



# USING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AND ONBOARDING SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

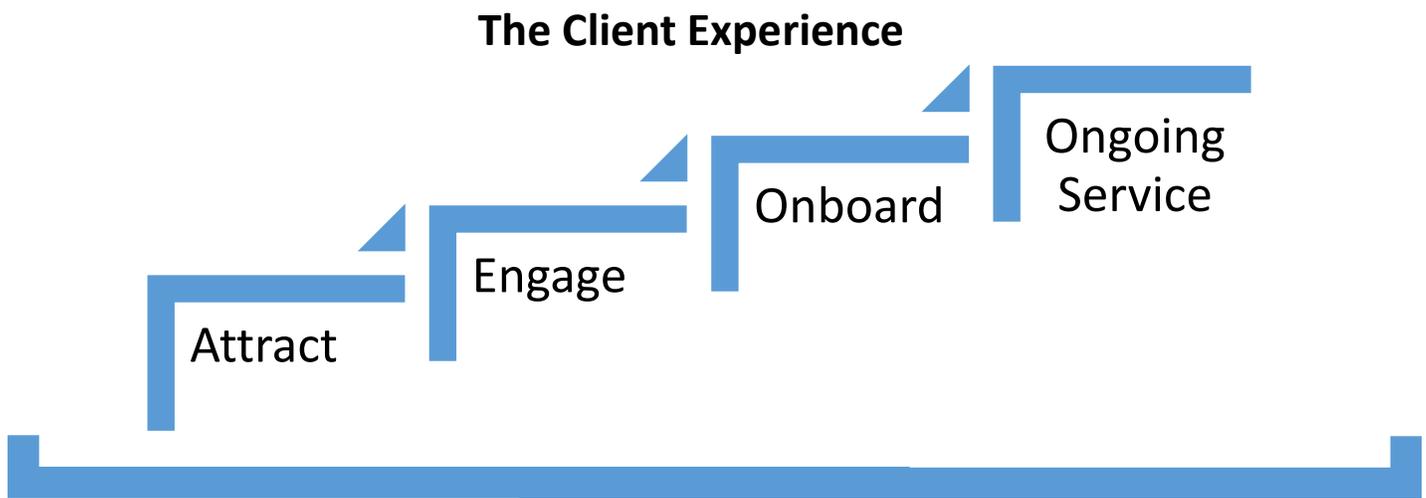
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AUTOMATION DELIVERED

## INTRODUCTION: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES USING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT & CLIENT ONBOARDING SOLUTIONS

Today's financial services environment is growing more complex, more competitive, and more technologically advanced. Industry rules and regulations, along with competitive pressures and the need to attract new advisors, force firms to look for new solutions to give them an edge. One key area that firms focus on is the client relationship experience. This starts from the time you first recognize a prospect and carries through the life of their relationship with your firm. You need solutions to help manage the various components of the client experience: contact information, contact activity, onboarding process and engagement with the firm, and continuing to monitor life events and stay in sync with their growing needs.

Effective firms look to technology to help manage this massive set of requirements and challenges. But a common mistake is to try and find one solution that can manage it all. This whitepaper will explore two of the most common solutions that are often considered to meet the challenge – Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions and New Account Opening (NAO) / Client Onboarding solutions. The goal is to identify the key benefits of each, recognize where there may be overlap, identify some of the key differences, and ultimately show how the two could (and should) work together to provide the most robust and effective solution.



*Firms must provide exceptional service at each stage of the client experience, even before an individual becomes a client*

## CRM SOLUTIONS

CRM solutions come in many flavors, shapes and sizes. There are free versions, offering basic functionality and there are purchased or licensed versions that provide more robust capabilities. There are SaaS offerings and hosted offerings and offerings that the firm runs on premise. But ultimately the leading CRM systems have the following key benefits that drive their value:

### Management of Client Data

The main feature of a CRM system is the ability to effectively store and manage the clients' data. This is more than just collecting their name, address, family information and birthdates. You need to gather information about the entire household and all of the key events that may impact your customer's financial future. Do they have plans to buy or build a home or maybe relocate? Do they have kids in public or private school? Do they have kids graduating soon? Do they intend to help pay for a wedding or two in the future? Do they have a rising teenager that will soon get their driver's license? All of these things may seem like second nature to some, but they become really powerful data points to collect and store for anyone looking to build a solid relationship with their customer. The more you know, the more you can relate and the more you can predict future needs.

