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of Seattle

***CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AND
ITS CONTRIBUTION
TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION***

By

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Customer Relationship Management and its Contribution to Customer Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Panagiotis C. Filippopoulos

Customer relationship management and its contribution to customer satisfaction

The thesis examines CRM and its relations with customer satisfaction for project managers. CRM is about creating not only strong relationships with your clients but also having a database with information regarding customers, evaluating this information and using it for the benefit of the firm. Often project managers look after only the work progress but not to receive some good knowledge regarding their customer and increase customer satisfaction which will guarantee more projects from the same customer in the upcoming months or years. The thesis concludes that Project managers shall develop some CRM practices in order to stay with competition and have better relations with their customers. This will help the firms to acquire more projects since they will take advantage and make better deals for the firm.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

In the past few year the organisations - enterprises have begun to focus on relations with their customers. When Tom Peters and Robert Waterman (1982) imported the phrase “close to your customer” as part of their evaluation of America’s top 40 companies, they expressed a opinion that gained continuously ground according to which a successful enterprise hears and pays attention careful to its her customers.

Since 1982 things have changed to management. New concepts have appeared and managers have understood the value of creating sustainable communications with their customers but also with their shareholders. One of the key concepts that helps firms to improve their relations with customers and to exploit the knowledge that customers can give to the firms is well known as Customer Relationship Management, or wide-known as CRM.

The annual level of spend on CRM function, techniques, strategies and technology is enormous. In the USA alone, according to industry commentators, an amount totaling some 0.5 per cent of the entire economy was spent on outsource CRM services in 2004. In the U.K. it has been calculated that call centers now employ more people than the car, coal and textile industries combined (Webber, 2002).

Does that mean that CRM is critical to the survival of companies? Possibly industry leaders think so. Increased competition, globalisation, the growing cost of customer acquisition, and high customer turnover are major issues in disparate industries. CRM is a combination of business process and technology that seeks to understand a company's customers from a multifaceted perspective: who they are, what do they want, and what do they like? Research shows that effective management of customer relationship is a source of competitive differentiation (Kalakota & Robinson, 1999).

Delivering high quality service and achieving high customer satisfaction has been closely linked to profits, cost savings, and market share. According to Peter Drucker "The business of business is getting and keeping customers" (Drucker, 1997).

Therefore to retain customers, means for a firm that it must have a stronger focus on measuring and managing the individual customer relationship. In short, all companies are in the service business, that is, satisfying customer needs, which, therefore, must be measured and tracked. The old paradigm was price, quality, and service. The new paradigm is price, quality, service convenience, value, solution and above all, to have an improved communication with the consumer.

1.1 Importance of topic

Global economy and business practices has changed a lot during past years. New concepts, technologies and managerial concepts have emerged. Globalisation and uncertainty have forced firms to seek for an alternative way to gain and acquired competitive advantage. Many firms have realised that in order to have satisfied customers they will have to develop capabilities that will give the opportunity to the firm to satisfy the customers' demands and to develop products and services that will create satisfied customers.

It is also important to mention that those changes have also altered consumers behaviour; nowadays consumers have better knowledge about a product and they are well informed for corporate practices towards their customers. Cartwright and Green (1997) have said that a firm that wants to be called "a successful firm" shall use CRM practices. Cartwright and Green (1997) also say that a firm can improve its efficiency and increase its sales volume by 20% if its management decides to implement a CRM program.

Every firm has its own stakeholders; employees, customers, suppliers etc. It is important to build some strong relationships with them, but mostly with customers.

At the most fundamental level, every company has customers, and each company has to maintain some basic information about those customers. (e.g. names, address, purchases, contracts, invoices, etc). Therefore every company should have some basic CRM technology to track and serve their customers. This is achieved basically by providing sales, marketing, and service personnel with better, more complete customer information, thereby establishing a more profitable relationship with customers, and reducing operating costs.

- **Sales organizations** can shorten the sales cycle and improve/increase sales performance, average order size, and revenue per customer.
- **Marketing organizations** can increase campaign response rates, while at the same time they gaining new customers.
- **Customer service organizations** can increase service productivity and customer retention by decreasing service cost, response time and request resolution time.

Thus it is important to have a look at how the firm can improve its relationship with its stakeholders, and more precisely with its customers.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the adoption of customer relationship management (CRM) by Greek companies.

Customer relationship is a subject which has been repeatedly investigated in a large number of studies. Throughout the last decade there has been an

increasing understanding of customer relationships and as a result many organizations have attempted to improve and adopt this kind of method. Customer relationship management can cause significant effects at both the individual and the organizational level.

In this study CRM is investigated in relation to a variety of factors. More specifically, the factors that are examined are:

- the familiarization of the employees with customer relationship management
- the improvement in customer satisfaction
- the productivity improvement through CRM
- the way CRM improves interaction with customers
- the awareness of CRM introduction in Greek firms
- to what extent training was satisfactory
- the importance of up to date technology in implementing CRM
- in what contexts Greek firms design product and services based on the customer needs
- the increase in customer satisfaction when CRM is used.

Due to the fact that the Greek market was familiar with the term and theoretical point of view of CRM, there has been a limited number of researches into the Greek market. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate CRM since in this way the current study can contribute to the existing limited research about this subject or similar ones (if there are any) in Greece.

1.3 Relation to the program

CRM is a concept that is connected with many aspects of project management. For example it ensures that the firm follows a quality program that will lead to customer satisfaction.

CRM is strongly linked with quality management since it gives added value to the firm and it can be part of the firm's quality program.

The modules of the MSPM program of study provide background for this study, for example, how firms have to follow certain regulations and the law. The most important of the various modules related directly to the CRM issue, like PM 511 (Project Quality Management); and Kerzner's book, which was used in many modules, and which is a valuable source of knowledge that will contribute a lot to this project. Another useful module was PM 512 - The Customer into the Project Process, which focused on the parts of Project Management in relation with the firm's ability to improve customer relations through those projects.

Chapter 2 – Problem statement

Many firms do not analyze customer satisfaction at the beginning of a project, and do not measure it throughout the project, resulting in a loss of market position.

2.1 Rationale

Customer Relationship Management is useful because the firms can utilise it in order to measure their customer's satisfaction and to find ways to improve it. However, many project managers have not understood its usefulness.

