

HOW TO REPORT

How CRM Evolves To Support Industry Requirements

Understanding The Value Of Industry CRM

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Summary

Industry CRM is a significant purchase, driven by the pressure to make more intelligent decisions faster to boost customer obsession. These cloud suites offer workflows, user experiences, data models, AI and analytics, and compliant infrastructures purpose-built for an industry's needs. Enterprises must navigate the decision of when and how to adopt industry CRM, weighing time-to-value and agility gains against how well the solution matches their core requirements.

Industry CRM: A Faster Path To Value

For companies looking to quickly move core businesses to the cloud, digitize processes, adopt AI, or drive sustainable revenue growth, CRM is a significant cost: \$500,000 to \$5 million a year. Industry CRM builds on core CRM foundations to fulfill unique industry requirements and realize value faster. Modern industry CRMs are cloud suites that offer workflows, user experiences, data models, and AI purpose-built for the needs of an industry; they also offer packaged connectors to core industry back-office technologies, development platforms, and infrastructures that support regulatory requirements.

Industry CRMs are at the center of an ecosystem of application marketplaces, independent software vendors, and third-party service providers that extend the core reach of these solutions to last-mile capabilities like note transcription for medical providers or ruggedized devices for field workers. More importantly, these ecosystems change an industry's competitive landscape. CRM vendors no longer just supply software to different industries — they have become players in those industries. Microsoft's acquisition of AT&T's 5G cloud positioned it as a communications service provider; Oracle's purchase of Cerner moved it directly into the healthcare space.

The Benefits Of Industry CRM Extend Beyond Value Creation For Customers

Enterprises are deciding how to transform their operations in the face of economic uncertainty. They must balance speed and agility against cost pressures and the need to better serve customers against talent resources to focus on areas of innovation. Modern industry CRM is a significant portion of overall CRM spending; these solutions unlock revenue opportunities, decrease risk, ensure compliance, and user adoption. About 20% of firms in various industries have already [adopted industry CRM](#); more than half are prioritizing [increasing this adoption](#) (see Figures 1 and 2).

Salesforce offers 14 industry CRMs, which are a significant growth driver; Microsoft takes an [industry-first approach](#) to help realize its \$2.7 trillion market cap. Former VP of IT and CIO of Concord University told us, "We benefit from the products being uniquely well designed for our specific purpose and with legal/regulation compliance. We find them to be costly but appreciate the value they bring." Former SAP chief strategy officer for CX Esteban Kolsky explained the value of industry CRM by saying "We're in the business of risk mitigation." Industry CRMs deliver benefits in many dimensions. They:

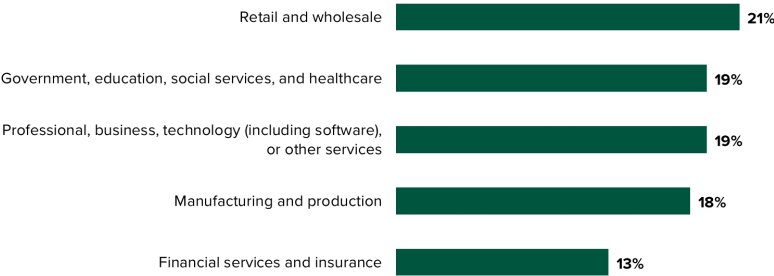
- **Derisk cloud migrations.** Enterprises that rely on legacy homegrown CRM or industry-specific CRM designed for on-premises data centers face difficult choices when moving to public cloud. Simply lifting and shifting applications can break dependencies, reduce system performance, violate on-premises licensing agreements, or introduce compliance risks. Modernizing before or after migration also has risks and costs; app modernization is often time-consuming and expensive. This is where industry CRM steps in to accelerate migration. Leslie Chaney, former CIO of New Hanover County in North Carolina, [explains its public sector CRM choice](#): “The cloud came ready for us to innovate, giving us the foundation to elevate our processes and workflows to give residents the services they needed in the way they wanted to receive them.”
- **Reduce the compliance burden.** Industry data models connect CRM to a broad ecosystem; compliant infrastructures guarantee that data is protected, processed, and stored according to industry regulations. Together, they address the problems of systemic security, regulatory, and compliance risk that most organizations face. GDPR penalties for compromising or breaching the personal data of employees or customers are severe: In the EU, fines for noncompliance can range from 2% of annual revenue for a minor breach to over 4% for a major breach.
- **Drive better software adoption.** Industry CRM provides efficient experiences that have been battle-tested for a particular vertical. As Creatio chief growth officer Andie Dovgan told us: “Everyone wants next best actions for financial services, but how is it presented? What’s the best way for sellers to visualize connections? With our focus in retail banking, we know how to deliver.” Pegasystems senior director and financial services industry principal Scott Andrick echoed this sentiment, describing how agents at a large Asian bank saw the successful uptake of its proactive offers rise from about 2% prior to adopting financial services CRM to over 30%.
- **Drive incremental value creation.** Industry CRM is often built on top of horizontal CRM and is designed to be modern and extensible so enterprises can start with what they need today and adapt as they grow. Value compounds as more products are adopted. A manufacturer could start by deploying workflows to monitor asset uptime, followed by capabilities for preventative maintenance and depot repair. This allows it to modernize in stages and realize ROI at each.
- **Focus the front office on value-added work to better serve customers.** Industry CRM guides the front office through predefined workflows like patient onboarding in healthcare or loan origination in retail banking while automating common user tasks. This reduces errors, shrinks internal costs by reducing the completion,

