

Why Investors Want You to Invest — In a Hedge Fund CRM

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Eze Castle Integration (www.eci.com) is the leading provider of technology and IT services to the investment industry. The company's service areas include Startup and Relocation, Outsourced Technology Support, Professional Services, Telecommunications, Business Continuity Planning and Disaster Recovery, Archiving, Storage, Colocation Services and Internet Service. Eze Castle Integration is headquartered in Boston and has offices in New York, Chicago, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Stamford and London.

It is no secret that investors are demanding more from their funds than ever before. Disgraced financiers like Bernie Madoff have made investors cautious and controlled when it comes to where, and with whom, they place their investments. Today's investors hold funds to a higher standard and demand that they maintain efficient operations that promote greater accountability.

Resonating most with hedge funds and investment firms are requests for increased transparency and reporting. Customer relationship management tools are becoming increasingly popular avenues through which funds can provide their investors with accurate information in a reliable and comprehensive format.

WHY WHAT IS A CRM?

Customer relationship management applications, or CRMs, were designed to support companies looking to easily and efficiently track customer information. CRMs have evolved in recent years, and many companies now offer hedge fund-specific CRMs that support the unique hedge fund workflow and serve both the fund and the investor.

As a tool that supports investor relations, a hedge fund CRM application gives funds the ability to centralize all of their investor data, including contacts, documents and correspondence while also allowing investors to access critical fund information at any time, including transaction history, account balance statements, and other investment data.

In order to become more accountable to investors and provide them with greater transparency and reporting, funds require investor account management capabilities, which can be found within hedge fund CRMs. Firms can easily track investor transactions, centralize subscription documents and monitor expected inflows and outflows, all within one comprehensive application. No more sifting through spreadsheets and multiple back-office systems. Hedge fund-specific CRMs give funds the unique ability to manage all investor relations from a single portal, making business more efficient and satisfying investors at the same time.

Seems like a no-brainer, right? But many hedge funds and investment firms are not sold on the need for a CRM. After all, it's a luxury, isn't it?

CRMS ARE NOT JUST FOR THE BIG BOYS

Many firms, particularly smaller funds, think that CRM applications are out of their league. But the truth is that funds of all sizes need an efficient system that can easily and completely manage their investor

relations. Whether a fund's investors can be counted on one hand or number in the triple digits and beyond, a CRM is a valuable tool for investment firms. On top of that, investors are choosier than ever, which means firms need to go above and beyond if they want to be successful.

More so than ever before, investors are interested in funds' operational infrastructure and back-office management, which includes investor relations. An investment focused CRM might be what sets your firm apart from competing funds. These applications are built specifically to support and work within a hedge fund workflow, and often have the ability to integrate with fund administrators and other relevant parties, generating greater efficiency and reducing the time funds spend communicating with multiple parties.

Hedge fund CRMs have the unique ability to scale with a fund, and can support firms with 5 people or 500 and can track relationships with thousands of investors. While generic CRMs are readily available to businesses of all kinds and can easily manage customer data, a hedge fund CRM leaves nothing to be desired. All features and functionalities relevant to an investment firm are built in and readily accessible.

KEY FEATURES

Integration is one of the most important features of any CRM. These applications should not create more problems or require more time than employees at a busy investment firm have to devote. CRMs generally come fully integrated with key applications, i.e. Microsoft Outlook, which lends to more flexibility and less time and money spent on coordination between multiple applications.

CRMs also act as great sales and marketing tools for hedge funds. Most applications come with mass emailing capabilities, which allow funds to quickly and easily communicate with all investors and potential investors, while also giving investors the immediate information they require. Funds can also manage their sales pipeline and create performance estimates, among other things, all from one platform. Another increasingly popular feature within CRMs is an investor portal or Extranet – a secure site where investors can log in to download specific reports made available by the fund. By giving investors easy access to relevant documents and reports, funds can increase confidence and satisfy growing demands.

In today's marketplace, when competition for investors is more difficult than ever, a CRM might be just the thing an investor is looking for in a fund. It can be seen as a true investment in a firm's business, in its appearance and professionalism. When it all boils down, operating with a hedge fund CRM and eliminating disorganized spreadsheets and Word documents could be what sets your firm apart from the rest.