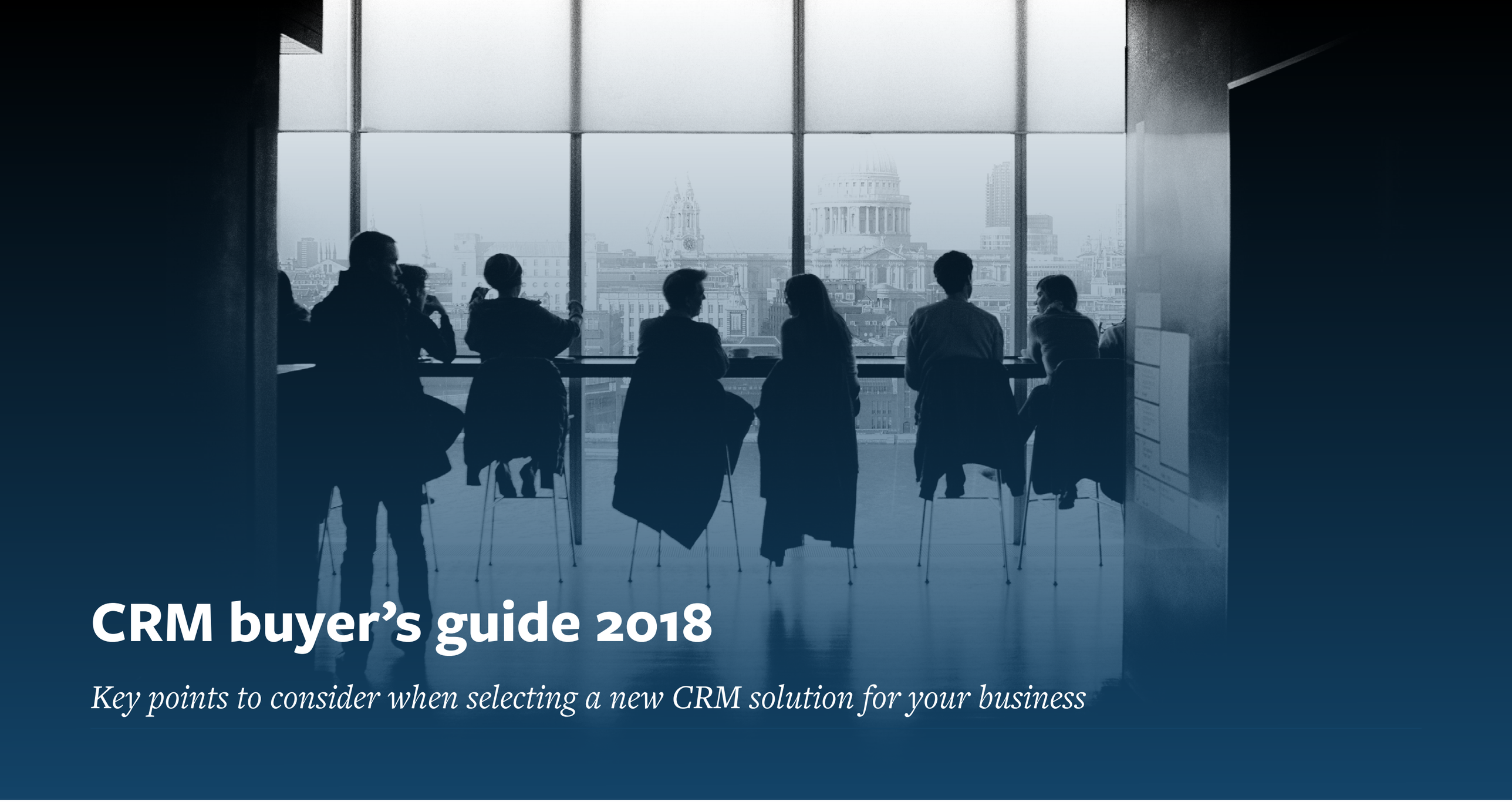

# CRM buyer's guide 2018

*Key points to consider when selecting a new CRM solution for your business*

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# *Contents*

# INTRODUCTION

**Organisations are spending more on CRM systems than ever before. And all the indications point to this figure only increasing in the foreseeable future.**

The latest forecasts from IT Intelligence Markets predict that the global CRM market will grow by 36% through 2022.