printing, and delivery of paper forms, and frees the front office to work on higher-value tasks. These workflows also capture data that was previously too labor-intensive to extract, enabling firms to mine broader, more reliable data sets for insights. At Express Scripts, one of the largest pharmacy benefit managers, over 7,000 users use Pegasystems' healthcare CRM for marketing, sales, service, and care management. The firm has realized significant value: 40% lower handle times, a 50% increase in electronic prior authorizations, and an 85% increase in referrals and renewals.

- **Unlock new business models.** Industry CRM provides continuous innovation, helps digitize core processes and unlock insights from organizational data silos, and allows companies to spin up new divisions and move into new markets. Life sciences cloud CRM has helped pharma firms transform the efficacy of drug trials. Oracle co-CEO Mike Sicilia explains that “The focus has moved to distributed trials. It’s no longer essential to get people into a central trial location, which is difficult at best. We can now do patient monitoring, HIPAA endpoint compliance, and real-world evidence gathering with connected devices and IoT. This speeds trials by giving researchers faster access to data from patients across geographies and demographics.”

Figure 1
Industry CRM Penetration By Industry Vertical

Industry CRM adoption

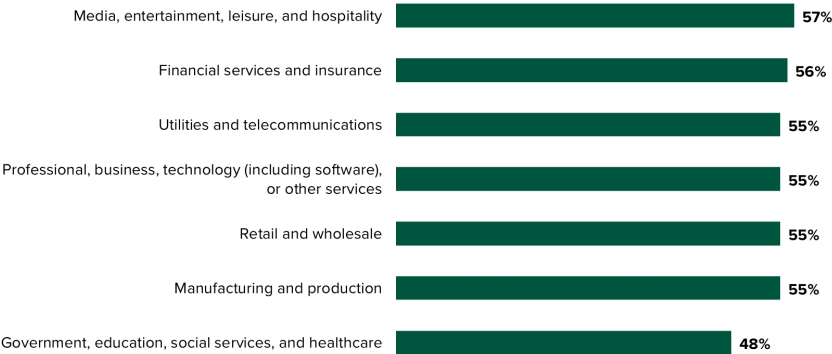


Base: 42 to 128 enterprise application software decision-makers at the level of manager or above whose organization has adopted CRM software; base size varies by industry
Source: Forrester's Enterprise Applications Software Survey, 2025

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Figure 2
Industry Verticals Prioritize Investment In Industry CRM

Prioritizing increasing the adoption of industry clouds



Base: 210 to 1,314 business and technology professionals; base size varies by industry
Source: Forrester's Priorities Survey, 2025

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Industry CRM Maturity Varies

Almost every company will benefit from some level of industry-specific capability in addition to the core functions common to all CRM systems. Vendors are doubling down on industry editions; enterprises must decide when, not if, to adopt industry capabilities. No enterprise can differentiate solely with out-of-the-box industry CRM, yet few can dedicate sparse engineering resources to developing industry features that are readily available. Below are seven examples of industry CRM with market momentum. Each solution offers capabilities at every layer of the stack: workflows, user experiences, data models and extensions, AI models, and regulated infrastructures.

