

The Situation

A large, well-known mutual fund company had been using a traditional on-premises CRM application for over 8 years, and was faced with an urgent need to expand its CRM capabilities to support the operations of a newly-created business unit, which the firm considered to be of critical importance in light of the collapse of global financial markets in late 2008.

The existing on-premises CRM application was highly customized to accommodate the needs of an international workforce across multiple business units. The organization had been diligently keeping the system current through application upgrades, typically spaced two to three years apart, but these were long and expensive projects costing hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting services, and consuming substantial internal resources for many months. The application had not been upgraded in several years, and this organization was in desperate need of either an upgrade to the next version of their on-premises CRM system, or a completely new CRM system, as the existing old version was soon to become unsupported by the vendor, and rapid deployment to this newly-created business unit was a key strategic imperative.

The Challenge

It was estimated that to upgrade the existing on-premises CRM system would cost over \$750,000 in IT consulting services alone, and take about 6 months to accomplish. Our client's IT organization recognized that this was an unacceptably high price in terms of time and cost, and therefore that the only acceptable path forward would be to convert to a new, cloud-based CRM system. Our client clearly had a favorite cloud CRM application in mind, a decision in favor of which they fully expected would be justified by a comparison of leading available cloud CRM alternatives.

Integra's CRM experts were brought in to lead the comparison effort. Going into this process, the IT organization had assumed that this effort would simply justify their preferred choice of a cloud CRM vendor. However, as Integra's experience was leveraged to

help our client identify appropriate vendors to consider, along with key strengths and weaknesses of each, it quickly became apparent this would not simply be a "rubber stamp" in favor of the client's expected choice of cloud CRM application.

The Solution

Integra employed its structured Technology Evaluation & Selection (TES) solution to guide the client through a comprehensive assessment of appropriate cloud CRM vendor alternatives. Our TES solution is by design objective, quantitative, and well-structured, and is oriented toward surfacing the evaluation criteria most important to each client's business, while taking emotion and politics out of the decision-making process. The detailed and unbiased nature of the information developed during our engagement helped open our client's eyes to the capabilities of vendors beyond the one they initially assumed would be their preference, and in so doing turned what was nearly a "shoe in" for what would have been the "wrong" choice of vendor, into a real "horse race," in which another, more appropriate vendor received the attention and "fair shake" it deserved.

The Results

In a surprising turnabout, the client's initially-preferred cloud CRM application was shown through our TES assessment to be a weaker fit for the needs of the firm than a competitive offering from another leading cloud CRM vendor, and the client — much to their own surprise — ultimately determined that the organization would be best served by moving forward with this competitive alternative. In fact, even though our client's unique requirements required some custom coding, the winning application was selected because our TES methodology and its accompanying Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) analysis showed it to be less expensive in the long run, while also providing additional capabilities the incumbent application was unable to provide.

Following this successful CRM Technology Evaluation and Selection engagement, Integra was hired to lead the implementation of the new cloud CRM system,

which was rolled out to various user groups in several phases. Integra's Rapid Implementation Methodology enabled the first user group to gain production access in less than four months! Our client was delighted with the ability to meet custom requirements without large, burdensome development efforts. Furthermore, because the application is run entirely in the cloud, the customer was able to reduce its dependence on expensive servers and internal IT infrastructure.

The organization has now fully embraced cloud-based CRM. The benefits of this solution include more flexible customization, less on-site expertise required to maintain the application, independence from internal servers and their related costs and support issues, and an application that is much more accessible to users, resulting in strong user adoption. The implementation was accomplished at approximately one-third the anticipated cost to upgrade the existing application, while requiring two months' less time. Our client further estimates the move to cloud-based CRM will generate significant additional savings each year by eliminating upgrades, and substantially reducing overall support and development costs.



400 Fifth Avenue, Suite 100
Waltham, MA 02451
www.integratc.com
1.781.890.0070
info@integratc.com