



The Estate Agency **CRM Buyer's Guide**

2022 Edition

How to choose the right CRM that will help you build trusting relationships with customers and prospects, drive greater efficiencies, and achieve higher revenue growth for your agency.

Content

A photograph of a modern building facade with blue and yellow balconies. The building has a dark blue facade with several windows and balconies. The balconies are enclosed with glass railings and have blue and yellow accents. The building is set against a white background with a large orange triangle in the top left corner.

i. Key Benefits of CRM software

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What should estate agency CRM software do for you?

An estimated **91% of companies with more than 10 employees** now use CRM software to facilitate their operations and customer interactions. Yet although CRMs present a tremendous opportunity to promote **efficient services and rich customer experiences**, few agents have realised their full potential.

A good Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution will help you...

- **build and nurture relationships with your customers**
- **automate and personalise the customer lifecycle**
- **securitise and manage customer and prospect data**
- **support sales management**
- **deliver actionable insights**

and so much more, all to help your agency realise higher revenue and faster growth.



But it's not just what the CRM does that matters; it's also how it makes it happen. What distinguishes a good CRM from a great one are:

- > **ease of use**
- > **persistent technical support**
- > **a credible reputation for delivering performance gains**

...and finally, if it's the CRM that all your competitors are using then there's a good reason for that too.

There are many different CRMs available on the market, but the win for your agency will be to determine which of them can truly deliver on the requirements of forward-thinking estate agencies that are geared to **attract**, **engage**, and **retain** the digitally transformed customer in 2022.



Why CRM software is critical for transparent, trusting customer relationships

Nurturing transparency and trust

According to the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, 92% of enterprises perceive CRM software to be important or very important to the success of their business, but one of the lesser spoken about benefits of a good CRM is how it can help your agency to build and nurture trust. The past few years have been a time both of challenge and change for businesses and customers alike, and what has emerged is that **consumers are increasingly demanding transparent and genuine relationships with the businesses they engage with.**

This is especially true for the property industry, where buying or selling a house is a highly emotional decision for most people. Customers look to your agency for support as they make one of most important financial decisions of their lives, so **it's not surprising that this relationship requires a great deal of trust to proceed smoothly and complete as planned.**

Delivering time and security

Where a good CRM can really shine is how it empowers agents to have more time with the customer, because recent studies have shown that most consumers want to interact with a real person more as technology improves. The right CRM is the one that does all the hard work behind the scenes, to give your agents more time with the increasingly digitalised consumer.

Security of their data is also becoming increasingly important to consumers as all generations become more aware of the pitfalls of digital transacting, so **it is essential that whichever CRM you choose has the infrastructure in place to protect customer data and prevent privileged information from being stolen.** Cyber-attacks on agencies are frequently becoming more commonplace, with an estimated one-third of estate agencies in the UK experiencing a cybersecurity attack in the last two years. Not surprisingly, your agency reputation relies on having a CRM that is capable of protecting the trust customers have given you.

The background of the slide features a modern building facade with a grid of windows. Some windows have bright orange or yellow frames, while others are dark blue. A large, bold red geometric shape, resembling a stylized 'A' or a series of overlapping triangles, is positioned on the left side, partially obscuring the building image. The text is placed within the white space of this red shape.

The insights **powering this guide**

Reapit has been a trusted provider of CRM solutions for thousands of estate and lettings agents worldwide for 25 years. This privilege has provided us with years of experience developing and optimising CRM software for agents that has helped them to put growth on repeat in all market conditions, putting us in a uniquely qualified position to help guide you through the decision-making process of buying a CRM. This software-agnostic guide is designed to help answer any of the questions you may have about what to look for in a CRM. It can be read in any order with each section easy to jump in and out of depending on your interest.



Key Benefits of CRM software

At its core, a CRM is critical to your business to *help you gain new customers and look after your existing ones*. But at an operational level the benefits of implementing a quality CRM are even more diversified and impact positively on the overall performance of your business as *decision-making becomes more data driven*, with a noticeable effect on your operations and revenue pipeline. Here are seven key benefits we have identified based on the feedback from thousands of our customers.

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1. Build a prospect database and grow your business

New customers are a key ingredient of continued growth, but they are not easy, or cheap, to come by. That is exactly why you need a system that helps you build your prospects and make the most out of every lead that comes your way.

According to Forrester Research: a properly implemented CRM can generate a 245% ROI for your business.

