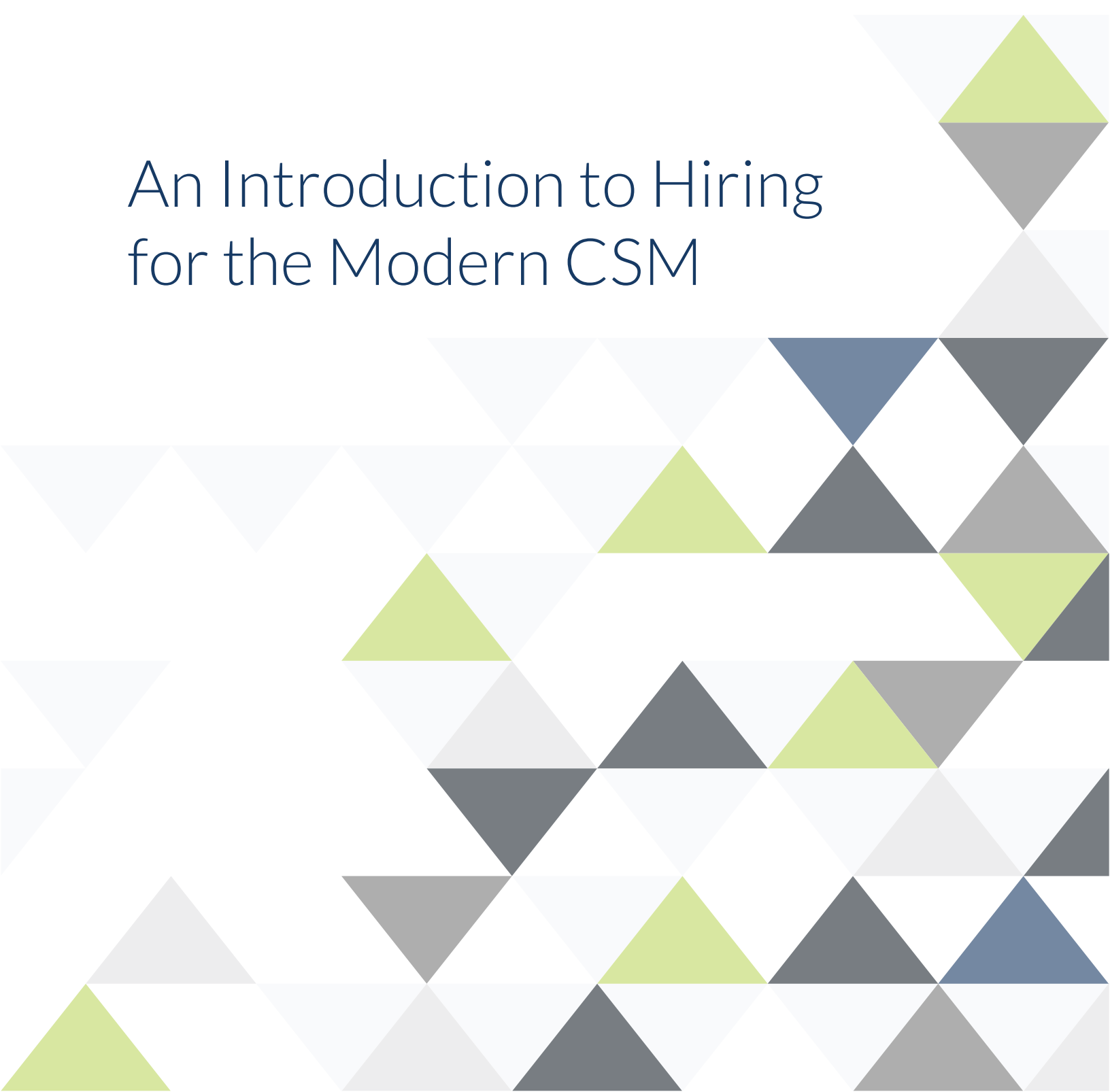


# An Introduction to Hiring for the Modern CSM



# Contents

Introduction	3
The Modern Customer Success Manager	4
Who Are They?What	5
Do They Do?What	5
Do I Pay Them?	5
What Motivates the Modern Customer Success Manager?	6
<b>Building a Dream Team: New Relic</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>How to Build Your Own Dream Team</b>	<b>11</b>
Sourcing and Screening	11
Phone Interview On-site	13
Interview Presentation	14
Offer	16
	17
Conclusion	18

# Introduction

The Customer Success Manager (CSM) is a role that's only been around for about 5 years, but the need for this position is increasing by the day. Companies are realizing that as the sales process changes, so does the need for specialized roles.

