

CASE STUDY:

Texas Tribune Funds its Mission with SugarCRM

How a Non-Profit Uses CRM to Drive Fundraising and the Fulfillment of its Mission.



The Texas Tribune
texastribune.org



With a CRM system that is tightly integrated into its public-facing media platform, The Texas Tribune has a unique and powerful tool for understanding customer preferences. The timeliness and value of the information this system provides allow the Trib to deliver its mission more efficiently, complete its fundraising activities more effectively, and manage its growing back-office accounting activities without adding staff.

Here's How They Did It

The Texas Tribune — a nonprofit, non-partisan media organization founded by a prominent editor and a successful venture capitalist — has a mission of promoting civic engagement and discourse on public policy, politics, government, and other matters of statewide concern in Texas. With a gilded team of reporters and editors backed by prominent individuals and foundations, the Texas Tribune quickly won distinction and journalistic honors when it was launched in 2009.

But building the infrastructure to support a high volume publishing platform (23 million page views in 2010) and associated Customer Relationship Management system was a huge challenge. A strong team of in-house technologists tackled the design and construction of the publishing platform while W-Systems focused on integrating a CRM “back-end” system to support fundraising, communication, and other aspects of mission delivery.

The Path to Success

The Texas Tribune CRM project began as a pure greenfield initiative. W-Systems was retained to work with technical,

development, and executive management to craft a vision for what the system would do and to develop a high-level architectural design of the system.

W-Systems worked closely with the Texas Tribune to evaluate commercial CRM alternatives. Ultimately SugarCRM was chosen because it was uniquely suited to integrate tightly with the Tribune’s Django-based publishing platform.

Within 90 days W-Systems rolled out the first phase of the Tribune CRM system. It featured:

Tight Integration with the Public-Facing Tribune Website

Registrants and donors using the TexasTribune.org website are immediately stored in the CRM database where their topical interests, usage of the site, donor history, and relationships can be easily viewed and managed.

Support for Fundraising Activities and Event Management

With a comprehensive database that includes registrants, event attendees, friends, and donors, the development team at Texas Tribune can more easily and effectively target their fundraising activities.



Learn more at www.w-systems.com

Customized Relationship Tracking

W-Systems developed a custom “multi-relationship attributes module” that allows Texas Tribune to link contacts in unique ways and track the characteristics of each network connection, providing critical visibility into the relationships among Tribune donors and users.

Email Marketing

W-Systems integrated SugarCRM with the Tribune’s existing high-volume email notification system so that the same engine used for news blasts could also be used for marketing updates, event notifications, and fundraising appeals.

Subsequent Enhancements

Simplified Data Entry

W-Systems deployed a custom module that facilitates the entry of donor data into multiple CRM modules in one step. This reduces the time needed to enter new donor info and improves user satisfaction with the system.

Staff Training and Support

W-Systems has continued to provide ongoing training to the Tribune development staff and technical support to Tribune developers who have operational responsibility for the CRM system.

Success Factors

Close and Open Communication with Texas Tribune Management

A great relationship was always maintained between Tribune management and W-Systems’s implementation team. As a result, when questions and problems came up, they were addressed quickly and openly, before they could grow and jeopardize project success.

Careful Evaluation of System Design Before Development

Spending several weeks at the beginning of the project documenting the overall architecture of the systems, desired use cases, and navigation and usability issues proved critical to our ability to develop the system quickly and on budget.

Respect for the Budget

As a start-up non-profit, Texas Tribune had a fixed budget for their CRM system. By managing the project scope carefully and making intelligent trade-offs between different design priorities, we were able to meet the project budget while still delivering the core features needed by the Tribune team.

Would you like to know how a mission-critical CRM solution like Texas Tribune’s can help you better manage your non-profit or for-profit organization? Contact W-Systems and we’ll show you how.



“We chose W-Systems over larger providers because they gave us the flexibility of working with everybody from top management to the developers themselves at any given time.”

Higinio O. Maycotte, Director of Technology