A feature-rich CRM will empower you to register new vendors, market your properties both online and off, register and action next steps with your buyer applicants, and accelerate sales and tenancy progression, all while delivering a personalised sales journey for each and every customer to help you close business faster and deliver higher revenue.



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2. Generate new business by mining your customer database

According to Zendesk, 30% of marketers say having disparate data sources is a main reason why they can't glean useful insights from customer data.

Which is why your CRM should be more than just a platform for tracking existing business. A great CRM will store all your data in a single, centralised database that you can mine intelligently with search features that funnel relevant data from across all your businesses and offer smart cross-referencing, from sales and lettings to property management, so you can maximise your investments and grow your prospect list.



3. Deliver targeted and personalised marketing

Deloitte research found that 85% of businesses agree that efficient data management is crucial to customised communication.

Winning new business becomes much easier with a CRM that is able to segment your data whilst intelligently matching buyers and properties, ensuring that you market the right content to the right audience at the right time.



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4. Gain greater insights

Nucleus Research found that data accessibility for salespeople shortens their sales cycles by 8-14%.

The right analytical capabilities will provide your estate agency with the competitive edge it needs, helping you to discover areas in high demand, keep a close eye on your current instructions, identify those at risk of withdrawal and track your conversion-to-instruction performance.

A high-performing CRM will help you to make effective insight-driven decisions, improve conversion rates, and drive revenue growth with intelligent decision-making. Capture every opportunity and increase productivity by drawing property data from multiple sources and eliminating manual reporting using an integrated suite of property analytics tools to track, report, and act on key performance insights critical to your business.

Companies whose decision-making is data-driven are more productive and up to 6% more profitable than those that don't rely on data

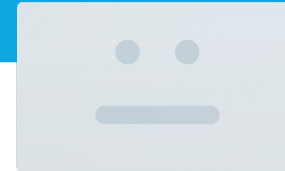
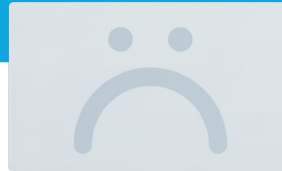
Source: Harvard Business



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5. Improve customer experiences

Research from the Rockefeller Corporation into why customers leave showed that 68% of customers leave because they feel that companies do not care about them.



A powerful CRM will turn hundreds of manual processes into automated ones, including support processes. Leverage your CRM to move to omnichannel, automated service offerings (phone, web, social) with 24/7 access so that your customers can engage with you all hours of the day and night.

Most of the important and time-critical customer service requirements of your agency can be entirely automated within a CRM, leaving your agents with more time to personalise and interact directly with customers.



6. Increase productivity and drive cost savings

A CRM can help align your teams with actionable reports and insights; streamline workflows and task plans so you follow-up, nurture and re-engage customers at optimum times. Furthermore, according to SuperOffice, **52% of companies say CRMs could reduce the silos in customer data**, which helps to ensure that data collection is quick, easy, and automated where possible so that no opportunities are missed.



7. Meet the demands of today and tomorrow

Data from strategic marketing planners DMI Target Media Inc. reveal that Generation Z – people born loosely between 1995 and 2010 – would **reach up to 40% of all consumers by 2020**, and according to BofA Global Research, this growing consumer segment will **surpass millennials in spending power by 2031**.

Your future customers are digital natives, having grown up in a world of digital content and online commercial interactions, and they will have different expectations of how customer engagements take place than you are currently used to. With the competition adopting more advanced CRM solutions, agencies with an underperforming system in place, or without a CRM entirely, risk being left behind. In short, your agency will underperform and so will your bottom line.

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Agencies in this sphere run the risk of becoming obsolete as customers are lured by ever-available, ever-attentive agencies, incrementally leading to a gradual reduction in profit and cash flow.

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Core Capabilities to look for in a Quality CRM

Not all CRMs are created equal. As with any kind of business software, there are platforms that better enable estate agents to stay ahead of the competition, improve relationships with customers, and ultimately benefit the bottom line – and there are those that fall short. One way of assessing the quality of an estate agency CRM is to focus on key features, because a lack of features is often one of the top reasons why businesses become dissatisfied with their current CRM. In this section we will walk you through the seven core capabilities most important to consider when choosing a quality CRM.

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1. User-friendly

One of the biggest challenges with CRM deployment is often user-adoption, and this is backed up in a study which reported that **65% of CRM users consider ease of use to be the single most important requirement** when selecting a CRM solution.

