

# Integrating CRM software applications

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## ABSTRACT

Scientists, end users of CRM applications and producers of CRM software, all come to an agreement when talking about the idea of CRM, the CRM strategy or the term CRM. The main aspect is that CRM can be analyzed from two different points of view: CRM – the marketing strategy and CRM – the software. The first term refers to establishing some personalized relationships with the customers that can be afterwards easily managed. This way, it can determine at any time the past client relations, the products (or services) that the customers bought, the products' range, the products' price, the type of delivery, all this information being used in anticipation of the future sales. All these things can be physically achieved through a CRM software application whose main function is to properly manage the information relating to customers and to enable personalized communication with them (via e-mail, phone, fax, mail).

**Keywords:** CRM, customer, marketing.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term of CRM (Customer Relationship Management) is being used for over 50 years in the IT, financial, marketing, sales and commercial departments, but the problem of the relationship between a customer and those who deliver him a product or a service, exists even from the time when the term “client” was invented.

J. Curry, a consultant for small companies, considers that the person who invented this concept in 1954 is Peter Drucker himself, when he stated: “the most important activity of each company is to attract and keep the customers”.

The concept of CRM can be defined as a software product, a mean of collecting data, a

sales strategy or a data analysis. Nevertheless, we can use all these four definitions and a dozen others in order to cover all our necessities when referring to CRM.

## 2. CRM COMPONENTS

There are many aspects regarding CRM that can be wrongly considered able for separate implementation. From outside the organization, the client sees the business as an entity that operates on a long term. The implementation of a CRM may look unsynchronized to the client when he sees the employees, the web sites and the services acting independently one from another; despite this appearance it represents an entity.

CRM is the philosophy, the politic and the coordination strategy that connects different players within an organization in order to unite their efforts in creating some important experiences, products and services for the client. The players considered to be acting in an organization are Customer Facing Operations, Internal Collaborative Functional Operations, External Collaboration functions, Customer Advocates and Experience Designers, Performance Managers and Marketing Analysts, Customer and Employee Surveyors and Analysts.

This classification of the players that participate in a CRM process can be completed with many components that are vital for an efficient implementation. Based on them, there can be created a complete strategy that is the same for any CRM, but it can have different features, depending on the necessities of the company that uses the CRM, and on the domains in which the CRM is being used. The theoretical components are a Customer Database, Customer Intelligence, Customer Relationship Strategy and Learning, Competency Management Systems.

These fundamental parts can be separately implemented in time, but in the end, they have to be dynamically coordinated. The continuous alignment of the basic components / blocks distinguishes a stylish CRM implementation, which founds the successful mutual relationships.

### 3. TYPES OF CRM

The CRM technology can be classified considering different factors, which actually represent different points of view regarding the customer and the relationships with the customer. In this context, the CRM strategies can be perceived through the following criteria: the outcome (sales automation, customer typologies' definition and promotion campaigns, assistance after the sale of the product), the categories of customers which is being addressed to (occasional customers, loyal customers, the mass of customers, potential customers), the degree of dispersion (Operational, Analytic, Collaborative and Geographic CRM).

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This article shows that nowadays the Customer Relationship Management is very important in a marketing that gives a lot of credit to the customers, their needs and their relationship with the company.

Despite the risk involved with the implementation of a CRM within a company, especially when it doesn't have as a result the "fidelity" of the customer so that the implementation is considered to be a mistake, there are many advantages: better knowing the customers and the increase of their support, the increase in efficiency of the marketing processes, the improvements in attracting new customers or the decrease of advertising costs.

CRM can be considered a direct support for elaborating business strategies, a management field, a methodology, software and internet facilities, a business strategy, an integrated approach of identifying, attracting and maintaining the customers' processes. Yet, a CRM software application always includes a

database with information about the customers and possible customers, handling the customer needs and the profitability of the company, values and descriptions on targets achieved, advanced processes.

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