

So these days it seems that SugarCRM is stepping on the toes of Salesforce.com. The small to medium sized market (SMEs) is becoming Sugar's territory.

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You just have to see a SugarCRM demo to realise that the feature set is more or less the same but with one big difference...License Price.

With Sugar the money you save on licensing costs can be put to better use getting your sales, marketing and customer service software bedded into your business infrastructure.

A well implemented CRM solution will serve the user base quickly and effortlessly creating an empowered workforce that actually likes to use the software. They see it as a business-critical tool. Go figure. Implement CRM poorly and it becomes a conflict between Man and software and there are no winners.

The fundamental flaw when buying CRM is the age old battle between the competitors to fit a solution into your budget. Let's suppose your budget is £2.40 and the software costs £2.00. That leaves you £0.40 to spend on making the software work. Alternatively spend £0.40 on the software and £2.00 making it work for you. Myth – just because a product costs less doesn't mean it does less. Usually it costs more because of the brand or global name it has earned. Salesforce.com is a great product but so too is Sugar. Any of the thousand or so SugarCRM partners around the world will concur.

A lot of rhetoric is given to software stability when it comes to using Open Source software and Sugar is one such project that falls into this camp. The reality though is this:

- The user community keeps coming back for more, with over 5 million downloads of the Sugar appliance
- 99 times out of 100 an issue is caused through an incorrect configuration or hardware fault. Not the software.
- Since SugarCRM is Open Source, a lot of end-user organisations download and install it themselves - badly
- SugarCRM is a multi-national software company dedicated to enriching and future-proofing its product suite
- There is a vibrant community of developers building added value components which enhance SugarCRM (some good some bad)

In tough economic times, buying SugarCRM is the pragmatic choice. When implemented correctly (and carefully) it gives your business a big competitive advantage.