But this level of investment hides an inconvenient truth – buying CRM is a painful process.

Whether you're buying your first CRM solution, or changing your existing CRM tool, the purchase process can be long and challenging.

And if the wrong decision is ultimately made, leaving the organisation with a CRM system that isn't fit-for-purpose, the consequences can be costly.

With this in mind, MyCustomer has pulled together a comprehensive buyer's guide to help businesses that are in the market for a new CRM solution, providing them with some useful steer.

**This report delivers expert advice on questions such as:**

- How do I know if I need a new CRM solution?
- How do you select the right CRM consultant?
- How do you best conduct requirements gathering?
- How much does CRM cost? How can you prepare for and make the most of your CRM demo?

The report also contains an extensive listings section of CRM suppliers, so readers can browse some of the best providers in the market.


# STEP 1: DO YOU NEED A NEW CRM SYSTEM?

**The vast majority of large organisations have a CRM system in place, but that doesn't mean they have the best CRM system for their needs.**

In some cases, problems will surface somewhere along the line, and this provides a catalyst for change. But for many others, there is uncertainty about whether their current CRM system needs changing. Should they stick to what they know, and use the system that they have become accustomed to, warts and all, or change vendor and leap into the unknown?

If you're unsure whether or not you may need a new CRM, this guide is a handy checklist of things you should consider.

### How should CRM be helping your organisation achieve its goals?

If you're reading this report, it's likely that you are considering investing in a new CRM solution – but you may lack confidence in your decision.

To help clarify your thinking, consider questions such as: What are we doing right now that we could be doing better? What are our users telling us about the current CRM system? And what are our customers telling us that we should be doing?

*Without a business case to show to show the ROI resulting from your CRM investment, it will be difficult to quantify the success of your project.*

Think about your goals in a very quantifiable way – are you trying to improve customer satisfaction, raise your NPS (Net Promoter Score), or improve the length of your sales cycles? Think about where your organisation is now; where you want to be in the future; and whether your present CRM system can get you there.

**Have you thought about what's wrong with your current CRM system?**

Before swapping out your present CRM it's worth remembering that just switching to a new system without a focused plan to drive and sustain the new initiative might yield the same level of dissatisfaction.

It's important that you do your homework and evaluate your present/previous experience. Decide what is working, what hasn't historically worked and what strategies will lead to the best results the next time around.

Signs that your current system may be problematic include low adoption rate, no clear improvements in sales, customer data becoming hard to find and lengthy reporting processes. But there can be internal issues to blame for some of these, so you need to do your due diligence before just blaming the tools.

**Have you got buy-in from those holding the purse strings?**

In order to convince the CFO of the necessity of the investment in this kind of technology, you must have a clear vision of the end-state of your CRM and its business goals. What role will CRM play in helping you meet your goals? Without a business case to show the ROI resulting from your CRM investment, it will be difficult to quantify the success of your project.

To gain CFO support, link your CRM initiative to the strategic direction of the organisation, and be sure to have a solid CRM business plan, complete with metrics that are forecasted and matched quarterly over the life of the CRM initiative.

**Do you understand the CRM market well enough?**

There have never been more CRM solutions available than there are today. And those solutions have more features than ever before in what are often highly sophisticated solutions.

However, more is not always better. CRM buyers have to understand the market and its different categories in order to focus on the right type of vendor that offers just the right solution for the organisation.

Understanding where you fit is very important in that selection process.