In many cases, those staff who stand to benefit the most from your CRM often cannot or will not use it. If your agents are unhappy with your current CRM, ask yourself the following:

- > **Is it missing important functionality?**
- > **Is it too rigid for your business processes?**
- > **Is it unintuitive?**

This last point is an important one. Useful should not equal complicated. An effective CRM prioritises a streamlined interface that facilitates straightforward interactions for both experienced users and those just starting out. It is about giving your agents the right quantity of information, in the right place, at the right moment.



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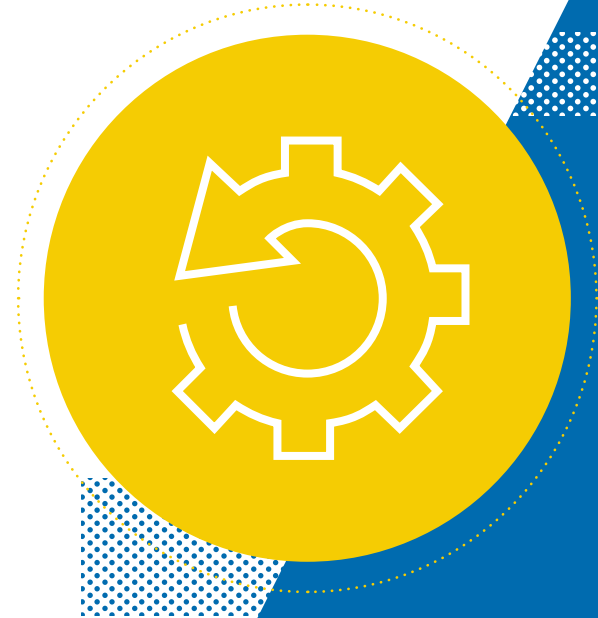
2. Automation

Analysis from the McKinsey Global Institute found that **40% of all estate agency activity can potentially be automated**. A fit-for-purpose CRM platform must excel at workflow management, automating processes wherever possible and reducing reliance on manual processes.

Automation improves productivity, reduces costs, and enables your agents to commit more of their time to revenue-generation activities instead of administrative ones. Such functions can be found in:

- > **Marketing**
- > **Enquiry handling**
- > **Data compliance**
- > **Diary handling**
- > **Reporting**
- > **and more**

These functions are all complimentary and will help to streamline efficiencies across departments to manage customers and leads.



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3. Analytics

According to the Pareto principle: 80% of your profits come from 20% of your customers. Companies which make data-driven decisions are more productive and up to **6% more profitable** than those not relying on their data.

A true estate agent CRM should be able to give agents valuable insights into their entire business model and should make a direct and tangible impact on the bottom line of business. To achieve this a CRM should combine powerful reporting tools and business-critical property management dashboards.



8 Core Benefits of CRM Analytics:



Visualise data



Track performance



Increase productivity



Maximise opportunities



Improve conversion rates



Discover more about your business



Make effective insight-driven decisions



Drive revenue growth with intelligent decision-making

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4. All in One Place

A CRM's effectiveness depends on its ability to serve as a centralised tool for bringing business functions and customers together. The most effective CRM software is the one that is able to combine all your agency data on a single, centralised platform, giving you full accessibility to all your data at the touch of a button, and revealing the 'big opportunity picture' in your data that will otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Bad data sources result in 30% of all leads failing – Cyber Sphere

Gains come from increased efficiency and productivity across admin teams and through improving communication channels across teams. It should touch all aspects of your business, not just front-office sales, and should be able to support the entire customer journey, from acquisition to advocacy.



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5. PropTech Integration

The best solution for a modern agency is a CRM which can integrate and deploy individual PropTech solutions that best meet their strategic business requirements. ***Having more tools at your disposal not only lends itself towards the advancement and fulfilment of internal processes but also helps to improve and enrich the end-to-end customer journey.***

Perhaps most importantly, ***integrated solutions and applications must operate on a single, centralised CRM*** rather than on departmental, siloed CRMs. This is particularly important for larger agencies with multiple departments and branches as a decentralised CRM creates operational inefficiencies and does not represent the best possible return on investment.

According to MuleSoft's 2022 Connectivity Benchmark Report, 88% of respondents said integration challenges continue to slow digital transformation initiatives, and 38% of respondents consider integrating siloed apps and data as their single biggest challenge to digital transformation within their business in 2022.

