

## **Business For Superheroes Podcast Transcription: Episode Fifty One: Untangling CRM Systems with Rob Drummond**



\*In an industry stuffed with marketing bullshit, empty promises and shiny-suited liars, one woman's had enough. She knows what it's like to have the wrong clients, no money and no time for fun, but she also knows how to fix it, and, on the Business For Superheroes Show, she promises to tell the down and dirty truth about business, sales and running away with the circus! Here's your host: Vicky Fraser...\*

**Vicky:** Hello and welcome to the Business For Superheroes Show. I'm Vicky Fraser, your host, and today I am not here with Joe, today I am here with Rob Drummond who is one of my Small Business Superheroes. He is a member of my Inner Circle and he is on today to talk about CRM systems. I will get him to explain what they are in just a moment, but first of all, hi Rob!

**Rob:** Hi Vicky!

**Vicky:** How are you doing?

**Rob:** Yeah, good thanks. I feel like I should have some gin or something.

**Vicky:** It's a bit early! I should point out that it's 11:04 am on a Wednesday, so probably no gin for now. But if you want to get yourself a gin, you carry on. That's absolutely fine. Thank you very much for coming on the show. I always like to have guests on. Tell them all a little bit about yourself. Who are you?

**Rob:** Yeah, so I have a bit of a chequered background in terms of-- I'm a marketing person, I'm a copywriter but my background is actually in CRM, which for me stands for Customer Relationship Management (systems). I started off in marketing basically doing all sorts of different thing. I've done just about every digital marketing job you can imagine, to varying degrees of competency. And I've kind of gone round in a big circle, to the point where I've realised that what actually mattered was the database at centre of everything. I like the words, I like the copywriting, I like the Adwords, but

ultimately it only really works when there's a database in the middle of it all. So you've actually got the right contacts and the right information to send the copy that you're doing to. So I've come full circle on that. The work that I do now is still based a little bit around Adwords and copywriting but I try and tie it together using systems as well. I do a lot of work with InfusionSoft, which we might talk about a little bit, but what I realised recently is that there's a huge amount of confusion around these systems. There's a huge range of options, the pricing points of these options have gone down recently as more of these services have begun hosting. That's basically what I do, I guess.

**Vicky:** Cool, okay. You explained the acronym CRM system, what actually is it? Tell us a little bit about what actually is a CRM system and where you first started messing around with databases because you are quite right, the money is in the list - that's what I always like to say. You need to have your list sorted, so tell us how a CRM system will do that for you?

**Rob:** I guess back in the very beginning, back in the early days, when people were just traders, you didn't need a CRM system. A CRM system is a fancy, stupid buzzword for a database. It's just a customer database, that's all it is.

**Vicky:** I guess in the old days the old salesmen would have had their little black book, wouldn't they? With all their notes about their customers. That would have been their CRM system back then.

**Rob:** Yeah, you had a black book, you had people who owed you money so you sent the heavies round when they didn't pay. He knew everything, it was either in his head or in small notes, and it just wasn't necessary. But then business expands. We have limited companies, we have Adam Smith shows up and all of a sudden you have this entity - which is a legal entity, your business is, effectively, legally a person but it doesn't have a memory. Your business swims in customer data all the time but customer data, it's kind of transient. Unless you capture it and store it in the system, it evaporates really quickly. That's kind of why you need it because you've got all this customer data and actually as the digital world has developed the range of data available to us - it's dramatically increased because there's just more data. If you think about 40 years ago, you sent someone a mail, you didn't know if they opened it, you didn't know if they got it. Whereas we have all of those data points now,

so it's capturing the data when it shows up so that you can then, potentially, use it to do something else, or trigger something else.

