What's an SMB?

It's not what you've been told.

zohocrm.com

Zoho CRM

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What's an SMB?

For too long we've defined small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) by their size. But there's nothing small about the neighborhood coffee shop that makes the perfect latte, the graphic designer who creates beautiful artwork, or the local insurance agent who protects the community in the event of a catastrophe. These businesses start with an idea and move forward with passion, exceptional customer service, and hard work. And while they may be small in payroll or square footage, there's nothing small about their aspirations or their needs.

At Zoho one thing we've noticed, and are constantly reminded of, is our SMB customers are smart. Unlike big corporations stuck in their ways, SMBs are constantly learning, adapting, and improving. They're quick to adopt technology and quick to upgrade or replace it when something better comes along. They also embody the spirit of the modern business by doing more with fewer people, taking advantage of every opportunity, and using every available tool to make an impact and be more competitive.

It's time we rethink what an SMB really is. **These businesses aren't small at all. They're smart and modern businesses.** One such tool these businesses can implement right away to get more organized and close more deals is a CRM. But with so many CRMs on the market, which is the right one for you? This ebook will help you understand what a CRM is, why you need it, and how you can use it to benefit your SMB for years to come.

What is a CRM?

While salespeople still close deals the old fashioned way—with charm, persistence, and likability—the smart and modern salesperson knows those methods only get you so far. To grow your business' pipeline and speed up the sales cycle you also need organization, a proven sales process, and insightful analytics.

CRM (customer relationship management) gives you all of that and more. Like the name suggests, CRM helps business owners manage and understand their relationships with current and prospective customers by analyzing interactions and measuring data. When implemented, CRM improves business relationships, streamlines the sales process, and increases overall customer acquisition and retention all from a single location, with the least amount of work possible.

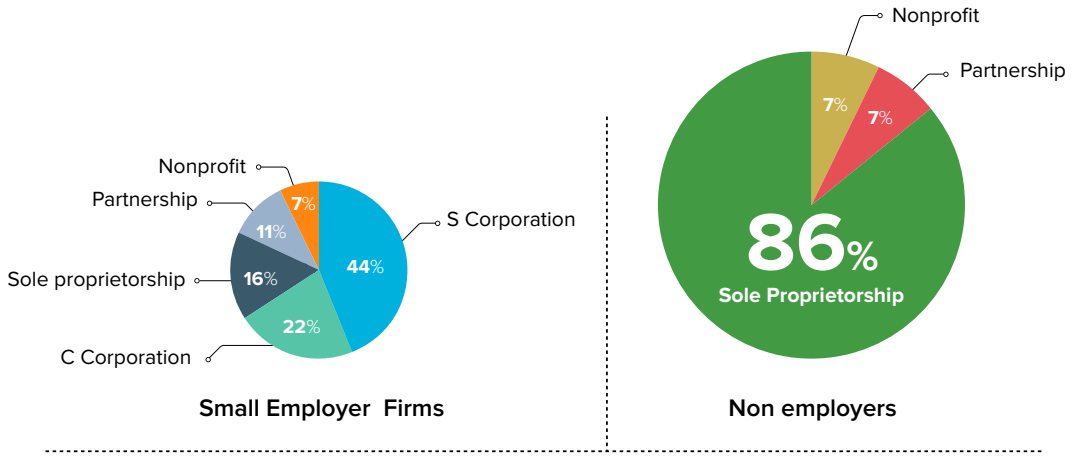
The problem for salespeople everywhere is they're only spending a third of their day actually selling. The rest of their time is spent completing administrative tasks, qualifying leads, and manually entering data. CRM is the easiest way to take care of these time consuming tasks and get your reps back on the phones, doing what they do best.

Zoho CRM is designed with the modern business in mind. By giving you insight into your sales performance to see what is and isn't working it lets you make the appropriate adjustments. You can also keep your sales team on track by setting up automatic emails and messages to customers so no task or lead falls through the cracks.

If you are looking to grow your business in the coming months and years, CRM gives you all the necessary tools to follow up with prospects and nurture leads with the personal touch of a one-on-one interaction.