Ultimately, this leads you to make smarter and better-informed decisions using real-time data from your centralised CRM and its PropTech integrations working seamlessly to drive profitability.



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Businesses use over 900 applications on average, but more importantly, only 28% of these apps on average are integrated in any way.

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Source: 2022 Connectivity Benchmark Report - MuleSoft, in collaboration with Deloitte Digital

What if tailoring your CRM was as easy as installing an app?

Instantly extend the power of Reapit AgencyCloud for any business need, with best-in-class PropTech solutions from leading providers, all available on the AppMarket.

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6. Mobile

A mobile CRM is essential for your team out in the field, providing access to day-to-day functions for both sales and lettings users. From registering an applicant or adding a market appraisal property, to processing appointment follow-ups, setting call reminders and tasks, and even running reports – an effective CRM should be able to handle important tasks remotely.

Nucleus Research discovered that 65% of companies using a mobile CRM achieved their sales quotas, as opposed to only 22% using non-mobile CRMs having reached the same targets.

Browser-based mobile access is the preferable choice rather than app-based as it would not restrict you to certain smartphone operating systems and ensure a device-agnostic approach to meet your business needs.

A mobile-enabled CRM results in a:



74% increase in customer satisfaction



87% improvement of sales and employee productivity



73% improvement of business process efficiency

Source: Forrester Research



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7. Compliance

Protecting your customer data is both a customer expectation and a legal requirement with UK-GDPR compliance on data protection and privacy.

Your CRM is a vital tool for maintaining compliance along every step of the privacy data lifecycle.

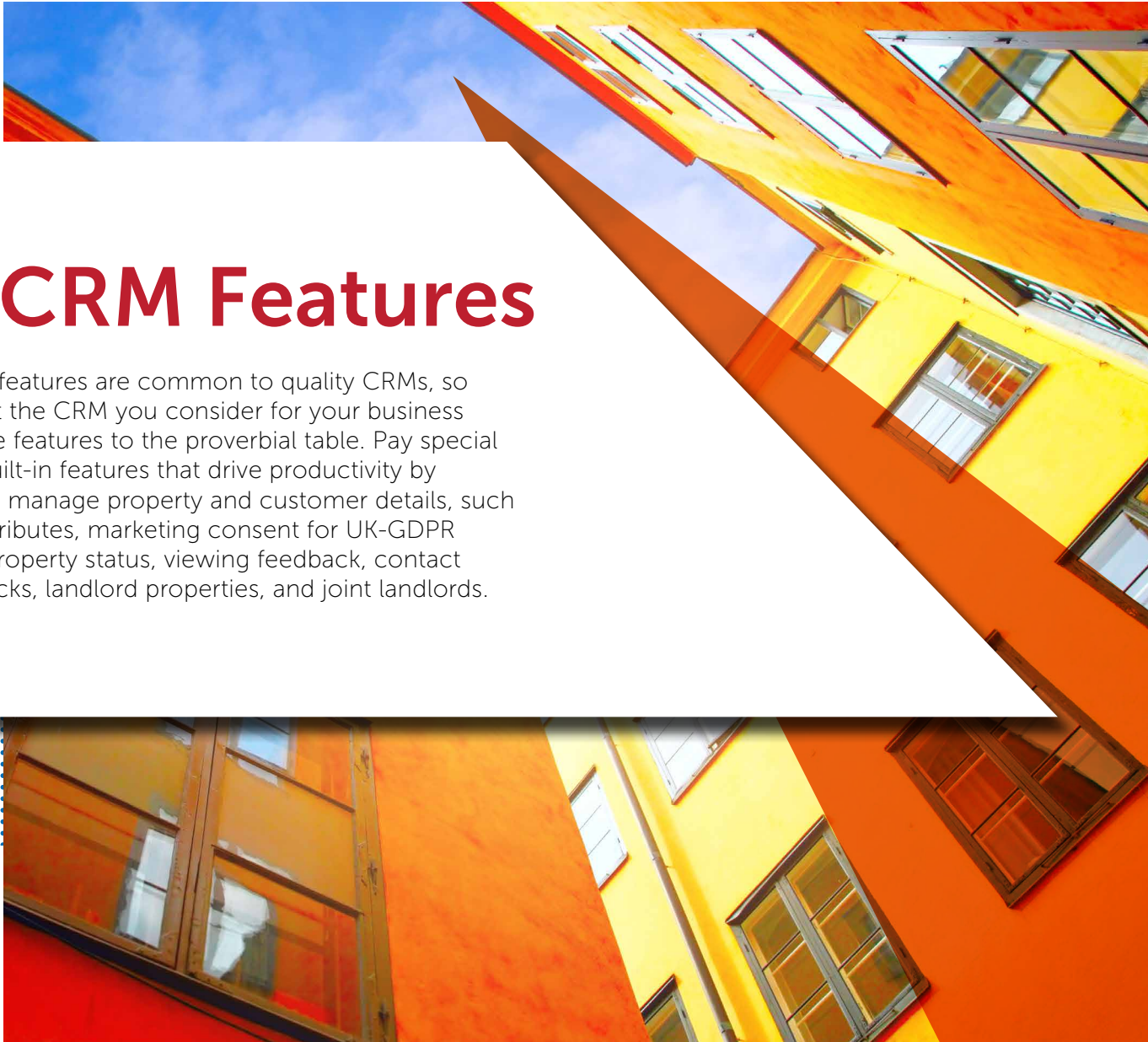
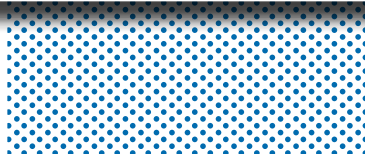
Compliance features built into a quality CRM will help you to secure and manage consents to protect your data across all communication. Data breaches open the risk of substantial fines, and a compliance-directed CRM not only protects your data but also helps promote trust and transparency.





