

**RightNow Announces 8.0; Making CRM Applications Customer-Centric**

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On September 11, 2006, RightNow Technologies announced and introduced its next-generation CRM solution, [RightNow 8.0](#), with availability in December 2006. Under development as code-name Castle, the new release reflects significant user-oriented changes as well as key technologies and tools for management and design. As any application evolves, the question of feature/function overload quickly arises. What can ISVs do to continue to enhance and evolve their products to both enable continued sales and value to their customer base? One answer is to make the applications more relevant. This is precisely the direction in which RightNow 8.0 has gone. The list of enhancements to the product taken together deliver the capabilities to RightNow's customers to make their CRM application installation relevant to both their customers and the organization.

IDC has spoken on the requirement for organizations to develop an understanding of the customer's view of the organization. The 360 degree view of the **customer** is a purely internal view. While it is valuable for organizations to understand their customers, customers need to understand the organizations with which they conduct business as well. For frictionless customer interactions, organizations must allow a 360 degree view of the **organization**. The pressure on organizations increases in terms of consistency with this new focus, but competitive advantage is at stake. The modern customer, while willing to use tools for self-service (FAQ, IVR, knowledge bases) is as adept at maneuvering to another vendor's web site as they are within the original vendor's web site. End-user organizations need tools that allow them to bridge the requirements of the business (make money) with the requirements of their customers (deliver and service products).

IDC considers the combination of the Customer Experience Designer, the Workspace Designer, and the shift to the Microsoft Smart Client to be key features in enabling organizations to evolve the focus of their CRM implementations to be more customer centric and accessible. Within the two designer products, roles and user profiles can be combined to create CRM workflows that are tuned to both the business processes and the role of the user. With XML triggers within these processes, other external applications and content can be included in the CRM flow for the uninterrupted processing of a customer inquiry. With increased navigation and layout capabilities from smart client technology, efficiencies in use are realized for both internal and external users. Overall, reducing the 'speed bumps' promotes usage and cost savings.

The next stage of CRM evolution is at hand. Stage 1 was focused on purely transactional requirements, Stage 2 began the analytic stage, and Stage 3 is, in IDC's view, the decision-oriented stage. It is within this stage that organizations begin to harness the knowledge and insight regarding their customers into actionable and, to a degree, automated decisions. In RightNow 8.0 this concept is supported by the integration of analytics through the product. IDC sees analytics as a necessary piece of any implementation. The combination of RightNow Feedback and RightNow Analytics enables organizations to capture real-time information about their customers and behaviors.

Customers are well aware that the organizations with which they engage are profit-making businesses. They have no quibble with that. However, they do demand value and service in exchange for their money. With tools such as these being more readily available, the proof will be in the execution.

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