Why do SMBs need a CRM?

There's a common misconception that CRM is too expensive or too complicated for SMBs. And while CRM used to be a luxury only large companies could afford, the market has shifted in recent years. Today, SMBs everywhere can afford and implement inexpensive and easy-to-use CRM software customized to their own needs and business process.



Legal Form of Organization of Small Business

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SUSB and Nonemployer Statistics.

One common characteristic a majority of SMBs share is limited resources and manpower. In fact, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that roughly three-fourths of these businesses are sole proprietorships, meaning one person, or just a few, are doing all of the work all of the time.

As these businesses grow they will inevitably need help. That's where CRM enters the picture. At its basic level, CRM makes it possible for your business to scale. Spreadsheets, address books, and other primitive forms of organization can only take your business so far. If a business wants to compete with larger companies, it needs a more sophisticated way of managing its sales cycle.

CRM gives you a complete and insightful view of every customer, letting you not only see contact information but also purchase history, personal interests, and even how they've interacted with your company website. And that's only the beginning.

When implemented, a CRM can also help SMBs:

Get and stay organized so leads and customers never fall through the cracks	
Become more efficient with a repeatable sales process.	Securely store data to prevent data loss in the event of a hardware crash.
Automate routine tasks to do more with less time and fewer staff.	Analyze every part of your sales process with detailed reports.
Improve customer service by streamlining daily operations.	Store and view all your customer information in a single place.

No matter the size, every business needs to visualize its pipeline so it can chart a clear path to success and growth. A sales pipeline is a visual representation of where your prospects are in the buying process as well as a representation of a salesperson's or sales team's forecast. With a CRM, SMBs can develop deeper relationships with customers by better understanding their needs, providing exemplary customer service, and competing with larger companies day in and day out.

How to choose the best CRM for your business

Before spending a single dollar on a CRM there are a few questions every SMB needs to consider. As we've said before, your business and sales process are unique. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. That's why it's important to think about your size, budget, and expectations so you don't get overwhelmed by the number of options and vendors.

Begin the buying process by asking yourself a few questions like,

How much am I willing to pay?

What do I expect to get from the CRM?

What are essential features I can't live without?

After you answer these questions and have a road map of your expectations, it's time to understand a few key terms, the different types of CRMs on the market, and the various pricing models.

Cloud versus on-premise CRM

If you've been researching CRM software, you've probably noticed there are two types: **on-premise** (also called installed) and **cloud-based** (or SaaS). The most obvious difference between the two is where the software is installed and how much time and effort is required by you to make it work.

On-premise CRM

Requires on-site servers and is managed by your company's IT team. The CRM is installed on individual computers and stores all data on your company server located in your office. Salespeople can only access the CRM on specific devices and all software updates are completed manually by your IT team.

Cloud-based CRM

Software and data are stored by a vendor on remote servers. This CRM isn't located on a specific machine and is accessible using any web browser and any device. Because there is no hardware to install and no need for a dedicated IT team, cloud-based CRM is an easy and cost effective solution for SMBs across every vertical. Any software updates happen automatically and do not require business owners to purchase additional upgrades or re-install the CRM on their machines. With cloud CRM, users can login to the system wherever they are across multiple devices (laptops, tablets and smartphones).

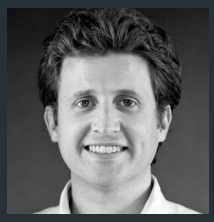
Pricing models

The majority of cloud-based—also known as software as a service (SaaS)—CRMs are priced on a monthly subscription model similar to Spotify or Netflix. This payment model is very attractive to SMBs because business owners only pay for what they need and not for superfluous features.

Whether classified by number of users or features, most CRM vendors offer various editions with various pricing. The most robust edition with the highest-level features like automation or marketing capabilities costs more per month than the standard edition with basic features.

From a cost-saving standpoint, Bernard Health's bottom line has improved significantly since switching to Zoho a year and a half ago.

