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contacts, business prospects and communications.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Jul. 26, 2022



As the country slowly transitions back to a state of normalcy post-pandemic, it seems some pandemic-era trends are here to stay—such as remote business models and online shopping preferences. That's the findings of a new survey from [Act!](#), a customer relationship management (CRM) and marketing automation solution for

small businesses. The survey examined the role of CRM in today's small to medium-

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Despite ongoing media reports of labor shortages negatively affecting SMBs, respondents did not see hiring (15%) or employee retention (11%) as overwhelming challenges, according to the survey. Instead, inflation (44%) was seen as the greatest challenge companies faced over the last 12 months. With inflation impacting SMB's product and services pricing, some businesses may have felt inclined to communicate price hikes to their customers. However, most respondents (69%) felt there had not been an uptick in customers' expectations of communication since the pandemic (69%). Although, over a fifth of SMB decision-makers still feel the pressure to communicate more frequently with their customers.

While larger businesses continue to integrate innovative software into business operations at an accelerated rate, many SMBs continue to leverage traditional systems to manage the company's contacts, business prospects and communications. Surprisingly, 45% of the SMBs' operations still relied on paper records and another 11% had no management system in place at all. Why? Many respondents feel their business is too small (47%) or that CRM software isn't applicable to their business (28%).

Businesses that do take advantage of CRM or marketing automation software overwhelmingly reported positive results. In fact, more than a quarter reported that their CRM system helped increase revenue. Respondents noted improvements from utilizing CRM technology across the board for their business, with the top five improvements being sales productivity (42%), customer service (35%), business productivity (33%), marketing outreach (32%) and customer satisfaction (30%). There was also a significant improvement in customer retention (28%) among respondents—which was noted as a top challenge for SMBs.

As we move into the second half of the year and businesses continue to feel the impacts of rising inflation, supply chain uncertainties and other unique challenges,

respondents seem to be more optimistic about the second half of 2022—with 70% of

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reduce workloads and improve productivity,” said Steve Oriola, CEO of Act!. “As consumer needs and industry best practices continue to evolve, SMBs that continue to adjust and implement innovative tools have an optimistic outlook for the future.”

To read the report and learn more about CRM and Marketing Automation tools for SMBs, visit: www.act.com/crm-survey/

Small Business

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