It is well known that concepts such as globalisation and the economic and macro environmental instability on many markets have pushed many firms to seek for new methods that will help them to survive. CRM is a concept that is strongly related with the management of customer relationships. This helps firms to improve the relationship with their clients and to establish long term and successful relations with their clients by improving their sales procedures.

CRM is a business philosophy. In this philosophy firms acquire the capability to understand better their clients' needs, and at the same time they have the opportunity to improve their communication with their

clients and to improve the service that they provide them and to become more competitive.

CRM is a new concept for marketing and management. It is based upon the concept of customer satisfaction. CRM has to do with managing technological improvements within a firm – in which we can include the Internet, processes, resources, and in general improving the way that a firm approaches its clients. The environment in which CRM operates is very complicated and this means that firms that want to improve their customer relationships will have to change their internal processes but also their behavior towards their clients. The application of CRM theories requires a better communication with the client through some technological means such as the Internet, and some new models of administration. According to the above, we understand that CRM must have a strong understanding of the new technologies.

2.2 Hypothesis

“CRM can improve the quality in a project”

This project will show the usefulness of CRM for project managers and how they can use it to improve their relationships with their stakeholders.

It will recommend how companies can use CRM on their projects to increase customer satisfaction and therefore improve the firm's performance.

Chapter 3 – Review of literature

3.1 Introduction to CRM

These are turbulent times in the world of organization and there is every indication that it will continue for years. Behind this turbulence lies a series of frequently cited environmental factors: Technological advances, deregulation of markets etc. that has created intensified global competition. These factors have changed and continued to change the dynamics of marketplace but the only tool that perceived to make sense, being the most potent and effective to compete globally in this emerging marketing environment is Customer Relationship Management (CRM).

The world is becoming a ‘buyers’ market, where increasing discerning customers are free to select their global market place. Highly empowered and informed customers have Customer Relation Management (CRM) a most important area to concentrate upon by the markets. Studies have proved the worth of CRM in turning the customer services into customer’s sales. CRM works on the theme of retaining existing customers i.e., most businesses get customers but successful businesses keep them. Keeping customers happy is not just public relations; it’s an essential part of sound business strategy. (Bhaduri, 2005)

Customer relation management (CRM) is defined as a business model that has as its principle goal to identify, anticipate and understand the

needs of potential and current customers in order to increase retention, growth and profitability. CRM includes a series of business and technology functions that contribute to the successful management of the lifecycle of customer and partners relationships: from marketing and acquisitions to service and retention (Wald and Marsden 2001), meaning that is more profitable to retain a customer than to acquire a new one. Hence the companies change their focus from pursuing the aim of selling to the maximum number of people to concentrate on developing relationship with their existing customers. Therefore, CRM is a 'business strategy not a technology'. It uses technology to accomplish this goal, since CRM is depending upon the capture, storage and analysis of customer-related data; however it needs to be embraced as a business model that utilizes technology functions in order to deliver personalized services to customers and partners.

3.2 Benefits of CRM

CRM system offers a range of benefits which are dependent on the different modules of a CRM system adopted. For example a CRM module for web-based sales will result to a large cost-savings since the customers can serve themselves. Also organizations that support employees through contact center should increase customer satisfaction because queries should be answered more quickly since the customer details are readily available. Furthermore, it support sales representatives or account managers meeting and face-to-face with customers, making them more effective, since customer needs and wants as well as customer orders can be tracked faster

and easier. Another module that a CRM can be support is outbound marketing communications, for example direct mail and email campaign should result in lower costs and higher responses since the offers and information can be directly targeted to the right people, and in this way wastage can be reduce (Chaffey and Wood 2005).

Based on a customer's survey made from Siebel (2002), the following benefits were reported by adopters of CRM:

- 8 per cent increase in revenue (through better targeting of customers in marketing campaigns, giving a greater response, selling more products to existing customers and reducing customer attrition.
- 18 per cent increase in employee productivity (customer contact can be handle more rapidly since information can be provided faster and processes partly automated.
- 18 per cent increase in customer satisfaction; (this arise since information is more readily to hand and fulfillment should be improved. i.e. the customers receive their product or services on time. Also reduce attrition, increase customer retention and customer loyalty.
- 13 per cent increase in customer retention due to better targeted communication.
- 13 per cent decrease in operating costs, due to the fact that fewer staff is required to serve customers, manage processes and provide better targeted communication with less wastage.

In addition to the above there are also some other benefits which are important to mention.

- **Protecting existing investments:** meaning that if a CRM solution can make your customer contact staff more effective and efficient, without changing a lot the system and the software that you already have, then return on investment (ROI) can be controlled and easy to realize (Hall 2004).
- **Employee's turnover:** if you have lots of turnover in departments that interact daily with customers, you loosing opportunities to build strong relationships every time a staff members leave. With CRM you will still know client needs and also will have a history of their conversation captured in your CRM system (Hall 2004).

3.3 Defining CRM

The theoretical definition of CRM can be given through the following definitions:

CRM is business philosophy. In this philosophy firms acquire the capability and ability to understand better their clients' needs, and at the same time to they have the opportunity to improve their communication with their clients and to improve the service that they provide them and to become more competitive. (Cann, 1998)

Galbreath (1999) states that CRM is a business activity that gives the opportunity to the firm to evaluate, develop and sustain satisfied its

client by giving the right product to the right moment through the correct distribution channel at the right cost. CRM develops sales through the computerization of the organisation, the technological development and the correct communication with the client. In general, CRM simplifies the relations between the firm, its supplies and its clients.

Cartwright & Green (1997) state that CRM's target is to help the firms to build long term and profitable relationships with their clients by improving the customer's service quality. It is proven that a firm can increase its performance by reducing its sales costs up to 20% when the front-office services are linked with the operation backbone system.

3.4 CRM's operations

This part will analyse some CRM's operations. More precisely:

1. With the use of CRM the firm has to focus on the customer and to understand its needs. At the same time it has to decode the messages that it receives from the customers base for the services that it provides them.
2. CRM needs from the firm to segment their markets in order to define the needs of each segment and plan how it can improve its communication on each segment.
3. The firm must improve its market information systems and use some management information systems (MIS) that will be part of

the CRM's operations. This is because if the firm does not have the right and continuous research upon the customers' behaviour it is not easy to have an effective use of CRM.

