

Chapter 1

GoldMine: An Overview

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GoldMine 8 (also called GoldMine Premium) is a tool for sales, marketing, and customer support and is one of many CRM (Customer Relationship Management) systems available today. GoldMine is for you if you ever have contact with customers or with business prospects. Right out of the box, GoldMine lets you track all the basic information to manage your client relationships. And with a little effort or money, you can customize it to your specific needs.

In the late 1980s, my company was growing a bit too fast and was getting a little out of control. I began searching for some kind of tool that could help us sustain our growth without causing additional pain. I chose GoldMine because it

- ✔ Won't let us forget to return a phone call
- ✔ Ensures that we remember all our appointments and we never double- or triple-book ourselves
- ✔ Provides a central place to store all client information
- ✔ Links all our documents to clients' records so that we can't lose proposals
- ✔ Makes sure that we all get home for dinner on time every night

The developers at FrontRange Solutions, Inc (formerly GoldMine Software Corporation) don't really know the special needs of your organization; your work may require some fields or functions that just don't come in the box with GoldMine. For example, you may want to track each client's anniversary so that GoldMine can automatically send flowers to your client's wife. The bad news is that GoldMine doesn't come out of the box knowing how to do this. The good news is that you can easily add an anniversary field and a process to completely automate this activity.

One of the advantages of joining the GoldMine community is the widespread level of expertise available to you from experienced GoldMine dealers all over the world. These dealers are trained professionals who have focused on CRM and GoldMine in particular. Admittedly, FrontRange has thinned the ranks of dealers and consultants today, but if you are looking for good and experienced dealers, they can still be found. Feel free to contact me for a local referral.

Discovering Everything that GoldMine Can Do

GoldMine tracks all the names, addresses, phone numbers, and basic contact information you will ever need. If you never use GoldMine as anything more than an electronic Rolodex, you will have gotten your money's worth. But if you use GoldMine in such a limited way, you will be missing out on most of the power for which your company paid good money.

Consolidating all your prospect and customer information

You will reap tremendous benefits from consistently entering every lead and every account into GoldMine. And if you can convince everyone in your organization to do the same, you have not only one organized location for all your data but also the following advantages:

- ✓ Everyone with authorization in your organization can share data and schedules.
- ✓ You can link e-mail and other documents to appropriate records, enabling you to maintain a complete audit trail.
- ✓ When a salesperson leaves your company, you can easily transfer her accounts to her replacement without missing a beat.
- ✓ You can set up all sorts of imaginative Automated Processes to help you with sales, marketing, and support.

Keeping track of your life

You can use GoldMine to track your business schedule and, in fact, your entire life. Just as important, GoldMine can keep schedules for all users and can help you coordinate your activities with theirs. This capability is one of the compelling reasons to use a CRM system such as GoldMine.

GoldMine lets you see what everyone else on your team is doing (although it also offers many provisions for privacy); at the same time, it lets everyone else track what you are doing. Or, at least what you claim you're doing. GoldMine can even coordinate the data for remote salespeople who rarely venture into the office.

If your entire team uses GoldMine consistently to schedule both professional time and personal appointments, here are some results you may see:

- ✔ You can eliminate most instances of overbooked or double-booked staff.
- ✔ You can feel reasonably safe in scheduling appointments for others in your organization.
- ✔ You can let GoldMine automatically find a time when everyone on your team is available to meet.
- ✔ You have a complete audit trail of team members' activities.

Communicating with your team and the world

You can use GoldMine to send a single letter to a customer or to send batches of letters or e-mail messages. Twenty years ago, sending notices to your thousand best customers telling them about tomorrow's price increase would have been an almost impossible task. Now you can name that tune in three notes.

To do all this, you can use GoldMine's built-in e-mail client or you can use Outlook, which can be tightly integrated with GoldMine. I am stubbornly sticking with GoldMine's e-mail client because I see no advantage to complicating my life with Outlook.

Keeping tabs on opportunities and projects

GoldMine has a simple sales forecasting system built-in, but that may not be enough to track your more complex sales. To meet that need, GoldMine has a much more sophisticated Opportunity Manager, designed to manage deals that may take months or even years to close and to involve multiple people in your organization — and possibly multiple people at your prospect's organization. The Opportunity Manager is also ideal when you want to link activities and documents to one of these larger pending deals.

When you succeed at landing that behemoth deal, GoldMine can turn your opportunity into a project so that you can just as easily keep track of all the work that is being done. I like to refer to this as Microsoft Project "light."

Setting up Automated Processes

My favorite feature of GoldMine is its Automated Processes, with which you can automate almost any business process you can design. With Automated Processes, you can have GoldMine send out follow-ups to sales calls or remind you to call a client or escalate an issue to your boss when you ignore GoldMine's first or second notices.

