

Become a Social Business with SugarCRM® and IBM®

No matter what business you're in, you're in the people business. Even if you sell business-to-business, the decision makers and ultimate buyers of your products or services are people who depend on interconnected relationships to make decisions, accomplish their work, and purchase from you. It's never been more important to understand the social nature of business because social is how a significant amount of business gets done today. With the right understanding, processes, and tools, your business can differentiate itself, grow, and thrive as a social business.

With the advent of the Internet, mobile communications, and social media, people have never had easier, faster, and more complete access to information. High-bandwidth networks have enabled ubiquitous near-instant access for collaboration and communication. Business information is readily accessible to consumers, and consumer information—both within and outside business relationships—is equally available. Businesses that understand these fundamental changes and how to leverage them throughout their organization are best positioned for success with this new connected, intelligent, and personal network.



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What is a Social Business?

IBM has identified three characteristics of a social business:

Engaged: connecting customers, employees, and partners deeply for productive, efficient involvement.

Transparent: removing boundaries to information, experts, and assets to help people align their actions to drive business results.

Nimble: speeding up business with information and insight to anticipate and address evolving opportunities.

What are the benefits of becoming a social business? A social business builds community and collaboration throughout its organization, both internally among employees and externally among customers and partners. But will this make a difference to your business?

Gain a Competitive Advantage as a Social Business

According to IBM¹, fifty seven percent of companies who invest in social business outperform their peers, with benefits including a twenty-five percent increase in business and a twenty percent decrease in the time it takes to manage projects. For your business, implementing processes that improve community and collaboration will provide the opportunity to achieve these benefits:

Gain more customers through more efficient sales processes that allow your sales team to focus on the most productive leads, close more deals faster, and spend less time on routine sales tasks like generating sales reports and producing sales forecasts.

Retain more customers through better lifecycle communication and visibility into customer use of, and satisfaction with, your products or services.

Increase customer satisfaction by providing your service representatives with all of a customer's historical dealings with your business including their interactions via social media. Allow customers to engage with your business through convenient, familiar social media.

Improve sales forecasting through a single accurate source of information that combines real-time sales input with information from other sources such as your ERP system.

Getting Started as a Social Business

Businesses that embrace social business principles are well-positioned to build business value and create new opportunities. But what's the process to become a social business? Where do you start?

Goals: As a first step you'll need to identify your key business goals. Gaining and retaining customers? Improving customer service? Boosting marketing efficiency? Your defined goals should be pertinent and measurable so you can clearly track and analyze the success of your efforts.

Processes: Define your customer-facing processes and the information required to implement them. Sales, marketing, and customer support may have unique practices, but their underlying required information should be shared from a single source to provide a complete view of the customer. For example, a sales rep should be able to access information about her customers' support experiences with your company.

¹IBM. "Social business: the advent of a new age" 2011.

People: For a successful implementation, it's vital that your team understands your business goals and processes, and is empowered by the information available to them to achieve those goals. The interface to the solution you implement needs to be easy to learn and easy to use to encourage adoption.

Technology: You'll need to pick a solution that will support your people as they implement the necessary business process changes to achieve your goals. It's also important to choose effective business analytics tools to measure your improvement and success. By choosing the technology after defining your goals and processes, you'll ensure that your choice will complement your way of doing business rather than making you change your business processes to fit the technology.

How SugarCRM Supports IBM's Vision of Social Business

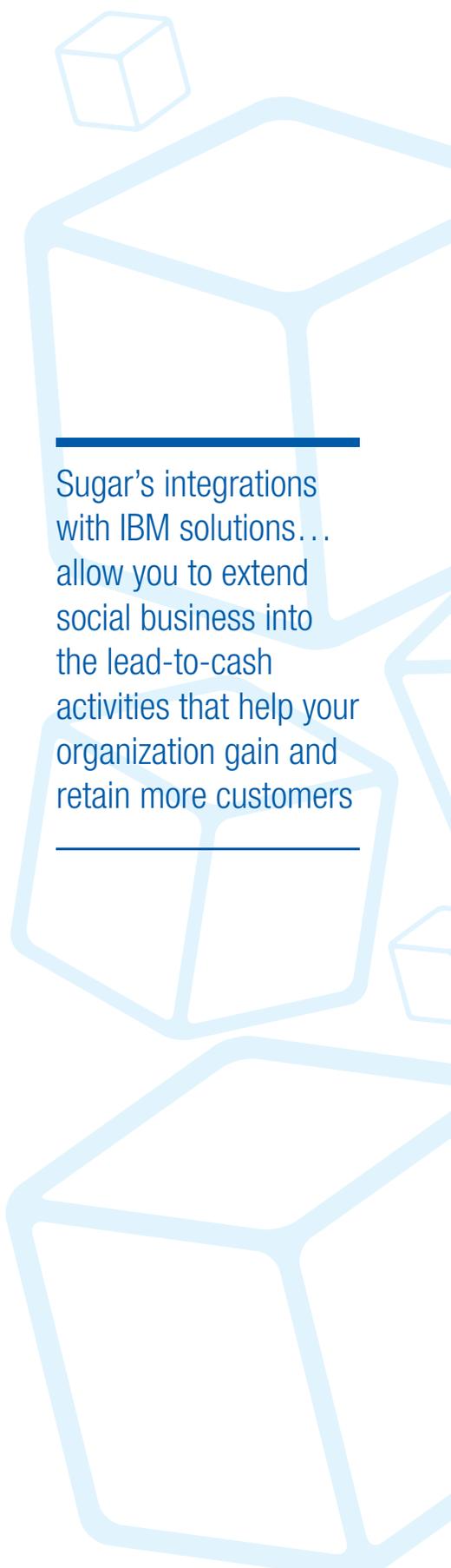
Sugar's integrations with IBM solutions such as Cognos®, IBM SmartCloud™ for Social Business, and IBM LotusLive Notes®—and the upcoming integration with IBM SmartCloud Connections—allow you to extend social business into the lead-to-cash activities that help your organization gain and retain more customers.