4. The correct use of CRM guarantees that the client will receive the right product / services. (<http://sales.monster.co.uk>)

So, all the operations of CRM must have the following:

- Good knowledge of the market needs.
- The marketing mix must be adjusted according to the consumers' needs.
- The firm must have a good knowledge of the consumers' behaviour as it is defined from market research.
- Good knowledge of modern technology.

In order to have a better understanding of how we can manage our relationships with the clients we ought to understand what the consumers want from the firm. Fredrick Reichheld (1998) did a survey for his article Beyond Customer Satisfaction to Customer Loyalty. In this survey he found that the following::

- 10% with 40% of the clients that say that they are satisfied from the firm's products and services may shift to another firm
- It costs five to seven times more to find new customers than to maintain the current customers.

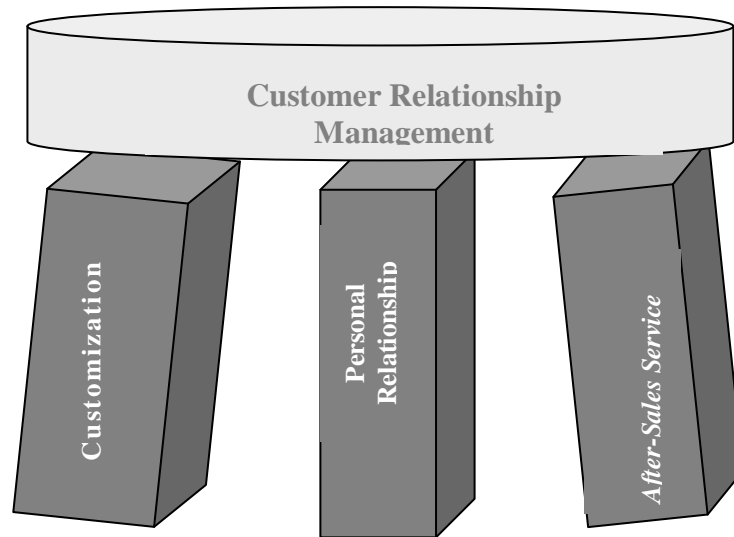
- The 98% of the dissatisfied customers never complains. It just shifts to another firm or brand without saying anything.
- Consumers that are totally satisfied have six times more chances to re-purchase a firm's product in the following two years than a just satisfied customer.
- A 5% reduction on the number of consumers that leave may bring an increase of 30% up to 85% on profits.

In order to have a client who is fully satisfied the firm must understand his needs and to satisfy its expectations. Firms that do not understand or try to understand the expectations of the clients will have problems. The more competitive is a market, the more difficult is to survive a firm without satisfying its clients' expectations.

If a firm wants to satisfy the expectations of its clients, it will have to focus on three areas. Those are :

1. Customization
2. Personal relationships
3. After-Sales (Galbreath, Rogers 1999)

Figure 1 shows the above relation.



What Do Customers Want?

Figure 1.

Every consumer has different needs and wants. When the firms had to increase their production

The build of personal relations can push the firms for further expansion of their profitability and of their customer base. As it is been said above, up to the 40% of the customers shift brands or products. The only way to stop this and reduce the number of leavers is to build long-term personal relations between the firm and the client. In order to do this, the firm will have to focus on the client, to listen to him and satisfy

his or her demands. In this way the firm can create mutual respect with its client. (Bhote 1996)

3.5 The importance of post-sales relations

The consumer's decision making process does not stop when he or she purchases something. Consumer continues to take decisions and evaluates the firm after the process of purchasing something.

Often the consumer doubts for the choice and the consumer believes that another choice could be better. In this case, the consumer will decide not to re-purchase the product.

A firm that wants to reduce this 'insecurity' will have to add some services that will support the customer's decision and they will make the consumer to feel that he / she took the right choice. So, the firm can use several instruments of CRM that will help then firm to make the consumer to feel secure. Some of those instruments are the following:

- Advertisement
- Direct e-mail.
- Follow up e-mails.

We understand that a firm does not only have to deliver its product but also to affect the post-sales behaviour of the consumer in relation to this particular product. This can happen through the building of long-term

relations and with CRM tools including relations through Internet functions.

Precisely, Westbrook and Oliver (1991) are stating that the definition of customer satisfaction for a product is the consumers' stance towards the product that purchased. The consumer evaluates the product and its services and decides whether it will continue with the same firm or not. CRM on this definition is the mean that affects the customer's stance towards the product and its services.

Figure two, shows the process of customer's decision making after the purchase of the product.