# STEP 2: DO YOU NEED A CRM CONSULTANT?

**Many organisations decide to employ a consultant to help them choose and implement a new CRM system. Certainly there are many benefits to hiring an expert to do the heavy-lifting. But with CRM being such a big investment, you're placing a lot of faith in that person or persons – so you need to make sure that you make the right choice.**

Historically, CRM consultants have been heavily involved during the technology selection process, because of the complexities of the marketplace. With the increasingly sophisticated tools, and the wide variety of options, as well as the significant marketing hype, it is little surprise that organisations have turned to consultants to help them make the right choice.

However, this is only part of the consultant's role. There are at least five other key areas where CRM consultants can earn their crust:

- Feasibility and planning. Consultants are helping businesses determine whether a CRM project makes sense in the first place and in what form.
- Requirements definition.
- Negotiating pricing and terms.
- Implementation.
- Working with existing systems. Systems often under-perform as a result of a poor implementation or user adoption issues, rather than a fault with the underlying technology. Re-implementing existing software can be considerably cheaper than buying a new system, but organisations often need outside guidance as to whether they are 'salvageable'.

Gartner has estimated that on average 55% of work on a CRM project is done internally, and 45% is done by external third parties – meaning either by the software vendor or a business consultant or an IT technical system integration consultant.

So if the hiring of a consultant is appealing, how can you ensure that you maximise the odds of it being a fruitful relationship? Here are some valuable tips.

### Do your research

When you're evaluating CRM consultants, do your due diligence. Seek out consultants that have case study libraries that demonstrate their success. Look at the sustainability of their business - will they exist in a few years? Losing a valuable service and finding a replacement can be an arduous process.

And also consider value for money - sniff around for the best deal. It is a competitive market.

### Look for experience in the same vertical as your organisation

Make sure you look for the consultant to bring insight and information about your industry to the project. You don't want generalists.

When you ask for customer references when speaking with consultants, specifically request feedback from those in the same industry as you, and also

ask to speak with them. This will give you a feel for the effectiveness of the consultant in areas that are important to you.

### Be clear about exactly what you need/expect from the relationship

Remember to communicate exactly what your expectations from your consultant are, and confirm those requirements in writing. This will avoid any embarrassing and difficult conversations further down the line.

### Ensure you know who is involved

You have to really understand what team you're actually going to get to work on your project. It doesn't matter if the consultancy has done thousands of projects, it only matters about the folks that you're going to have working on your project.

It is a good idea to get references for the team members that are assigned to your project.

# STEP 3: REQUIREMENTS GATHERING

**If you're going to conduct the vendor selection process in-house rather than bringing in a third-party, you'll need to scope out your CRM requirements.**

Traditionally, requirements gathering would take place fairly late in the CRM purchasing process.

But it is increasingly acknowledged that the better sequence is to define detailed requirements before a commitment to a specific vendor has been made.

For a start, understanding requirements up front means there's less risk of selecting an inappropriate technology platform. But it also makes procurement more efficient because detailed requirements allow vendors to provide firm pricing up front which generally means you can purchase more cost-effectively. Finally, it makes for a quicker implementation, with much less risk of scope creep where new requirements arise part way through the project.

Other benefits include helping to secure buy-in and improving user adoption, as employees are given clarity about why they need a CRM prior to be asked to use it.

### Who should take responsibility for requirements gathering?

Organisations also have to consider who is going to take responsibility for the requirements gathering process, and whether this will be a single individual or a project team.

Most organisations leave it solely to the sales or marketing director, but that's a mistake as it could result in silos of business information rather than fully integrated processes. For a CRM system to work well, it has to integrate into and benefit all areas of the business, and so each division should be represented when it comes to compiling CRM requirements.

### What should you consider?

When it comes to detailing CRM requirements, there are a number of do's and don'ts to bear in mind. A common mistake is to get bogged down in feature requirements, at the detriment of everything else.

In reality, most CRM vendors have similar features, so making an investment decision based purely on features and functions is a high risk strategy.

Therefore, you should focus on the following areas when building a detailed requirements list.

### 1. Business challenges

What are the challenges that you want to address? Once you have a list of challenges, the vendors you speak to will be able to recommend the best solution for your needs and budget.

