



## **Customer Relationship Optimization (CRO): *The Driver of Top-Line Performance***

Without question, the past two years represent the most challenging business environment in modern history. Companies have largely reacted by focusing on their internal operational efficiency, looking for ways to reduce costs and become leaner organizations. But the truth is, *you can't shrink to greatness*. Once you've taken out cost, where do you go from there?

Operational efficiencies will always be a component of a strong business and companies shouldn't abandon these initiatives. But the strategic emphasis should be on how to *grow to greatness*.

So how do you grow to greatness? The future belongs to companies that understand business performance is all about strong customer relationships. Quite simply, people choose to buy from companies they trust and who truly understand their wants and needs – and who satisfy those needs by providing valuable products and services.

At the heart of this business performance evolution is the concept of Customer Relationship Optimization (CRO), which is helping organizations make the transition from survival to success by driving top-line growth through mutually beneficial customer relationships.

CRO is a robust approach that helps businesses step up their game by establishing and strengthening interactive, collaborative relationships that add greater value for both parties. It acts as the overall aligning force to unite marketing and sales behind common objectives. And when the customer-facing programs and revenue engine are in harmony, growth is the result.



To reach this next level of optimized customer relationships that drive top-line performance, companies must adhere to a CRO formula we call the “Three A’s.” This stands for Assess, Align, and Act.

- Assess – Develop a deeper and more robust understanding of the health of the customer relationship, where insight is achieved across multiple dimensions and key relationship value drivers are identified and prioritized. A multi-dimensional diagnostic approach to assessment feeds the next element in the formula – alignment.
- Align – Connect organizations, resources, investments and programs and focus each directly on the critical relationship drivers identified through assessment. Once alignment is achieved, the focus shifts to the next step – action.
- Act – Create a customer optimization roadmap – a guide that summarizes the findings from assessment and alignment and turns them into an overall plan of prescriptive action. Actions comprise both short-term and long-term initiatives, all identified and defined.

This three-step approach to Customer Relationship Optimization is not a static process. Rather, it is a strategic cycle of continuous improvement. Once performed, companies need to go back and again run the diagnostic assessment ...align their organizations accordingly ... and take the necessary prescriptive action.

The end result of deploying the 3 A’s of Assess, Align and Act is the creation of high value customer relationships that drive top-line business performance with maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

This formula is critical because if you don’t assess properly, you can’t understand the real value drivers in the customer relationship ... which means your resources aren’t aligned properly to support these drivers ... and you can’t take the necessary action to deliver value to your customers. That means you won’t grow your business.

The time is now for companies to position themselves for growth by using the Customer Relationship Optimization approach. After all, you can’t shrink to greatness.