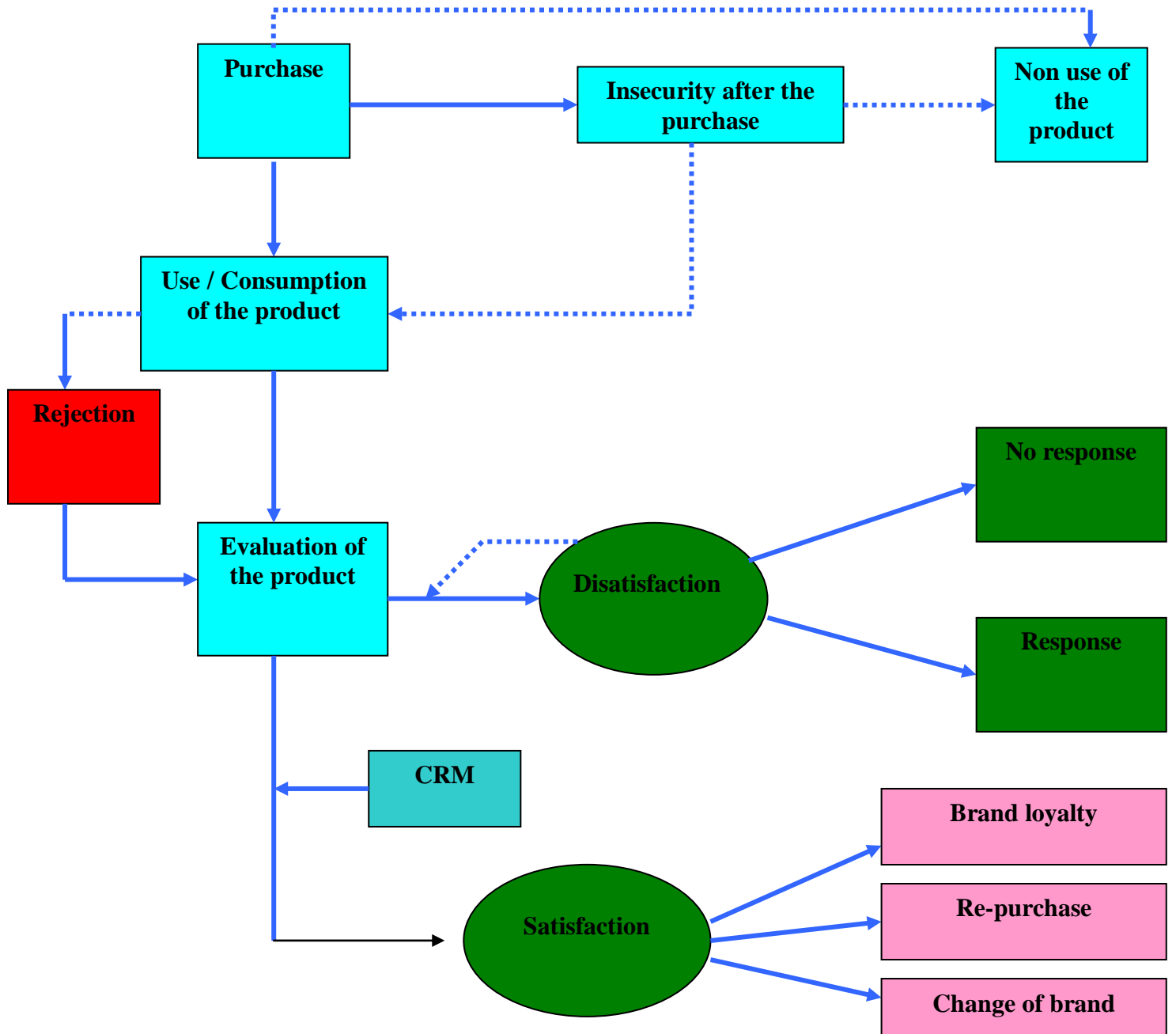


Figure 2. The process of customer's decision making after the purchase of the product

3.6 Why CRM is important?

The annual level of spend on CRM technology is enormous- in the USA alone, according to industry commentators, an amount totaling some 0.5 per cent of the entire economy will be spend on outsource CRM services by 2004. In the U.K. it has been calculated that call centers now employ more people than the car, coal and textile industries combined (Webber, 2002).

Does that mean that CRM is critical to the survival of companies? Possibly industry leaders think so. Increased competition, globalisation, the growing cost of customer acquisition, and high customer turnover are major issues in disparate industries. CRM is a combination of business process and technology that seeks to understand a company's customers from a multifaceted perspective: who they are, what do they want, and what do they like? Research shows that effective management of customer relationship is a source of competitive differentiation (Kalakota & Robinson, 1999).

Delivering high quality service and achieving high customer satisfaction has been closely linked to profits, cost savings, and market share. According to Peter Drucker "The business of business is getting and keeping customers" (Drucker, 1997).

3.7 Why not CRM?

On the other hand CRM has some disadvantages as well. One of the disadvantages of CRM is that it is very difficult to implement according to Richard Forsyth a consultant specialist in the Customer Relationship Management in the Business to customer market. (Business week, 2001).

One further point - it's very hard to make money out of CRM when the value of each relationship is very low. CRM requires considerable investment, and is only value when the cost / customer is insignificant compared with the opportunity to increase customer value. (www.crm-forum.com).

Another vital reason for the failure Customer Relationship Management failures is the profound negative impact immediately in the market so leaders think many more times before they jump into a wholesale CRM transformation says Vic. Datta, a member in BT Marketing Solutions Strategist. Finally Dick Lee writes that CRM is not only about technology, in fact the technology alone will not achieve anything. The success of CRM strategy/ project will depend more so on and culture of the organization behind it and their ability to embrace and achieve change within their own organization. (www.crm-forum.com).

3.8 CRM Strategies

It is vital to see customer relationship management not as something that is a stand-alone, a separate programme to be developed and operated independently of other business strategies, but as an integral part of the way the company do business. Both a long-term dialogue with the customers and the integration of the idea of CRM into branding strategy are critical to the success of the approach. Here are some of the most vital strategies.

Integrated marketing via continuous dialogue - which is known as the contact strategy. A good overall marketing plan will normally contain a number of other plans for communicating with customer, each constituting one or more campaigns.

A campaign is a period of structured communication. During the campaign, customers receive one or more communications and respond to them. The desired and result - usually more sales – is achieved.

Another strategy is the Data quality. CRM requires high quality information about customers if it is to be effective. This information may have been collated from various databases- sales order entry, customer service, salespeople's files, responses to marketing campaigns and so on. This is critical in managing relationships with customers proactively.

Finally branding is vital in the CRM strategy. Branding is the marketing concept that makes integrates the marketing mix and makes the relationship with customers more coherent. This is defined as the complete set of values that customers derive from the companies offering. Branding is an asset that remains valuable even after investment in creating it has been reduced. A strong brand can survive weak marketing for a period (Stone & Woodcock, 2000).

3.9 Architecture of CRM

There are three parts of application architecture of CRM:

- **Operational:** automation to the basic business processes (marketing, sales, service)
- **Analytical:** Support to analyze customer behavior, implements business processes (information obtained) alike technology.
- **Collaborative (CO-operational):** Ensures the contact with customers (phones, email, fax, web, post, in person).

Operational CRM

Operational CRM focus mainly on the direct support of the day to day needs and wants of customer facing employees.

Operational CRM solution provide state of the art technology that enables sales people and service engineers the access to complete history of all customer interaction with your company, regardless of the touch point, secondly enables a 360-degree view of your customer while you interacting, and thirdly it delivers personalized and efficient marketing, sales, and service (Cooper, 2002).

Analytical CRM

Analytical CRM is the use of analysis, modeling and evaluation of customer data to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the company and the customer. Also analytical CRM can help companies maximize customer profitability and loyalty (Beck and Summer 2001).

Collaborative CRM

Collaborative CRM is the interaction with customers through the various department of the company, such as sales, marketing, and technical support that share any information they collect from their interaction with customers, which is a solution that brings people, process and data together so companies can improve the quality of customer service, and obviously to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore Collaborative CRM provides some additional benefits:

- Enables customers interaction through all communication channel
- Enables web collaboration to reduce customer service cost

- Integrates call center enabling personal customer interaction
- Integrates view of the customers while interaction at the transaction level

(Cooper, 2002).

