



AMP READS BETTER WITH SUGARCRM

Some eat steak.
We eat software.

WE EAT
SOFTWARE

AMP

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WHEN AMP WAS FOUNDED IN 1997, THE INTERNET WAS STILL A RELATIVELY NEW CONCEPT.

Smart businesses change with the times. As the world moved online, American Marketing & Publishing (AMP) adapted its products and strategy for an increasingly digital market. Unfortunately, its older, print-focused CRM lacked many of the features the company needed to sustain its growth.

In 2018, AMP began working with Faye to create a modern, fully-customized SugarCRM solution. The results were impressive.

45%

INCREASE

IN FIELD OPTIMA SALES

97%

DIGITAL CONTRACTS

PROCESSED ELECTRONICALLY



CHALLENGES

When AMP began publishing business directories in the late 1990s, print was still king. The internet was still in its infancy, with most companies having no significant online presence. Online directories like Google, Facebook, and Yelp didn't exist yet, and the earliest versions of today's smartphones were still a decade away. If you needed to find anything — from the address of a pizza place to the phone number of an emergency plumbing service — you were going to need a phone book.

Not surprisingly, businesses across the country relied on phone directories to reach their customers. In addition to having their basic information listed, businesses could also advertise in these directories, helping them reach even more customers. For many rural businesses in the Midwest, advertising in one of AMP's 500 regional business directories was easily their most effective annual marketing investment.

But times change. Print directories were steadily becoming less and less competitive against their internet rivals, and AMP decided that it was time to start developing new products for the online age. As AMP began developing digital offerings, however, AMP realized that its older, print-focused CRM system simply wasn't capable of meeting its future needs.

"We were trying to back-engineer our old system for new digital products," said Joline Staeheli, AMP's co-founder. "We spent a lot of money trying to update it."

"THAT SYSTEM WAS DESIGNED FOR THE DEADLINES OF THE PRINT INDUSTRY. THAT'S NOT THE WAY THE DIGITAL WORLD WORKS AT ALL."

AMP had new products, and that meant it had to change the engine that drove the business.



CHALLENGES

After considering a variety of options, including Salesforce and Microsoft Dynamics, AMP decided to go with SugarCRM due to the flexibility of its open-source platform.

During her research, Staeheli learned about Faye, a company with a long history of building CRM systems to fit unique challenges and use cases.

Given that AMP was on the verge of completely changing the focus of its business, SugarCRM seemed like a good fit for the new direction. As Staeheli recalled:

“I FELT LIKE WE COULD REALLY PARTNER WITH FAYE TO BUILD A SYSTEM THAT WAS GOING TO WORK FOR OUR CHANGING BUSINESS.”



SOLUTIONS

Although AMP has more than 50,000 customers in a 12-state area, AMP is still a relatively small operation. The company has around 350 employees, with about 160 of those being dedicated salespeople. To do their jobs efficiently, AMP's workers needed a robust set of tools that were specialized for both acquiring new customers and maintaining existing customer relationships.

“OUR OLD CRM WAS LIKE A BLACK BOX.”

Staeheli recalled that you couldn't get anything out of the old CRM. AMP had to build an extraction program just to get their data out of it. With limited licenses, data was pushed into different portals just to give the right people access to their own reports.

“OUR SALES REPORTS WERE SOMETIMES 24 HOURS OLD BY THE TIME WE GOT THEM BACK. IT WAS REALLY PROBLEMATIC.”

After adopting SugarCRM, those ongoing problems that had plagued AMP for years quickly evaporated. Sugar allowed AMP to have the data stability and system flexibility to build out its own e-contracting order system, which integrates with CRM platform and data.

Generating new reports now took seconds instead of hours, making life much easier for the sales support and customer service teams. For the first time, AMP had both total control and instant access to their data.

But the biggest impact was on their sales teams.



SOLUTIONS

“OUR SALESPEOPLE ARE CONSTANTLY MAKING CALLS – ABOUT 40 SALES CALLS A DAY.”

While AMP’s executives were excited about updating their technology, many of their salespeople were less than thrilled about learning an entirely new system. As flawed and inefficient as it was, the staff understood the old, paper-and-spreadsheet based system they had been using for years. Initially, the company struggled with getting these status-quo favoring employees to fully adopt the new CRM.

As it turns out, the sales teams did have one big headache that they needed help with: They dreaded writing and rewriting contracts. Most of AMP’s customers order multiple products, with each one requiring its own contract. Writing the same information over and over on paper contracts was a real chore, and the sales teams were desperate for a better option.

“Obviously, our sales people hated all that paperwork. Our big hook was that if they did everything from inside the CRM, those digital contracts would automatically fill on all of the account details for them.”

“IN THE END, IT TOOK ALL OF THAT WRITING OUT OF A SALES PERSON’S WORK, AND INSTEAD OF TAKING 15 MINUTES TO FILL OUT A CONTRACT, IT TOOK ABOUT 30 SECONDS.”