### 2. Business objectives

The main consideration for an organisation should be its business objectives. For example, it could be that the business must grow turnover by 50% without substantially increasing sales overheads. The question should then be posed - how are you, as a vendor, going to help me increase my sales by 50%? Organisations should be challenging potential vendors to answer this type of question – and this will ensure that you receive the expertise of the vendor in providing the right solution to business-specific issues and objectives.

### 3. Processes

Think about what processes you are looking to embed and how they will be supported by the system. When you do this, the feature requirements tend to drop out pretty easily. Listing features without clarity on what you're looking to achieve with the system and how you're going to achieve it is pretty pointless.

### 4. Functional requirements

Here are the requirements that are routinely forgotten about during the requirements listing process, but that could be important (courtesy of Richard Boardman, founder of Mareeba CRM Consulting):

- Customisation capabilities.
- Compatibility with existing infrastructure.
- Different views for different users. This could be useful if you have users accessing the system for a wide range of reasons.
- UAT and training versions.
- Security.
- De-duplication. Data quality is crucial, so the ability to identify duplicates, both when a record is being entered, as well by scanning the system to find potential matches, is important.
- Offline access. Despite the ubiquity of internet access, there are situations where you may need users to be able to operate offline.
- Language and currency. If an organisation has international operations, the ability to support local character sets, translate field names and pick lists, and track and report on transactions in different currencies, may well be key requirements.

*Consider what resources and budget will be required to support the implementation and ensure it meets your needs.*

### 5. Implementation

Make sure your requirements include how the implementation will be handled and how the vendor will support you - not only in the first phase of deployment but for the coming years, when your business is (hopefully) growing and you need ongoing support to get the most from your CRM system.

Review what you want to undertake yourselves (if anything) and where you need help and clearly define that as part of your requirements. Consider what resources and budget will be required to support the implementation and ensure it meets your needs. Do you need help with the project design and implementation? To what extent? How will you migrate data from your legacy system(s)?

### 6. Education

Company culture can be an obstacle to successful roll-outs, so organisations should ensure their chosen partner is there to help drive understanding across the business and help communicate the benefits of the technology and the immediate improvements it will bring to people's roles.

### Presenting the requirements

A final point to consider is how you will present the information once it has been gathered. While there is no perfect way of presenting a requirements document, because it will vary from organisation to organisation, there are some tips to consider.

**Boardman recommends that organisations adhere to the following structure:**

- Business objectives.
- Supporting processes – 'as is' and 'to be' and how they will be supported by the system.
- Entity model of system record types and how they relate to each other.
- Functional requirements.
- Data migration and integration requirements.
- Reporting requirements.

**Additionally, organisations should consider providing supporting documentation that provides:**

- A workflow diagram for each department.
- An organisation chart.
- Example reports/templates.
- Existing architecture/systems.