"We save over 70% per year since switching. When I tell people that we changed CRMs, they're shocked. They think that Salesforce is the only platform on the market that can accommodate the complexity of our business. And that's just not true.



- Alex Tolbert, Founder, Bernard Health.

BERNARD HEALTH
Rescuing you from healthcare confusion

This is where cost can vary greatly, so ask yourself whether you need a CRM with in-depth and customizable features or can you get by with basic functionality? Fortunately for owners, the CRM market is very competitive and almost all vendors offer a free trial of their software, and in some cases even a free edition. At Zoho, in addition to a free 15-day trial of CRM, we also offer a free trial edition of all our products.

Take advantage of these offerings and sign up for a few free trials or even the free version before purchasing to make sure it's the solution that best fits your business.

CRM buying guide checklist

There's a scene in the Netflix original series Master of None where the main character, Dev (played by Aziz Ansari), spends 45 minutes online researching the tastiest taco in New York City only to find that when he arrives to the spot, they've sold out.

It's an accurate reflection of our current purchasing habits in the age of Yelp and Amazon where consumers are more informed and more opinionated than ever about products and services. CRM software is no different. With so many CRMs on the market, narrowing it down to two or three choices can be a vast undertaking. So before diving into specific features or solutions it's important to consider a **few big picture characteristics of your CRM**.

- Price versus budget
- Ease of use
- Integrations
- Flexibility
- Scalability
- Customization
- Data security

Price versus budget

This is a factor in any purchasing decision but it's especially important to SMB owners who want to keep costs as low as possible. First, establish your budget and use it to narrow down your choices. Be sure to consider both up front and long term costs so you have a clear picture of what this software will run you. If the base price is low but requires a bunch of add-ons or hidden costs in the future as you grow, you may want to consider another option.

Ease of use

CRM software doesn't do your business any good if your salespeople can't use it or spend most of their day trying to understand it. Most SMB owners aren't computer science majors and don't have time to dedicate to complicated software. Almost all cloud-based CRM vendors offer free trials, so take advantage of those to determine how quickly you and your salespeople can start using the CRM. Yes, there will be some type of learning curve with any CRM, and training your sales team is an essential step of the implementation process, but some systems are far easier than others and designed with SMB owners.

Integrations

Chances are you are already using a number of cloud applications to run sales, marketing, and other aspects of your business. Your CRM should be able to integrate with those third-party applications (like social media or email) so no aspect of your business has to be interrupted.

Scalability

If the CRM works the way it's supposed to, your business will grow year after year. That means your CRM has to keep up. Whether it's adding more complex features, using additional modules or even integrating with other products, your CRM should be able to scale alongside you.

Customization

CRM exists to help your business grow, get organized, and improve relationships with customers. That means you should never have to change your business to fit your CRM. It needs to be customizable. If it isn't, move on.

Flexibility

Financially speaking, this can be one of the most important factors in choosing your CRM. Some CRM vendors require you to sign a long-term contract without the option of canceling or reimbursement. By doing this you forfeit any option of switching to another CRM until the contract expires. You want a CRM with flexibility, in case you need to cut costs or find another solution down the line.

Data security

A common question and concern among SMB owners is whether or not their data is secure in a cloud-based CRM. For those used to storing all personal data locally, the unknown of trusting your customer information to a third party can seem risky. But working with a CRM that runs from a secure data center ensures your files are always protected and always available wherever you are. If you have questions, talk with the CRM vendor before purchasing and ask them to explain their privacy and security policy.

How to get the most from your CRM

So you've looked at your business, decided it's time to implement a CRM system, and even decided on the perfect solution (we prefer Zoho for a number of reasons, but we're a little biased). But like any tool, CRM is only valuable if you know how to use it and how to get the most from its features so it works for you.

53%

companies expect a CRM to drive sales and increase productivity.

If you're like 53 percent of all companies, you expect a CRM to drive sales and increase productivity. To do that, you need to first take a look at your sales process and sales team to make sure everyone is on the same page from day one.

