

CASE STUDY:

HD Vest Implements CRM System to Improve Workflow and Lead Management

HD VEST
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H.D. Vest
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H.D. Vest Works with W-Systems for Sugar Solutions and PCI Sugar Hosting.



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Business Challenges

Prior to implementing SugarCRM, H.D. Vest was using a “homegrown” CRM system. Its self-built application was a one-page contact management system that was very limited in functionality. H.D. Vest had a dip in the numbers in 2010 and found that its marketing efforts were no longer effective. They hired an outside consulting firm to evaluate and do a thorough analysis of what they had in place and determine where improvements could be made. One of the recommendations was to implement a more robust CRM system.



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The Path to Success

H.D. Vest reviewed all of the major CRM systems and narrowed its search to SugarCRM, Salesforce, and Microsoft Dynamics. H.D. Vest’s evaluation criteria was based on sales, workflow,

usability, marketing capabilities, reporting, and price. A major advantage of SugarCRM was the different hosting options available to them. They needed the CRM to be deployed in a single tenancy and secure PCI compliant environment, and Sugar gave them that flexibility.

Price was another big factor in choosing a CRM system. With the lower license cost of SugarCRM, H.D. Vest felt they could put their money in other areas like doing much-needed customization or PCI hosting to make sure they had the security and database size that was needed.

“From an admin perspective, I liked how easy Sugar was to get up to speed on and to customize,” said Emily Stivison, CRM Administrator and Marketing Analyst for H.D. Vest. “I liked that it was open source, could be customized however we needed, and it had the ability to integrate with a lot of other applications.”

W-Systems began working with H.D. Vest during the initial CRM evaluation period. After the selection of SugarCRM, H.D. Vest also chose to host its Sugar instance on W-Systems’s PCI compliant hosting platform. “At first the migration process was stressful for me because I had to take a massive database on Friday afternoon and move it over and have it ready to use in the new instance by Monday morning. I panicked a lot, but



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W-Systems Engineer, Andy Hidalgo reassured me the migration would go fine. And he was right! Even with the millions of different records in our old system, everything transferred over perfectly and that was a huge relief for me,” said Stivison.

W-Systems worked closely with H.D. Vest to successfully migrate all of their data. Their previous system held more than 400,000 leads, 45,000 contacts and millions of emails, calls, and notes. “My experience with W-Systems has been great and we are working well together. The implementation of Sugar was a seamless and positive experience and we’ve been really happy with the development,” said Stivison.

Success Factors

H.D. Vest’s busiest department is the recruiting and licensing department. Implementing Sugar has helped this department improve task management when organizing new leads and contacts. Prior to implementing SugarCRM, H.D. Vest had to print out a list of contacts and cold call each individual to figure out when and how they should maintain contact. Now Sugar can help them to identify who they last spoke to, when it occurred, and what was last said.

Workflow and lead management have also improved since implementing Sugar. The sales team is able to automatically send workflow emails to people in different sales stages without second-guessing their levels of engagement. “The ability to set up Workflows and automate emails has been huge for us for recruiting purposes because our team can now reach out to people and get feedback without taking the time to do so,” said Stivison.

Lead management has also improved by placing different web to lead forms on their site that instantly push new leads into

Sugar. These leads are then auto assigned out through a round robin and scoring tool built by W-Systems. Using the lead score, the sales team can easily identify who to contact first. These features have alleviated many issues with second-guessing practices as well as manual maintenance. H.D. Vest has also saved time through making more effective touch points with its leads and customers. Since implementing Sugar, the organization has been able to track more activities, such as the first touch point and initial response to affiliation. Capturing these metrics has made a tremendous difference and continues to help H.D. Vest scale its business.

“I would definitely recommend Sugar. I think it’s a great tool and I’m really really impressed with Sugar’s version 7. It’s a great solution especially if you are looking for an alternative to Salesforce that is more cost-effective and flexible,” said Stivison.

H.D. Vest plans on using Sugar in the future for better segmentation and prioritization. They also plan to further build out their lead scoring and create more customized tools to help recruiters communicate with contacts.



“My experience with W-Systems has been great. The implementation of Sugar was seamless and we’ve been really happy with the deployment.”

Emily Stivison,
CRM Administrator and Marketing Analyst