**Vicky:** Yes, that's a really good point, since everything has got more complicated. It's a very good point actually because in the old days when people would send direct mail mail shots out, you're quite right, they didn't know whether or not they were being opened. The only metric they had was whether or not they were making sales, which is why the old-school direct mail was so bloody good. And why today's marketing is, largely, so bloody crap. People get bogged down with all these metrics and in the end it's only sales that matter, but like you say, a lot of these bits of data that pop out are really useful. You can tell who is opening your emails, you can tell what they're clicking on. That's really useful stuff isn't it? Tell us a bit about why that's so useful?

**Rob:** Well, it's all customer interactions. If you think about it, so part of my model when I'm talking to people about CRM systems is to think about, What are the inputs that go into your database to begin with? The inputs, generally, are information that you hold about your customers. Where they live, maybe things you would store in a field, so how tall they are - whatever is appropriate. Or it's interatuary based stuff, so it's things that they've done, it's things that they've bought, it's things that they've clicked on, it's things that -- perhaps they've shown up at your event, for example. That's another input. I've lost my train of thought!

**Vicky:** That's okay, I derail myself all the time myself. So, what is it about capturing all these minute data points that's so useful? Now we can tell who's opened an email, who's clicked on it. Why is that important? Why should we care?

**Rob:** Because ultimately when you store it, you can then do something with the data. So it's taken all of that data - I think it's worth saying as well that data itself isn't very intelligent. Data itself is ones and zeros, it's quite dull. So the fact that I received your daily email this morning, I opened it, I clicked on it, that is just ones and zeros basically. It's putting it into a system and converting it into information - what you can do something with it. Where the fact that I've clicked on a link in your email means that you can then do something

with that. That's why you would store all of this information about stuff that's going on.

**Vicky:** Cool, so tell us a bit about the CRM system that you use. I should point out that I use Ontraport and I have done for quite a while. I'm quite happy with it, mostly because I just want this stuff to work because I don't understand it. I mean I understand I just want it to do what it needs to do. I'm kind of in awe of you because you understand how this thing works. It's like I can't even get my head around that. Tell us a bit about InfusionSoft and what you do with it, and what it can do?

**Rob:** So InfusionSoft is a hosted CRM system - like Ontraport and like a lot of the others, Sharpspring would be another example. A hosted CRM system is, rather than - when I used to sell CRM systems, the hosting thing has only come about quite recently. Previously you'd have to buy this thing, you'd have to spend £8,000/ £15,000 (pounds that is) on a system and someone would come in, they'd install this thing on a server, and it would all run in-house. The advantage of doing that is your data is held in-house then, I guess. Whereas for me and you - your data is held on Ontraport servers. They manage your infrastructure, they manage the server - you do not touch the server. That's been a big change actually because for people like me and you - I don't know about you but I have no interest in having an IT department.

**Vicky:** Oh god, no.

**Rob:** I don't think I'd recognise a server if I kicked one. So InfusionSoft is a hosted thing and what I'm seeing is that a lot of these services that are becoming hosted, just make it easier for small businesses. A lot of small business owners don't want to have IT departments. It's made a lot of powerful functionality available to small business owners, at a relatively reasonable cost.

**Vicky:** So what kind of functionality? What can we do with these things?

**Rob:** Most people buy InfusionSoft for its marketing automation capabilities. Let's point out its three things: you've got the CRM aspect of it, which is all to do with storing information about your customers. It's good the e-commerce aspect to it which is then selling online. And it's got the email marketing,

marketing automation side of it. And it's the marketing automation, then, that most people buy it for. Quite often people with existing companies will have some sort of database at the moment - it could be in Excel, it could be in something really basic even.

**Vicky:** Post-it notes!

**Rob:** And then they realise - yeah or they've taken that and they're uploading lists into MailChimp. That's a really common one and that seems to make a lot of sense because when you compare the cost of InfusionSoft, compared to the cost of MailChimp, MailChimp is obviously a lot cheaper. But what has effectively happened is, when you do that, you've made a snap technology choice based on the incorrect criteria, just because you wanted to do something that was essentially free to get started, basically. But it creates all sorts of problems because it's sub-optimal, you can't automate anything. So it's the marketing automation and the ability to send.

