

Global Refund

by Jane Affleck

CASE STUDY

Global Refund

Company:

- Global Refund

Industry or service:

- Financial services, specializing in maximizing merchants' foreign customer business

Geography:

- An international company headquartered in Switzerland, Global Refund has operations in 40 countries on 5 continents

Software Requirements:

- To replace legacy systems with a new customer relationship management (CRM) solution, with user-friendly mobile functionality

Users:

- Over 200

Software Selection Project Needs:

- To find a simpler, time-saving methodology for matching requirements with CRM solution functionality

Software Selection Expert:

- Global Refund chose TEC to help determine which solution of a long list of 40 CRM vendors would best meet the company's requirements

Benefits:

- Access to TEC's eBestMatch™ decision support system (DSS) and reports showing weighted average and ranked scores for each vendor solution
- Confidence that the short-listed vendors' solutions offer the best-fit functionality for the requirements of companies such as Global Refund
- An efficient, time-saving, and successful software selection project

“Antiquated” CRM System Lags behind Mobile Salesforce

Global Refund, headquartered in Switzerland, adds value by enhancing the interaction between travelers, merchants, and banks. Global Refund states it invented the tax refund concept more than 25 years ago, and today offers both its Tax Free Shopping services for tourists and Dynamic Currency Conversion services to merchants in 37 countries. Global Refund’s services are available at more than 240,000 merchants around the world, and each day, the company’s more than 1,000 employees serve over 30,000 travelers with tax refunds or dynamic currency conversion. Global Refund completes more than 15 million transactions per year.

Dealing with so many customers and transactions on a daily basis requires a capable and up-to-date customer relationship management (CRM) system. However, Global Refund’s legacy CRM system was “antiquated and inflexible,” according to the company’s IT project manager, Eric Hansen.

Not only that, but the system suffered from low user acceptance—a problem compounded by mobile functionality that simply “didn’t work.” It was also extremely difficult for users to extract customer information and other important data from the system. “We’ve had to rely on an external reporting service in order to get any useful data from the CRM database,” Hansen says.

With these and many other challenges impeding operations across the company, it became impossible for Global Refund to ignore the fact that it needed a new CRM system. One of the company’s top requirements was that the new solution have usable and user-friendly mobile options that would allow sales representatives to schedule customer meetings or appointments on the fly. Also, Global Refund wanted to improve efficiencies overall—including database management and data mining/extraction—with a solution that would be able to meet the present and future business requirements at all of its divisions and branches.

“Using eBestMatch, we had a detailed, precise list that ranked the ability of each CRM solution to meet our requirements.”

– Eric Hansen,

IT Project Manager, Global Refund

Getting a Long List of CRM Vendors Shouldn't Take So Long ...

With so many potentially viable CRM solutions on the market, making the right choice can be a challenge. In order to find the solution that would be the best fit for the company's requirements, Eric Hansen needed to find as wide a range of potential solutions from which to choose as possible. It was also important that the team demonstrate to the company's board of directors that each possible solution on the eventual short list would be able to meet Global Refund's prioritized requirements.

"By surfing the Web and asking colleagues, we came up with eight or nine—but still that was not enough," Hansen states, adding that a longer list was necessary in order to satisfy the board of directors that all possible options were being considered, thereby securing funding for the project.

Conducting thorough research on nine vendors' solutions would be time-consuming enough—finding additional CRM solutions and comparing their ranges of functionality would be nothing less than a weighty and laborious task. Hansen knew that going through the available CRM solutions would demand more time than he and his software selection team would realistically be able to devote. "It was very time-consuming to talk to all the vendors about our requirements and find out if their solutions were suitable," he adds. "It seemed clear to me that we needed a quick and easy way to find and narrow down a list of potential vendors."

Defining Requirements Simplified with Comprehensive CRM Criteria Lists

While doing CRM-related research on the Web, Hansen came across the [Technology Evaluation Centers](#) site. Impressed with the extensive selection of CRM vendors and the comprehensive requirements spreadsheet, he spoke to a representative about the kinds of selection service options that were available.

TEC provided Hansen with two hours of training, showing him how to make the most of having self-serve, online access to TEC's CRM Evaluation Center, including eBestMatch™—TEC's decision support system (DSS)—as well as all relevant graphs and reports. Hansen passed on what he'd learned to his team, and they were then ready to perform the prioritization of requirements, as well as the feature and function analysis, in order to determine which available vendor solutions offered the needed functionality.

Though Hansen and the requirements definition team didn't need TEC's expertise in that area, they nonetheless found a decided advantage in having access to TEC's ready-made, detailed spreadsheets of CRM functional and technical requirements. Using these spreadsheets allowed the team to ensure none of their critical criteria was missed as they went through the process of defining the company's requirements.

Hansen explains: "Even though our team already had expertise in defining requirements and was very familiar with the company's needs, there were a few times while we were going through the criteria list that we said, 'Oh, we forgot about that!' As a result, we were able to add key criteria to our requirements list. TEC's research, such as the RFI spreadsheets, allowed us to be very specific in defining our requirements and place emphasis on what was truly most important for our company."

Making a Long Process Much Shorter: Global Refund Uses TEC's Tools for Self-service Software Selection

Although Hansen says that narrowing down the long list of 40 vendor solutions to a short list of 4 “took two weeks—about as much time as we expected,” he believes that overall, he personally saved about “two months’ work” during the selection process. “Software selection is a very time-consuming process,” he explains. “If we’d had to come up with a long list of 40 potentially suitable vendors on our own, it would’ve taken a lot more time to sort out. The selection process is so much quicker and easier with the decision support system database like eBestMatch that tells you which product is the best-fit solution for your needs.”

TEC’s decision support system, eBestMatch, uses a Weighted Average Composite Index (WACI) in addition to weighted averages, to help users like Eric Hansen compare solutions and make software selection decisions that more accurately reflect their company’s business needs.

According to Hansen, he and his team accomplished their tasks on their own with minimal input from TEC: “Using eBestMatch and generating comparison reports was simple—child’s play,” he states with confidence. “All instructions, as well as the graphs and charts, were very easy to read and follow.” He is quick to add that the TEC project management team was readily available any time to answer questions and offer guidance.

At one point, Hansen and team wanted to add an additional solution to the comparison. However, it wasn’t available in the database of available vendors. Hansen asked if it would be possible to add this solution, and affirms that “TEC said it would be absolutely no problem.” Soon, the information about the given product was online and ready for Hansen and team to include in their vendor/solution comparisons.

Moving Forward toward Implementing a Best-fit CRM Solution

“TEC’s self-service resources allowed us to compare a large number of vendors and eliminate all those that did not match up well enough with our requirements,” Hansen sums up. In a short period of time, he and his team were able to drive an efficient and successful software selection project, easily adapting TEC’s resources to their needs. In the end, they were able to make effective decisions on their own that were supported by the comparison data generated in eBestMatch—and backed up by a fully auditable data trail that proved that their decision was based on objective analysis of all the criteria that mattered to them.

“One of the main benefits of using TEC was that we were able to find vendors that we would never have considered, simply because we would have never heard of them before—and that we were able to make sure that these vendors’ solutions offered the functionality we needed,” Hansen maintains.

Now, Hansen and the selection team have successfully conducted scripted demonstrations with the four short-listed vendors and their solutions—Aplicor CRM, Oracle CRM On Demand, Salesforce.com Enterprise Edition, and EBSuite CRM—and have chosen a solution that they will begin to implement soon, confident that it is the best available CRM solution for the company’s needs.

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– Eric Hansen,
IT Project Manager, Global Refund



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