

NBR special report

CRM & SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

Communication is key when it comes to a customer relationship management (CRM) system. It makes communication between staff members and how a company interacts with its customers easier and more collaborative. But ensuring a CRM system works for your company means understanding the technology behind it and how it could leverage and build the business. There are exciting developments happening and CRM is no longer the domain of large multinationals but small to medium sized businesses are reaping their benefits as well. In this feature NBR takes a close look at the CRM sector and how CRM can make businesses more productive and efficient

CRM systems are indispensable tools

The heart of a customer relationship management (CRM) system is how it connects businesses with its customers, Intergen chief operating officer Simon Bright says.

Intergen integrates and implements Microsoft Dynamics' CRM solution, a solution that can drive greater customer service. CRM systems can manage everything from incoming calls made to businesses, record them and log the nature of the incident, Mr Bright said.

But CRM systems are now



Simon Bright

moving into a different space. Mr Bright said the trend was now to use CRM systems to better manage an organisation internally. An example of this is how the agricultural sector is using the system to track the

progress of trainees.

Through the system, an organisation can see where its trainees are, how many hours they have worked, what courses or skills they need to upgrade to and what level they are at in their training.

"It's a system to support a scenario where you have a relationship as a platform," he said.

Intergen has 30 customers that use Microsoft's CRM system, these customers include small to medium sized businesses to larger organisation such as commercial banks.

Mr Bright said CRM didn't have to cost businesses the earth and getting it implemented was much cheaper than trying to build it from the ground up. "What's challenging about CRM systems is getting people to understand what it does and how it can work for a business. It's a change in the way people think.

"What's amazing is how fast things can happen with CRM. The time of projects can be halved. It's a complete return on investment and this is realised a lot faster than people think because it is a lot

quicker," Mr Bright said.

Intergen implemented Microsoft's CRM solution for Waikato Milking Systems because it needed an "out-of-the-box" solution that could be tailored to the company's specific pricing requirements.

Intergen said for Waikato Milking Systems winning contracts was driven by its ability to quote and price competitively as the key to its success was accurate and timely pricing.

With this in mind, the company needed to replace its old price book solution for pricing management. Waikato

Milking Systems general manager Dean Bell said. "We felt confident that we were investing in a state of the art platform but not one that we had to fit our business to but rather one that fit all the drivers of our business."

Intergen has more than 200 staff employed across offices in New Zealand and Australia. Intergen said it had a strong "unwavering" commitment to Microsoft. On its website the company states "technology has evolved radically over the years but our core Microsoft foundations have not and will not."