So what most people buy InfusionSoft for is to customise the emails and any other communications that you're sending out, but mostly the emails that you're sending out, based on the interactions that the prospect has had with you. The fact that I've clicked on certain links means that you would then add me to certain emails, for example. Or the fact that I'd bought certain products, or told you certain things means that you might then customise the follow-up experience. Potentially when you get really down into it, each person in your database could have a unique follow-up experience with you, based on the way that they've interacted with your systems.

**Vicky:** Okay, yeah, so I do a similar thing to that in Ontraport, then. So if somebody clicks on - I've got my 49 Ideas that people start off with - if somebody then clicks on three of the emails that I talk about email marketing in-depth, they'll get some emails specifically directed towards them. They'll get tagged and they'll get a specific sequence sent to them about email marketing, at which point I will then offer them one of my products on email marketing. If they buy my email marketing mini course, they will then get tagged and they will get put onto the sequence that delivers that mini course to them. I guess that's what you mean by marketing automation?

**Rob:** That's right, yeah.

**Vicky:** It's really useful.

**Rob:** There's this thing, though, where people get excited about the automation possibilities and they start to map out all of these things on a whiteboard. They say, "Our prospect's going to come in here and then we'll send them these emails. Then we'll see what they click on and send them this way" and that's great in principle, but what happens in practice then is that people overcomplicate it.

**Vicky:** Oh yes.

**Rob:** And they confuse themselves and they end up not doing it, or forgetting what it was they were trying to do in the first place. There's actually - I speak to a lot of people who are mostly using InfusionSoft and there's a huge amount of confusion over what they're trying to do. And actually they lose sight of the copywriting and the messaging that they're trying to communicate because they get distracted by all of the marketing automation, shiny objects. About the fact that just because they can segment the list 17 million ways, it doesn't mean that you need to, or that you should.

**Vicky:** So how would you recommend that people -- I know it's kind of difficult because people listening to this podcast have at least two different businesses between them! No, I have more listeners than that. How would you recommend that people simplify it, really, and keep it simple. I've been down the overcomplicated road and it's a big headache. I'm much simpler now, I'm a simple soul.

**Rob:** I think the answer is to get help from a professional who not only understands the system, but actually who understands what you're trying to do. There's a huge number of consultants who know a lot - more than me - about InfusionSoft, or Ontraport, or whatever, but finding someone who will actually understand what you're trying to do with it, and can simplify it. A lot of consultants are really good at creating a complex - I hate this word but - "ninja" stuff. A lot of consultants are quite good at doing that and will jump straight to that stuff, whereas you need someone who will be able to understand what you're trying to do and within time frames that you're working to. So, okay "Let's just do this for now" and just assume that it's version A. It's always just version A. You get started with that. I think it needs a

little bit of guidance. I actually have something I wrote about in my book actually.

I think there's four roles that have to be fulfilled. There's the product owner - so the product owner is often the business owner, could be a product manager, someone who knows a lot about the product, about the specific product you're trying to sell. There is the systems expert. The systems expert is the person who knows InfusionSoft, or Ontraport, and knows about all of these 17 millions ways that you can segment your list, and all of the things that you can do with your systems. You've got the copywriter - so the copywriter typically follows around the product expert and bottles up what they know, and figures out the right wording and the right messaging. And typically you'll have a fourth one, which is an implementer. Which is a person that takes the output of the other three roles and sets it up in Ontraport, or in InfusionSoft. And in my business I basically play all four roles, and it's knacker. You just can't do it.

This is what the problem is, is that a lot of small business owners are trying to (in the long term) sit in the product manager role, they're trying to sit in the copywriting role and they're trying to sit in the systems expert role. It might be viable just while you're getting going and it's worth knowing how all of these things work, but in the long term you can only really do one of the roles. The highest value role is the product expert or business owner role. That's what makes the most difference.