Healthcare CRM

Healthcare CRMs manage patient data, consolidate views of medications and services, coordinate care across providers, and help manage a patient's healthcare journey (see Figure 3). Healthcare organizations (HCOs) use CRM data to generate insights about individuals or populations, determine the best ways to influence people to change their behaviors, and improve health outcomes. Healthcare CRMs help HCOs find new patients, expand their practices, provide customer support, build online resource centers, create and track tickets, and provide a unified communication dashboard. CRMs with online reputation management allow HCOs to track patient engagement

across social media and review sites.

Figure 3
Healthcare CRM Solutions Card

Degree of industry specificity		High	
Customer-facing workflows	• Patient 360 • Appointment scheduling/rescheduling and management • Benefits and medical claims management • Care team coordination and collaboration • Physician workload management	User experiences	• Telehealth for virtual care • Patient self-service • Patient visit transcriptions • Automated self-triage • Predictive analytics • Virtual scribes • Remote patient monitoring
Data models	• Fast healthcare interoperability resource (FHIR) for exchanging electronic health records (EHRs) • Healthcare procedure and claims codes	AI agents	• Prior authorizing agents • Personalized healthcare plans • Clinical workforce optimization agents • Medication adherence call agents
Extensions	• EHRs (Epic, Cerner) • Medical data management • Patient engagement • Patient relationship management • Referral management • Payer management • Appointment scheduling • New patient acquisition • Clinic reputation management	Compliance	• HIPAA • HITRUST • GDPR

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Retail And Consumer Packaged Goods CRM

Retail and consumer packaged goods CRMs support B2B and B2C customer engagement (see Figure 4). They streamline B2B account planning, manage trade promotions and incentive programs, optimize retail execution, and power B2B experiences. They also support consumer experiences such as marketing, loyalty, direct-to-consumer commerce, and digital customer service.

Figure 4
Retail And Consumer Packaged Goods CRM Solutions Card

Degree of industry specificity		Medium	
Customer-facing workflows 	• Sales agreements and rebates • In-store retail execution • Trade promotion management • Incentive programs • Rebates • Real-time recommendations	User experiences 	• Augmented reality for retail execution and immersive shopping • Geosignage alerts
Data models 	Retail data model; includes retail operational data model and data warehouse model	AI agents 	• Fraud protection agents • Real-time personalization agents • Revenue prediction • Route and visit optimization • Trade promotion optimization • Store shelf intelligence
Extensions 	• Supply chain management, product lifecycle management, supplier relationship management • Customer data platforms • Enterprise resource planning • Point of service	Compliance 	• PCI DSS • ISO 22301 • SOC 2 • GDPR

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Financial Services CRM

Financial services CRMs help increase user productivity, optimize customer value, improve customer loyalty, and grow assets under management (see Figure 5). They enable [retail banks](#) to better acquire and engage with customers, drive customer self-service, and uncover insights into the activities and behaviors of customers that these banks can use to personalize offers and experiences. They enable commercial banks to deepen customer relationships, manage pipelines, collaborate on deals, and comply with policy. They enable wealth managers to deliver personalized advice at scale that earns client trust and helps clients achieve their financial goals. They enable insurers to manage policy lifecycles across quoting, underwriting, issuance, endorsements, billing, renewals, and commission.