In addition to the basic storage of data, you also need to be concerned with data integrity and data management. This means that your data is stored and modeled, and indexed properly to allow for fast, easy retrieval. It also means that you have a comfort level that your data isn't subject to update or change without the right rules, entitlements, and governance in place. These are key components to making sure your customer's sensitive data is safe, secure, and easily used within your enterprise...but **only** your enterprise.

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## Management of Client Contact Activity

Another key feature of a good CRM system is the ability to capture and organize all of the various client contact activity that has occurred over the life of your relationship with your customer. We have all been there. We get a call from a vendor or an advisor and provide infinite details about whatever problem or service we are trying to manage. Two days later we get a call from a different representative from the same vendor or firm...and they know *nothing* about the conversation we just had. The ability to store all of the various client contact activity and make it easily accessible is a key benefit of a good CRM system. You show that you care enough about your client to make sure you follow up promptly, recall their conversation and the surrounding details, and, quite frankly, reduce their frustration by simply remembering the last time they were contacted. This provides a solid foundation to help build trust with your client.



## Integrate with Other Enterprise Solutions

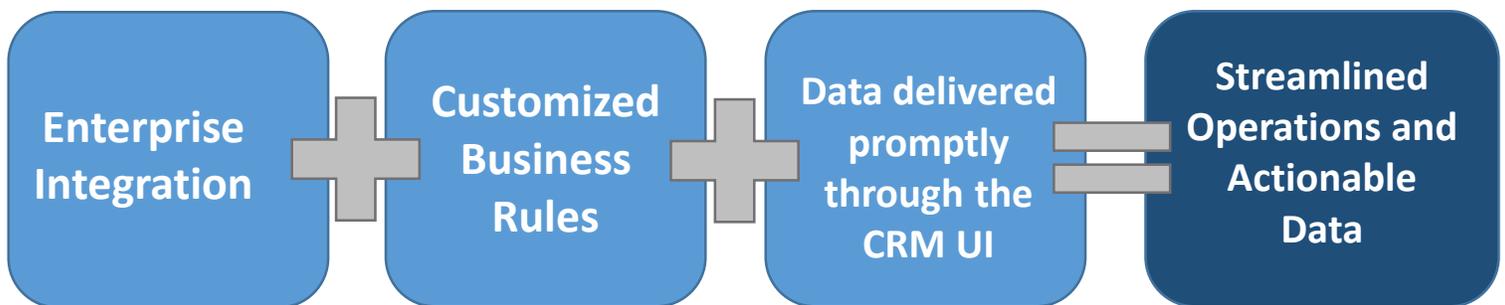
Once you have all of this wonderful data collected, another key benefit of a good CRM system is the ability to integrate with other solutions across the enterprise and make the data available to them. As we noted earlier, a good solution will have a robust data management component that will allow you to get at the complete set of customer data and do so easily and efficiently. Complex system integration or poor performing data queries can be some of the biggest hurdles, or even barriers, to using the data across the enterprise. And, if you reduce the ability to use this data in other applications or solutions you ultimately minimize the value of the data, thereby reducing your ultimate return on your CRM investment.

Ultimately you want to be able to serve this data up to any number of solutions, such as Portfolio Generation, Financial Planning, Customer Service or Call Centers, Marketing tools, and New Account Opening tools. Capturing the customer data one time and being able to propagate the data to other solutions saves the time and annoyance of multiple data entry, and it also reduces the risk of your customer data being different in one enterprise solution versus another. And, all of this results in higher satisfaction from your internal users *and* from your end customers.