While there is more information available to your customers than ever before, there is also more competition for tech solutions, making it increasingly difficult to retain customers. An unhappy customer can quickly run a Google search for alternative vendors and migrate to another solution before you even know there's a problem.

That's where the Customer Success Manager comes in. The CSM's job is to ensure that your customers have everything they need to be successful and satisfied with your product.

Customer Success Managers are a unique breed with a unique skill set. They need to have the right combination of technical ability and customer-facing experience in order to manage demos and implementations along with customer feedback.

**COMPANIES ARE REALIZING THAT AS THE SALES PROCESS CHANGES, SO DOES THE NEED FOR SPECIALIZED ROLES.**

 Tweet This!

**THE CSM'S JOB IS TO ENSURE THAT YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE SATISFIED WITH YOUR PRODUCT, TO REDUCE CHURN.**

 Tweet This!

Altogether, this creates a challenge for hiring organizations that are looking to hire a CSM — the competition is fierce among companies hoping to fill these positions, and not many people have the CSM job title or experience.

In this eBook, we offer an in-depth look into the Customer Success Manager role and provide insights you can use to build or scale your own CSM team.

# The Modern Customer Success Manager

The Customer Success Manager's exact role can vary from organization to organization, but a CSM is generally responsible for a new customer's post-sales experience.

Traditionally, an Account Manager would manage the customer from the closing phase all the way through upselling and the Customer Success Manager is a separate role that may focus on anything related to onboarding, implementation, training, support, and renewals — all to ensure customer retention and growth.

**THE CUSTOMER SUCCESS MANAGER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR A NEW CUSTOMER'S POST-SALES EXPERIENCE.**

 Tweet This!

## Who Are They?

Given that the position hasn't been around for very long, Customer Success Managers can come from a variety of backgrounds. Rather than trying to find people who have worked in a specific role, hiring managers will have to look for the traits that signify a good potential CSM.



**Cross-functional communication skills**







**Relationship-building skills**

**Teaching/training skills**

**Product knowledge**

# What Does a Customer Success Manager Do?

A day in the life of a modern CSM typically consists of:

-  Onboarding new customers
-  Transitioning customers from old software and implementing new software
-  Encouraging product adoption through training
-  Ensuring customer happiness to increase retention rates
-  Defining customer needs for future account growth
-  Customer support and product adaptation

## What Do I Pay a Customer Success Manager?

We looked at the San Francisco, New York, Phoenix, and Austin markets to determine what the average CSM earns.

### San Francisco/New York:

1-2 years experience:

**\$65,000-80,000 (\$70,000-90,000 OTE)**

3-5 years experience:

**\$100,000-130,000 (\$120,000-160,000)**

### Phoenix/Austin:

1-2 years experience:

**\$40,000-60,000 (\$50,000-70,000 OTE)**

3-5 years experience:

**\$50,000-70,000 (\$60,000-80,000 OTE)**

# What Motivates the Modern Customer Success Manager?

CSMs are advocating for your product day in and day out, so a product they can be passionate about is a big motivator. If your product is best-in-class, part of a new product category, or disrupting your industry, make it known – this will help you attract top talent.

CSMs will also be interested in the caliber and number of accounts assigned to them. A CSM managing enterprise accounts will carry a larger book of business and realistically only manage 5-10 accounts. However, it is more common for CSM's to manage and onboard anywhere from 30-80 accounts depending on the size and implementation difficulty. Salespeople get excited about the prospect of working with a known brand and want the responsibility that comes with managing an enterprise account. However, they also want to make sure they're set up for success with a manageable workload – and that they won't be over-assigned on customer accounts.

In addition, CSM candidates are looking for things many candidates look for: great leadership (especially direct managers), an awesome culture, opportunities for growth (either within your CSM or AM team), and equity.

**CUSTOMER SUCCESS MANAGERS ARE MOTIVATED BY A PRODUCT THEY CAN BE PASSIONATE ABOUT.**

 Tweet This!

# Building a Dream Team: New Relic

Interview with

**Julie Giannini**

**Senior Director/Customer Success**



## How Did You Start Building Your Team?

When I started at New Relic there were already a few members on the Customer Success team. I looked at the needs and existing talent on the team to determine hiring priorities. I'm a big believer in people, process, and passion and look for candidates who can bring that to the team.

Our team is segmented by customer spend between SMB and Enterprise accounts. I have added team members to both groups with the goal of having ample coverage across customer spend levels. As we grow, we are continuing to hire and add to the team over the next 12 months.

## What's Exciting About Your Opportunity?

New Relic is an amazing company and joining the Customer Success team is a unique opportunity. Customer Success is a relatively new team for most SaaS companies. We are providing a chance for people to come aboard and help define what a world class Customer Success team looks like, in terms of process and framework.