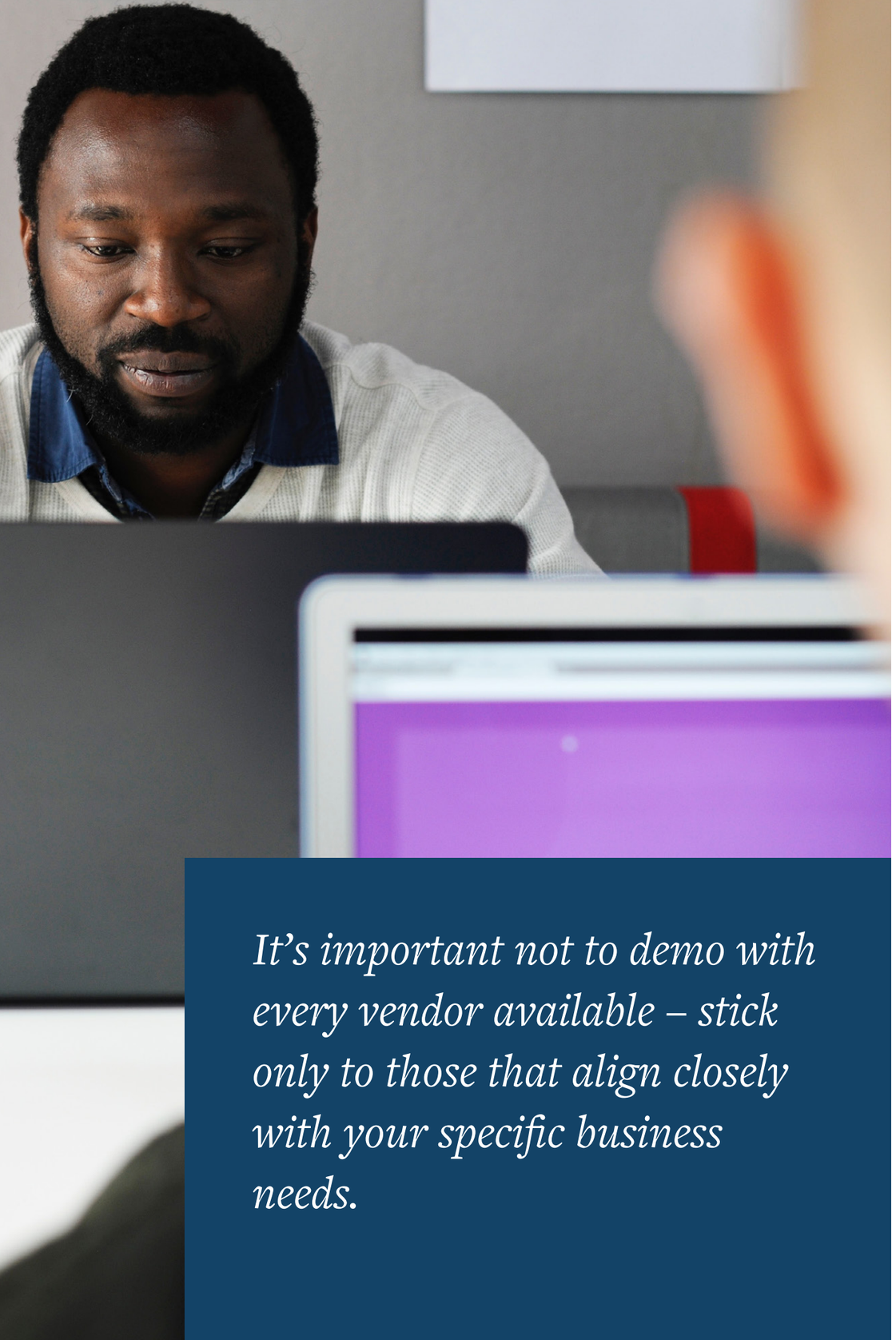
# STEP 4: PULLING TOGETHER A VENDOR SHORTLIST

**Once you have outlined your requirements, you can cross-reference solution functionality and the services offered by vendors to find a good fit. But there are other factors to bear in mind, and wider research can be valuable.**

For instance, user reviews and surveys can provide some useful steer from those that have already implemented the systems you are considering.

The reason budgeting for CRM can be so arduous is due to a number of 'hidden costs' that CRM leaders have to unearth during the course of a project. These include:

- **Importing data**. Most CRM packages do not include the process of migrating existing data, so if you're not going to do it yourself, bear this in mind.
- **Support.** Standard CRM subscriptions are typically costed for basic support so if you want additional support you will have to pay extra for it.
- **Customisation.** The fewer customisations required, the cheaper the price will be. So it is always a good idea to find a vendor that provides the closest fit to your needs straight out of the box.
- **Contract terms.** Check the small print to see if you're locked into a contract without a refund. It's wise to consider a vendor that offers shorter trial periods or even free trial periods.
- **Time.** Time is often the CRM project's silent assassin, with delivery periods ranging wildly – from 10 days to five years, depending on their complexity. But most organisations don't take internal costs into account – for instance, that 20 people in your organisation may be effectively working part-time for six months while the implementation takes place.
- **Consultancy costs.** Consultancy is a lynchpin for most CRM deployments. Gartner states that the rule of thumb necessitates that consultancy is "always a multiple of the software"; the range being somewhere between a multiple of 1x and 10x, but on average, around 3.5x the cost of the purchased technology.
- **Cloud costs.** The rise of cloud computing has made implementations quicker (the average cloud project lasts 17 months, whilst on-premise is around three years), but not always cheaper. Despite cloud increasingly becoming the standard, many companies still have to weigh up the pros and cons of project time vs delivery when it comes to choosing between cloud and on-premise CRM.



