

Customer relationship management (CRM) is an approach to managing a company's interaction with current and future customers. It often involves using technology to organize, automate, and synchronize sales, marketing, customer services, and technical support.

CRM is a customer-oriented feature with service response based on customer input, one-to-one solutions to customers' requirements, direct online communications with customer and customer service centers that are intended to help customers solve their issues. It includes the following functions:

- **Sales force automation, which implements sales promotion analysis, automates the tracking of a client's account history for repeated sales or future sales, and coordinates sales, marketing, call centers, and retail outlets.**
- **Data warehouse technology, used to aggregate transaction information, to merge the information with CRM products, and to provide key performance indicator**
- **Opportunity management, which helps the company to manage unpredictable growth and demand, and implement a good forecasting model to integrate sales history with sales projections.**
- **CRM systems that track and measure marketing campaigns over multiple networks, tracking customer analysis by customer clicks and sales.**

CRM is expanding outside of the core sales and marketing areas and systems are available that incorporate support and finance data also into the CRM view that a user gets, enabling a wider holistic view of a customer from one screen for a user.

Impact on customer satisfaction

According to Bolton, customer satisfaction has significant implications for the economic performance of firms, because it has been found to increase customer loyalty and usage behavior and reduce customer complaints, and the likelihood of customer defection.

The implementation of CRM is likely to have an effect on customer satisfaction for at least three reasons:

Firstly, firms are able to customize their offerings for each customer. By accumulating information across customer interactions and processing this information to discover hidden patterns, CRM applications help firms customize their offerings to suit the individual tastes of their customers. This customization enhances the perceived quality of products and services from a customer's viewpoint, and because perceived quality is a determinant of customer satisfaction, it follows that CRM applications indirectly affect customer satisfaction.

Secondly, CRM applications enable firms to provide timely, accurate processing of customer orders and requests and the ongoing management of customer accounts. For example, Piccoli and Applegate (2003) discuss how Wyndham uses IT tools to deliver a consistent service experience across its various properties to a customer. Both an improved ability to customize and a reduced variability of the consumption experience enhance perceived quality, which in turn positively affects customer satisfaction

Thirdly, CRM applications also help firms manage customer relationships more effectively across the stages of relationship initiation, maintenance, and termination.

Call Centers

As well as tracking, recording and storing customer information, CRM systems in call centers codify the interactions between company and customers by using analytics and key performance indicators to give the users information on where to focus their marketing and customer service. The intention is to **maximize average revenue per user**, decrease churn (rotación) rate and decrease idle (no utilizados) and unproductive contact with the customers. **CRM software** can also be used to identify and reward loyal customers over a period of time.

Growing in popularity is the idea of gamifying (reteniendo) customer service environments. The repetitive and tedious act of answering support calls all day can be draining (mermando), even for the most enthusiastic customer service representative. When agents are bored with their work, they become less engaged (comprometido) and less motivated to do their jobs well. They are also prone (propenso) to making mistakes. Gamification (atraer y retener) tools can motivate agents by tapping into their visceral need for reward, status, achievement, and competition.

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS (B2B)

Business-to-Business (B2B) es la transmisión de información referente a transacciones comerciales, normalmente utilizando tecnología como la *Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)*, presentada a finales de los años 1970 para enviar electrónicamente documentos tales como pedidos de compra o facturas. Después nacieron actividades que serían denominadas "Comercio en la red", como la compra de bienes y servicios a través de la Web vía servidores seguros (HTTPS *Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure*), un protocolo de servidor especial que registra la realización confidencial de pedidos para la protección de los consumidores y los datos de la organización) empleándose servicios de pago electrónico, como autorizaciones para tarjeta de crédito o monederos electrónicos.

El B2B ha venido impulsado también por la creación de portales para agrupar compradores. Así, encontramos, por ejemplo portales de empresas de alimentación, químicas y hotelería, entre otros.

Las compañías se asocian para crear dichas páginas conjuntando fuerzas, lo que les permite negociar en mejores condiciones. El mantenimiento de las páginas se produce cobrando a los socios una comisión del negocio realizado en el portal.

En términos generales la expresión *business-to-business* no se encuentra limitada al entorno electrónico, sino que hace una referencia de exclusión para destacar el origen y destino de una actividad que, por antagonismo, no se refiere ni al B2C (*business-to-consumer*), B2E (*business-to-employee*), etc.

Solo por establecer un ejemplo de referencia, el *business-to-business* se aplica en la relación que hay entre un fabricante y el distribuidor de un producto y también se refiere a la relación entre el distribuidor y el comercio minorista, pero nunca se refiere a la relación entre el comerciante y su cliente final (consumidor), relación, ya esta última que quedaría ajustada entonces al entorno del B2C (*business-to-consumer*).

Ventajas

El comercio electrónico entre empresas es una ventaja más que aporta Internet y que ha experimentado un gran auge en los últimos años.

Algunas de las ventajas que aporta el *business-to-business* para las empresas son:

- **Rapidez y seguridad de las comunicaciones.**
- **Integración directa de los datos de la transacción en los sistemas informáticos de la empresa.**
- **Posibilidad de recibir mayor número de ofertas o demandas, ampliando la competencia.**
- **Despersonalización de la compra con lo que se evitan favoritismos.**

- **Abaratamiento del proceso: menos visitas comerciales, proceso de negociación más rápido, etc. Por tanto, los compradores pueden pedir una reducción de precios en virtud del menor costo de transacción, o bien, los vendedores incrementar su margen comercial.**

Social media

Balaram (2010) presented evidence of a significant increase in the use of social networking sites, especially among young people. This has caused companies to use these sites to draw (atraer) attention to their products, services and brands, with the aim of building up customer relationships to increase demand.

Some CRM systems integrate social media sites like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook to track and communicate with customers sharing their opinions and experiences with a company, products and services.

Enterprise Feedback Management software platforms such as Confrontit, Medallia and Satmetrix combine internal survey data with trends identified through social media to allow businesses to make more accurate decisions on which products to supply.

Other types

Some CRM software is available as a software as a service (SaaS), delivered via the internet and accessed via a Web Browser instead of being installed on a local computer. Businesses using the software do not purchase it, but typically pay a recurring subscription fee to the software vendor.

For Small Businesses a CRM system may consist of a contact manager system which integrates emails, documents, jobs, faxes, and scheduling for individual accounts. CRM systems available for specific markets (legal, finance) frequently focus on event management and relationship tracking as opposed to financial return on investment (ROI).

Customer-centric relationship management (CCRM) is a nascent sub-discipline that focuses on customer preferences instead of customer leverage. CCRM aims to add value by engaging customers in individual, interactive relationships.

Systems for non-profit and membership-based organizations help track constituents, fund-raising, Sponsors demographics, membership levels, membership directories, volunteering and communication with individuals.

CRM Paradox

The CRM Paradox, also referred to as the "Dark side of CRM", entails (implica o conlleva) favoritism and differential treatment of some customers. This may cause perceptions of unfairness (injustas) among other customers' buyers. They may opt out (excluirse) of relationships, spread negative information, or engage (involucrar) in misbehavior (mal comportamiento) that may damage the firm. CRM fundamentally involves treating customers differently based on the assumption that customers are different and have different needs. Such perceived inequality may cause dissatisfaction, mistrust and result in unfair practices. A customer shows trust when he bonds (se involucra) in a relationship with a firm when he knows that the firm is acting fairly and adding value. However, customers may not trust that firms will be fair in splitting the value creation pie in the first place. For example, Amazon's test use of dynamic pricing (different prices for different customers) was a public relations nightmare for the company.