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ESTABLISHING CRM IN SMALL ENTERPRISES

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ABSTRACT

CRM business strategy can help small enterprises overcome their competitors and provide additional value to their customers. Unlike big companies, little attention is devoted to addressing the CRM-related problem of small enterprises. CRM is a enterprise strategy that can be applied within the company regardless of the size of the company or the amount of goods or services sold; large and small enterprises assess the quality of customer service, customer loyalty, which are less sensitive to price changes and recognize that attracting new customers is expensive. This paper explores the advantages and disadvantages in managing relationships with customers within the small enterprise unit.

KEYWORDS

Competitive advantage; CRM; CRM strategies; eCRM; small enterprise.

THE ROLE OF CRM STRATEGY IN SMALL ENTERPRISE

Achieving customer satisfaction is closely related to the achievement of the objectives of quality management, in particular the achievement of enterprise excellence. Modern understanding of the concept of quality includes not only its technological base, but the concept of quality of production is transferred to the executive management level, where, speaking in the long terms gets the characteristics of improving the quality of enterprise of the company as a whole, while consumers and achieving of the customer satisfaction have a central place. CRM is a strategy for identifying and meeting customer's needs and behavior, doing so results in a stronger relationship with them. Greenberg defines CRM as (Greenberg, 2004): "the obligation of companies to put customer's experience at the center of its priorities and to provide incentive of the systems, processes and sources of information of power by upgrading relations obtained from experience." CRM (Urbanskiene, Daiva, & Chreptavičienė, 2008) is seen as "chain reaction", which is caused by new strategic initiatives of communication with a customer when high level of information technologies' development and constant customer's need to get better quality of service are achieved. Small companies which compete to gain advantage in the market are constantly looking for ways to out-compete their competitors. As rapid improvements in technology lead to a greater transparency of marketing activities, the greater the challenge to achieve long-term differentiation is. Successful CRM is one of the competitive advantages that companies can use to keep users and prevent their transfer to other competitors. Such marketing area is being developed with emphasis on activities that enhance the transaction aimed at building and maintaining profitable relationships. CRM is actively creating and maintaining long term relationships with customers that is supported with the use of appropriate technology. It is a process designed to gather data about users, their characteristics and to use these qualities for certain marketing activities.

Knowing each user based on possession of relevant information, analytical functions and data mining techniques, small enterprise is enabled to gain insight into the properties and to deliver products and services that help keep users and enhance their loyalty. CRM enables organizations to create greater value for users through better communication, faster delivery and personalized products and services (Chen and Popovich, 2003). Improved relationship with customers can lead to greater customer loyalty and retention and eventually profitability. Furthermore, the rapid development of Internet and its technology has greatly increased opportunities for marketing and transformed the way in which relationships take place between companies and their customers. Five different kinds of relationships that can be built with the consumers that buy products and services of the organization can be distinguished (Kotler & Keller, 2006):

1. The basic relations. Vendors of the organizations sell products and services to customers, but do not follow in any way response and satisfaction of consumers.
2. Reactive relations. Vendors sell products and services and encourage consumers to call them whenever they have any questions or problems.
3. Responsible relationships. Vendors call consumers by phone immediately after the sale to check whether the product meets their expectations. Vendors also are asking customers to give suggestions to improve products or to impart specific objections. Such information can help companies to continuously improve their offer.
4. Proactive relations. Vendors or other organizations marketers occasionally occur to consumers by phone, or in other ways, with suggestions on improving the use of the product, or with information about the benefits of new products.
5. Partnership relations. The company is constantly working with customers and with other partners in discovering ways of creating and delivering better value.

CRM can be divided into three major functional areas supported by information technology and systems. These areas are as follows:

- Marketing
- Sales
- Service and Support

Information technology plays a key role in the development of CRM. Appropriate CRM strategies can be developed using information technology to automate the work of the CRM process. Information technology can help in collecting and maintaining data in order to understand the acquisition, retention and duration of the user. There are three ways of changing the future of consumer behavior and creating the potential value of customer (Pappers & Rogers, 2004):

1. Competitive enterprise - Any enterprise that consumer performs with a competitive organization, represents a potential organization. If an organization for example, wins and takes over the job that the consumer performs with his competitor, there is a possibility of increasing the current value that the consumer brings to the organization.
2. Change of behavior - Sometimes organization may encourage consumer to change his behavior so that it leads to a reduction of operating costs or increase of customer loyalty. For example, an organization can offer its customers the performance of certain enterprise activities and communications by electronic means, thereby reducing the costs of its operations.
3. Strengthening the role of consumers - When a consumer becomes a stronger, more profitable and influential, the organization is more interested in doing enterprise with him.

