

How Will AI Improve CRM?

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At a recent training session of Texas A&M Industrial Distribution students, a question came up that I believe is important to a lot of people evaluating the CRM space with possible fit into their enterprise. The question was “how will AI be used in the future development of CRM products and solutions?” An insightful question considering the intense power of

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it may directly impact and transform the customer / supplier relationship. According to SugarCRM’s 2022 CRM Impact Report, the most use cases for AI are:

- Automated email response and conversational AI
- Account intelligence
- Lead conversion

I agree with these basic points but here is my take on how this technology will impact and even transform the customer /supplier digital experience in the industrial automation and distribution space.

“Sellers may get a larger window into the customer’s enterprise to anticipate needs and to help focus business solutions.” Says Brian Gardner CEO of SalesProcess360

CRM and Artificial Intelligence

AI is all about collecting mass amounts of data and organizing it into relevant and actionable packets or requests. Suppliers may get a larger window into their customer's enterprise to anticipate needs and to help focus value added solutions. As the technology develops, AI will create greater value by providing enhanced solutions, and ease of use. Integrating AI functions may quickly connect customers to supplier resources to get near real time information regarding basics like order status, delivery information, product and particular configuration availability, but also new product information targeted directly at their unique application needs.

Successful industrial salespeople are always trying to educate themselves on the customers process and applications. Adding value as a subject matter expert (SME) is important. AI can facilitate that end by organizing data for action. Across the enterprise we can share knowledge of certain applications that are common to their process and how peers may be solving similar problems. Then making the information available via video format or through AR VR.

Enhanced call handling is already being used in a broad sense for years. Although reviews are mixed, this function will get much better in the near future. Chatbots collecting customer Q&A to route for optimum assistance including different languages is already underway.

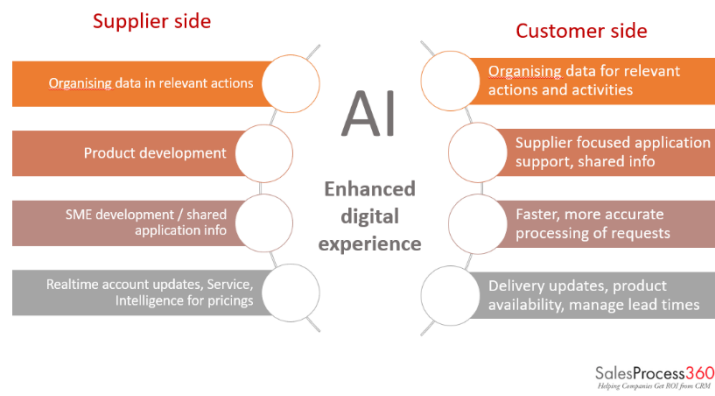
Heads up!

Service information can be updated to inform Sales of impending updates on product repair status prior to the sales call. Via web, users will collect and consolidate industry news or specific industry trends that impact the customer. Suppliers gain knowledge for Product

development decisions. Product and Brand Managers can organize relevant data to recognize need or market size for new product development.

Competitive metrics can also be tracked, like lead times or project (volume) pricing. Dynamic pricing engines can be incorporated like in the hotel and airline business. Additionally, AI can help businesses respond faster to customer inquiries and provide better answers to requests.

The adoption speed of AI into CRM will likely depend on the value being gained. We know currently that most CRM users are not getting the return they anticipated. Adding higher level functions like AI may not help this. However, as the technology gets more robust and easier to use, value will come quickly for both suppliers and end users. Companies headed down this path may consider doing a detailed audit of needs



and requirements. This will ensure proper CRM fit with the right functionality and a path for implementation that will assure success. Visit CRM consultants at www.SalesProcess360.com to access resources and experience to help guide the process. Using proven methodologies and tools will ensure project design, execution, and onboarding for the full CRM life cycle.