



How CRM differs for Home Health and Hospice

Customer Relationship Management, or CRM, is a business strategy that emphasizes the importance of the customer from acquisition, service, and satisfaction to customer loyalty and retention. Like all businesses, home health and hospice businesses serve customers, in this case patients. However, standard CRM processes don't address the unique needs of home health and hospice providers.

For example, while you may think of the patient as the customer and your mission is to provide the best possible care and comfort to this customer, your customer base extends far beyond your patients. Who refers patients to you? Case managers, doctors, nurses, rehab directors, insurance agents, trust officers, lawyers, family members of previous patients, and so on. These referral sources are also your customers and should be managed through CRM just as you manage your patients.

Next, imagine a single terminally ill patient who has been referred to you by a doctor. As you care for this patient, there may be several stakeholders who need to be informed as the case progresses including the referring doctor as well as insurance companies and family members. A generic CRM strategy doesn't take into account the complexities of managing the patient as well as the patient's stakeholders. In addition to needing a system for notifying referral sources and stakeholders of admissions, terminations, status changes, plan of care changes, and deaths, home health and hospice businesses need a system for acquiring new patients which is a crucial part of CRM strategies.

For most businesses, retaining customers makes sense because it is less expensive to retain a customer than it is to acquire a new one, but for businesses serving terminally ill patients, patient retention is practically impossible. Acquiring new clients requires a stronger focus on managing referral sources. Hospice and home care marketing professionals value their referral sources and need a tool for maximizing referrals and admissions, with the highest possible margin.

CRM software is such a tool. Off-the-shelf CRM software works well for many traditional businesses looking to manage the sales process from origination to conclusion. However, the unique needs of home health and hospice providers require extensive customization and even then the final product may fall short or require extensive training. A better approach is to use a Customer Relationship Management system designed specifically for the home health and hospice industry.

Like all businesses, return on investment, expense management, productivity, conversion rates, access to information, and ease of use are important CRM system considerations. An ideal CRM tool for the home health and hospice provider should incorporate the following features:

- Automated notification system – Secure, automatic email notifications to referral sources of admissions, terminations, deaths, status changes, changes in plan of care, and so on.
- Alert system - Automated email/alert notification for key data points such as alerting employees involved with a specific referral source when someone else, such as a clinician, in the organization has met with the referral source.
- Automated expense management system – Tracks typical business expenses such as mileage as well as tracks expenses to specific referral sources such as physicians. Tracking of expenses at the individual level

as well as at higher levels such as the practice, hospital, and clinic level. This type of tracking allows providers to calculate the return on investment per referral source. For example, a calculation could tell you for every \$XX spent, X referrals result.

- Time management system – Tracks how individual sales people spend their time and calculates how many hours it takes to result in a referral.
- Activity and Productivity tracking system – Tracks the day-to-day activities of sales and marketing personnel and details the progression of relationships with referral sources
- Referral source hierarchy – Details admissions and referral counts from referral sources at the physician as well as practice, hospital, county, and organizational level.
- Referral source conversion statistics – Statistics showing conversion rates at all levels from the individual physician to the larger referring organization.
- Referral source ranking – Ranks referral sources based on factors such as past performance, potential for referrals, and quality of referrals. This allows the sales team to focus on high value referral sources.
- Access to information – Includes patient chart lookups for all active and inactive patients as well as patient histories and lists per referral source.
- Robust reporting – Includes ROI and productivity reports, charts, and graphs detailing business development data, expenses, productivity, return on investment, and the entire referral source layout. Exception reports detailing referrals not admitted along with reasons why.
- Document management system – An electronic system for storing expense receipts, medical paperwork, contracts, images, correspondence, and other documents.
- Availability via client/server, laptop, PDA, and Web – A client/server version with offline capabilities, full PDA version for Blackberries and other portable devices, and 100% Web-based access for remote information retrieval and data entry, 24/7.
- Security – User access control and security ensure that only those with access to confidential information can access it.

The home health and hospice industry serves patients while also managing a complex business. Managing customer relationships is crucial to ensuring that the organization has the resources to provide the level of care and compassion patients require. Adopting a CRM strategy and selecting a CRM tool that facilitates that strategy allows businesses to spend their sales and marketing resources on quality referral sources. While your patients may not be repeat customers, your referral sources can repeatedly refer patients to you if you effectively manage your relationship with them. When it comes to referral sources, remember the foundation of CRM: acquisition, service, satisfaction, loyalty, and retention. A Homecare CRM strategy will help you build on this foundation and grow your referral base.

For Information about HomecareCRM please contact Sales at 888-843-8276.