*It's important not to demo with every vendor available – stick only to those that align closely with your specific business needs.*

# STEP 5: VENDOR DEMOS

**Once a shortlist of vendors has been drawn up, traditionally the next step is to undertake demo sessions to help single out the best solution.**

The CRM demo plays a vital role in helping organisations achieve this by eliminating vendors that aren't the right fit.

In addition to this, demos also enable organisations to:

- Learn how a CRM system can add extra value to the organisation.
- Explore how a CRM system can address use cases that are specific to the organisation.
- Learn more about the vendor and how they have helped their existing customers.
- Develop a closer relationship with the vendor's team.
- Get a better understanding of the CRM system's user interface, including how to navigate the tool and customise it.

Typically, demos should take place in the procurement stage, when requirements have been researched and documented and the provider can be properly prepped.

This is important, as if the demo takes place too early, further rounds of questions and discussions will need to take place to establish if the tool can satisfy the needs of the organisation, and time will be wasted.

If the demo takes place too early, before the requirements gathering process has been conducted, it is also difficult to narrow down the list of tools that are potentially a good fit and that should be demoed. It should be a shortlist – not a long list.

It's important not to demo with every vendor available – stick only to those align closely with your specific business needs. Once you've identified which vendors are worthy of a demo, and the demo has been scheduled, it is important to be well prepared.

Ensure you're fully prepared for your demo by ticking off the following tasks in advance.

### Hold a pre-demo briefing with the vendor

Have a 30 minute discovery briefing (on the phone or better still, face-to-face via video conference) with your demoing vendors. This is incredibly helpful for both buyer and vendor in ensuring a relevant and engaging demo. Before meeting with the provider you should agree with them what you would like to get from the meeting.

Use this briefing to craft a detailed agenda for the demo and establish who is required to attend. Detail an agenda for the CRM demo.

### Share your requirements document and any supporting information

It is useful to share requirement gathering documents which outline project objectives, business challenges and their impact on the business. It may also be a good idea to share sample data and business processes to enable the vendor to tailor their demonstration to your needs, helping them to highlight the relevant functionality.

### Prepare scenarios for the vendor

The best way to do this is to document a series of scenarios and get the vendors to demonstrate their products against them.

If you're switching CRMs, it's also useful to make sure you've prepared a clear explanation of why you are unhappy with your existing solution – and make sure the vendor can demonstrate resolutions to these problems.

### Prepare questions for the vendor

Think beyond your features and functionality requirements – you should also prepare questions about any future costs, the vendor's experience within your industry, and – crucially – the benefits of a long-term partnership.

**Consider the following questions:**

- Have you implemented this kind of solution to a similar organisation as ours?
- Why should we choose your solution over your competitors?
- How is the solution deployed - cloud or on-premise (If it is a cloud solution it is worth checking who is responsible for maintenance and backups)?
- How is data migration handled?
- What levels of support can I expect? What is the SLA?
- What are the ongoing costs – such as support?
- Will I need to pay to upgrade when a new version is released?
- Is training included? If not what is your recommended approach for training?
- What are the potential risks?

### Draft some evaluation forms

You need to give appropriate weighting to each goal that you want to achieve with the new CRM so that the correct focus is placed on the most important components. Create evaluation forms for each criteria, along with notes and questions - this will save time on the day.