Figure 5
Financial Services CRM Solutions Card

Degree of industry specificity 		Medium	
Customer-facing workflows 	• Know your customer • Customer onboarding (e.g., deposit and lending originations) • Product and policy management • Risk assurance • Customer lifecycle management • Customer self-service • Account and purchase protection • Customer engagement • Lead and referral management • Customer service and claims management • Financial planning and wealth management • Knowledge management	User experiences 	• Web and mobile • ATM/kiosk • Branch • Video chat • Cobrowse • Appointment scheduling • Chatbots
Data models 	• Banking industry architecture network • Householding relationships • Customer segmentation • Cross departmental referrals • Client hierarchies • Investment profile	AI agents 	• Fraud detection agents • Anti-money-laundering agents • Credit risk assessor • Know your customer • Investment research assistant
Extensions 	Integration into core banking platforms (e.g., Symitar, DNA, Fiserv Premier, XP2, Datasafe)	Compliance 	• GDPR • PCI DSS • FFIEC • ISO 27000s • SOC • IEC

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Manufacturing CRM

Manufacturing CRMs allow manufacturers to capture commitments, track performance with sales agreements, and forecast demand to support customers and channel partners throughout the service lifecycle including maintenance, warranty, and recall (see Figure 6). They deepen partner relationships with shared visibility into sales agreements, forecasts, orders, cases, and partner channel inventory tracking.

Figure 6
Manufacturing CRM Solutions Card

Degree of industry specificity 		Low	
Customer-facing workflows 	• Real-time demand forecasting • Key account management • Product configure, price, quote • Contract, warranty, and subscription management • Asset lifecycle management • Service inventory and logistics management • Channel partner and reseller management	User experiences 	• Augmented and virtual reality for factory footprint layouts • Predictive maintenance • Heads-up displays or smart glasses for assembly
Data models 	Industrial IoT	AI agents 	• Predictive maintenance agents • Schedule optimization agents • Demand forecasting agents • Logistics agents
Extensions 	• Billing and finance systems • Project management • Field service management, product development, CAD model repositories	Compliance 	• SOC 2 • GDPR • PCI DSS

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Telecommunications And Utilities CRM

Telecommunications CRMs allow telcos to create and launch new products (see Figure 7). They provide self-service capabilities to enable customers to discover products, configure service plans, understand their use, choose and purchase the best plans, and get support (e.g., settling billing issues). They support customers in their channel of choice, create positive experiences, reduce the cost of service, and turn customer service into upsell/cross-sell opportunities. Utilities CRMs also allow customers to self-manage their accounts, view real-time energy consumption, and proactively recommend best energy plans.

Figure 7
Telecommunications And Utilities CRM Solutions Card

Degree of industry specificity		Medium	
Customer-facing workflows	- Product configure, price, quote - Subscription and contract management - Real-time order configuration and fulfillment - Customer activation and onboarding; move-in and move-out - Digital customer service	User experiences	- Self-service and mobile customer access - Mobile access for field workers
Data models	TM Forum information model (SID)	AI agents	- Inventory optimization agents - Asset maintenance schedule optimization
Extensions	Back-office and customer information systems	Compliance	- SOC 2 - GDPR

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Public Sector CRM

Public sector CRMs enable government organizations to improve customer engagement and reimagine the delivery of health and social services like child welfare, social security, and vaccine management (see Figure 8). They modernize permitting and licensing processes, digitize customer services, and allow organizations to increase transparency and accountability to improve civic engagement and trust. These CRMs are deployed on dedicated infrastructures, provide data residency, and support regulatory compliance via data encryption, continuous data monitoring, and annual audits of regulatory standards.

Figure 8
Public Sector CRM Solutions Card

Degree of industry specificity		Low	
Customer-facing workflows	• Permitting and license applications • Customer services management • Public outreach • Public funds allocation and management • Fraud management	User experiences	• Self-service and mobile access for customers • Mobile access for field workers
Data models	N/A	AI agents	• Fraud detection agents • Risk analysis agents • Anti-money-laundering agents
Extensions	• Enterprise resource planning • Geographic information systems • Government services applications (e.g., taxes, benefits)	Compliance	• FedRAMP • DoD • ICD • JSIG

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Assess Whether Industry CRM Is Right For You

Each company must decide when and how to adopt industry clouds, weighing cost savings and agility gains against core requirements. CRM vendors confuse the issue: Almost all offer a wide range of industry-specific solutions and encourage customers to adopt these as part of their growth strategy, as these solutions enable companies to be agile, resilient, and get to market faster. Many horizontal CRM suites are at feature saturation in many of their application categories, and industry CRM gives CRM vendors access to a much larger market. When making a decision, consider:

