



CRM Usage and Satisfaction: Microsoft Dynamics CRM users found to be more satisfied than Salesforce.com users

A Crimson Consulting Group



WHITE PAPER

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Executive Summary

In early 2009, Crimson Consulting executed a quantitative survey and analysis of users of Microsoft Dynamics CRM and Salesforce.com CRM. The goal was to identify the tasks most important to them, as a guide to the functionality desired in a CRM solution, and to assess their satisfaction with how well their CRM solution supports them in accomplishing these.

This white paper analyzes the data gathered to offer business decision makers insight into two aspects of CRM usage:

1. The tasks sales and customer service users believe are most important to their daily work, and
2. The differences in satisfaction with their solution's support for these tasks between Microsoft Dynamics CRM users and Salesforce.com CRM users.

The analysis focuses on the top 15 tasks these users rated as important.

Survey responses revealed many directional differences in satisfaction. For nearly every one of the top 15 tasks, for both sales and customer service users, Microsoft Dynamics CRM users are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users with how their CRM solution supports them.

Survey responses revealed many directional differences in satisfaction. For nearly every one of the top 15 tasks, among both sales and customer service users, Microsoft Dynamics CRM users are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users with how their CRM solution supports them.

Methodology & Demographics

For the survey, Crimson Consulting identified the major steps or activities within sales or customer service processes, such as “prospect management” or “following up on open customer support cases.” These became the high-level organization or “scenarios” of the study. Within each of these scenarios, we identified many different tasks, such as “tracking deals in the pipe” or “accessing customer information.”

Respondents use CRM in combination with other applications: they leverage email, spreadsheets, word processing, and other applications such as accounting, ERP, or product catalogs. Integration with such applications can be important to them, and the survey probed this as well. It asked respondents to rate the importance of integrating Salesforce.com CRM or Microsoft Dynamics CRM with a few specific (e.g., Microsoft Outlook) and generic (e.g., ERP) applications. For the purpose of this white paper, such integrations are referred to as “tasks,” as well.

For each of the following tasks please indicate how important it is to you for your CRM system to support you in your task.

For each of the following tasks please indicate how satisfied you are with the way your CRM system supports you in your task.

Please rate the importance to you of integrating (two-way data sharing) Salesforce.com CRM or Microsoft Dynamics CRM with each of the following applications.

Please rate the importance of using your notebook/desktop email (e.g. Outlook, Notes, Thunderbird etc.) to manage your CRM activity for each of the following tasks.

Respondents were asked to rate Importance using a 5-point scale, where 1 is extremely unimportant and 5 is extremely important (with 0 if question was not applicable to respondent). Based on our experience with surveys of this nature, in this analysis we interpret the mean of responses as follows:

- Very Important (4-5): Items with this rating are essential to users of the program or product.
- Important (3.5-4): Items with this rating are desirable to users of the program or product.
- Marginally Important (3-3.5): Items with this rating are potentially useful for the program or product.
- 1-3 Not required

Note that items rated “Essential” or “Desirable” are generally required capabilities for CRM users and for a successful CRM product.

Respondents were asked to rate satisfaction using a 7-point scale, where 1 is extremely unsatisfied and 7 is extremely satisfied (with 0 if question was not applicable to respondent). For the purposes of this analysis, we interpret the mean of responses as follows:

- Excellent (6-7): Items with this rating are delivering *excellent* user satisfaction.
- Satisfied (5-6): Items with this rating are delivering *expected* user satisfaction.
- Needs improvement (4-5): Items with this rating *need improvement*.
- Not satisfactory (1-4): Items with this rating are *not satisfactory*.

Demographics

The 316 respondents represent a good mix of mid-market and enterprise organizations, with more than half (57%) employed by enterprises with 1000 or more employees, and just over a third (34%) by enterprises with 5000 or more employees worldwide. The organizations were heavily weighted towards technology adoption leaders (44%). Respondents were almost evenly divided between Microsoft Dynamics 4.0 users (156), and Salesforce.com users (160).

Their roles break down as follows:

- 112 Sales Representatives
- 91 Customer Service Representatives
- 113 Sales Managers

Half of the respondents have been using CRM for over a year, and they tend to have a high level of CRM expertise. Two-thirds of survey respondents stated that they are “self-sufficient” or “support others with CRM.”

The 316 respondents represent a good mix of mid-market and enterprise organizations, heavily weighted towards technology adoption leaders (44%).

Sales Representative CRM Users

Sales representatives use CRM for every stage of the sales process, from prospecting to long-term follow-up, as well as to monitor their own progress towards sales goals. Within this process, Crimson Consulting identified the scenarios that distinguish the major steps or sets of related activities:

- Prospect for, research, and qualify sales contacts.
- Gather requirements and create proposals.
- Analyze their business and how well they're tracking their sales goals.
- Manage accounts and monitor the competition.