### Make technical arrangements

Most demos are cloud-based, always check beforehand that vendors can connect from the venue, and it is a good idea to have a backup connection available. And always give the vendor plenty of notice if you want to use your own data in the demo.

### Take a free trial

Signing up to a free trial is a great starting point ahead of a demo, and also gives an indication of the level of service support available.

# What to look for during the demo

### Capabilities

Look for intuition, efficiency and logic in the functionality, considering factors such as how many clicks it takes to complete basic actions and the ease of the data entry process.

Make sure you assess specific features for business relevancy.

Ask what controls users have over the look and feel of the solution, whether there are any integrations 'live' using single sign-on, and how flexible the system is when the scenario goes 'off-script' - for example, is the demo data consistent between scenarios and across integrated demos?

### Questions

While it is important to ask questions during the demo, and businesses should come prepared with a set of pre-canned questions, attendees need to ensure that the questions complement the demo rather than take it over.

Try to avoid asking generic questions – everything you ask should be specifically related to your own unique business objectives.

If you ask too many questions during a scenario, you won't get a natural 'feel' for how transactions or processes are made, so keep these until the end if possible.

### Post-demo activity

As well as using the demo to assess the technology, attendees should also use the time to assess the vendor's team.

It's important that you meet with the people you will actually be working with to assure yourself that they have the relevant credentials and experience, and perhaps most importantly they are someone you can work with.

Once the demo concludes, organisations should ask for copies of the demo presentations for later reference, and obtain any appropriate supporting documents. Then, with the demo over, organisations need to ensure that they accurately capture all the attendees' thoughts on the tool and the vendor team. This can be aided by a pre-agreed scoring system

It is also important that attendees complete their evaluations soon after the demo has concluded, so that it is still fresh in their minds.

Further questions may be surfaced during this process, and so any subsequent queries should be packaged into a concise document or, alternatively, covered off in a short call with the vendor.

Ultimately, the demo process represents an important process on the path to selecting a CRM tool – but it is not the be-all and end-all. The vendor that delivers the best demo isn't necessarily the best fit for your needs, so do bear in mind other factors before making a decision, such as assessing proposals and tender responses, researching an implementer's track record, assessing financial stability, following up references, scrutinising contractual terms, etc. are generally just as important.

## Make a decision

Choosing a CRM solution is no picnic. Not only are there an extraordinary number of solutions to pick from, but they come in many different flavours, with all manner of different functionality. The problem is that it is a high-stakes game – picking the wrong tool can undermine your entire customer strategy and prove to be a very costly mistake.

But by following the steps above, you can improve your chances of choosing the best fit for your needs and making your business goals much more achievable.

# DIRECTORY

**The following solution partners and consultants cover a broad range of different CRM options, with details of each and contact information to help meet your requirements.**

## Infor

With over 90,000 customers in more than 170 countries, Infor deploys software that puts the user experience first, leverages data science, and integrates easily with your existing systems.

Infor CRM is an award-winning, state-of-the-art technology platform that empowers you to maximise the value of your most important corporate asset—your customer data. With Infor CRM, you can drive customer engagement with meaningful interactions across the entire customer lifecycle, both on the road and in the office.

**For firms sized:** Mid-market to enterprise companies

**Specific industries:** All industries, but particularly strong in: Manufacturing, distribution, construction, financial services, professional services, hospitality, retail and telecoms.

www.infor.com/crm
@InforCX
+44 (0) 808 238 1641
/infor-cx

## Mareeba

Mareeba are independent CRM consultants, offering impartial, expert advice on choosing, buying and using CRM software to realise maximum benefit for your organisation.

If you're considering a CRM purchase, Mareeba can help you with costings, requirements, choosing a vendor and setup.

If you're reviewing your existing CRM system, Mareeba will help you find the best way forward – whether that means replacing it, improving it or using it in new ways.

Either way, Mareeba will help you save money, reduce risk and get more value from your CRM system.

Advice is completely vendor-neutral. We don't receive payment from software vendors, so are free to recommend the solution that best fits your needs.