- **The underlying architecture.** The choice of industry CRM depends on your cloud architecture standards — e.g., Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure — and existing CRM assets, as many industry solutions are layered onto existing horizontal CRM. Be aware that hyperscalers are pursuing industry verticalization and may become your competitors. Many retailers avoid Amazon; Microsoft now offers a financial services cloud. Keep these market movements in mind when choosing an industry CRM.
- **Project scope.** The immediate scope of the project may be well-defined and range from legacy industry CRM replacement to a departmental modernization initiative. But these projects rarely have no interdependencies, especially with integrations to core systems. Determine how the CRM initiative fits into broader back-office

and AI transformations and whether these projects should be closely coupled. In the communications industry, CRM-related business processes can't be considered as operating in a CRM silo, as they extend to user provisioning, billing, and invoicing and require deep integration with Amdocs or Netcracker. In such cases, align the stakeholders of the end-to-end workflow around customer-centric improvement metrics such as customer satisfaction, billing accuracy, and time-to-market for new services to drive buy-in and share efforts.

- **Your requirements.** Many enterprises in highly competitive industries have fallen behind in the cloud race. Public sector and financial services organizations in Europe have been slower to adopt cloud tech than those in the US because of strict data residence requirements. Internal organizational conflicts often prevent firms from moving modernization forward. Industry CRMs are attractive, as they support compliance regulations and promise an easy and scripted path to modernization. However, horizontal CRMs can be a better choice: Advertising and marketing use cases vary little by industry and are well served by horizontal solutions; for more verticalized sales and service use cases, many industry CRMs do little more than provide better ways to visualize underlying data and lack the AI maturity of some horizontal solutions. Industry CRMs may also provide generic workflows and inflexible data models that don't align with the needs of your industry or easily integrate into your existing ecosystem. Work with your cloud teams to dig into verticalization depth and capability maturity.
- **The need for differentiation.** Each industry and firm has different CRM goals. Some industries, like the public sector, strive for digital sameness: Digital experiences that are excellent but not necessarily unique. Other industries adopt common processes and data models, such as patient 360 in healthcare, to allow data to be shared among providers. Consider how and where CRM workflows touch the end user and determine whether these workflows are standardized by industry or whether they affect your ability to differentiate.
- **Vendor expertise in a given industry.** Large CRM vendors offer broad portfolios of industry solutions, not all of which are equally successful. Ask about the vendor's high-level focus area. Drill into their success in your industry, including their domain expertise, go-to-market approach, market share, referenceable accounts, and deployment size and success. Pegasystems started in the banking industry and has hundreds of microprocesses available for use by banks; SAP has dominated the utilities and energy markets. [Wells Fargo Advisors chose a CRM solution](#) based on the depth of its vendor's ability to address wealth management topics, integrate into core financial systems, and migrate decades' worth of data.
- **Marketplace depth and partner ecosystem alignment.** Industry CRMs have

smaller ecosystems of trained partners and marketplace add-ons. This may pose problems with talent sourcing or with industry cloud adoption, migration, and integration. Partners may not align with vendor roadmaps and strategies, duplicating capabilities and forcing the decision burden on your IT teams. Perform due diligence to understand vendor/partner relationships at every layer of the stack and whether their alignment extends beyond the sales cycle. Probe their ability to cocreate solutions for you and their approaches to value alignment to guarantee optimal outcomes.

- **Cost and complexity.** Industry CRM is often built on top of horizontal CRM and can command a price premium. [Microsoft's Financial Services Cloud](#) is an add-on to its horizontal solution, offering templates, workflows, and data model extensions. Factor in marketplace components and specialized services and these solutions can get very expensive. Calculate the total cost of ownership of the industry solution and compare it with the custom development of a horizontal solution. Take care to compare vendors similarly, as each has a unique, complex licensing model that can confuse your analysis.

Supplemental Material

This is an update of a previously published report; Forrester reviews and updates it periodically for continued relevance and accuracy.

Companies We Interviewed For This Report

We would like to thank the individuals from the following companies who generously gave their time during the research for this report.

BUSINESSNEXT

Creatio

Microsoft

NexJ Systems

Oracle

Pegasystems

Salesforce

SAP

SugarCRM



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