By pairing their CRM with mobile devices, the sales staff could also take payment on the spot. Unlike the old paper-based system, which required several days to process a customer payment, the new CRM handled it instantly. This allowed the sales teams to get their commissions almost as fast as they could sell.

Instead of dragging their feet to adopt the new CRM, the sales staff soon became enthusiastic supporters. “Those were the two big wins for the CRM,” Staeheli said.





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LASTING RESULTS

"The great thing about working with Faye is that we don't have to re-educate them about our system every time we need something fixed or added to the CRM," explained Staeheli.

"FAYE UNDERSTAND OUR BUSINESS, AND THEY CAN GET TO THE HEART OF WHAT WE'RE REALLY ASKING FOR. THAT'S BEEN REALLY VALUABLE TO US."

One of the primary goals AMP had for its new CRM was the ability to centralize its data, allowing it to be easily accessed by anyone, and in real time. By working with Faye to design a CRM that fit perfectly with workflows and other software, AMP was able to take a big step in the right direction. Two years later, AMP is still seeing the benefits.

"SUGARCRM TURNED OUT TO BE GREAT FOR OUR REPS," STAEHELI SAID. "THEY USED TO HAVE ALL KINDS OF PROBLEMS WITH THEIR CONTRACTS, LIKE MISSING IMAGE FILES FOR DIRECTORIES OR DETAILS GOING INTO THE WRONG PLACES."

Now, they just push a button on their SugarCRM dashboards, and they can immediately see if there are any problems. It used to take a ton of phone calls to resolve that stuff, but now they can do it on their own.



LASTING RESULTS

In fact, the CRM has changed things for the better across the entire company. For example, the sales support staff now spend far less of their time on simple-yet-time-consuming tasks like looking up account balances for the sales team. The CRM has also been fully integrated with AMP's ERP system, making their accounting and administrative work much faster, easier, and efficient.

"One of the things you hear about CRM users is that they don't know what they want," Staeheli says. "They think they know what they want, but they're not particularly good at describing it."

"FAYE HAS BEEN REALLY GOOD AT TRANSLATING WHAT WE SAY WE WANT INTO A CRM THAT WORKS THE WAY WE NEED IT TO."

Another major benefit of AMP's partnership with Faye is the ongoing refinement of their CRM. As the company's staff gains more experience with the system, they have been able to make specific requests for new features, more streamlined workflows, and improved functionality. Even relatively small changes to user experience (UX) can result in serious efficiency and quality-of-life enhancements for users.

For example, AMP's sales teams had long complained that the default CRM fields for adding notes to prospect and customer records wasn't robust enough. By making relatively small changes to the code, Faye was able to deliver a feature that saved employees a significant amount of daily hassle. Other features, such as automatically adding comma-separated values and pre-populating common text fields, have enabled workers to significantly increase the speed of record entry. Combined with Faye's ongoing training and product support, AMP now has a CRM solution that everyone at the company benefits from.



LASTING RESULTS

Faye also helped AMP replace a legacy system that was not connected to the CRM with a task management fulfillment engine.

"Building this within the CRM allowed us to remove redundant data inconsistencies, and manage a customer journey, sales order through product fulfillment, in one system," Staeheli said.

"This gave us data transparency to see where a customer was at in the servicing timeline, allowed us to coordinate sales and fulfillment efforts, and provided the flexibility to update processes in one place as our business changes."

HERE IS FEEDBACK DIRECTLY FROM THE AMP TEAM ON THEIR SUGAR INSTANCE:

"Now that I'm familiar with the new system, I love how easy it is to navigate through tabs without messing anything up. Overall, I think Sugar is going to be super effective in terms of streamlining all of our processes." - **IRIS**

"I feel like everything just loads faster in Sugar." - **DEVLYN**

"One thing I like about using Sugar is how easy it is to reschedule a customer to check back on later, or for a call back." - **MICHAEL**

"I like how easy it is to leave notes in Sugar!" - **MORGAN**

"I am finding myself moving faster today in Sugar than I did yesterday!" – **CHERYL**





At Faye, we love software. We eat it, breathe it, and built it. Our mission is to make the best software in the world even better by helping clients lead the way with software strategy, deployments, integrations and technical support.

With us is better than without us. As an Inc. 5000 award winner seven years in a row, we help mid-market and enterprise clients globally achieve up to 10x productivity returns by leveraging the hidden potential within Zendesk, SugarCRM, Salesforce, HubSpot, and more.

There is no ceiling to what we can achieve with a lot of caffeine and an uncompromising commitment to make software better. We are intensely passionate about eating your software complexity and challenges, so that you don't have to.

Our flagship offering, AXIA by Faye™ bundles our IP, capabilities and pre-built software enhancements into one monthly or annual subscription. The result - A partnership that drives lasting value and optimization even as you grow.

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