



The Most Powerful Name in Corporate News

Affordable CRM for Small Businesses



Tyler King
CEO & Co-founder
Less Annoying CRM

CEOCFO: *Mr. King, how did you decide that your name, Less Annoying CRM would be not only catchy but also serious enough for people to pay attention?*

Mr. King: We wanted to have a sense of humor when it comes to our name, but we also knew that small businesses would take it seriously because they can relate to it. The fact is that most business software is annoying, so when people see our name, they know exactly what we do and exactly what to expect.

CEOCFO: *How have you been able to make a CRM that people do not scream every time they have to use it?*

Mr. King: It's all about keeping it simple. CRM software was originally designed for very large companies, which meant that they were very complex and unintuitive. Now there are a lot of CRMs that market themselves for small businesses, but they're really just cheaper versions of the big business CRMs of the past. So when we started Less Annoying CRM, we began with a blank slate. We didn't base it off the old model designed around the needs of the Fortune 500. Instead, we just added what small businesses really need and left out all of the rest.

CEOCFO: *When someone is using your system, what are they able to do quickly and easily compared to the 800-pound gorilla, Salesforce?*

Mr. King: Our system really focuses on streamlining the basics of managing a relationship. That means that things like adding contacts, entering notes, and setting reminders for follow-ups are very simple and intuitive. We want to offer a great experience for the people actually using the CRM, like sales reps and customer service reps. More complicated CRMs such as Salesforce are more focused on the needs of the executives, so they have lots of reporting and automation features, but the day-to-day use by normal employees is much more cumbersome.

CEOCFO: *How do you grab attention in such a crowded field?*

Mr. King: The name helps. There are so many people out there who are annoyed by their current CRM, so our name really stands out to them. Beyond that, our growth is powered almost entirely by word-of-mouth. We obsess over giving all of our customers the best experience possible, and so they're more than happy to help spread the word.

CEOCFO: *Are there particular types of small businesses that tend to use your service or that should be but do not?*

Mr. King: We're a good fit for pretty much any small business, but I'd say that our sweet spot is any company with 1-20 CRM users where there is an ongoing relationship with their customers. The more times a business communicates with a single customer, the more important it is for them to have a record of all previous interactions. So a real estate agent who works with the same clients for months or years might get more benefit from a CRM than a retail store where customers walk in, buy something, and leave forever.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about customization?*

Mr. King: Customization is a really important feature for CRMs because every business is different, and it's important for the CRM to be able to adjust to fit your business model rather than the other way around. Most big enterprise CRMs have lots of customization options, while most small business CRMs hardly have any at all. Less Annoying CRM fits somewhere in the middle. You can set up custom processes, or "pipelines" as we call them so that you can track what matters in your business. For example, you can set up a sales lead pipeline, a customer service pipeline, and just about any other type of process you want to track. That customization is important, but we also try to keep things simple, so we don't have all of the bells and whistles that some of the more complicated CRMs offer.

CEOCFO: *How is your customer service amazing? Did you realize the importance of providing that type of service from day one?*

Mr. King: Honestly, when we first started, I didn't realize how important customer service would be. I'm a programmer so I figured that if our product were simple enough, no one would need much help. But I put my phone number on our website and the first time a customer called and I picked up, they were blown away that we had a real person willing to talk to them over the phone. That was a lightbulb moment for me. Technology companies have a horrible reputation when it comes to customer service, so it's a great way for us to set ourselves apart. It's such a focus for us now that more than half of our staff is on the customer service team. Rather than waiting for customers to call us, we proactively reach out to each new user and try to get on the phone with them to help them with anything they need.

CEOCFO: *Are you US based?*

Mr. King: Yes, the entire company is based in the US.

CEOCFO: *Do find that customer service is important to your clients in choosing a CRM?*

Mr. King: Yes, absolutely. I'm very proud of our product, but I think that the customer service is even more important to our customers. Trust is just so important in this industry, and it's much easier to trust a company that will pick up the phone and have an honest, personal conversation with you.

CEOCFO: *Is there a limit to how much data a company can utilize?*

Mr. King: No, we do not put any explicit limits on it. We normally recommend staying below 50,000 contact and company records just to keep the software running smoothly, but there's no hard cap on that, and we don't have extra fees for adding more data.

