# The future of CRM: Insights from industry leaders as we approach 2025



In a recent forum hosted by CRM Playaz, thirteen senior executives from leading industry vendors shared their insights on the future of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as we approach 2025. The discussion highlighted the evolving nature of CRM in shaping customer experiences and business interactions.

Clint Oram, Cofounder and Chief Strategy Officer of SugarCRM, articulated a traditional yet evolving concept of CRM, stating, "I'm looking for a personal assistant for my customers. A personal assistant for my employees. I'm looking for CRM to tell me what I don't already know. To tell me what to do next and then go do the easy things for me." This underscores the view of CRM as an enabler of efficient interactions and decision-making within businesses.

David Singer, Global Vice President of Go-To-Market Strategy at Verint, provided a broader perspective, framing CRM as “the art, science and practice of continually elevating your customer or consumer's experiences through their entire journey.” He emphasised that while technology plays a critical role, CRM represents a holistic philosophy that requires execution across various organizational levels.

Adam Justis, Senior Director of Product Marketing at Adobe Experience Cloud, suggested a nuanced interpretation, stating, “Change one letter in that acronym." He proposed thinking of CRM in terms of Customer Experience Management (CXM), highlighting the importance of understanding and facilitating customer experiences rather than just managing relations.

The executives underscored the significance of leveraging data effectively. Anthony Leaper, Senior Vice President of Sales and Service Cloud Product Management at SAP, described CRM as "leveraging every piece of information and knowledge you can capture in a meaningful manner, to exceed the expectations of the customer at the point you interact."

Similarly, Vijay Sundaram, Chief Strategy Officer at Zoho, echoed a classic business maxim by quoting Peter Drucker: "the goal of a business is to create and keep a customer." He positioned CRM as the “enabler of a primary goal of a business,” signifying its enduring importance in customer retention strategies.

John Taschek, Chief Market Strategy Officer for Salesforce, summarised CRM's purpose succinctly by stating that it is about “making the customer successful,” which involves also empowering the individuals within the company to facilitate that success.

Jason Miller, Chief Evangelist at Creatio, stressed a dual approach involving both systemic and emotional aspects of customer interaction. He noted, "It's ultimately up to us to enable our employees to be able to better engage with those customers," highlighting an employee's role in the customer experience.

Rob Pinkerton, SVP at Oracle CX, offered a simplified view by querying ChatGPT for an answer, positing that CRM fundamentally helps businesses "win their customers' business, keep those customers happy, and find more happy customers like the ones they already have."

The conversation further tiptoed into the operational aspects of CRM. Terence Chesire, VP of Product Management at ServiceNow, outlined CRM as the systems and processes that allow organizations to appropriately engage with customers. “It's much more important to deliver on what that customer then requires," he explained, focusing on the necessity of understanding customer engagement beyond mere offers.

Tara DeZao, Product Marketing Director at Pegasystems, added that CRM should "add value to the life of your prospects and customers throughout their entire life cycle," advocating for consistent engagement across various channels.

John Bruno, Vice President of Strategy at PROS, contributed by highlighting that CRM encompasses the approaches and business processes related to targeting, acquiring, servicing, and retaining customers. He noted, “Technology becomes a fundamental requirement, but if you're not focused on the strategy...it’s not going to matter," stressing the need for strategic alignment in CRM initiatives.

Johann Wrede, CMO of UserTesting, encapsulated the essence of CRM as the "system of record for every interaction with the customer," providing insights for future interactions. This viewpoint aligns closely with Michelle Couture, Global Product Marketing Lead of Customer Experience at Zoom, who saw CRM as essential for understanding customer touchpoints and attributes.

As these industry executives dialogue about the nature of CRM in 2025, it is clear that the landscape of customer interactions will be heavily influenced by technology, a customer-centric philosophy, and the strategic processes that underpin these engagements. The perspectives shared in this session suggest a significant evolution in how businesses view and implement CRM solutions moving forward.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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