There is a great example of a series of Automated Processes within the AdvisorsGold add-on for the financial services industry. You can read more on that in Chapter 30.

Doing some great marketing

GoldMine can gather leads from your Web site (see Chapter 29) and automatically turn them into records in your database. Then, with a little planning, you can set up marketing campaigns to clients and to prospects directly from your GoldMine database. GoldMine is just great at scheduling calls and sending batches of e-mails, faxes, and snail-mail letters. The best campaigns use combinations of several strategies. E-mails and faxes will both benefit from some add-on products discussed in Chapter 30.

Organizing your customer support

Along with a completely reworked user interface, GoldMine Premium now boasts a customer service module that allows GoldMine to manage service issues by associating each issue with an account. It also assigns issues to a queue until someone deals with it and maintains a library of service-related documents.

Investigating a Few of the Things GoldMine Isn't Designed to Do

There's no point in reinventing the wheel and, for the most part, GoldMine hasn't. Rather than build a word processor, a quotation system, or an expense reporting system, FrontRange has relied on other developers to build great products. Many of these products are now tightly integrated with GoldMine.

Integrating word processing and spreadsheets

GoldMine has no built-in word processor, so you can't really use GoldMine to write a letter. The designers long ago decided not to reinvent this wheel and have long relied on what has become the de facto word processor — Microsoft Word. Just as GoldMine tightly integrates with Word, so it also integrates with Excel, just in case you need to output some data in that direction. Chapter 16 provides details on connecting GoldMine and Word.

Faxing

Faxing comes and goes. It was the hot technology before e-mail became so prevalent. Now that marketers are having more and more trouble penetrating everyone's spam filters, faxing is hot again. GoldMine, however, relies on one or two well-established faxing programs to carry the load here. Chapter 30 discusses these.

Quoting and accounting

Don't rely on GoldMine alone for help with accounting or with quotations. You can, and should, buy separate programs for these tasks. And again, you can refer to Chapter 30 for details about each of my favorites in these categories.

Planning a Successful Project

If you have five people in your office using GoldMine and your goal is to just consolidate your data and use GoldMine as an expensive Rolodex, you might be able to get away without too much planning. Plenty of people use this approach. Of course, that may be part of the reason that so many studies have cited CRM's rather shocking failure rate.

Any but the simplest of systems must have a real, professional planning phase. My own rule is that any CRM implementation that might involve ten or more days of work should have a formal Needs Analysis done first. A good Needs Analysis is done by an experienced dealer and is almost always a billable event. But it's money well spent to document goals, develop specifications, and assign tasks and timetables.

Perhaps you don't want to spend the money. Maybe you're a Type A and just want to get on with it. Resist the urge. Invest 10 percent of the total project budget in the analysis phase, even if you do the analysis yourself.

Planning and analysis is one thing. Installation is another. Back in the day of GoldMine Standard Edition, it was relatively easy to install GoldMine. Now that GoldMine Premium runs on MS-SQL, installation is a lot more involved. Definitely not something you want to do by yourself at home. Call an experienced professional if the thought of doing it yourself makes you at all queasy.

Providing Training: The Key to Success

Don't shortchange yourself or your company when it comes to training. At least 80 percent of my clients use less than 10 percent of GoldMine's power. That's usually because they just never made the effort to find out what else GoldMine could do after they solved their initial crisis.

You can get GoldMine training in several ways, and any one of them is certainly better than expecting someone to just figure it out. The following list shows some effective training methods, starting with the most effective and ending with the least effective.



- ✓ Send every user to an authorized GoldMine Dealer for training.

In the old days, the manufacturer used to certify select dealers as Authorized Training Centers or Authorized Trainers. I am one. They don't do this any more, so any dealers with that designation is telling you that they have been around a long time and may or may not be up-to-date. You will need to do your own investigation to find a good trainer, or, again, contact me for a referral.

- ✓ Bring an experienced trainer to one of your regular company meetings and allocate a half day or a full day to GoldMine training.
- ✓ Bring an experienced trainer to your facility for training (make sure to temporarily confiscate all cell phones and pagers).
- ✓ Sign up for some Web-based training that several dealers offer. Some dealers actually specialize in Web-based training, and this is especially cost-effective if you have users in many locations or you want to schedule the training in bite-sized chunks.
- ✓ Buy some computer-based training CD-ROMs and set aside time for each person to work through them. *Note:* It's difficult to ask a CD a question if you're confused about something.

- ✔ Buy each staff member a copy of *GoldMine 8 for Dummies*. Tell each person that she will get a one-week paid vacation upon finishing the book.
- ✔ Tell your staff to just figure it out. I've never seen this actually work very well, but it might for you.

GoldMine manuals are available electronically — either on the initial CD or as a download. Printing hundreds of pages may not be practical, but the option is there. One advantage is that you can print just the chapter related to the subject you are trying to master.