Source : brainshark.com

BRAINSHARK

One of the biggest mistakes you can make early in the implementation process is failing to properly educate and train your employees on the benefits of CRM and how to use it on a daily basis. Make sure to highlight benefits, like how much time it will save them early in the implementation period, to inspire unity across your sales team and to also show how CRM specifically impacts their workday for the better. It's also a good idea to offer frequent retraining sessions or tests to ensure your team retains the information.

If your sales team doesn't buy in to using CRM and following your company specific guidelines or workflows, the true financial benefits for your company in using a CRM can be derailed early on. It does your business no good if only half of your salespeople are inputting leads into the CRM or using automation to reach out to customers. It's all or nothing.

When you are working on company rules for using the CRM, think about the following:

- How do potential customers find you and how are they getting into your CRM?
- Once leads or potentials are in your CRM, what happens?
- What steps does your sales team need to follow when a lead is assigned to them?
- What happens when a salesperson closes a deal?

How can CRM make your business smarter?

Using your digital identity.

SMB owners know that running a smart and efficient business is crucial to growth and longevity. As you begin to implement a CRM into your daily routine, there are a number of ways you can compound its impact on your bottom line.

Zoho CRM named Best Free CRM for Small Business Owners.

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Source: fitsmallbusiness.com.

FitSmallBusiness.com
Get Your Business Into Shape

The modern business needs exposure, and more specifically, exposure on the web with a simple and easy-to-navigate website. Consider our own shopping habits. When we hear about a company through a friend or advertisement, our first instinct is to Google the business' name and visit its website to learn more about them and to browse their products or services.

With CRM, you can capture information about your website visitors and import their contact information directly into your database. Simply embed a webform into your company website for visitors to fill out and automatically push the information into your Leads module so you can follow up with the appropriate communication.

After embedding a **webform** you can then prioritize the leads with scoring and assignment rules so no one falls through the cracks. All leads are critical for SMB owners—especially younger businesses—but some are more qualified than others. With **scoring rules** in Zoho CRM you can prioritize your leads with positive or negative scoring so salespeople can prioritize their workdays and know which leads to pursue first.

Additionally, **assignment rules** in Zoho CRM lets sales managers distribute leads across their various sales teams. Zoho lets managers do this two ways. The first is based on a specific condition. This can be lead source like a trade show or in-person meeting, as well as by state or country of origin. You can also distribute leads randomly across your sales team to ensure an even distribution. This is ideal for smaller sales teams that aren't divided by region or territory and ensures every salesperson has the same number of leads.

Automate your day using workflows.

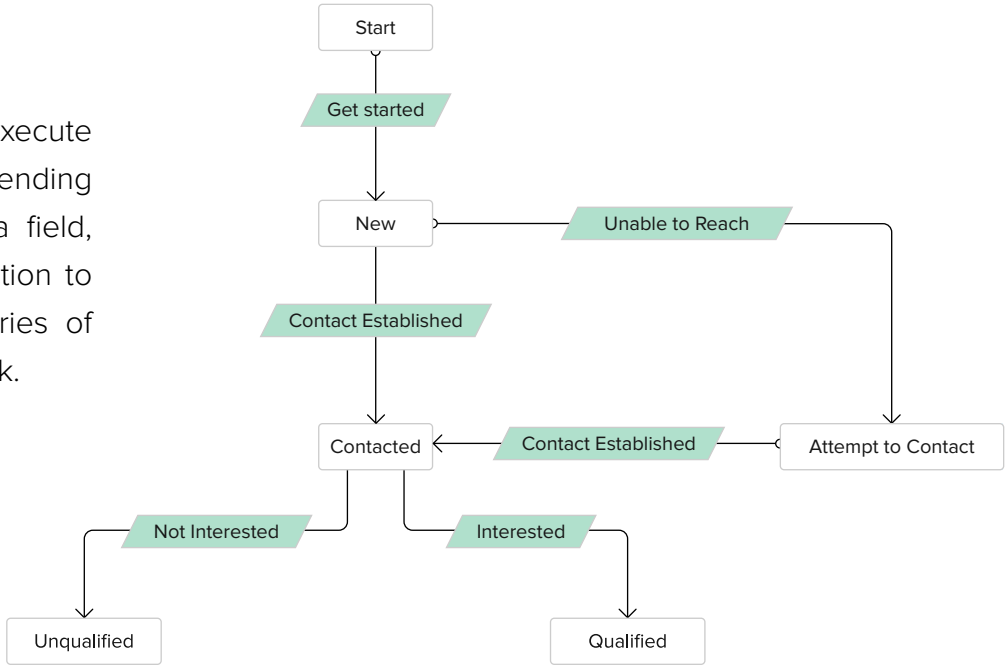
Automation is one of the most valuable CRM features for SMB owners because it multiplies the power of their workforce without hiring more employees and spending more money. It also ensures all salespeople follow the same process and are on the same page from qualifying a lead to winning the sale.