## Provide Actionable Data to Your Audience

At this point we know how important it is to collect the right data about your customer, store it effectively and safely, manage the access and security of the data, and be able to integrate with other solutions. But why? At the end of the day, the reason is pretty simple. You want to be able to provide actionable data to the right audience within your firm. Using enterprise integration along with customized business rules and other tools within the CRM platforms, you can deliver the data at the right time through the CRM user interface or through an enterprise solution, thus making the information truly actionable.

### A Recipe for Success



## Attract and Retain Advisors

I think it is probably fairly obvious that the most common, and probably largest audience for the CRM solution is the front office – the advisor and/or the sales assistant, which really drives one of the key factors for investing in a good CRM solution.

You want to be able to prove to your current employees *and* to prospects that you may be recruiting that you are a firm that will invest in technology with the intent of making them more productive, less frustrated and less stressed.

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Firms must prove to current advisors and prospective advisors that they are willing to invest in technology with the intent of making them more productive and less frustrated.

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## ONBOARDING AND NEW ACCOUNT OPENING (NAO) SOLUTIONS

Like CRM solutions, NAO / Onboarding solutions will also range in features, costs, functionality supported and more. And while there are some common benefits that Onboarding solutions share with CRM solutions, there are many that most CRM solutions just do not touch. Below we will explore some benefits of a good Onboarding solution, some that are unique to Onboarding solutions and some that are shared with CRM systems.

### Customizable Solutions

If there is one thing I have learned over my years in Financial Services technology, it is that everyone does the SAME things, but does them very differently.

The same holds true for onboarding a new client. Every brokerage firm, wealth manager, private banker and insurance agency has to have an automated way of opening new accounts and onboarding new customers. And each of them will be regulated in some way by industry organizations and their own internal policies and practices. But that is where they start to differ. Interpretation of complex regulations, building of firm policies and practices, adhering to a conservative or liberal view on certain positions, trying to differentiate yourself from your competition; these are all factors that drive the need to provide a customizable solution to onboarding new clients.

It is imperative that your solution offer easy-to-manage business rules that can change at the speed of *your* business. And, they need to be easy to understand and maintain so you can leverage your business staff, since they are the ones who know the policies and regulations inside and out.

#### Solution Checksheet



Easy to Manage



Adaptable to changing  
business speeds



Easy to Understand



Easy to Maintain

## Document Integration

One fact that I don't see changing in my lifetime is that opening a new account will require a lot of documentation. Signature pages, disclosure statements, copy of your driver's license or passport, W9 forms; they all need to be processed as part of the onboarding experience. And ideally, with the right onboarding solution, you can easily integrate the full document process.

Using firm-driven business rules your onboarding solution should determine *the right* documents and forms that are required, and you can pre-populate the forms with as much of the client data that you can collect before meeting with them. This will initiate a more productive meeting with your client and will reduce the hassle that they endure. Once you collect the updated information the right solution will provide you the ability to attach the document(s) as part of the onboarding request, which will ensure that the documents will live in conjunction with the request they pertain to. This eliminates the need to search through the document archives to find the letter of authorization that pertains to an account opened 18 months ago.

In addition to maintaining the document(s) with the onboarding request, it is also important to be able to integrate the documents with your long-term document retention service or software. Whether you leverage an external storage system, or SharePoint or some internal home-grown solution you ultimately need to get the client-signed forms out of the onboarding solution and in to your storage facility. A good onboarding solution will provide multiple options for satisfying this requirement, thereby providing options that can satisfy every type of firm and need.

### What Your Solution Should Provide in Terms of Document Integration

- 1 An easily-integrated full document process
- 2 Firm-driven business rules to determine that the right documents are required
- 3 The ability to re-populate forms with as much client data as possible prior to meeting them
- 4 The capability to attach documents as part of your onboarding request
- 5 The ability to integrate documents with your long-term retention service
- 6 Multiple options for loading client-signed forms into your storage facility

## Workflow Automation, Task Visibility, and Reduced Error Rates

One complaint that you may hear often is that the advisor or assistant submits the paperwork to onboard their new client, which could include multiple accounts at one time, and they lose visibility to the status of their request. Or, it isn't clear what department is responsible for the next step in the process. The assistant will spend countless hours trying to track things down and understand where the request stands, but a good onboarding platform can easily resolve that.