**Vicky:** Yeah, so you're kind of saying focus on the one thing that you can do, that no one else can, and outsource the rest of it, which is totally what you should be aiming for. But like you said just a moment ago, when you're starting out people simply can't afford to do that, so if - and I suspect quite a lot of the people who are listening to this podcast are in that situation, so what do you suggest for those people? How would you suggest that somebody got started with a CRM system and kept it as simple as they could, without having the cash to go out and pay a consultant who can go and sort it out for them, because I know a lot of people won't be able to.

**Rob:** I think fundamentally it's taking responsibility for your own learning and for your own systems. I think a lot of people get - I see a lot of people who get excited about InfusionSoft and they start off with good intentions but they

don't really take responsibility for - if you're going to buy InfusionSoft, even if you're the business owner and you've got no time, make time to go on a training course, or make time to learn the system. And accept that part of your responsibility in the early stages is to be the systems expert. And maybe you don't do it forever but what happens then is a lot of freelance people, or a lot of small business owners - because even freelance people are small business owners inadvertently, I guess.

**Vicky:** Yeah they definitely are. That's one of the things that I try and get people to realise.

**Rob:** That's the big trouble. They get busy and they abandon the systems responsibilities that they've taken on. It's a case of just making time for it. I think another thing to say is, as well, that every business has a core system. In my business, InfusionSoft is my core system and it's therefore my most expensive system. Your core system is probably going to be your most expensive system that you pay for on a monthly basis. I live in Sheffield so there's got a lot of - well, there's still a few manufacturing businesses left and I think in that sort of business the core system would probably be the accounting system. There's always a core system and you have to decide what your core system is and then build everything else around it. Otherwise what happens is people buy InfusionSoft and they try to tack it onto their business and it just doesn't work. They end up not using it, or they use it in a kind of bit-part way.

It's like you have a look at your business, you have a look at your requirements in terms of the data that you need to store and the actions that you want to trigger, and based on your best assumptions on that you pick the most appropriate system for that, and then you make it your core system and you put it at the centre of what you do. You go deep into it. I can say, actually, with 100% reliability that the people who get the best return on investment from InfusionSoft - every CRM system has return on investment but the people who get the best ROI are the people who go deepest into it and make InfusionSoft the core of what they do. There's a lot of people who just buy into the marketing automation as a fad. Yeah, it can do all of this cool stuff. It's like they have this Ferrari sitting in the garage, that they're paying for every month, but they don't use it.



**Vicky:** Yeah I've seen quite a lot of people do that. Shelling out for something like InfusionSoft or Ontraport is a hefty investment. Especially InfusionSoft because I've looked at it before and I decided to stay with Ontraport, because Ontraport does everything I really need it to. But even that's not cheap. So if you're going to invest in something like this - and it often is a very good idea - it really is worth your while spending some time and really learning about how it works. And, like you say, building your business around it so that you can get as much out of it as possible. It's really important because otherwise you might as well just be setting fire to your money. I see people do this all the time and I'm guilty of it myself with some stuff because, like you say, you find a bright, shiny object and you think, "That looks great" and then you buy it and it sits there and you do nothing with it.

**Rob:** It's not so much about the cost, it's more about the return, and selecting the right system. So what a lot of people will do is they'll say, "Right, I need a CRM system" and they'll get recommendations, you know: Vicky likes Ontraport, he uses InfusionSoft, whatever. They'll just make decisions based on the wrong criteria. Or they'll make snap choices just because they get excited about a particular product feature, or a particular shiny object, I guess. The fact that Ontraport can link to your Wordpress website, or whatever it is. It's a case of stepping back from all of that and thinking, "What data am I storing and what outputs do I want?" If the outputs include things like integrating to a direct mail house, can the system do that? If the outputs include things like sending SMS text messages, can the system do that, or do we need addons? Is that going to affect the cost?