We have a seasoned leadership team with a proven track record to grow revenue. The people that work at New Relic are genuinely kind and wicked smart with a passion for providing our customers with world-class software that customers love to use. We are on an ambitious growth trajectory. It's a unique and exciting combination and when you find it, you have to seriously consider jumping aboard.

## How Do You Differentiate Yourself With Personal Branding?

The impressive mindshare on our team allows us to attract top talent. I believe in setting the bar high and hiring to... and above that level. I do my best to set an example with the team of continuing to evolve and give back to the Customer Success community. I contribute to Customer Success groups and forums that have recently emerged



with the goal of defining best practices. The Customer Success community is still relatively small and intimate which makes for great opportunities for those that come on board.

## **How Do You Make Yourself stand Out as a Hiring Manager?**

I lead by example. I find out what candidates are looking for and if I genuinely believe we can offer that, I sell them on our ability to map to their needs and desires. It might be mentorship, opportunity to grow in their careers, a high growth company, but whatever it is they are looking for, if we have a match, I sell them on that.

## **What Are the Differences Between CSM Candidates Then Versus Now?**

CSM as an organization emerged from Professional Services. Teams were focused on the implementation and once complete, would often move to the next project. CSM candidates now have a broader cross section of skills. They might have sales DNA mixed with a technical background with an overarching ability to collaborate internally and communicate effectively externally. Candidates today are laser focused on the success of the customer - both defining what that looks like and executing on that vision.

## **What Are the Top Things that Attract and Retain Talent?**

Pay and benefits help, but it goes beyond compensation. Individuals I speak with are looking for opportunities to grow, in their career and with New Relic. Many are looking for strong mentors, and New Relic's strong leadership team is able to provide that. People we hire are excited about that unique opportunity to join an emerging team and define what a world class Customer Success team looks like.

# How to Build Your Own Dream Team

If you're starting to build out your Customer Success team, or trying to expand your current team, one of the most important things to do is establish your hiring process.

Try to keep things simple, efficient, and timely to maintain your candidates' interests. A long hiring process not only means that your position goes unfilled, but it may also cause your best candidates to drop out of the process. The best candidates are in high demand with plenty of choices about where to work, so tighten up your hiring process so you don't lose them to a competitor.

Once your hiring process is determined, communicate it to your candidates so they have clear expectations about timing and next steps.

The hiring process for CSMs typically takes 3-6 weeks and consists of 5 parts: sourcing and screening, phone interview, onsite interview, presentation, and offer.

You should customize the hiring process to meet your organization's unique needs, but we have broken down each part to help you get started.

**THE TYPICAL HIRING PROCESS FOR A CUSTOMER SUCCESS MANAGER IS 3-6 WEEKS.**

 Tweet This!

## Sourcing and Screening



If you're beginning your search for your next Customer Success Manager on your own, the best places to start are with internal referrals and LinkedIn searches.

As with any role, internal referrals can be a great source of candidates – particularly if they're from a current Customer Success Manager who knows what it takes to succeed. However, you may also find great candidates within your other employees' networks, or even your own.

While you're waiting for those referrals to roll in, you should also take a more proactive approach to recruiting by running searches on LinkedIn for your ideal candidate profile. Since the CSM role is new, you should widen the title searches to include job titles such as implementation strategist, onboarding manager, client services, client strategist, client success, and technical account manager. You may also have success by looking for candidates at more structured organizations known to have already established the CSM role.

Finally, you can try job postings to find candidates – although, in most cases, you'll end up with too many applicants to sift through and may not find anyone that is truly qualified.

Many organizations use a recruitment firm like Betts Recruiting to both source and screen candidates. We provide higher quality candidates than other methods – and faster.

**RECRUITMENT FIRMS CAN HELP YOU SOURCE AND SCREEN HIGHER QUALITY CANDIDATES, FASTER.**

 Tweet This!

When organizations need to hire CSMs on an accelerated timeline, our pipeline of great candidates is already ready to go. Plus, we perform consultative searches and pre-screen all candidates to ensure that our clients will be satisfied with the results we provide.

It's for these reasons we get so much of our business through client referrals. We have a solid reputation for delivering great candidates, which, in turn, helps our clients reach their business goals.

# PHONE INTERVIEW



After the sourcing and screening phase, most companies will begin the interview process with a phone call.

During the phone interview, start off by explaining the role in detail, and try to determine if the candidate's technical and customer-facing experience is a good fit. Your goal is to make sure they fit the basic requirements of the job, and to try to identify any red flags.