With robust workflow capabilities you can route the request and the documents to the right people based on the right business criteria. And, a good advisor or sales assistant-facing dashboard will make it easy to see all of the requests for their given book of business, what status each one is in, and possibly what person or department is currently working the request. These tools, combined with a robust search capability, makes it very easy to find what they need and stay on top of the onboarding process.

Also important, is the ability to leverage automation and firm-customized business rules to get the onboarding process done faster and with lower NIGO (Not-In-Good-Order) rates. With the right business rules on the right platform, you can dynamically update the user interface to only ask the appropriate questions that are required for the account type(s) you are opening. In doing so you minimize the risk of NIGO requests, reduce the amount of review and oversight that is required, and speed up the onboarding process. All of this leads to higher customer satisfaction and faster revenue-producing activities such as trading, purchasing policies and more.

### Automated Onboarding Solutions:

- ✓ Increase Transparency
- ✓ Increase Accountability
- ✓ Increase Efficiency
- ✓ Save Time
- ✓ Reduce NIGO Rates
- ✓ Allow Advisors to Open New Accounts Faster

## **Integrate with Other Enterprise Solutions – Part 2**

As was the case for CRM systems, it is important for your onboarding solution to also provide for easy integration with other enterprise solutions.

First and foremost, you will want your onboarding solution to avoid being a stand-alone application or site. Ideally it should be integrated with your enterprise desktop solution that all of your employees leverage, and it should fit within your single sign-on strategy.

In addition, since the ultimate goal of any automated solution is to provide a straight-through process, you must have the ability to integrate with your core record-keeping system. You don't want to have a wonderful tool that will collect data and documents, only to swivel to another application and manually enter the data into your books and records system.

Two-way integration with your primary systems is paramount to offering a successful onboarding solution, just as it is critical to maintain integration with your CRM system or the aforementioned document integration systems. The more you can integrate across your enterprise the more value you will drive and the more satisfaction you will see from your user base.

## **Opening Multiple Accounts in One Experience**

The holy grail of an onboarding solution is the ability to take the full set of customer needs and consolidate them into one request that is easy to input, easy to track, and offers consolidated documentation.

For example, in the case of a brokerage or wealth management experience, a customer may need to open three or four or five accounts at a time – an individual, a joint, a trust, and an IRA. The right solution will provide the advisor or assistant with an easy way to input all of the client data one time and re-use it across the multiple accounts, or integrate with a CRM or other solution to retrieve existing customer data.

In addition, providing the client with one single packet of documents instead of three or four or five individual packages will reduce costs as well as customer frustration.

## ONBOARDING PLUS CRM

Ultimately it doesn't seem feasible to have one solution that can offer all that is needed to satisfy the needs of a CRM consumer *and* a customer onboarding experience. The needs between them are too diverse and the audience varies so much from one to the other. Any solution that tries to be all things and satisfy all requirements will either be so complicated that it is unmanageable or will be so thin in functionality that it will only cover the basics.

So, our solution is to build world-class onboarding solutions that provide feature-rich, robust capabilities and include push and pull integration with CRM systems to retrieve and update customer-centric data that is pivotal to the overall firm relationship with their customers. This provides the best of both worlds.

## SOURCES

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NexJ Systems (CRM provider)

online sales magazine published by RAIN Group  
(global sales consulting / coaching company)

Online community forum designed to help CRM buyers

Free research site dedicated to CRM

Free research site dedicated to CRM

***Interested in learning how IFS can help your firm improve the onboarding process? Contact [sales@ifsautomation.com](mailto:sales@ifsautomation.com) or call 704.894.9331.***

***Stay tuned for our upcoming whitepaper on other emerging technologies like document integration and single signature, coming soon!***