

CRM – KEEPING CUSTOMERS AND GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

IF YOUR BUSINESS IS UP AND RUNNING, you know how hard you worked to get your first customers. But did you know that acquiring customers can be the easy part - keeping those customers loyal and making sure they return to do repeat business with you can often be much more difficult.

However, existing customers can contribute significantly in helping you build a successful business - so it makes good business sense to manage these relationships effectively.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software has been around for years but many small business owners don't consider it as an option as they think their business may be too small or just doesn't need it.

On the other hand, small business owners that use CRM software to track interactions and keep in touch with customers and/or prospect customers could not envisage operating without it.

There are many options available for small business with a lot of providers offering free versions - what is key is to take some time and research what the best option is for your business. All CRM platforms enable you to easily build and maintain a customer and/or prospect database. With this database you can:

- Store customer details, product preferences, special requirements etc
- Communicate with your customers easily and track responses to calls/emails
- Identify visitors to your website and track their activity, building a profile of what prospective customers are particularly interested in
- Deliver email marketing campaigns in bulk to promote special offers, discounts etc
- Follow up with inactive customers that have not bought in a while or did not complete a purchase, with a gentle reminder

PERSONAL DATA AND GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

If you process personal data as part of your business, then GDPR applies to you.

It is important to remember that:

- Customer AND employee data is personal data
- Storing personal data either electronically or in hardcopy constitutes 'processing' personal data and is governed by the General Data Protection Regulation.

There is a lot of helpful information available from the Data Protection Commissioner in Ireland to make sure you are fully compliant with all data protection regulation.



FITNESS FOR WORK: GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES AFTER COVID-19 ABSENCE

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) has published interim guidance on its website to assist employers to manage workers' return to work following Covid-19 related absence. The guidance can be considered within existing sickness and absence management procedures and policies.

Fitness for Work (FFW) refers to a state of physical and psychological health and well-being which enables a worker to carry out their work reliably, safely and efficiently and in a way that does not affect their safety or the safety of others. Most workers who contract Covid-19 will recover with no long term health effects. Some workers, however, may suffer serious or on-going health effects and need additional support to return to work.

Maintaining communication with the absent worker is important and will help you in assessing whether the worker is fit / unfit to return to work. Employers should apply existing policies and procedures to encourage workers back to work, after a longer absence due to COVID-19, in the same way that return to work following any long illness is managed.

Employers should establish whether workers, who are returning to work following COVID-19 infection, are fully fit to return to their pre-COVID-19 roles and responsibilities. In some instances, workers may be unable to resume their pre-COVID-19 roles and responsibilities and may require both transition arrangements or altered responsibilities. This can be done in



line with the organisation's existing policies and procedures. Employers should make workers aware of worker assistance programmes and or wellbeing initiatives that have been put in place by the employer, that may help workers adjust to returning to work after absence due to COVID-19.

On the return to work, the employer should inform the worker of any relevant changes in the COVID-19 response plan made at the workplace, e.g. specific COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures or any other changes to work practices. It is expected that there is a regular update issued to staff of relevant health advice to workers on COVID-19 in the workplace on an on-going basis.

In the event an employee is unable to return to their pre Covid-19 roles/responsibilities, employers may wish to consider the following options:

- **relocation:** same job in an alternative location (remote working arrangements) where the risk assessment indicates control measures can be put in place
- **change in tasks:** modification, adaptation or removal of higher risk tasks
- **change in role and / or retraining:** alternative roles such as office-based role with the required controls in place or the ability to work from home in the new role.