Then you have to select the most appropriate system, based on the data that you've got going in, and then the outputs you've got coming out. Then, as well, with the data coming in you have to think, "Where is that data actually coming from?" The data will come from places like your accounts systems - so your accounts system knows who's bought what, who's paid for what. Sometimes you want that data in your CRM system, if you do you need to integrate Xero, or whatever it is, through InfusionSoft. Some of them will work, some of them won't work. But people don't think about this. People think about this after the fact and it's too late then, and it creates a huge additional ballache and expense, having to try and patch it all together. Don't give yourself that ballache. Think it through in the beginning and you save yourself so many troubles.

**Vicky:** That is such a good piece of advice actually because one of the things that's driven me most crazy CRM systems, with using them myself, has been getting it to integrate with other stuff. There isn't any one system, there's no one system that will integrate with all of the things you want it to integrate with. It just doesn't exist. I can tell you that from bitter and painful experience. If you're thinking that there's something that will do everything, it won't. It doesn't exist yet. But there are kind of things you can do to hook stuff up, there's other bits of software that you can use. But trying to navigate your way around that, when you've already got it all started, is just a nightmare because I've been there and done it. That's probably the best piece of advice you could have given, Rob, is just to sit down and decide exactly what you want to get out of your CRM system, what you want it to do, what you need it to do, the things you absolutely have to have, and the things that are maybe nice to have, and work from there. I think the key is, like you say, starting with what your goals are. What do you want your business to do, how do you want it to serve you?

**Rob:** I mean, you always end up patching systems together to a degree because no system will match it straight on. One of the outputs in my system, for example, is an integration to a direct mail house in the UK and a friend has just developed an integration for that. So there's always these kinds of patches but my take on things now is that unless something already integrates to InfusionSoft, I just won't touch it. So my accounts integrate to InfusionSoft, my website integrates to InfusionSoft, I have InfusionSoft integrated to my lead marketing audiences. And some of this requires add ons, and that's okay. You can use addons. It's a case where you don't want to be custom-developing stuff. That's the worst situation.

**Vicky:** Okay, cool. So what's your biggest piece of advice about CRM systems, regardless of - because I know you're an InfusionSoft fan, I'm an Ontraport fan - what is the biggest piece of advice you can give someone who's thinking of, say, upgrading from MailChimp (or something similar).

**Rob:** Take your time. Get the right information that you need. See lots of demos actually - most of these tools will have online demos now. I think that the sales process is changing a little bit. The sales process when I used to sell these things was, we would go out on meetings and we used to call these

meetings, “Jolly boys meetings”. We’d go out on these meetings and we’d say yes to whatever the client asked us. So, “Could the system do this”, “Yes”. “Will it boil the kettle for me”, “Yes”. “Will it run my business for me”, “Yes”. And then we’d close the sale, we’d throw the problems over to the implementation team

**Vicky:** I bet they loved you!

**Rob:** They loved us. But as far as we were concerned, we got paid our commission, end of story! That’s still in evidence but what is happening with these hosting systems now is there’s more of a focus on offering free trials and allowing you to try the system in some way. InfusionSoft don’t actually do that but there isn’t the same kind of capital outlay equivalent when you’re investing in a system. I think something to be wary of with that is just because you saw a free trial of Active Campaign, or something, the risk is that you end up dabbling in systems and you end up just dabbling in features, and just comparing shiny objects. And that isn’t the point. The point is to identify the most appropriate system for your needs and that requires harder thinking. It probably requires help. It probably requires then, to buy an hour of your Borrow My Brain, or something, and figure out what their requirements actually are because it takes an external perspective to try and do that sometimes.

**Vicky:** It does and that’s worth saying as well. You really need to be thinking about why you want to do something because quite often I will ask one of my clients, or somebody in the Inner Circle “Well, why do you want to do that?” and their answer - sometimes they’ve got a great answer and it’s like, “Okay, great, go ahead and do that”, but sometimes the answer is more like, “Oh well it’s just one of those things I thought I ought to do”. If that’s the only answer you can come up with, it’s generally not a good reason to do something. That’s kind of the same when you’re looking for a CRM system, it’s like, “Well why do you need to do that? Why do you need this feature? Why do you need the system to do that?” Unless it’s actually going to serve you and bring you a return, there’s really no point.