3.10 Achieving effective CRM

In order for CRM to be effective, an organization must first identify what kind of customer information it is looking for and decide what it intends to do with that information. Information about customers have to analyze and used properly for each customer. Hence because companies can communicate with several ways through a customer, i.e., by mail campaign, web site, call centers, and/or mobile sales force staff, a solid CRM system have to link up each of these points. This collected data flows through all departments in the organization and this help the company in having a holistic view of each customer and pinpoint areas where better services are needed (Deck 2001).

Moreover, CRM can be more efficient by providing product information, product use information, and technical assistance on web site that are accessible 24 hours a day, they can provide a mechanism that users can apply their complaints, as well as a mechanism that can solve the problems before other customers experience the same dissatisfaction, developed approach and separate customers based on their needs and wants,

so later you can design a service strategy for each one based on these individual requirements (wikipedia 2007).

Achieving effective customer relation management require at most time organizations to adopt a new perspective, for example a traditional customer service is something you 'do to' the customer, while modern customer relation management is 'done with' the customer, meaning that your relationships with customers should be straight, supportive, and always built for long-term (Gifford 2004).

Organizations that have many momentary relationships with customers consequently have to spend a lot of money on finding new customers. That's why CRM consider a 'cheap' software implementation because the cost of keeping existing customers is a tiny fraction of the cost of acquiring new customers (Gifford 2004).

Furthermore in an organization is very important to know which customers fit into which category and then try to manage them accordingly. Customers that are highly satisfied from your product are good 'advocates' for your organization, so you have to treat them with special care. From the other hand customers that is dissatisfied with your product and services have little or even no loyal for your organization, therefore those one you should seek to rebuilt relationship and trust, and the most important a long future relationship (Gifford 2004).

3.11 The Internet and Customer relationship management

3.11.1 The expansion of the Internet

There are many definitions about the Internet. What we can say as an initial statement is that the Internet is not a technological development in the way new processors are, but is a driving force for the creation and development of new technologies and in that sense it can influence our lives. However, there are definitions that can help us understand the Internet concept. One of them found in Markham (1998) suggests that the Internet began as a governmental and military communications network in the early 1970's. It was then used by academics at research institutes as a tool which linked computers for the sharing of data and research information. The Internet has now come into use by many computer users as a medium for communications, entertainment, research and the purchase of products and services. A description found in Turban (2002) gives some specific technical details about the way it operates: "Networked computing connects multiple computers and other electronic devices that are located in several different locations by telecommunications networks, including wireless ones. This allows users to access information stored in several different physical locations and to communicate and collaborate with people separated by great geographic distances. Although some people still use a stand-alone computer exclusively, the vast majority of people use

computers connected to a global networked environment known as the Internet or to its counterpart within organizations, an intranet. An intranet is a corporate or government network that uses Internet tools such as Web browsers, and Internet protocols. Another computer environment is an extranet, a network that uses the Internet to link multiple intranets”.

The creation and the rapid development of the World Wide Web and other Internet application such as e-mail and e-commerce, has permitted companies to reach customers in markets where they could not reach without having the internet, and to compete efficiently with the traditional suppliers or even with larger firms, something that can not happen on the traditional marketing (De Kare-Silver, 1998). Alternatively, the computer technology and the Internet applications that have emerged during the past decade have offered for the first time in marketing's history the possibility to collect, process, analyse, and efficiently use large volumes of data, and to adopt a personalised marketing approach for every customer, whereby we have moved from mass marketing to one-to-one marketing (Rayport and Jaworski, 2001).

On the other hand, this has changed the nature of competition. For example the fact that now a small firm can equally compete a larger firm (see the examples of Linux vs MS Windows) is an evidence that the Internet have changed the nature of competition and the entry barriers

have lowered, the market size has become even global and the low costs of online activities have changed the nature of competition. Novo, (2001) has stated that the only way to survive on this new environment is to create a strong brand name but more important is to build long-term relations with the clients using the Internet. The customer shall not be considered as a target but rather it shall be considered as the business partner that will help the firm to expand. According to Novo (2001) the consumer is a business partner that will help the firm by indicating ways to improve its services or its products features.

The customer relationship management (CRM) systems designed to implement and deliver to online customers services that can be better provided from the Internet rather than the traditional business communication channels.

The implementation of CRM has an impact on a number of business areas and departments within an organisation including sales, IT, operations and etc. In this case we will focus on the implementation of CRM from the Internet. Bradshaw and Brash (2001) also asserted that implementing CRM is certain to involve the deployment of new technologies including the Internet. The operation of Internet technologies gives an insight into the rate of growth of electronic CRM applications (e-CRM), which are based on the use of Internet or intranet networks. A study by AMR Research, as stated from Ness et al, (2001)

found that the CRM software market would be worth more than \$16 billion by 2003.

On the other hand, CRM is not always successful. A firm that wants to use an e-CRM system may have to think that the electronic customer relationship management is not always the best possible solution. Earley (2002) found in a research of a large number of businesses that 75 to 85 per cent of electronic CRM implementations fail.

Rheault and Sheridan, (2002) stated that several firms fail to develop an Internet based customer relationship program because they can not adjust the e-CRM software and its application to the real needs of the firm.

Some issues that the firms that want to implement electronic CRM have to consider are the following:

- ❖ The personnel must have been trained to use the Internet
- ❖ The consumers must be familiar with the Internet
- ❖ The firm must adjust its operations and the systems to implement the proposed e-CRM plan.
- ❖ The e-CRM plan must be in conjunction with the aims of the corporate strategy

To conclude, the fast expansion of the Internet has given the opportunity on many firms to communicate with their clients cheap and efficiently through the following ways:(Klein, L, Quelch, J.A 1996):

1. By advertising their products.
2. By informing the clients with constant product information updates.
3. By letting the clients to have on-line transactions with the firm

The existence of the Internet allows the clients to have access on million of web pages and offers and this is tricky. On the one hand the firms can address their offers on million of users but on the other hand their clients are exposed on many other offers on a global scale. For example, a firm may be a price leader in one country of EU but the same product may be much cheaper in USA because of the differences on the differences of the exchange rate that favours the US dollar.