You can automate your workday multiple ways with Zoho CRM.

Blueprint

The first is with Blueprint, a tool which guides your team through every stage of the sales cycle to make sure they follow your company's sales process. SMB owners can build a custom workflow using a drag-and-drop editor and create a repeatable process for handling opportunities. Or you can set conditions that have to be met before a salesperson can close a deal. You can also make your business more productive by automating a number of routine tasks such as sending follow-up emails, updating customer information, or assigning new leads to your salespeople using workflows and macros.

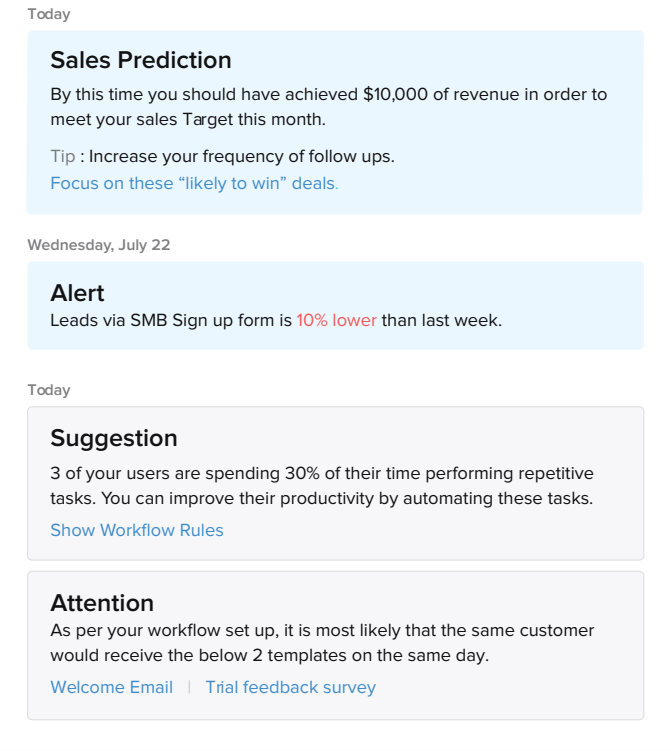
Create workflows that execute a number of tasks like sending an email or updating a field, or use the macros function to manually execute a series of actions with a single click.



Zia: AI-powered sales assistant

Zoho CRM continues to service the modern business with Zoho's AI-powered sales assistant, Zia, making your sales process infinitely more streamlined and productive.

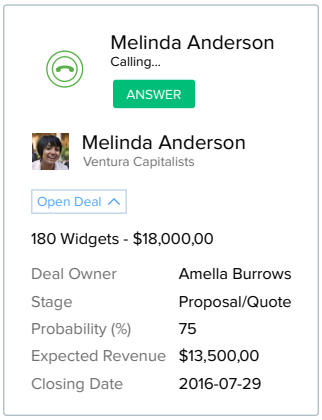
Zia analyzes every sales rep's tasks, patterns, and tendencies and suggests a macro function to automate those tasks, bypassing the time it takes to create a macro yourself. And because no two salespeople are alike, Zia creates custom suggestions unique to individual salespeople based on their personal selling habits.

