DMNews

# The Third Stakeholder: The end-user's impact on CRM ROI

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Consider this scenario. It's 12 months after the "go-live" of your new CRM system. The management team invested to improve opportunity management and forecasting, streamline the order management process, increase win rates and drive average transaction values higher. But, after 12 months, the anticipated business benefits have not been realized.

User adoption of the CRM application has stalled. The outside sales force is complaining about poor response time, remote users can't access the system, there are widespread claims that the system "doesn't work" and it's not clear if there are real problems or if end-users are just using the wrong procedure. The inside sales force, which started off enthusiastically, has stalled as well. The reps complain that the software is counterintuitive, and their manager, worried that it's affecting their call rates, is not enforcing its use anymore. The back-office personnel find the software cumbersome to adopt into their routines and ultimately create their own workarounds to get results.

Without a strategy to measure end-user adoption, as well as gather insight about the end-user's experience with their CRM applications, many IT organizations are left with the reality that they can't manage and improve end-user adoption and proficiency. In the absence of comprehensive and representative data, many discussions regarding CRM application deployments are based on reported user impressions, limited visual observations, and occasional stopwatch timings. This results in extrapolations about the performance of the whole system that are inaccurate, and lead to decisions that are not in the best interest of the business.

One pragmatic way to solve to this problem is to install an end-user experience management solution. These monitor all aspects of the end-user experience with enterprise applications. End-to-end response times, application and system errors are key performance indicators of the end-user experience. Some solutions extend to capture metrics on end-user error rates, utilization and compliance — all key indicators of end-user performance. Full-featured systems capture user behavior and the actual workflow that the user experienced — before, during and after transaction execution.

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These issues include the fact that application support teams have real-time metrics to proactively address response time issues. Also, help desk personnel have immediate visibility into actual user interaction with the application, and they can quickly resolve end-user issues. Specific application areas, or specific users, that require additional training can be pinpointed and helped by training organizations. Process engineering can spot cumbersome work flows and errors that are affecting end-user satisfaction and efficiency, and business stakeholders can pinpoint adoption problems, such as who is using which transactions, how long are they active and how long are they idle.

Only with the insight into end-user metrics that these systems provide can you really know if your core enterprise applications are delivering an acceptable user experience. These insights show if application users have adopted the applications and are executing key processes effectively and efficiently. Using this knowledge to improve application use is the key to achieving business value and ROI from the application investment.