

Salesforce Plays 'Instrumental' Role in Helping The GL Company Achieve More than 200 Percent Increase in Customers in Less Than Two Years



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— Alex Sobell
Database Administrator

Industry

Technology

Geographies

UK, US, Australia

Challenges

- ⚡ Effectively manage customer and revenue growth
- ⚡ Overcome reliance on wide range of separate, disconnected systems used to manage relationships with customers around the world
- ⚡ Tackle loosely-coupled customer support processes and introduce formal case-by-case tracking procedure
- ⚡ Manage and accommodate growth in international markets

Solution

The GL Company deployed Salesforce SFA and the Apex Platform as part of a multi-tenant CRM solution to 35 users in the UK, U.S. and Australia to unify sales, marketing and customer support operations.

Benefits

- ⚡ Played 'instrumental' role in helping the company increase customers from 60 to 200 in less than two years—a more than 200 percent increase
- ⚡ No clumsy hardware, software, or upgrades to install
- ⚡ Low total cost of ownership
- ⚡ Marketing campaign management has become significantly more effective
- ⚡ 'Web to leads' functionality ensured prospect data is automatically populated into Salesforce and immediately followed up
- ⚡ Helped deliver responsive, effective and professional product support, help desk, and technical support—across the lifecycle of customer support

It doesn't matter if a software company has a sales team comprising of five, fifty, or even five hundred people, the fundamental goal remains the same: to ensure the sales team has the information at its fingertips to effectively target, acquire and retain customers. That was the problem facing The GL Company, a fast-growing accountancy software organization. The company markets the 'Really Real Time®' Inquiry Suite, a true real time inquiry, consolidation and reporting system for JD Edwards World and EnterpriseOne, and Oracle E-Business Suite.

A Flourishing Software Company in Need of a Single Customer View

With more than 200 accountancy practice customers currently in its portfolio, The GL Company is flourishing. Only two years ago, the picture was not quite so positive though. At that time, when the software company was significantly smaller than it is today, the sales team was using a wide range of separate, disconnected systems to manage relationships with customers around the world. These included an in-house designed contact management system, Outlook files, ring binders and other loosely-coupled sources of data. The same system applied to the important area of customer support. Here too, cases were managed using a maze of different processes and systems, with no formal case-by-case tracking procedure. Growth was occurring—but could it be managed?

“The entire functionality of our in-house system was about equivalent to just the 'Contacts' tab in Salesforce,” explains Alex Sobell, Database Administrator, The GL Company. “We were able to manage with this when the company was comparatively small. But as The GL Company expanded—acquiring more customers, bringing in new sales staff and operating in new markets like the U.S. and Australia—we knew we needed a more sophisticated and professional approach to sales, marketing and service.

It was time to move from a home-grown to a grown-up customer relationship management (CRM) model. Sobell and his colleagues at The GL Company conducted an analysis of the CRM market and concluded that the multi-tenant salesforce.com solution was an ideal fit for the business. “We might be a software company surrounded by technical experts, but we still wanted a straightforward, easy-to-use CRM system,” he says. “We opted for the 30 day free Salesforce trial and we immediately knew it was what we were looking for. For a set monthly fee, we get a significant depth of sales, marketing and customer support functionality which we can adapt really quickly to our bespoke software sales model. There's no clumsy hardware, software, or upgrades to install, the cost of ownership is very low and it's very popular with users. Quite literally, there's nothing else like it on the market.”

Just how popular is confirmed by the rate at which staff use Salesforce. The GL Company is achieving a log-in rate of 93 percent—something Sobell is quick to attribute to the all-pervasive nature of the solution. “It's the heart of our business,” he says. “From the moment staff arrive in the morning, Salesforce provides almost all the information they need to manage their activities.”

15,000 Prospects Residing in Salesforce

From a sales perspective, The GL Company is using Salesforce for lead, opportunity and account management, sales forecasting, calendaring and everyday contact management. Right now, there are 15,000 leads residing in the system. When a prospect visits the GL Company website, the 'web to leads' functionality means that the data they input via their browser is automatically populated into Salesforce and routed to a member of the sales team for immediate follow up. The prospect also receives an automated email acknowledging the enquiry.

Marketing campaign management has also become significantly more effective following the implementation of Salesforce. “Like any software company, we co-ordinate an annual User Group, training programs and are continually launching software releases. Almost all of this communication is conducted using Salesforce. We can segment the audiences we want to target with the announcement, send the emails and record the responses in Salesforce. A dashboard view also helps the team to keep track of the volume and nature of respondents on a shared basis.”

“Prior to adopting Salesforce, we had approximately 60 customers. Two years later, we have more than 200. Salesforce has been instrumental in enabling that increase in customers and revenue.”

— Nick Gomersall
Senior VP, Sales and Marketing

Selling and marketing the accountancy solutions is only half the story—the rest involves ongoing customer support, which is an intrinsic element in customer retention and cross-selling. Point-and-click customization in Salesforce is used to help The GL Company deliver responsive, effective and professional product support, help desk, and technical support. And this is right across the complete lifecycle of customer support, from logging cases, to suggesting and delivering new solutions to customers. “Dependable customer support is the key to every software company. With Salesforce, customers can log an inquiry on the Website and a case is automatically created in Salesforce. This is then assigned to a particular specialist for prompt examination and resolution.”

With Salesforce used every day by almost all of the staff, it’s easy to understand the effect it’s having on the business. Nick Gomersall, Senior VP, Sales and Marketing at The GL Company concludes, “Prior to adopting Salesforce, we had approximately 60 customers. Two years later, we have more than 200. Salesforce has been instrumental in enabling that increase in customers and revenue. It provides a single, complete view of the sales, marketing and service environment. It enables our sales teams to increase the amount of time they devote to selling, and less time to administration. And it scales easily whatever load we put on it. It’s also very popular among the staff, helped by its ease of use and rich functionality.”

For More Information

Contact your account executive to learn how we can help you accelerate your CRM success.

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