3.11.2 The impact of the use of e-mail for CRM

Electronic Mail, which is also well known as e-mail, is one of the best mean building relations between a firm and its clients through the Internet and therefore we will examined it as a separate Internet function.

E-mail, has a series of advantages that may help the firm to build its relations cost effective and increase the satisfaction of the client bases. (Hamel, G 1998):

1. Direct contact with client
2. It is cost effective, comparing to other means such as traditional mail and fax.
3. The firm can also send big files including photos, brochures and videos, which is important for the firm. For example an advertising firm can send a preview of its work in avi (which is a video file) mode. The client can watch the avi video and make suggestions upon the video. This is a unique offer that can be done only with e-mail.
4. There is no problem with the time zones from country to country neither to interrupt the customer from his daily activities since email is not making any sound like phones does or fax. In addition to this, the message arrives even when the client has switched off the computer
5. Through an email the firm can inform its client base, promote some new offers and maintain some good relationships with client.
6. The consumer can send its complaints or any enquires and to have an immediate response from the firm, which is very important for a CRM practice.

3.11.3 Other impacts of the use of Internet for customer relationship

In the case that a firm decides to use the Internet as its main tool for keeping good relations with its clients it will have to use some e-CRM software such as SAP. In using CRM software applications, organisations will often be faced with a choice of different vendors and software. The ability to select the right solution will impact greatly on the level of success and returns gained from the application. In particular:

- The functional characteristics of applications being considered need to be thoroughly reviewed to ensure that they fit with the organisation's culture and processes. This may involve the use of a cross-functional team.
- The technical architecture of the applications should ideally be compatible, either directly or through middleware, with other systems within the organisation.
- Resource allocation will significantly affect the types of application to be selected and the level to which applications can be configured for the organisation.
- A realistic expectation of financial and operational returns and benefits that would be gained by the implementation of different types of applications.
- Definition of a CRM strategy that would be delivered or enhanced by software applications.

- Development of technical and management skills vital to successful implementation of e-CRM solutions. (Adebanjo, 2003)

Thus creating an e-CRM solution, or in general an Internet based customer relationship system is not an easy job. It is cost effective to set up a web site but there are tasks much more difficult to do that e-CRM must be taken very seriously. Feinberg and Kadam (2002) did a research and created a list of functions that related the Internet with customer relationship and their impact on the businesses. The most important are the following:

- **Site customization.** The Internet brings enormous amounts of information to the desktop. While this is an advantage, it can also be an enormous disadvantage, since the user may not be able to readily access the information he needs. Therefore, sites offer customization features allowing the user to filter the content they see. Thus, if the user, on the first visit, customizes the site to suit his tastes and preferences, he will see the customized content on subsequent visits. (Example: www.yahoo.com; www.my.yahoo.com)
- **Alternative channels.** These are the different ways for the consumer to contact the company. For instance: e-mail, fax, toll-free numbers, postal address, call-back button, voice over IP and bulletin board. Traditionally, only toll-free numbers and postal addresses could be used by customers to reach the company. However, over the past few years, e-mail has emerged as an

important tool for company-customer communication. It offers opportunities for improving customer service and reducing costs. Unlike telephone communication, which is synchronous, e-mail communication is asynchronous. This reduces costs, since customer service queries will now be handled in countries with lower labor costs, by taking advantage of the time-difference. Also, e-mail transmission happens on the Internet, which is essentially a public service and thus the company does not incur significant transmission costs.

- **Local search engine.** This feature allows the visitor to search on key words to quickly locate the required content on the Web site. This feature is helpful for those site visitors who are looking for a specific piece of information.
- **Membership.** The visitor can request a password. With this password he can continue surfing on password-protected Web pages within the Web site. This feature allows the company to collect personal information from users, when the user registers for the membership. It also allows them to track the customer's behavior at the site over time. This knowledge allows the business to assess which customers are worth retaining by looking at current and prospective customer profit and customer defect patterns.
- **Mailing list.** To receive more information, the visitor can add his/her e-mail address to a list to receive automated e-mails. Often, this is called a newsletter. This feature allows the company

to build a database of e-mail addresses of potential users of the company's product or service.

- **Site tour.** The visitor can follow a tour through the Web site. This allows users to get familiar with the Web site contents.
- **Site map.** This is a hierarchical diagram of the pages on the Web site, also called a site overview, site index, or site map. This feature is helpful in understanding the general structure of the Web site.
- **Introduction for first-time users.** Visitors, who enter the site for the first time, can surf to an introduction page containing information about "How to use the site most efficiently". This feature could help attract prospects and facilitate a first-time purchase.
- **Chat.** This feature allows a visitor to chat real-time with others. Specifically, this could mean chatting other visitors on the site or with the customer service personnel. This feature, while not used widely yet, is likely to see a marked increase in use, as Internet penetration increases and bandwidth constraints decrease globally.
- **Online purchasing.** Visitors are able to purchase services or products online. This feature is probably the most critical part of the Web site.
- **Product information online.** Visitors can read product information on the Web site. This feature is critical since Web surfers gather product information on the Web and subsequently buy the product from a brick-and-mortar store.

- **Customization possibilities.** Visitors can customize their service or product online before ordering. For instance, a visitor may want to assemble online a PC of a configuration that is not listed on the Web site. Or a jeans pant buyer can design a pant that fits his or her body shape exactly.
- **Preview product.** The (customized) product can be viewed before purchasing. The product can be viewed in a motion picture or a demo.
- **External links.** The visitor can easily and seamlessly link to complementary products from other companies.
- **FAQ's.** Frequent asked questions and their answers are available for reading. This feature acts as self-help for customers looking for answers to their queries. Like other information on the Web site, this could potentially help in reducing contact center traffic.
- **Problem solving.** Customers can solve problems with products or services themselves with online self-help routines. This feature is not very prevalent since customers show resistance to using this feature.
- **Complaining ability.** Complaints and problems can be detailed online. The Web site has a specific area for customers to log in their complaints and get action. .
- **Product highlights.** The benefits of a particular products/services are highlighted. This feature allows the company to highlight products or services that may be relevant in a particular context.

The context could be a particular festival or a season, among others. This feature also prompts repeat traffic.

