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56. Customer Relationship Management through introduction of CRM-systems as a constituent in efficient business management

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Introduction: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is the customer-focused business strategy which is not a new concept. Although CRM is more about the customer, it cannot be successful by this definition alone. CRM should be performed in organizations as the combination of three main concepts: people, processes, and technology. Customer relationship management (CRM) is a combination of people, processes, and technology that seeks to provide understanding of customer needs, to support a business strategy, and to build long-term relationships with customers. To increase relationships with all customers the integration of these three is essential.

Resources and methods: The people component is the most difficult one in order to adjust employees/staffs to the changes. CRM initiatives require vision and each and every employee must understand the purpose and changes that CRM will bring. CRM success will be in danger by negative feedback. Along several important elements regarding to management and employee team that successful CRM system requires, top management

commitment plays the main role. Top management must show its commitment to development of company education and training programs, and also enhancing employee skills and knowledge. Furthermore, it should be noted that education increases motivation and commitment of employee and reduces employee disagreements. In addition to these, different reward programs such as compensation programs and reward systems for employees should be considered by management.

The process component of CRM is the most delicate one because inappropriate process is the same as continuing your work aimlessly. When the company aims to create an effective process change, first of all it seeks to know the function of existing customer-facing business processes. Then the company needs to redesign or replace the process with ones that have been created and/or agreed upon internally. As an example, the replacement or updating of the business processes happens for most companies that have the process of direct contact with the customers during the purchase, payment, and usage of the company's products and services.

The technology component is the toughest one, because there are a lot of technology offerings and alternatives. There are two issues related to technology: dealing with CRM software vendors and staying on top of CRM technology trends. CRM is a strategy that puts together a combination of Information Technology (IT) with business processes and services such as Data Warehouse Technology and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Technology.

Results: The following table 1 provides a generic model for understanding how the mix of people, processes, and technology will change for the key CRM implementation activities. This generic model needs to be adjusted for each company, taking into account that different companies will realize key CRM implementation activities from different perspective.

Table 1

Developing the right mix of people, process, and technology

Key CRM Implementation Activities	Most Relevant Components
Determining business requirements	People, some process
Setting up the project management team	People, some process
Integrating legacy and other needed systems	Technology
Customizing the CRM software	People, process, technology
CRM system pilot	People, technology
CRM system roll-out	People, technology
CRM system support	People, some process
Growing your CRM system	People, process, technology

Conclusions: CRM requires a customer-centric business environment to support effective marketing, sales, and service processes. Investigating CRM elements (people, process, and technology) one by one and together shows their high value in managing a proper customer relationship. The main business drives of CRM are increasing customer lifetimes, reducing costs, and improving efficiency. The main obstacles to becoming customer-centric are poor performances in some areas. In addition to these, the method used here is personal opinion; the article believes that re-engineering a customer-focus business model in organizations needs the integrating of the main parts of each element, mixing of the related activities, and eliminating of those which do not add any value to organization and customers.

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