Within each of these scenarios, Crimson Consulting identified the key tasks, and asked sales representatives how important CRM support for each of these tasks was to them, and how satisfied they were with that support. As well, as noted above, the survey asked respondents to rate importance and satisfaction regarding integrating Salesforce.com CRM or Microsoft Dynamics CRM (in terms of two-way data exchange) with a number of applications.

When discussing the top fifteen tasks ranked as important by sales representatives in more detail, they will be grouped according to the scenario they support; here Table 1 ranks them in descending order of importance. This identifies the primary functionality required in a CRM solution by sales representatives.

Table 1 – Top 15 Most Important Tasks (Sales Representative CRM Users)

Rank	Task	Scenario
1	Microsoft Outlook	Two-way data exchange
2	Document and record customer details	Contact prospect
3	Track progress towards quotas/ goals	Conduct analysis on my business
4	Keep account & activity status up-to-date for management reporting	Gather requirements and create proposal/ quote
5	Track and alert you to tasks in the sales process	Contact prospect
6	Track proposals/ quotes delivered & deals in pipe	Conduct analysis on my business
7	Schedule an appointment for yourself	Contact prospect
8	Microsoft Word	Two-way data exchange
9	Prepare sales forecast tracking for myself	Conduct analysis on my business
10	Identify customers who have contracts up for renewal	Monitor account and schedule activities with customers to assess satisfaction, continue relationship
11	Contact lead via email	Contact prospect

Rank	Task	Scenario
12	Create reminders for follow up	Contact prospect
13	Prepare sales forecast for manager/ others	Conduct analysis on my business
14	Define custom reports, dashboards and drill downs in CRM	Conduct analysis on my business
15	Microsoft Excel	Two-way data exchange

Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 and Salesforce.com users assigned the same level of importance to virtually every one of the top 15 tasks; in only one case was there was a significant difference.

For all but one task in the top 15, sales representatives using Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users.

Microsoft users are significantly more satisfied with one of these 14 tasks, as discussed below. For the one task with which Salesforce.com users are more satisfied, the difference is not significant.

For all but one task in the top 15, sales representatives using Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users.

Two-Way Data Exchange

The number-one ranking within two-way data exchange was Microsoft Outlook, which is not surprising given that both sales and customer service respondents rated Outlook an essential tool. (They also rated Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word as essential tools in the same way in terms of importance.) Respondents rated two-way data sharing with CRM as essential for both Outlook and Excel, making this functionality particularly important.

Table 2 – Two-Way Data Exchange

Task Rank	Task	Satisfaction (Directional)	
		Microsoft Dynamics 4.0	Salesforce.com
1	Two-way data exchange with Microsoft Outlook	√	
8	Two-way data exchange with Microsoft Word	√	
15	Two-way data exchange with Microsoft Excel	√	

Prospect Management

The survey probed attitudes about tasks involved with prospecting for leads, and researching and qualifying sales contacts. Both “documenting and recording customer details,” and “tracking and alerting you to sales process tasks,” were significantly more important than any other task in this scenario, and respondents rated them as “essential.” Respondents rated the next three prospect-management tasks on the top-15 list as “desirable.”

In prospect management Salesforce.com users rated “creating follow-up reminders” significantly more important than did Microsoft Dynamics 4.0 users. Nevertheless Microsoft users are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users for all five prospecting tasks in the top 15.

Table 3 – Prospect Management

Task Rank	Task	Satisfaction (Directional)	
		Microsoft Dynamics 4.0	Salesforce.com
2	Document and record customer details	√	
5	Track and alert you to tasks in the sales process	√	
7	Schedule an appointment for yourself	√	
11	Contact lead via email	√	
12	Create reminders for follow up	√	

Requirements and Proposals

In this scenario, one task appeared among the top 15: “keep account & activity status up-to-date for management reporting.” For this task, satisfaction is statistically equivalent but directionally points to Salesforce.com. Other tasks in this scenario, including “access shared best practices,” “access standardized proposal template,” “access an existing proposal,” “create a new proposal,” and “manage internal approval” show significantly more satisfaction for Microsoft Dynamics users.

Table 4 – Requirements and Proposals

Task Rank	Task	Satisfaction (Directional)	
		Microsoft Dynamics 4.0	Salesforce.com
4	Keep account & activity status up-to-date for management reporting		√

Analysis and Goal Tracking

An important aspect of CRM functionality for sales representatives is analyzing their business and tracking their progress towards sales goals. The five tasks in this scenario that showed up in the top 15 overall were significantly more important to sales representatives than all but one of the tasks that did not. All were rated “desirable,” and in every case, Microsoft Dynamics 4.0 users are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users.”

