Cloud-based CRM is nearly a billion dollar industry and analysts agree that it’s poised for tremendous growth in the next few years. And, while over the last few years, the term has changed, from “hosted” to “on-demand” to “SaaS” and now “cloud,” one thing that has not changed is the need. Now, more than ever, businesses want to get customer service solutions and data into the hands of contact center personnel quickly, effectively, and productively, without massive infrastructure or resource spending.

Why the cloud for customer service CRM?
In an unpredictable environment where change is the only constant, it’s hard to dismiss the value of solutions that need low upfront investment and offer quick results. Great for the “practice and perfect” approach, cloud applications can become “training wheels” for businesses, allowing them to incrementally implement and fine-tune CRM initiatives and maximize the odds of success.

The need for speed
Can you afford to ignore the promise of speed that cloud CRM applications offer? Even large organizations are now opting for cloud solutions to fix time-critical problems. For instance, if you were part of a retail organization and swamped by customer email, wouldn’t an easy-to-deploy, easy-to-use email management system be a real blessing during a holiday season?

Don’t dismiss the “Quick ROI” claim
Besides the speed of deployment, another benefit of cloud CRM solutions is that they offer quick ROI. This characteristic makes cloud software a good fit for innovative, customer-focused organizations whose main goal is to adapt and respond to changing customer needs.

Flexibility and scale on demand
What makes cloud solutions even more attractive is the freedom to start small and expand on demand. Businesses can determine the general roadmap and get started, add pieces one at a time, monitor closely, and refine the system based on feedback from existing users and changing market demands.
With good cloud CRM software, it is easy to add users, interaction channels, capabilities, and integration, all on demand.

**Different flavors of cloud-based customer service CRM**

There are four deployment options:

- **SaaS**: Web-based hosted software accessed on a subscription basis.
- **Private hosting**: Hosted solution set up by vendor, and controlled, managed and maintained by the customer.
- **Managed service**: Hosting and management of traditional customer-owned on-premise solutions deployed by vendor.
- **Hybrid**: Some channels on-site and some in the cloud.

Choosing the right deployment “footprint” typically depends on several factors, including deployment urgency, security considerations, resource readiness, and technology comfort level. Over time, as these needs change, the form that your solution takes may change as well. Vendors such as eGain allow seamless migration between the different flavors and even between in-house and cloud deployments.

**What to look for in a cloud-based customer service CRM solution**

- **Track record**: Look for a provider with a long history of successful deployments with companies your size, who isn’t new to the cloud or inexperienced with cloud technology or deployment of cloud-based solutions.
- **Flexibility**: Make sure that the company has a proven record with hosted and on-site deployments, and has experience bringing a hosted solution on premise, unifying solutions across channels, and adding new service channels.
- **Ease of integration**: Look for a solution that leverages your existing cloud-accessible data as easily as its own, through pre-built integrations and configurable data adapters, and integrates this information into your service process.
- **Security and uptime**: Make sure the vendor you choose can guarantee secure, reliable access to software and critical customer data.

**Risk-free innovation in the cloud**

The cloud is ideal for trying out new capabilities, make it easier for you to break out of operational “silos” by sharing information across systems and service channels. It’s also a great way to determine which improvements will immediately add tangible business value. eGain SLaaS provides a powerful,
risk-free model for rapid innovation:

- Try out new ideas in the cloud
- Pay for value
- No lock-in
- Move seamlessly to a traditional model of your choice upon success

**Conclusion**

With budgets still tight and the need for service innovation growing, demand for cloud-based customer service CRM solutions has never been greater.

**About eGain**

eGain is the leading provider of cloud and on-site customer interaction hub software. For over a decade, eGain solutions have helped improve customer experience, optimize service process and grow sales—across the web, social, and phone channels. Hundreds of the world’s largest companies rely on eGain to transform their fragmented sales engagement and customer service operations into unified Customer Interaction Hubs (CIHs). For additional information, please visit www.egain.com.