Top CRM Features

The following features are common to quality CRMs, so make sure that the CRM you consider for your business will bring these features to the proverbial table. Pay special attention to built-in features that drive productivity by helping agents manage property and customer details, such as property attributes, marketing consent for UK-GDPR compliance, property status, viewing feedback, contact details, ID checks, landlord properties, and joint landlords.





Customisable dashboards

These will provide real-time updates for key areas of focus, such as sales progression, tenancy progression, compliance, available properties, new instructions, post-tenancy activities, inspection due dates, and internet registrations.



Search function

An imperative feature, this will help staff to easily find data records in various record categories (contact, suppliers, landlord, applicant, tenancy, and property) across all your databases and branches.



Unified database

A solution that integrates all your customer data from every source into a single database across all your businesses, offices and roles will give you a 360-degree view of your business so you can track success and identify new opportunities.



Record management tools

Providing real-time information on your vendors, landlords, property, and applicants to view information, this feature will enhance customer interactions and the completion of activities/tasks.



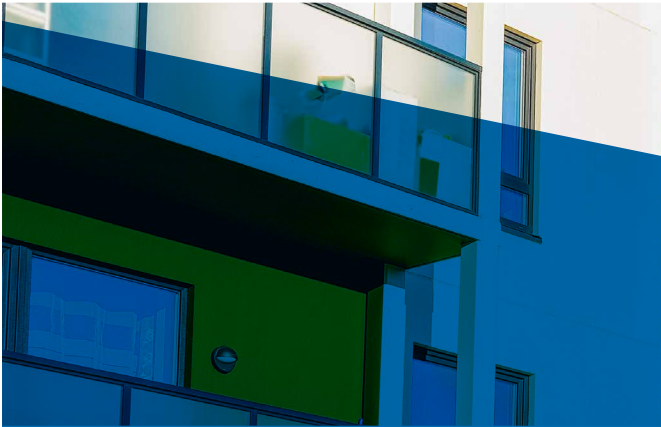
Pipeline management tools

These tools provide insights based on real-time data to see how instructions and agency fees perform against targets and KPIs.



Customer journey tracking capabilities

Use these to monitor critical milestones such as sales progression checklists for property sales through to pre-tenancy and post-tenancy checklists for lettings opportunities.



Variety of interaction options

Choose a CRM that offers a choice of interactions with customers and applicants, be it in branch, online, or over the telephone. In particular for online engagement, consider the functionalities such as booking online and continuing the online journey with dedicated self-service portals for vendors, applicants, landlords, and tenants, all designed to speed up sales, lettings, and tenancy progression whilst providing a personalised and enhanced online customer experience.



Analytics

Look out for analytics features that provide dashboards and customisable reporting capabilities to analyse every aspect of your business and customer journey, giving you greater visibility of your operations and empowering you with timely and accurate information to manage and grow your business effectively through insight-driven decisions.



