Learning Lab:
5 Things You Should Consider Before Buying a New CRM

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Version 1.0

28 April 2023

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Your CRM is your most important IT investment.

 TRUE

or

 FALSE

✅ Your CRM is your most important IT investment.

Associations expect a lot out of their CRMs!

Website				
Members Portal				
Member Applications	Member Details	Member Renewals	Member Entitlements	Events Management
Sponsors Management	Ads Management	Certification Applications	CPD Management	Job Boards
Directories	Committee Management	Shopping Cart	Digital Magazines	Invoicing
Reporting	Member Comms	Learning Management	Credits, Transfers & Refunds	Engagement Scoring

For most Associations, the CRM does more for generating revenue and supporting a positive member experience than any other system.

5 Things You Should Consider Before Buying a New CRM:
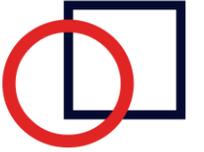
- ✓ Functional considerations

- ✓ Vendor considerations

- ✓ Implementation considerations

- ✓ Price considerations

- ✓ Cybersecurity considerations

Functional Considerations

To keep your costs down, choose a vendor that best meets your functional needs out of the box:

✓ Can the CRM support all the services you deliver?

✓ Do you need a new website or want to keep your current one?

✓ Do you need to track CPD points automatically?

✓ Do you have both individual and corporate members?

  ✓ How complex are those relationships between them?

  ✓ Do you need to track corporate entitlements?

✓ How complex are your Finance Needs?

  ✓ Do you frequently provide credits, transfers and refunds?

  ✓ What kind of accruals or deferred income reporting do you need?

Most systems can meet your needs at first glance. It's only after several demos and clarification questions that you can understand how well.

Vendor Considerations

A CRM vendor will be your partner for many years. Choose wisely with these considerations:

- ✓ Can they effectively support you during Australian business hours?

- ✓ How easy is it to integrate with other systems?

- ✓ Are they financially sound enough to be around in 3-5 years?

- ✓ Are they investing adequately in their Roadmap, especially for critical functions like cybersecurity?

- ✓ Did they pass your referee checks with other Associations?

> *CRM Vendors can expose you to significant costs, cybersecurity and business continuity risks in the future. Don't forget to include this in your evaluation.*

Implementation Considerations

Implementation approaches and costs vary greatly by vendor:

✓ Can you afford for the vendor or implementation partner to do the configuration for you?

✓ Do you have an appropriately-skilled resource to fully dedicate to the implementation?

✓ Have you already done a data clean-up of your existing database to minimise risks and costs?

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Price Considerations

CRM pricing can be incredibly complex and differs greatly by vendor. Be aware of these considerations:

- ✓ Free licenses do NOT mean free!

- ✓ Beware of the Add-Ons

- ✓ Beware of volume pricing when migrating data

- ✓ Beware of customisation requirements, including for reporting

- ✓ Don't underestimate the cost for data integrations with your other systems

- ✓ End of FY discounts

- ✓ Lock in multi-year pricing

> *CRM vendors use a combination of cost inputs to determine your ongoing fees. Ensure you understand all these costs, including any add-ons, when you conduct your evaluation process.*

Cybersecurity Considerations

Ensure your preferred vendor meets the basic cybersecurity requirements by asking these questions:

✓ Do you have [multi-factor authentication](#) capability?

✓ Do you have [Single Sign On](#) capability through Microsoft? This allows user-monitoring through Endpoint Manager if enabled and used.

✓ What are your minimum password requirements?

✓ How often do you release new security patches?

✓ Can you provide us with proof that you are [PCI compliant](#)?

✓ Can we see your security standards document?

> *Your CRM usually holds your most valuable and sensitive data outside of employee records. However, not all vendors have taken this responsibility as seriously as others.*

Do You Need Help with Choosing Your CRM (and/or Other Systems)?

- Vendor summary videos and other CRM advice on my website for free

- Vendor Deep Dive Reports available soon!

- IT Consulting advice

- Completely independent - I do not accept partner agreements with vendors.

@tvendange

"This is the second time I have worked with Tammy, and I look forward to continuing to do so next year. I have her on speed dial should I need her expertise again."

Julia Whitford, CEO
Australian Institute of Health & Safety (AIHS)

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