

Speed of Light: Presidential Campaigns Finding Salesforce a Powerful Partner

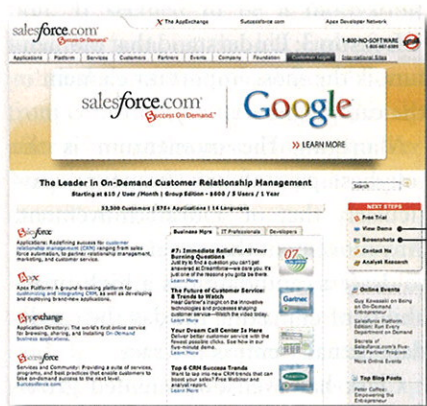
By Joel Berg

After Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., ran for president in 2004, his campaign team had fund-raising information stashed everywhere—a database here, an Excel spreadsheet there—but no easy way to bring it all together.

In 2005, as the Massachusetts Democrat pondered a second shot at the White House, a member of his finance team began poking around the Internet for a better way to organize all that data.

“The trick with political fund raising is you want your information readily accessible,” said Jay Dunn, finance director for Kerry’s Senate campaign fund.

Kerry decided against a second bid, but not before Dunn discovered Salesforce.com.



The California-based company makes Web-based software that streamlines sales and marketing. Businesses have been relying on such programs, known as customer relationship management, or CRM, for years. It’s how bank tellers know the customer in front of them received a direct-mail piece about home equity loans last week.

Political campaigns are catching on to the software’s potential, and the CRM industry has taken note. In April, Salesforce.com launched a new product, called Campaignforce,

cifically for political users at all levels.

Users log onto a password-protected, dedicated Web site where they find information from recent poll numbers and fund-raising totals to information about individual donors, including where they went to college and what clubs they’ve joined.

Campaigns have many of that data already, said Daniel Burton, Salesforce’s senior vice president for global public policy. But it’s usually housed on expensive, custom-built software and can’t always be shared. The donor list, for example, can’t be matched to the volunteer list.

Campaignforce puts everything in one place on a secure Web site. Campaigns pay a monthly fee based on the number

learning what business already knows ... You can supercharge your operations by harnessing the power of the Web.”

Dunn, Kerry’s finance director, said Salesforce alone won’t raise fund-raising totals. But the software has boosted staff productivity.

“There are other systems out there, but what’s key about Salesforce is that it’s so user-friendly and so quick and so accessible,” Dunn said.

Another Massachusetts pol also has turned to CRM. Former Gov. Mitt Romney (R) has been using a custom-designed blend of Salesforce.com and other software to raise money for his 2008 presidential campaign.

Romney surprised political observers when he led Republican candidates in donations for the first quarter of 2007, despite his middle rank in the polls.

“I do think it’s a safe bet that these products have given us a competitive advantage in terms of organization and understanding of our fund-raising activities,” said Ben Godley, deputy national finance director for Romney’s campaign.

The campaign dubbed its version of the technology ComMITT and created a streamlined version called QuickComMITT.

Nearly 400 professionals and business executives from around the country used QuickComMITT during the campaign’s “National Call Day” in January, a one-day fund raiser that raked in more than \$6.5 million

For one observer, the promise of CRM goes beyond fund raising.

Once in office, politicians can use the software to engage their constituents and be more responsive, said Paul Greenberg, a CRM expert and author of “CRM at the Speed of Light.”

“If you really look at CRM for fundamentally what it is, it’s not just pure technology,” said Greenberg. “Technology is an enabling piece of it. What it really is is a strategy, a philosophical outlook that says we are going to make our institutions more responsive to our customers or constituents.”



of users, \$65 or \$125, depending on the edition of the software.

Of course, campaigns have been—and are—raising millions of dollars using existing vendors.

“It’s just going to take time for us to demonstrate the power and efficiency of this whole approach,” Burton said. “Really, campaigns are in the process of