

# CRMchump

CRM industry news, CRM information, and CRM commentary

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## The straight story

[There's a nice folksy story](#) being reported over at TMCNet set in – where else? – Kansas. As it turns out, calendar year 2007 will see the 30th anniversary of a family-owned and family-run CRM vendors Ruf Strategic Solutions.

In family terms, the longevity of this company based in Olathe, Kansas is “a tribute to the commitment of four brothers who are keeping the family business running, as well as carrying on their father’s dream of entrepreneurship.”

Jacob and Sondra Ruf founded the company in the basement of their home in 1976 – ah, the American dream! – where Jacob developed decision support software.

Jacob Ruf is perhaps most well-known by those in the know as helping co-create the first ZIP code-level marketing

system with Martin Baier, member of the Direct Marketing Hall of Fame. Yes, [there really is a Direct Marketing Hall of Fame](#).

The company also claims development of the first commercially available relational database, the first truly household-level consumer clustering system, and the first business clustering system using proprietary “corporate lifestyles.”

Naturally, the Ruf brothers credit their success to the father’s Midwestern values: “Dad always pushed us to compete, whether that was with each other or in business. We are all quite different, but I think that is what makes this company work. We all have our own ideas to bring to the table, yet every one of us has the same goal -- to keep our father’s dream alive. If we can do that as a family, then we’re doing pretty well.”