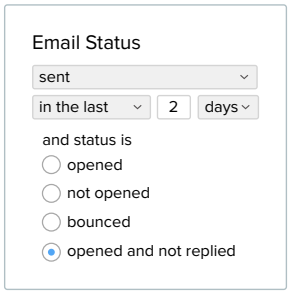


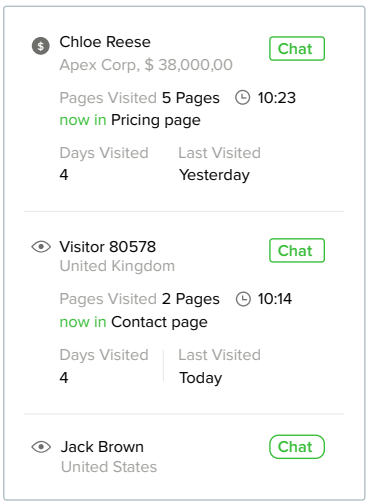
Go multichannel and grow your SMB.

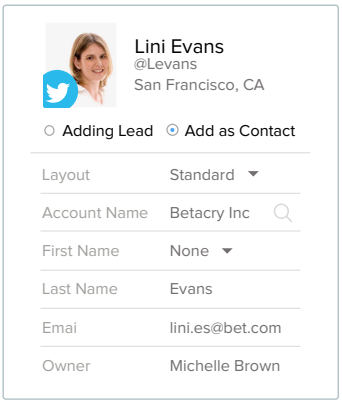
The days of exclusively interacting with leads and customers face to face are over, even for small businesses. Today, SMB owners have to meet and communicate with customers wherever they are and wherever they interact online.

This means embracing a multichannel CRM so you can provide relevant and personal experiences to each and every customer who comes in contact with your business. As customers move to a more mobile-driven lifestyle across multiple channels and devices, the modern SMB owner has to adapt and interact with customers in a way that benefits them.









Zoho CRM gives you multichannel support so you can talk with customers on the phone, through live chat, over email, and even on social media in a single view. This means your sales team can follow your sales process for every lead no matter the channel and store all interactions in an organized and streamlined manner.

SalesSignals is the culmination of this multichannel approach. From what pages customers visit on your website to whether or not they opened your marketing emails and if they mention your company on social media, your salespeople need to respond as quickly and effectively as possible. SalesSignals connects the dots of these customer interactions so you can initiate a conversation and move them through your sales pipeline.

Conclusion

This is an exciting time for SMB owners everywhere. Thanks to powerful and easy-to-use CRM solutions, every SMB can organize their business, gain a deeper insight into their business process, and run successful sales and marketing departments like large cooperations at a fraction of the price.

We designed Zoho CRM with the SMB owner in mind. No matter your industry or your budget it can help you find new leads, close more deals, and ultimately grow your business into what you've always dreamed it could be.

Zoho CRM

To learn more about Zoho CRM
and how it can help your business grow, visit the below URL today.

www.zoho.com/crm

Sales enquiries: sales@zohocorp.com

Highlights Of Zoho CRM

STANDARD
Includes everything in Free Edition

- Sales forecasting
- Scoring rules
- Reports and dashboards
- Document library
- Roles and profiles
- Mass email
- Call center connectors
- 100,000 records

PROFESSIONAL
Includes everything in Standard +

- Email integration
- Social CRM
- Google AdWords integration
- Workflows and Macros
- Inventory management
- Unlimited records

MOST POPULAR

ENTERPRISE
Includes everything in Professional +

- Territory management
- Zia - Artificial intelligence
- Custom buttons
- Blueprint
- Conditional fields
- Page layouts
- Custom modules
- Multiple currencies

ULTIMATE
Includes everything in Enterprise +

- Sandbox
- Dedicated Database cluster
- Priority support
- Advanced customization
- Advanced CRM analytics
- Enhanced storage

Can't decide which plan is right for you?

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START YOUR FREE TRIAL TODAY

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