Engagement: Sugar provides a single source of customer information for use by sales, marketing, and support. Sugar supports integrations with popular collaboration tools such as IBM SmartCloud Engage and social media including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn so your customers can interact with your business using methods they prefer.

Transparency: Sugar's open platform gives you flexibility and control over your CRM deployment. You can make unlimited customizations, integrate with third-party or legacy systems, and add new functionality with easy-to-use administrative tools. Sugar's use of open software and industry-standard APIs mean that it easily connects to third-party software available today, including business analytics, social networking, and social media applications, as well as to applications released in the future.

Nimbleness: Sugar includes all the functionality necessary for transforming business processes and implementing sophisticated customer-facing initiatives, yet its simple user interface helps your team quickly gain proficiency even as it reduces training and support requirements. The powerful yet intuitive Sugar interface is easy for today's Web-savvy users to master with little training. Sugar's flexible interface and platform support extensive application customization, regardless of the cloud service platform or operating system on which it's running.

Do you have a mobile workforce? Sugar's ready to support you with a variety of apps that work on all major mobile platforms. Your team, whether they're in sales or support, can be as productive on the road as they are in the office, with access to the information they need wherever they're located. Management will benefit from near real-time remote updates, making data analysis faster, easier, and more accurate.

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page consisting of several light blue, semi-transparent cubes and interconnected lines, creating a 3D effect. The cubes are of various sizes and orientations, some appearing to be stacked or connected by lines.

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Key Benefits of Sugar on IBM

Control Over Your Data

Sugar's flexible deployment options give you the freedom to host your CRM implementation—and your data—where it best meets your requirements. For rapid development, prototyping, and international presence, you can deploy on IBM SmartCloud Enterprise. If you prefer to deploy on another cloud infrastructure or on-site, behind your own firewall, Sugar's application and database are completely portable between in-cloud and on-premise deployment options.

An Open, Intuitive, and Flexible CRM Solution

Sugar has an open application architecture, which means you have code-level access to customize Sugar to fit your business processes. With Sugar, you have unparalleled flexibility regardless of the complexity of your IT infrastructure. Sugar's interface and platform support extensive application customization, regardless of the cloud service platform or operating system on which it's running.

Mobile, Global, Social

Sugar is available as a native application on iPhone, iPad, BlackBerry, and Android devices, or it can be accessed from any mobile browser. In its standard configuration, Sugar supports 22 languages and the Sugar Community provides packs for more than 60 additional languages. Sugar also offers extended social CRM capabilities with new and enhanced social management tools including InsideView, Hoovers, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Google.

Sugar Makes the Most of your IBM Investment

Sugar adds value to your IBM investment through comprehensive, tested integrations with IBM software, systems, and infrastructure solutions. After deployment, Sugar's open platform means that it can continue to grow and adapt to your business needs and changing technology, sustaining its value far beyond the typical software lifecycle.

IBM Software compatible with Sugar includes:

- Cognos®
- DB2®
- IBM SmartCloud™ Engage
- LotusLive Notes®
- SPSS®
- IBM SmartCloud Connections (coming in 2012)
- Sterling Commerce (coming in 2012)
- Unica (coming in 2012)

IBM Hardware supported by Sugar includes:

- System i®, System x®, System p®

Sugar-Compatible IBM infrastructure includes:

- IBM SmartCloud™ Enterprise
- WebSphere® Cast Iron® Cloud

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