Microsoft users are significantly more satisfied with the “ability to track progress towards quotas or goals.”

Table 5 – Analysis and Goal Tracking

Task Rank	Task	Satisfaction (Directional)	
		Microsoft Dynamics 4.0	Salesforce.com
3	Track progress towards quotas/ goals	<i>Significantly more satisfied</i>	
6	Track proposals/ quotes delivered & deals in pipe	√	
9	Prepare sales forecast tracking for myself	√	
13	Prepare sales forecast for manager/ others	√	
14	Define custom reports, dashboards and drill downs in CRM	√	

Account Management

Among the tasks involved in account management and competitive monitoring (e.g., “maintaining a file of quotes” or “thoughts about customers and competitors”), only one rose into the top 15: “identifying customers who have contracts up for renewal.” Respondents rated it “desirable.” This, of course, can be an important source of revenue, and one that is particularly important in a recession, when customer spending slows and opportunities involving capital expenditures become increasingly scarce.

Table 6 – Account Management

Task Rank	Task	Satisfaction (Directional)	
		Microsoft Dynamics 4.0	Salesforce.com

10 Identify customers who have contracts up for renewal

√

Customer Service Representative CRM Users

Customer service representatives use CRM for every stage of the support process, from initial contacts, from customers seeking help with orders or product issues, to tracking open cases, to closing an issue. Within this process, Crimson Consulting identified a number of scenarios distinguishing major steps or sets of related activities, including:

- Receive customer inquiries for product questions, orders, or returns
- Follow-up on open customer support issues
- Track and record customer issues

Within each of these scenarios, Crimson identified the key tasks, and asked customer service representatives how important CRM support for each of these tasks was to them, and how satisfied they were with that support. Also, as noted above, the survey asked respondents to rate importance and satisfaction regarding integrating Salesforce.com CRM or Microsoft Dynamics CRM (in terms of two-way data exchange) with a number of applications.

When discussing the top fifteen tasks ranked as important by customer service representatives in more detail, they will be grouped according to the scenario they support; here Table 1 ranks them in descending order of importance. This identifies the primary functionality required in a CRM solution by customer service representatives.

Table 7 – Top 15 Most Important Tasks (Customer Service Representative CRM Users)

Rank	Task	Scenario
1	Provide customer with information they need to solve issue	Receive customer inquiry for product/questions, product orders, product returns
2	Access Customer information	Follow-up on open customer support cases
3	Contact customer	Follow-up on open customer support cases
4	Microsoft Outlook	Two-way data exchange
5	Access current customer information, including recent order & support history	Receive customer inquiry for product/questions, product orders, product returns
6	Deliver solution	Follow-up on open customer support cases
7	Receive list of incidents	Follow-up on open customer support cases
8	Close incident	Follow-up on open customer support cases
9	Microsoft Excel	Two-way data exchange
10	Investigate customer issue and find a resolution	Follow-up on open customer support cases
11	Create new customer entry	Receive customer inquiry for product/questions, product orders, product returns
12	Propose solution and close issue	Track & Record customer issues
13	Create a new ticket or issue	Track & Record customer issues
14	Locate information to answer a customer query	Receive customer inquiry for product/questions, product orders, product returns
15	Update Knowledge base with new information	Follow-up on open customer support cases

Among customer service representatives, there were no significant differences in the importance of the top 15 tasks between Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 and Salesforce.com users.

For all of the tasks in the top 15, customer service representatives using Microsoft Dynamics CRM are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users. For two tasks (discussed below), Microsoft users are significantly more satisfied; among the top tasks, there are no tasks with which Salesforce.com users are significantly more satisfied.

For all of the tasks in the top 15, customer service representatives using Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users.

Receive Customer Inquiries

Customer service representative receive inquiries at many points in the customer experience, from requesting product information, to ordering products, to obtaining technical support. The survey probed importance and satisfaction for key tasks in this scenario, of which four made it into the top 15. Respondents ranked “provide customer with information they need to solve issue” as the task most important to them. Another important task, “access current customer information, including recent order & support history,” was ranked number five among the top 15. Respondents rated both tasks as “essential.”

Two other customer-inquiry tasks that appear among the top 15 are “create new customer entry” and “locate information to answer a customer query.” Respondents rated both “desirable.” Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 users are significantly more satisfied than Salesforce.com users with CRM support for “locate information to answer a customer query.” With the other three tasks, Microsoft CRM users are more satisfied.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 users are significantly more satisfied than Salesforce.com users with CRM support for “locate information to answer a customer query.”