- ***Request for catalog.*** Allows the user to request a catalog.
- ***Quick order ability.*** This feature basically allows the user to check out the product within three-clicks. Amazon.com pioneered this feature. Because of intellectual property issues, other sites use variants of Amazon's 3-click process.
- ***Ability to track order status.*** This feature allows the user to find out which stage of the shipping process his/her order is in. Customers are more likely to feel satisfied if they know of the status of their order than if they do not
- ***Member benefits.*** Description of benefits of shopping or of being a site member.
- ***Order.*** This feature allows the user to place an order within three clicks.
- ***Speed of download page.*** The Web site was considered fast if the Web pages downloaded in less than 15 seconds.
- ***Account information.*** If the user had registered on the site, the feature allowed him to view his personal information that he has given to the site. This could include his credit card information, if he has authorized the Web site to retain this information for repeat purchases.
- ***Customer service page.*** These pages give details on contacting customer service.

- **Company history/profile.** These Web pages give the company background. In the case of retail shopping sites, there will be a link to the corporate Web site.
- **Posted privacy policy.** Privacy concerns are coming to the fore with increased Internet penetration. Today, most sites have a privacy policy and post it on their Web site. This not only assures the customer that his information is protected, but will also protect the company from lawsuits from perceived privacy violations. (Feinberg and Kadam, 2002).

3.12 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is becoming an increasingly outstanding topic in many firms and in academic research. A motivation behind this interest is that customer satisfaction is believed to be associated with productive customer behaviour from the firm's point of view. A number of empirical studies indicate that there is a link between customer behaviour- therefore the decision to buy or not a product / service - and customer satisfaction. For instance, a positive association has been observed between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Taylor and Baker, 1994) and between customer satisfaction and the tendency to recommend the supplier's offer to other customers (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988).

Customer satisfaction is one of the major indicators of a successful firm and mainly depends on the way the companies are providing their different products or services. Christopher *et al.* (1993)

have defined service quality as the ability of the organisation to meet or exceed customer expectations.

Thus, one of the most desirable aspects for a company is to get a positive feedback from its customers in order to gain a competitive advantage (Zeithmal & Bitner, 2003). “Since the 1980s, for the majority of firms, the delivery of high-quality services became a marketing priority” (Parasuraman et al., 1988), as it is one of the most vital factors for a company in pursuing customer satisfaction. However, each company’s limitation is that it cannot identify and meet its customers’ expectations and consequently, the customer gap between a company and its customers is arising; “expectations are the reference points that customers have coming in to a service experience; perceptions reflect the service as actually received” (Zeithmal & Bitner, 2003).

Thus, a project manager has to consider several service issues such as, the competence of his project its performance in the marketplace and generally, how it handles the several services it provides to its customers. According to Baker & Lamb (1993) the service quality evaluations involve both the outcomes and the development of the different quality characteristics of the service delivery.

Moreover, as the aim of the service quality is based on the customer satisfaction, where most of the times their expectations are very high, “a distinctive and unequivocal management approach as well as organization commitment is required” (referred in Sultan & Simpson, 2000). If this will be accomplished, the desired zone of tolerance that may probably lead to the adequate one will be reached (Zeithmal & Bitner, 2003); as it will be high, it will be the reason for getting the appropriate feedback from the customers.

However, according to the consumer evaluation process and the SERVQUAL model the service quality cannot be easily evaluated (Sultan & Simpson, 2000); although, servicing a project will be evaluated after experiencing the provided services (Zeithmal & Bitner, 2003). On the other hand, the SERVQUAL model describes the service quality by using five dimensions which are reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness. The most important dimension of perceptual SERVQUAL model is the reliability and the less important is the tangibility (Sultan & Simpson, 2000) as the first thing that comes in the manager’s mind when choosing on who is going to deliver a project is how reliable is the potential partners but also for what can be its post-project services

In order to identify the sources of customer satisfaction for increasing the validity of the given information, a company has to use the appropriate method, collect the appropriate data that will be

collected by a specific sample and then present the appropriate output (Zeithmal & Bitner, 2003).

3.13 Service value and customer satisfaction

The first think that a firm needs is the consumers. In the case of a project those are the clients, the firm that supplies the project manager with a task to do. The consumers can choose from a variety of alternative firms and their services. On many cases some project managers and their companies do only provide the project and no further services, such as post-sales services or something similar that gives added value on the project manager's work.

Kotler (2003:60) defines the customer perceived value as follows: 'Customer perceived value is the difference between the prospective customer's evaluation of all the benefits and all the costs of an offering and the perceived alternatives. Total customer value is the perceived monetary value of the bundle of economic, functional and psychological benefits customers expect from a given market offering. Total customer cost is the bundle of costs customers expect to incur in evaluating, obtaining using and disposing of the given market offering.'

The consumer will evaluate the alternative offers using some personal criteria and he /she will decide for which offer gives him / her greater value. Service value and what the consumer will receive will not

only determine the customer's satisfaction but also the customer loyalty. Satisfaction can be defined as the emotions that result from the customer perceived value in combination with his / her expectations. (Fournier, S & Glenmick, D. 1999: 6).

3.14 Relationship between Customer's satisfaction and the project's performance

Service quality has become an important subject for many firms, including the large firms and their contractors doing their projects, although some firms still ignore the importance of customer's satisfaction and service quality for their firms.

According to Zemke and Bell (1990: 45) state that it is very common seeing advertisements where organizations showing their commitment to the services that they provide to their consumers but in reality there is a gap between what they promise and what the consumers are actually receiving.

Capodagli and Jackson (1998: 60) are claiming that many organizations seem to deem their consumers as a trouble, although they do not admit it. Many organizations have signs and mission statements indicating that the customer's satisfaction is their priority but in reality once a client enters the firm's staff is treating him bad.

The reason for this is that many firms and their staff have not understood that there is a relation between the consumer's satisfaction and the quality of the perceived services and of course of the organization's performance.

Zeithaml (2000) made a research and found that there is a strong correlation between those three factors (customer satisfaction, service quality and organizational performance). Koska (1990) and Nelson et al. (1992) are examining the case of service quality and organizational profitability in the hospital industry and both researchers found a strong correlation between those two factors. Additionally Aaker and Jacobson (1994) a correlation between the three factors on the accounting industry. Beside this, satisfied consumers bring not only profitability but also they help the organization to improve its reputation through word of mouth and to gain market share. All of the above are helping the firm to improve its performance.

Chapter 4 – Methodologies and procedures used in the study

This project is a literature review. It will investigate the related literature of Customer Relationship Management and how it contributes on customer satisfaction.