## Sample Questions For a Phone Interview:

- 1 Why did you leave your previous company/why are you leaving your current company?
- 2 Can you tell me about a time you provided great customer service?
- 3 What kind of experience do you have with retention and onboarding?
- 4 Tell me about some of the previous accounts you have managed (Enterprise or smaller accounts).
- 5 Do you have experience with Sales Engineers?

# ONSITE INTERVIEW



The onsite interview is your opportunity to ask more in-depth interview questions and look for a culture fit.

## Start Off by Asking Situational Questions, Such as:

- 1 If a customer complains that the sales team embellished certain product features during the demo, what would you do?
- 2 Can you tell me about a time you had to deal with an upset customer, and how you were able to turn their experience around?
- 3 How would you go about identifying potential growth opportunities for the AM team?

Following the situational questions, the candidate should meet with a few people from your company to determine culture fit. Be careful not to go overboard: 10-15 minute interviews with between 3-5 people from your company should suffice, and we recommend that you include one person who's not on your direct team or in your department.

Remind the interviewers to keep the conversation open, and to give the candidate the opportunity to ask questions that give them a better sense of the company culture. Remember that CSM candidates are in high demand, so your goal should be to connect with the candidate on a personal level – you want them to feel the culture fit as much as you do.

# Sample Questions For Culture Fit

- 1 What excites you about waking up to go to work everyday?
- 2 How do you want to feel when you leave at the end of the day?
- 3 What shows that you're a good fit for a startup?
- 4 What do you like to do in your spare time?
- 5 Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
- 6 What excites you about technology?

7 What's your ideal work environment: one in which you can work on several dynamic projects simultaneously, or one in which you can work on one task at a time through completion?

8 How do you personally stay focused while working in an environment that has many distractions? How can you keep others focused?

9 What do think makes a good team player? Would you describe yourself this way? How do you deal with those who are not?

# Presentation



A great way to test your candidate's ability to actually do the job is to ask them to put together a 15-minute presentation. With your team acting as the customer, the candidate could either walk you through a demo of their current company's product, or run through the customer onboarding process, to prove their ability to educate customers on product solutions.

Testing candidates on one of the day-to-day activities of the position will give you valuable insights into whether they're able to follow directions and how well they could handle customer meetings.

After this point, you should have a clear idea about whether or not you'd like to extend an offer to your candidate. However, be sure to provide feedback to each of your candidates, regardless of whether they will be receiving an offer – this can help them in their next interview, and will leave a lasting positive impression of your company.



# Offer



Once you've decided to extend an offer, there are a few things you can do to increase your chances of it being accepted.

The first, and perhaps most important step, is to pre-close your candidate. By this point, you should have an idea as to why the candidate is looking for a new opportunity and what it will take to get them onboard. This is your chance to present your offer and see if they will verbally accept.

Your offer should include at least a 10% increase over the candidate's current compensation, and you should discuss all benefits, perks, and equity. This is also a great opportunity to revisit the conversations you've had about the candidate's motivations, so you can reinforce that it will be a great fit for both parties.

**THE BEST WAY TO ENSURE YOUR EMPLOYMENT OFFER IS ACCEPTED IS TO PRE-CLOSE YOUR CANDIDATE.**

 Tweet This!

If your candidate has any reservations or would like to negotiate the offer, respond within a day (if not immediately) to show that you're excited to have them on board.

Timeliness is key here, so be sure to contact the candidate with a verbal offer as quickly as possible, and ask that they respond within 48 hours. If any further discussion is needed, do your best to keep the conversation moving and find a resolution as quickly as you can. Any delays could be the difference between hiring your top choice

candidate and losing them to a competitor or a counter-offer.

Only once the candidate has verbally accepted should you send out a written offer with the same details you agreed to in the verbal offer.

Then take a deep breath, and congratulate yourself for a job well done.

## Conclusion

The Customer Success Manager is an emerging role in organizations that want to focus on customer retention and growth. It will become more competitive to hire for this role as companies realize they need it to maintain their competitive advantage.

You're on the right track by starting to build your team now, but you may still face challenges finding candidates with the right skillset. Competition for top talent will be fierce, so make yourself stand out as an employer of choice and attract top talent with a solid product, enterprise customer accounts to manage, a strong leadership team, a fun culture, growth opportunities, and/or equity.

A great Customer Success Manager can help you generate additional revenue from existing customers in the form of adoption, retention, and renewals, so don't delay in finding him or her – your company's future depends on it.

# Thank You and Good Luck in Your Hiring!



At Betts Recruiting we partner with the fastest growing and most innovative Tech startups in the United States. We personally match all of our candidates and specialize in recruiting for revenue generating roles such as: Sales, Marketing, Customer Success, and Business Development.



[www.bettsrecruiting.com](http://www.bettsrecruiting.com)