Table 8 – Receive Customer Inquiries

Task Rank	Task	Satisfaction (Directional)	
		Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0	Salesforce.com
1	Provide customer with information they need to solve issue	√	
5	Access current customer information, including recent order & support history	√	
11	Create new customer entry	√	
14	Locate information to answer a customer query	Significantly more satisfied	

Follow-Up on Open Cases

Keeping track of open cases is a critical customer service activity, and it's perhaps not surprising that this scenario finds more of its key tasks in the top 15 than any other, including the number-two task: "access customer information." (This is a different task from the similar one involving customer inquiries, the most important distinction being that it is initiated by the representative, rather than the customer.) Respondents rated support for both this task and three others, "contact customer," "deliver solution," and "receive list of incidents," as "essential."

It is among these essential tasks that we found a significant difference in satisfaction. Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 users are significantly more satisfied with CRM support for "deliver solution" than are Salesforce.com users.

All of the other follow-up tasks in the top 15 were rated "desirable."

Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 users are significantly more satisfied than Salesforce.com users with CRM support for "deliver solution."

Table 9 – Follow-up on Open Cases

Task Rank	Task	Satisfaction (Directional)	
		Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0	Salesforce.com
2	Access Customer information	√	
3	Contact customer	√	
6	Deliver solution	Significantly more satisfied	
7	Receive list of incidents	√	
8	Close incident	√	
10	Investigate customer issue and find a resolution	√	
15	Update Knowledge base with new information	√	

Track and Record Customer Issues

Being able to track and record customer issues is an important component of the knowledge base that CRM helps create, whose value increases the longer CRM is in service. Two of the tasks in this scenario appear in the top 15: “propose solution and close issue,” and “create a new ticket or issue.” Respondents rated support for both tasks as “desirable,” and Microsoft CRM users were more satisfied.

Table 10 – Track and Record Customer Issues

Task Rank	Task	Satisfaction (Directional)	
		Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0	Salesforce.com
12	Propose solution and close issue	√	
13	Create a new ticket or issue	√	

Two-Way Data Exchange

As with sales representatives, two-way data exchange is important to customer service representatives. Integration with both Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Excel made it into the top 15 tasks for which support is important. Respondents rate both as “essential.” Again, Microsoft CRM users are more satisfied.

Table 11 – Two-Way Data Exchange

Task Rank	Task	Satisfaction (Directional)	
		Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0	Salesforce.com
4	Microsoft Outlook	√	
9	Microsoft Excel	√	

Conclusion

In the past 5 years, Crimson Consulting has executed numerous quantitative studies for high technology clients, particularly in the enterprise software space. We have gained a great deal of insight into the directional interpretation of such surveys, based on our ongoing engagement with these clients on other projects and the differing perspective they yield on the same product, product category, vertical, or other areas of interest.

Based on this experience, we believe that the data presented in this white paper can be useful to CRM decision makers in two ways. First, as noted in Demographics (above) respondents and their companies represent a good cross-section of the enterprise space. As well, there is very little vendor-related difference in the importance users of either CRM solution assign to support for the 15 most important tasks. In fact, there is only one case, among both sales representative and customer service representative respondents, where there was a significant difference in the importance assigned.

With one exception, for all tasks, across both sales and customer service representatives, Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 users are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users.

Thus, the top 15 tasks for which respondents rated support as “essential” or “desirable” identify the core capabilities that CRM users believe are most important to their daily work. As such, it may serve as a useful perspective on CRM requirements at the inception of a project or while talking to vendors and their partners.

Second, we want to call attention to the directional consistency of the satisfaction data about these tasks, and what it says about the relative advantages of Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 and Salesforce.com. With one exception, for all tasks, across both sales and customer service representatives, Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 users are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users. Another indication of this consistency is the fact that in no cases were Salesforce.com users significantly more satisfied, while, for three tasks (one in sales and two in customer service), Microsoft users were significantly more satisfied.

In short, based on our experience with surveys of this type, the data suggest that for nearly every one of the top 15 tasks, for both sales and customer service users, Microsoft Dynamics CRM users are more satisfied than Salesforce.com users with how their CRM solution supports them.

About Crimson Consulting

We help executives achieve market leadership

Crimson is a leading provider of consulting services to the high technology industry. Our clients include Adobe, BEA, Cisco, HP, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Oracle, Seagate, SAP, Sprint, Sun and Symantec.

Our clients gain significant value from our contributions in the following areas:

- Strategy Development
- Research Analysis
- Marketing Implementation

Unlike other firms, we combine consulting best practices with specialized knowledge from a database of experts. This combination results in deeper strategic insights and more pragmatic recommendations, delivering greater value than our competitors.

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