sugarcrm

CRM Supports Clarity and Excellence in a Business Where Special Experience is Everything

LARSEN
JEWELLERY

Our CRM Change Agent

Lars Larsen isn't a jeweller, but he's brought a bright idea to Australia's jewellery world with a thriving brand that is well-loved by its customers. Larsen Jewellery has created a specific niche in custom-made fine jewellery, focussing on special experiences, lifetime customer relationships and personal service.

Larsen Jewellery's success is grounded on Larsen's business-minded approach, which he brings from a career in investment banking. "I'm not a jeweller by trade," he explains, "but that's actually an advantage. It's my role to make sure our business runs efficiently, and I can focus on that 100%."

Most Jewellery brands are led by jewellers who are brilliant at their craft but have their creative focus diverted by business burdens. Larsen comes from outside the industry and sees things with fresh perspective. He allows his creative and management staff to work and flourish without micro-management.

Industry ///

Jewelry Retail

Location ///

Sydney, Australia

Website /////

www.larsenjewellery.com.au

Even in a thriving business it's important to look for ways to improve, and CRM has been an important goal for Larsen Jewellery for a number of years. "I'm responsible for every aspect of our operations. There are a lot of facets to my role, but I spend a lot of time on marketing and business systems. And when it comes to systems, it doesn't get bigger than CRM for us."

The Situation

Larsen Jewellery had been managing its customer information entirely on paper since it first started trading. Even payments were recorded in traditional column books by hand. This was working fine with a low volume of high-value sales, but there was potential for error and manual processes weren't scalable in line with the brand's growth strategy. The business needed CRM that would enable better processes and data management whilst maintaining the brand's highly personalised service.

Larsen Jewellery & The Jewellery Industry

The jewellery industry is highly competitive. Like many industries, over the past decade it has seen pressure from online retailers who operate on lower costs than traditional retailers. Their high volume, low margin approach affects market attitudes and price expectations.

Brands that want to focus on value rather than price really need to set themselves apart through service and customer experience. Larsen Jewellery also has one extra twist, operating as a face-to-face retailer without a traditional shopfront.

Their studio workshops are desirable destinations where customers can work under the direct guidance of jewellers and get involved in the creation their own pieces of jewellery. Larsen Jewellery has the only studios in Australia where customers can enjoy this special experience, together with the benefit of exquisite workmanship and competitive workshop prices.

Whilst the brand does offer value for money, it's by no means the cheapest; its story is based on value. Personal service is central to the brand, with customers returning regularly to have their special pieces of jewellery cleaned and maintained.

Challenges

With plans to open branches around Australia, Larsen needed to make sure the business had efficient and repeatable processes. The aim with CRM was to remove paper-based processes, to support the administrative and creative teams and enable a customercentric view for the business.

"Without CRM we'd continue to do well, but disadvantages would surface in time. Our CRM is about making improvements and stepping up. It's not addressing a specific downside but rather capturing upside – being able to seize more opportunities."

– LARS L.
Owner, Larsen Jewellery

Customer Details Wrapped Up In Paper

Larsen Jewellers customer information was previously recorded and managed entirely on paper – everything from enquiries through to point of sale, production and servicing. Because all customer details were maintained manually, capturing, finding and using this data took a lot of time. Larsen wanted to improve this situation before it impacted customer experience.

"We have ongoing relationships with our customers," explains Larsen, "For example we offer an annual polishing service free of charge. As our customer community grew, this was becoming more difficult to manage on paper. We needed to keep all customer information like contact details, purchases and design sketches in a central place that would be easily accessible."

Improve Productivity & Make Life Easier For Everyone

Paper–based record keeping takes time and is prone to error. Larsen wanted to enable people to focus on their core roles with less manual burden, and to eliminate mistakes that could impact business performance and customer experience.

"We wanted to make it easier to capture, store and find the information that we need to run our business," says Larsen.

Analyse Data To Improve Business Performance

"Previously everything was manual and we didn't have a lot of data to analyse and act on," says Larsen. "From a business point of view, I want to know things like how many of the people who visit our studios actually turn into customers. I also want to understand what kind of products and experiences people are interested in, so we can shape our business and our marketing accordingly."