The purpose of the methodology must be significant with the purpose of the dissertation. In this case the purpose of the study is to investigate the adoption of customer relationship management (CRM) by Greek companies and how it create customer satisfaction in order to benefit project managers who are using CRM policies.

The inspiration for this research came from personal work experience, where the author notified the lack of CRM policies and CRM philosophy but also from reading books like Cann (1998).

The main part of the literature review will focus on Customer Relationship Management, then customer satisfaction and how this is linked with Customer Relationship Management.

The researcher relied on secondary sources and on researchers that have already occurred. Most of the researchers derived from the Internet and from electronic databases like emerald and EBSCO.

The author of this dissertation used those databases to recover data regarding CRM and its effects on customer satisfaction. This means that he focused on those two issues by examining articles coming from those two fields.

The author had identified sources from both fields of research and he wrote the literature review. Though he did not find so many researches on CRM and project management he concluded by writing the outcome of the research based on his own views and according to what he learnt during the process of writing the conceptual framework of the dissertation.

The articles found and the books used helped the author to make his secondary research. He used case studies and researches, like the one made from Microsoft in order to show the value of CRM for modern firm and how it can improve customer satisfaction in order to help the companies to attract more customers.

The reasons for not making a primary research was that not many Greek project managers are using CRM, so it will be vogue to go ahead with a primary research, as it was consulted from the supervisor.

Chapter 5 – Results

From the secondary research and literature review we have found that CRM is a new concept for marketing and management. It is based upon the concept of customer satisfaction. CRM has to do with managing technological improvements within a firm – in which we can include the Internet -, processes, resources and in general to improve the way that a firm approaches its clients. The environment in which CRM operates is very complicated and this means that firms that want to improve their customer relationships will have to change their internal processes but also their behavior towards their clients. The application of CRM theories requires a better communication with the client through some technological means such as the Internet and some new models of administration. According to the above, we understand that CRM must have a strong understanding of the new technologies and off course strong leadership and good knowledge.(Galbreath and Rogers 1999).

If we take as example Microsoft, they implement four basic tools for excellent performance in customer relation management:

- **Analyze sales data:** By determining what sold well in the past, manufacturers can make predictions about what might sell well in the future. This enables companies to make marketing campaigns for products that might sell well with certain group of customers.
- **Customize sales:** Manufacturers can easily target the right customer with the right value proposition based on specific product and feature

request. This has as a result for companies to predict activities, such as customizes promotions.

- **Improve customer service:** “When customer information is maintained in a central location, it’s much easier for sales and customer service representatives to access and use the data in the field and on sales calls. Sales representatives, for example, can copy the information to a handheld device to use while selling products away from the office. Not only can this customer data be used to enhance the current sales transaction, the information can also be used to cross-sell other products”.
- **Expedite orders:** Customer order management is another key factor in the success of a company. Excellent customer service includes accurate and fast order processing. With the help of a good CRM solution, it is easy to locate specific orders and track the status of that order from initial placement to final delivery (Microsoft 2005).

Chapter 6 – Discussion, Conclusions, Recommendations

In brief, CRM is a concept that has conquered business world during the last years. It can help the firms to improve their relationship with customers and create a loyal customer base. CRM is also an essential for projects. Projects can benefit a lot from the usage of CRM policies not only to increase their customers' satisfaction but also to create a positive image and establish a loyal customer base.

From the previous chapters we found out two major concepts; the concept of building strong relationships with your stakeholders, and mostly the clients and the value of having satisfied customers and how they can affect the overall performance of not only the project but also of the company in general.

Often project managers look out the project but not on how to build strong relations with their clients. For some managers this may not be important, however a good CRM program may be important on two cases:

- 1) when the customer finds some errors
- 2) when the customer decides to assign on a project manager another project.

On both cases a good CRM program will create a satisfied customer and it may affect some decisions. A CRM program, will improve the quality of the services provided on the customers.

An example has to do with the project updates and meetings. On many cases project managers are so busy that they forget their meetings to brief their customers on the progress of the project. This situation creates a dissatisfied customer who is likely not to chose again the same contractor or in general not to have a good cooperation, which will create problems on both sides.

However, a good CRM program but also philosophy, often with a simple software such as outlook express or Google's calendar but also with expensive CRM software such as SAP's software, can help a project manager to organize its work.

CRM leads to a customer satisfaction which also leads into customer retention, which is very important for a project manager in order to keep his or her customers and their projects. Customer retention is a core concept of project management but also of other areas of marketing and management such as consumer marketing. Organizations, rather than trying to complete just a single transaction, at best may have to focus on creating a relationship. Consequently their efforts are determined on profit at a relationship level rather than at a transaction level. The process results in entrepreneurs searching not merely for new customers but also for new products and services that are appropriate to

their customers' needs. This enables them to extend customer loyalty and develop the relationship. The process of creating and maintaining a strong relationship with customer is recognized as customer retention. Loyalty and retention are the key for a project manager's success. If we assume that the project manager and his company are doing some fine job a CRM policy maybe the point of differentiation against its competitors who may also offer the same quality of projects. In addition, post-project services are often ignored from project managers. When they believe that they have finished their project they think that they have finished it and they abandon their customers in order to seek a new project. However, a good CRM will help the project manager and his customers to create strong relationships but also to deliver some quality services.

Customisation and post-sales services are also playing an important role. Many firms have on their mind only the sales without considering the post-sales effects. The firms that give added value to the client by giving attention to their post-sales service can gain customers' respect and loyalty that is so important for firms. From the consumers' side, this will give him / her an added value and he/ she feel that the firm respects his or her needs.

Regarding customer satisfaction, it is important in order to retain customers we must have a stronger focus on measuring and managing the individual customer relationship. In short, all companies are in the service business, that is, satisfying customer needs, which, therefore, must be measured and tracked. The old paradigm was price, quality, and

service. The new paradigm is price, quality, service convenience, value, solution and above all, to have an improved communication with the consumer.

To conclude, for a project manager is not enough to produce an excellent project but to create strong relationships with all stakeholders, from the suppliers up to the clients, there is a need to create a number of satisfied and committed stakeholders. CRM will help the project manager to take easier jobs from customers that has already worked for, create trust with his suppliers and provide its future customers with something more than doing a project; integrating quality services in the project.

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