Messages, tasks, and alert reminders

Help employees to engage with customers at the right time, share best practices and support communication flow between colleagues and branches.



Continuous improvement built-in

Your business keeps evolving and so should your CRM software. Look out for a product that is continuously improving based on identified best practices and customer feedback.



Added value services

A CRM purchase is not a one and done event so be sure to select a software partner that will provide ongoing training, support, and customer success management to help you grow, retain business, and increase productivity.



Services of a **Quality CRM Provider**

Success with your chosen CRM solution should not be a one-and-done package. From the moment you enter into an agreement with a provider and for as long as you work together, you should be receiving ongoing support to help you get the best out of your new CRM. Good suppliers want you to maximise your use of their software, because this mutually beneficial relationship means that your agency consistently performs at its best and they receive your continued business. So, in this section we shall explore what a quality CRM provider will offer to give you all the support you need.

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1. Data Migration

Once you have chosen a new CRM, a quality CRM provider will ensure your onboarding experience is seamless and disruption-free. Getting your data migrated over successfully to your new solution can be a challenge for many CRM providers, but a good provider will have experienced data and implementation specialists available to support your agency during the transition.

Ask your preferred supplier if they have:

- > **Experienced data and migration specialists**
- > **A tried and tested change management methodology**
- > **Familiarity with migrating data from legacy systems**
- > **Security and data privacy controls for customer data**



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2. Training

Quality CRMs should also come with quality training. Good CRM suppliers are not just interested in selling you a product and moving on. They will offer training at no extra cost to ensure both a smooth adoption and ongoing training support to facilitate the growth and expertise of your agents even as new features and improvements are implemented into the solution.

Ask your preferred CRM supplier if their training is:

- **Available 24/7** – allowing your agents to pick and choose when they learn
- **Unlimited** – to ensure that your operations are not affected by employee churn
- **Complimentary** – as a good supplier will want you to get the best from your CRM

Good CRM suppliers will also provide different options and levels of learning. We all learn in different ways and CRM users will all be at very different stages of learning. New starters will need to be brought up to speed on their first day (especially during onboarding), and experienced users will want to be able to access content which can enhance their knowledge.

Training experiences should include:

- **Video tutorials**
- **Skill assessments**
- **Live webinars**
- **In-person learning**



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3. Customer Success

Software companies are now making Customer Success Management a standard offering. However, the level of service, quality, approach, and relevance is not always the same, and companies often fail to realise agreed customer outcomes and support customer aspirations. A quality CRM supplier will *work with you to help your agency meet its business objectives and priorities.*

Ask your preferred CRM supplier if they offer:

- > **A dedicated Customer Success Manager**
- > **Regular face-to-face visits or remote meetings**
- > **Bespoke value reports to gain insights into your business**
- > **Optimised business plans tailored towards your CRM goals**



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4. Support

Just as important as training is a robust and efficient support structure from your chosen supplier to ensure that any issues are dealt with as swiftly as possible, because as we all know, lost time is lost revenue. Your CRM is a business-critical system, so it should be backed up with a 24/7 dedicated support functionality to quickly address any issues which may impact on your business.



Ask your preferred CRM supplier if their support includes the following:



Log, update, view and escalate issues 24/7 – so that your agents can see the status of their case, see support team updates and comment in real time.



All correspondence is maintained in one place – full visibility reduces email chains, confusion, or misunderstandings.



Support accessible from within your CRM – your agents should not have to look far for help, it should be available at the click of a button.



Self-service knowledge base – many questions or issues can quickly be resolved by the user themselves with access to comprehensive FAQs.



Conclusion

So, there you have it – everything you needed to know about buying an estate agency CRM all in one place. CRMs are a fantastic tool for creating great customer relationships that build trust and deliver meaningful results along every step of the end-to-end customer journey.

The right CRM will make your agency smarter, more efficient, more agile, and increasingly adaptable in a world where the competitive landscape is ever changing. A quality CRM is not merely a tool but an ecosystem to create rich experiences for both you and your customers – because the easier your job, the more time and care you can pass on to the customer.

Hopefully now you have a better understanding of what to look for in a powerful, future-proof CRM. The next step on the road to success is finding the CRM solution which is right for you. With this guide at your side, it need not be a hard decision.



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**attract, engage &
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