"We like to say that the best CRM is the one you'll actually use, and that's what Less Annoying CRM is all about." - Tyler King

CEOCFO: *Do your products allow mobile access from anywhere?*

Mr. King: Yes. We are entirely web-based so any device with an internet connection can access the CRM. That means iPhones, iPads, Android, Macs, Windows, and any other modern device will work with our software.

CEOCFO: *As people started to use Less Annoying CRM, what have you changed? What have you learned from your customers?*

Mr. King: We're constantly working to improve our product based on customer feedback. The most valuable thing we learned from our customers is what "simplicity" really means. In the early days, we thought that simplicity meant making the product as easy to use as possible. But that's not quite right. What really matters is that the product makes the users lives as easy as possible. Our users taught us this. For example, we didn't originally include a calendar in Less Annoying CRM because we figured that it would make the product more complicated. Our early users explained to us that yes, the CRM would be more complicated with a calendar. But they still had to use a calendar either way and it was more complicated for them if the CRM and calendar were two separate systems. So by adding a calendar we made the CRM more complicated, but we made our users' lives easier, and that's what matters. This concept has guided our product improvements, and it's one of the main things that separates our product from our competitors.

CEOCFO: *How is business?*

Mr. King: Business is great! Most tech startups focus entirely on growth even if it means that they're taking too many risks and losing money. That's why it's so common for startups to vanish overnight. Our customers trust us with their most important data so we've chosen a much more sustainable, responsible path. That's why I'm so happy to say that not only are we growing quickly, but we're profitable and very stable.

CEOCFO: *Do you have a high retention rate with customers?*

Mr. King: Yes, this is a strength of ours. Once someone starts using our product, they stay with us for a long, long time.

CEOCFO: *Your pricing seems quite reasonable. Do you find that your pricing is what draws customers in or is price is not as important as ease of use?*

Mr. King: I think it is a little of both. Any CRM should be worth way more than what we charge, so most of our customers would be fine paying more. At the same time, our mission is to help small businesses succeed, and one way we do that is by charging significantly less than we could so that our customers can capture even more value. So I don't think our

customers choose us specifically because of the price, but the low price sends a strong signal to them that we're serious about our mission.

CEOCFO: *Are there particular subsets in CRM that people might search for to get them to your website?*

Mr. King: Probably the term that best fits us is "simple CRM". Someone who has tried other CRMs and found them to be too complicated will probably be pretty happy to find us in their search results.

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic range when it comes to customers?*

Mr. King: We have users all over the globe. Last time I checked we were in about 60 different countries. Most of our customers are in the U.S. but we also have large concentrations in the other English speaking countries.

CEOCFO: *Are customers the same in other countries? Do you find much difference in what people are looking for or what they expect?*

Mr. King: Not for the most part. Every small business is unique, but I don't think their country matters that much. The one way in which it does matter is that in developing nations, they might not have as much money to spend on a CRM, so customers are much more appreciative of our low price point. People in the states love how affordable we are, but that's not the primary reason they choose us.

CEOCFO: *What is next for you?*

Mr. King: Right now we're focusing on making our core product better. Sometimes this means adding more features, but it also means polishing up existing features to make them easier, faster, and more useful. Long term, the goal is for our product to be able to help with more areas of the business. One day we might have Less Annoying Project Management, or Less Annoying Invoicing. It would be a dream come true if a typical small business could use our software to handle all of their technology needs.

CEOCFO: *What surprised you as Less Annoying CRM has grown and evolved, both from running a business to the actual product itself?*

Mr. King: From a business standpoint, I've been really surprised at how important personal relationships are to our customers. I came into this thinking of it as a technology company, but our customers rely on us for their livelihood and that means that it's about a lot more than just technology to them. It's very personal, and that makes this so much more rewarding than I imagined. From a product standpoint, I've been surprised by the fact that our customers aren't necessarily interested in major innovation. They just want something that works and that they can count on. We still have plenty of exciting ideas for cool new projects in the future, but while the rest of the tech world is focusing on innovation and disruption, we just want to stick to the basics and make the core experience as simple as possible.

CEOCFO: *Why choose Less Annoying CRM?*

Mr. King: Honestly, any CRM can help your business grow. The problem is that about 50% of all CRM licenses go unused, primarily because they're too complicated. We like to say that the best CRM is the one you'll actually use, and that's what Less Annoying CRM is all about.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine



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