**Rob:** There’s nothing wrong with using MailChimp if that’s the appropriate thing for your needs. You shouldn’t be buying one of these more expensive systems just because you feel like you should be.

**Vicky:** No, absolutely not. And I've told people that before - people in the Inner Circle - because people are like, "Oh I'm doing this, that and the other and which CRM system should I use?" And I'll say, "Well what are you using at the moment?" And they'll say Aweber or something and I'll be like, "Well that's fine. For what you're using it for at the moment, you don't need any more than that. Maybe eventually you'll want to do more stuff but if it's serving your purposes at the moment then don't overcomplicate things, and spend money that you don't need to".

**Rob:** I think it's worth knowing what some of the more expensive systems can do but it's trying to objectively figure out, "Well will I get a return from the extra money that I spend on that".

**Vicky:** Absolutely. Cool okay so where can people find out more? You mentioned a book, Rob? Where can people get your book? What is your book? Tell us about your book?

**Rob:** The book is called, "The Marketing Nurture System". It actually started off as a copywriting book and then what I realised was - I sort of believe that within the scope of following up with contacts and closing sales, I think you have the copywriters who are talking about writing and following up with people, and sending daily emails etc. And then on the other end of the spectrum, you have the systems people, you have the marketing automation people, who are talking about follow up sequences, [indistinct] and all of these buzzwords that I hate. And I feel like there's a bit of a mixed approach needed in the sense that yes, the copy is important, yes the systems are important, but how do we efficiently move people from opting in, to the point where they're spending money with you as soon as possible? I've been working on a bit of a model for that. I've taken some ideas from Sean D'Souza - whom we both love. There's various ideas from different places in there. So that's what the book does. It's called "The Marketing Nurture System".

**Vicky:** Where can people find it?

**Rob:** If people want to get that, they can go to my website. It's at [www.confusionclinic.com/book](http://www.confusionclinic.com/book) I think. If not it'll be [www.confusionclinic.com](http://www.confusionclinic.com) and then there's a link.

**Vicky:** We shall get that URL and it'll be on the show notes. If you want a copy of Rob's book, go to his website [www.confusionclinic.com/book](http://www.confusionclinic.com/book) Let me just try that live actually. There you go, yeah. It's [www.confusionclinic.com/book](http://www.confusionclinic.com/book) so a nice, simple URL. Go there if you want Rob's book.

**Rob:** Yeah don't do what Vicky does for her event. At the end of every podcast Vicky says, "Come to my event. It's [www.businessforsuperheroes.com/events/](http://www.businessforsuperheroes.com/events/) ...seven words", or whatever it is.

**Vicky:** Ah you know what? There's always a link in the show notes and if somebody can't be bothered to type that in, I don't want them at my events.

**Rob:** I guess it's like an extra barrier isn't it? If they really want to come, they'll find the page.

**Vicky:** I could quite easily claim that it was an extra barrier, rather than that I decided I was going to do an event and then clung a URL up. It's worked okay! Cool, okay, thank you very much Rob. That's been very enlightening. Anyone who's thinking of investing in a CRM system, you could do a lot worse than get in touch with Rob, and find out from him a little bit more information. Start with his book, have a look around his sites, his daily emails are always very entertaining - I read them. And by the time you listen to this, my event will have been and gone so I will be much more chilled out! He also mentioned, if you do want to Borrow My Brain, if you want to know where to start with all this CRM stuff, then [www.businessforsuperheroes.com/borrowmybrain](http://www.businessforsuperheroes.com/borrowmybrain) There you go, thanks very much Rob, really appreciate it.

**Rob:** No problem.

**Vicky:** Joe will be back next week, we will probably have gin or wine, or something. If you can't be good, don't get caught and I'll speak to you soon.

\*Like what you've just heard? Tell your colleagues, tell your friends. Send them to <http://www.businessforsuperheroes.com/podcast/>