**For firms sized:** Between 10 and 500

**Specific industries:** Broad mix of commercial, government, not-for-profit and charities.

www.mareeba.co.uk
@crmadvisor
+44 (0) 1494 927418
/mareeba

## Goldmine

GoldMine helped pioneer the CRM industry more than 25 years ago. With thousands of clients all around the world, GoldMine has proven that they are a great place to start.

With CRM solutions that are on-premise, in the cloud and on mobile devices, you will quickly realize that GoldMine is feature rich without being feature overload – don't pay for things you won't use. You can also save BIG with Goldmine because it's one of the only CRMs you can own.

**www.goldmine.com**
**+44 (0) 13444 42126 (US: +001 800-443-5457)**
**@contactgoldmine**
**/goldmine-crm-software**

## Gold-Vision

Gold-Vision CRM is a flexible, fully-integrated sales & marketing platform which supports the full business lifecycle. Gold-Vision pride itself on delivering professional, ethical systems and support, whilst remaining agile enough to respond to some of the bigger challenges faced by businesses – such as GDPR compliance.

Gold-Vision can be configured to suit most business' needs and has a number of standard integrations with leading email, social, finance, events, mapping, and other web tools.

**For firms sized:** Mid-sized companies (5-500 CRM users)

**Trial:** Gold-Vision offer customised demos (tailored to individual business needs) followed by a free trial for up to five users.

**www.gold-vision.com**
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## Launchpad CRM

If you are prospecting for and closing sales in an account-based marketing and sales environment, with medium to long pipelines, handling multiple simultaneous opportunities, competing against other companies in formal tenders, or convincing multiple customer stakeholders that your offer is the winning solution, Launchpad CRM is for you.

**For firms sized:** Micro-SME and SME companies

**Specific industries:** All companies operating in a B2B sales environment.

**Trial:** Launchpad CRM only sell to customers who have taken advantage of a free trial. That way they know if Launchpad CRM meets their needs.

**www.launchpadcrm.com**
**+44 (0) 207 117 2443**
**@LaunchpadCRM**

## Maximizer Personalised CRM

Maximizer makes enabling your success its top priority. That's why Maximizer is committed to help all customers achieve outstanding results and grow their business with confidence.

Maximizer works with ambitious SMEs, facing everyday challenges around data, marketing, sales, service delivery and business performance!

With top-rated tools for contact management, lead management and exceptional customer service, Maximizer CRM gives businesses everything they need to grow – all in one place.

**www.maximizer.com/uk**
**+44 (0) 1344 766 900**
**@Maximizer_EMEA**

## Really Simple Systems

Established in 2006, Really Simple Systems is one of the world's largest providers of cloud-based CRM systems. Designed for small and medium sized businesses operating B2B, its customers range from single user start-ups to 100 user systems and include the Red Cross, the Royal Academy of Arts and British Museum. Featuring an integrated marketing module, Really Simple Systems CRM is GDPR compliant, super-easy to use and offers exceptional customer support, free of charge.

**For firms sized:** Small and medium sized business in the B2B sector

**Trial:** 14 day CRM trial of the professional plan, with email marketing enabled.

**www.reallysimplesystems.com**
**+44 (0) 1730 823800**
**@ReallySimpleSys**
**/really-simple-systems-rss-**

## Workbooks Online Ltd

Workbooks delivers cloud-based CRM and marketing automation applications to the mid-market, at an affordable price. Workbooks extends beyond sales, marketing and customer support to also include order management and fulfilment, invoicing and supplier management, at a price which is typically 50-70% less than solutions such as Salesforce or Microsoft Dynamics.

**For firms sized:** SME companies

**Specific industries:** Manufacturing, engineering, retail, IT, media and publishing, education and training, finance, transport and logistics, advertising and marketing, services, trade association and professional bodies.

**Trial:** See how your company can reach its goals faster with Workbooks CRM. Get started now with a 30 day free trial.

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