Complex Production Processes To Translate Into CRM

Larsen needed to find a CRM that could handle the complexity involved in producing one–off customised products. "Our business is all about custom–made products," explains Larsen, "So for every sale the process is broadly the same but with a lot of curly scenarios. It's a complex business to build CRM for."

"Our customer experience is quite different. We empower our customers. We're transparent with prices and have clear processes, whereas traditional jewellers tend to closely guard information about their processes and costs."

— **LARS L.,** Owner, Larsen Jewellery

CRM Strategy & Solution

There are CRM solutions designed specifically for the jewellery industry, but none is flexible enough to facilitate Larsen Jewellery's requirements.

"We spent years researching what CRM to go with, and had a few false starts," says Larsen. "We tested off–the–shelf products, some of which are designed for our industry, but quickly saw they weren't flexible enough and pulled the plug before implementation."

Larsen then took the opposite approach and considered a completely custom–built solution. "We spoke to a technology firm about building our CRM from scratch, but in hindsight I'm relieved we didn't go this route and end up with something that wouldn't easily evolve."

The Middle Path: Best Of Both Worlds

"Then we looked at Sugar and it excelled," says Larsen. "It's the perfect CRM to handle our complex production processes – professionally designed to work out of the box, but so flexible it's like having a custom–built CRM. I'm pretty sure no–one else has Sugar set up like we do."

The Sugar solution, enhanced with Flexidocs, lets staff easily capture information and use it to make the customer experience even better. Customer details are all in one place, from contact information and enquiries to jewellery sketches, certificates, payment histories and service records.

Implementation

CRM Online worked with Larsen Jewellers to implement the 25–licence CRM over six months, starting June 2016.

It was rolled out first into the Sydney branch so glitches and improvements could be tackled before extending it to Melbourne. "Implementation took a bit longer than expected but it's been a really good experience and CRM Online have been fantastic," says Larsen. "We're pushing boundaries about how certain things are set up, but they've guided us throughout and we see them as long–term partners."

"I was hands on during implementation," he continues. "There were no major issues, and a couple of minor implementation challenges were quickly resolved."

He adds: "It's still early days and we're getting used to the system, tweaking and fine tuning it. As with any CRM, adoption needs to be encouraged. In the beginning, uptake takes longer because everyone is re–learning. CRM slows people down at first, then gets much easier."

"Running a business without CRM can be like stumbling around in the dark."

— LARS L.
Owner, Larsen Jewellery

Results So Far

Clear, Consistent Processes

Larsen Jewellery is only just staring on their CRM journey following the first phase of implementation, but already the benefits are clear.

"We've made our processes much easier and more efficient, and minimised human error," says Larsen, adding: "We achieve this with lots of checks and balances that just aren't possible when doing things manually."

The CRM has various trigger points and automated prompts during the sales, production and service processes. "This is designed to help us avoid mistakes and make sure things happen on time, which adds polish to what we do," says Larsen.

Better Customer Experience

Staff can now instantly access customer information. Larsen explains: "All our data is in one place and is instantly accessible. This has a good impact in so many ways. Even just looking up an outstanding balance when a customer comes in to pick up their jewellery – we're not trying to make sense of scribbles on paper!"

Before & After

Larsen Jewellery has gone from a 100% paper-based customer information management environment to a centralised, CRM-driven one.

Staff have an easier time capturing and using customer information. The business' highly variable processes for custom production.

> "When you're looking for a CRM solution, choose one that suits your business processes. The CRM system should be built around working processes rather than having to change how things are done just to fit in with it."
>
> **— LARS L.**
> Owner, Larsen Jewellery

About SugarCRM

SugarCRM is how marketing, sales, and service teams finally get a clear picture of each customer to help businesses reach new levels of performance and predictability. Sugar is the CRM platform that makes the hard things easier.

Thousands of companies in over 120 countries rely on Sugar to achieve high-definition CX by letting the platform do the work. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, Sugar is backed by Accel-KKR.

To learn more visit www.sugarcrm.com or follow **@SugarCRM**.