

# Client Relationship Management and Practice Management

## Understanding the Unique Needs of Business Brokers

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has always been an important part of any successful business strategy. Learn what a customer's needs are and provide for them effectively. CRM, an acronym made popular in recent years, has evolved to cover a wide range of solutions for managing client information and improving client relationships. All sectors of the economy depend on effective CRM, but the role it plays within the business broker community is very different than in the broader product oriented corporate environment. Understanding the differences, the challenges and the opportunities, and then choosing and implementing a proper CRM strategy can improve a firm's long-term success.

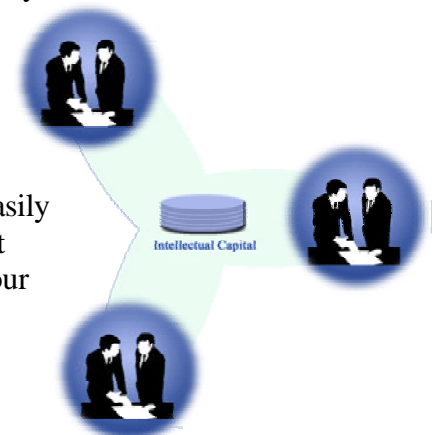
*What* business brokers sell is different than what the average salesperson sells. Business brokerage firms provide professional services in the knowledge, skill and judgment of their professionals. They do not market specific manufactured products or simple services. What brokers market to their clients, is their professional expertise.

*Who* is doing the sales is also different. Businesses that manufacture/distribute products employ groups of mid level sales and service people to sell and support the inventory manufactured by their own – or another – company. Business brokers, on the other hand, often own or partially own their firm and are responsible not only for providing the professional services to the clients, but also are directly responsible for business development and sales.

*How* business brokers sell is different. Product oriented businesses depend on the sales & service automation thought processes to provide goods and services to existing customers and new customers and they use mass marketing channels to sell even when no personal relationship exists. Business development for a business broker depends on one-to-one contact with the client or prospects to demonstrate that the broker has the requisite skills and expertise to accomplish and properly manage the brokering process and to establish the trust and credibility necessary to secure the engagement.

Most off-the-shelf contact management software is designed for the product-oriented sales person to help in marketing. Maintaining address and contact information with to do lists of activities is standard in all of them. Because significant differences exist between the business brokering model and the business model of product-based companies, the CRM requirements for these different industries necessitate different solutions. Brokers quickly run into the limits of what these generic 'one-size-fits-all' packages can offer.

**Intellectual Capital** - The successful CRM solution for a business brokerage is one that organizes for the broker the entire brokering process and due diligence responsibilities inherent in transactions of buying or selling businesses. The solution should also help management easily understand what is occurring within the organization to ensure the highest professional service to the clients. "Practice management" insures that your firm's intellectual capital is increased with every transaction effort.



**“Practice Management”** - SALYN provides the ability to record and track to completion, the complex tasks associated with business transactions ensuring they are accomplished in an orderly and timely fashion. Checklists and task management provide a powerful tool to brokers to manage the whole brokering process. Selling an auto parts manufacturer has different requirements than selling a sandwich shop. And by the same token, selling an industrial parts manufacturer may often have similarities to selling the auto parts firm. If a broker can capture and codify his thought processes on transactions in industries with which he has experience; and share this knowledge with other brokers in the organization, the services provided to the firm’s client are improved and the profitability of the brokerage firm is enhanced.

The CRM strategy for brokers can be defined as “a system that has the means to aggregate knowledge and expertise about people, industries, companies and transaction requirements, and transform this into the firm’s intellectual capital. *Practice Management* as part of this strategy harnesses and leverages the knowledge and expertise of its associates to provide the best service to its clients.”

**This is a crucial function  
that SALYN CRM performs.**

**Why use Technology** - When small companies employ all its staff at one location, it is easier to share information between associates through human interaction. Company meetings and discussions around the office keep everyone informed about what is happening with clients and facilitates knowledge transfer between staff members.

In recent years, changes have occurred that affect the working environment. The pace of business has accelerated; the geographical area where even small businesses draw customers has expanded and the desire to work from home or in small remote offices has increased. The face-to-face interaction between associates has become more difficult to maintain and the question of how to effectively manage customer relationships and encourage knowledge transfer between staff members has become more complicated. To avoid the inevitable breakdown in information transfer, broker firms must supplement the human interaction with a CRM system capable of managing the firm’s intellectual capital and deliver it to their professionals whenever and wherever they need it.

Another consideration concerning the firm’s intellectual capital is employee turnover. When a broker leaves the firm, they take with them a tremendous amount of information about people, companies and industries as well as their experience and expertise. This can create lapses in service to clients and even the loss of clients. Their knowledge and expertise is part of the intellectual capital of the firm and providing a central location to capture and maintain this information helps eliminate the risks associated with staff turnover.

The CRM solution a firm chooses is an important decision about how their CRM strategy will ultimately benefit their clients and the firm’s success. Business brokers unique requirements in managing client relationships necessitates a specialized solution.

SALYN has specifically designed a CRM application for business brokers, capable of managing the firm’s intellectual capital and delivering it to their professionals easily and securely regardless of location.

For more information about the SALYN CRM solutions for business brokers, please contact us at [www.salyn.com](http://www.salyn.com) or by calling (828) 230-7400.

