sugarcrm

How Star2Star Communications Fuels Massive Growth with SugarCRM

Star2Star COMMUNICATIONS

Imagine for a moment that your company suddenly starts to hit some unprecedented KPIs. After years of steadily increasing your customer base, there's an explosion of new contracts and channel partners. Those big audacious goals that once seemed far away are firmly in your grasp.

It's an ideal scenario, but doesn't come without complications. How do you get a 360-degree view of your customers in the midst of all that growth? Will it be possible to protect your exceptionally high 99.85% customer retention rate? And how can you continue to support the channel partners who are so central to your business model?

It wasn't long ago that Star2Star Communications faced this exact situation. Here's their story.

Industry ///

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Location ///

Sarasota, FL

Website ///

www.star2star.com

If your business has ever faced the daunting task of unifying and simplifying business communications, there's a good chance you're familiar with Star2Star Communications. To say the company has garnered widespread attention would be an understatement. In addition to its placement in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS), Star2Star has been recognized on numerous lists: the Inc. 500, the Deloitte Technology Fast 500, Forbes Most Promising Companies and more.

After climbing the ranks to become the world's fifth largest UCaaS provider, Star2Star **now serves tens of thousands of locations through 750+ channel partners. And its footprint is expanding every day.**

In other words: The business is doing really, really well. With a remarkable customer retention rate — at 99.85%, it's among the industry's highest — Star2Star provides the kinds of customer experiences many companies dream of achieving. It wasn't always this way. In fact, not long ago many of these accomplishments were still little more than big goals and future visions.

An Urgent Need for Speed

Being nimble and agile is a competitive advantage in virtually any industry. But in the world of unified communications, where success hinges on uptime and infrastructure, the ability to move quickly is especially critical. If Star2Star was going to rise in the ranks, the company would need a much more holistic view of its partners and customers.

That's where Michelle Accardi came in. As soon as the longtime leader joined Star2Star as chief marketing officer, she knew it was time to answer some difficult questions, such as:

- What kinds of experiences were customers having?
- What types of interactions should they be having?
- Were orders being processed fast enough?
- Could deals be closed faster?
- What more could be done to differentiate?

Accardi set out to address these issues and many others like them. There was just one potential problem.

"I Was a Salesforce Zealot."

When Accardi first got word that her team would be using Sugar to manage the customer experience, it wasn't the most thrilling news she'd ever received.

"The decision had already been made for Sugar," Accardi explains. "I was not part of that process. Truth be told, I was a Salesforce zealot."

After all, Accardi had once driven the biggest–ever deal for the popular CRM vendor. So starting fresh with a different kind of customer experience solution was going to be uncharted territory. Still, the move made sense. Star2Star was about to embark on massive waves of expansion. The company was in need of a solution that could easily scale and grow—minus the added costs and forced upgrades.

> "As we started to hit growth curves, it became clear that we'd need to change systems and processes in several operational areas. More than anything, we needed to get that 360-degree view to improve the experience for customers, partners and employees."
>
> — **MICHELLE A.,** President and Chief Revenue Officer, Star2Star Communications

Sugar fit the bill. So Accardi did what she always does: She began to move full speed ahead.

Accardi and her team created configuration after configuration — there are no limitations to the number of modules and workflows that can be created in Sugar — and actively sought out new ways the platform could be used to fuel growth.

It worked. Perhaps even better than anyone would have thought possible.

Protecting Over $4M in Revenue

It's a scenario that's all too common among tech companies: The seemingly insignificant product bug that leads to a sudden surge in unhappy customers. For Star2Star, the issue was a technical problem. It was the kind that could have quickly spiraled out of control and possibly lead to customer churn — long before executives had a chance to hear what was happening, let alone take action.

Except in this case, Star2Star had two things going for it: Some exceptionally quick–thinking visionaries, and one very versatile customer experience solution.

"I really felt for our partners and the customers who were experiencing this issue," said Sheila Jordan, EVP of operations. "Being on the product and support side of the house, I want to make sure our customers have a great experience. But sometimes it's hard to build a case and get the business to see that we need to address a particular problem."

Using custom Sugar modules for service requests and cases, the team quickly identified exactly what needed to be addressed. Turns out, this particular predicament was on its way to impacting over $4 million in pipeline across current customers and partner activity.

And that's just one example. Once the pattern had been designed, Sugar could be used for countless insights and competitive advantages. For example:

- **Detailed KPIs around order management** allow executives to watch as new orders progress toward actual installations, when monthly recurring revenues are locked in. This data is especially impactful in tracking the effectiveness of sales promotions. For instance: When the number of new order installs completed within 90 days rose 26% year over year, marketing knew they had a strong promotion on their hands.

- **A robust partner hub** gives Star2Star's 750+ channel partners full visibility into each location they serve. Partners can see open requests, read feedback from techs and even escalate cases

> "Once I was able to articulate the problem in those terms, we got the entire development team working on it and solved the issue within a month. Without those modules in Sugar, it would have been a lot more challenging."
>
> **— SHEILA J.**
> EVP of Operations,
> Star2Star Communications

as needed. And if a customer has concerns around technical or support issues? The partner has all the data needed to answer questions more accurately, thoroughly and swiftly than ever.

- **A steady flow of support analytics** gives product development unprecedented insight into which features and functions to prioritize.

Sugar is behind countless other business initiatives, too: the company leans heavily on the customer experience platform to set agent goals, forecast financials, calculate customer lifetime value, identify emerging trends and much more.

A New Form of Fanaticism

Does Accardi ever miss Salesforce? Here's what she has to say: "For the value you get, Sugar is just as robust — if not more. With such strong flexibility, the partner community and Sugar Exchange, it's possible for a company to take things forward faster and a lot less expensively."

Which is exactly what Star2Star has done. Since starting with Sugar, the organization has expanded its footprint beyond small and medium-sized businesses to serve middle-market and enterprise companies.

The marketing department, originally a one-employee team, now consists of more than 20 team members worldwide. Today, Sugar is the system that all other applications and tools flow through. In some instances, it's replaced the need for additional apps altogether: Zendesk, for example, was traded for the Sugar cases module.

"It's truly the workflow engine of our operation," Accardi explains.

Both Accardi and Jordan are convinced that the same can be achieved at virtually any company, regardless of industry or size. "All you need is a vision of where you want to go, and then you can adapt Sugar to meet your needs," says Jordan.

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**.