If the organization treats the best customers like everyone else, they will soon be organized to act in the same way, which is not a good way to run a enterprise. The task of marketers (Domazet, 2005) is to identify their customers and to maintain a continuous and personalized communication with them. The idea of CRM is to increase customer satisfaction along with the creation of new values through (Tumbas, 2004):

- the provision of improved services,
- development of effective call center,
- more effective and efficient sales,
- assisting the sales staff at the conclusion of operations,

- simplification of the processes of marketing and sales,
- identifying new customers

CRM is a continuous enterprise process at all organizational levels, aimed to attract and retain customers. Basically, CRM is a synthesis of enterprise processes, human resources and software. The quality of such synthesis will enable the establishment of strong mechanisms for customer relationship management, whose results will be: customer satisfaction with good cooperation, this satisfaction will result in his loyalty, loyalty will prevent client leaving to join competitors. Customers are the most valuable asset that company has, and the whole wisdom of CRM is contained in two words – long-term and profitable relationships. In contemporary conditions of enterprises, one of the basic parameters of successful enterprise is the quality relationship with customers. Customer satisfaction from good enterprise cooperation, as well as knowledge of customer needs, habits and desires, are indispensable factors to increase their loyalty in the conditions of dynamic competition.

Experience from many CRM implementations projects in organizations show that the potential for improving enterprise performance is to be achieved fully only with decisive initiatives of the organization to include all the above elements in the implementation. Retention (the rate of loss of existing customers), satisfaction (innovative products and services, customization, convenience, community, etc.), acquisition and profitability are key measures of readiness assessment of CRM. Multi channel strategy can focus serious efforts on data collection and data analysis process in the company to reach unified views of customers on the basis of activities that companies can make to personalize their marketing campaigns. The main benefit from this is gaining some competitive advantage.

E-ENTERPRISE AND CRM

The importance of effective implementation of CRM is intensified within the e-enterprise as customer loyalty is much harder to keep/establish in this domain. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of e-CRM and estimate its impact on the results of the organization for e-enterprise are crucial. Since the acquisition, retention, satisfaction and loyalty are the most important criteria in the e-CRM process, there can be given a number of measures in relation to them. Building trust is difficult at a distance. Big competition, which is constantly being renewed, and which allows transparency of the Internet, is another challenge for e-CRM. Building confidence in conditions where other competitor is "one click" away is very difficult. Most Internet users have a basic idea to compare different offers so the exposure of the targeted customer with messages and offers from other enterprises is imminent. The rapid advancement of technology, the emergence of new product performance and integration of different products into new product have created a society of multimedia communications. Decline in costs of unit production influenced the growth in the number of users, and thus the fall in prices of services. Building a CRM with the support of IT takes place in five steps (Turban, McLean, & Wetherbe, 2003):

1. make sure that consumer's enterprise with the company is easy;
2. final consumer of company's products and services should be the focus;
3. redesign enterprise processes with customers from the consumer standpoint;
4. equip company for profit, design a comprehensive architecture for electronic commerce that can be further developed;
5. cultivate the loyalty of consumers in electronic commerce, that is the key to profitability.

To achieve these five steps, it is necessary to take the following actions (although related to the Web, CRM does not have to be on the Web, a trend is to move more CRM activities to Web because that way CRM is generally cheaper and/or more efficient):

- the provision of personalized services (npr.dowjones.com);
- focus on the rights of consumers (eg aa.com, national.com);
- help consumers to do their job or their goals (npr.boeing.com);
- enabling consumers to help themselves (npr.iprint.com);
- encouragement of enterprise processes that have impact on consumers (eg, ups.com, amazon.com);
- knowledge of the overall consumer's experience (eg, amazon.com, hertz.com);
- understanding from all corners of customer relations (npr.wellsfargo.com, bellatlantic.com).

THE BENEFITS OF USING CRM SOLUTIONS WITHIN THE SMALL ENTERPRISE

Before deciding whether a CRM strategy is suitable for small enterprise, it should review all the potential benefits that are realized with its implementation. CRM can reduce costs related to communication with customers, optimize work flow, as a result of integration with other systems in the enterprise, enabling better market segmentation, enabling improved interaction with customers and relationships with them, and creating the opportunity for personalization. The goal of CRM systems is to improve customer service, to retain profitable customers and to create support in the provision of analytical capacity within the small enterprise. The biggest advantages of the successful implementation of CRM include the following examples (Goldenberg, 2008):

- Better sales/marketing information - user names, user history, their needs and competitive positioning are some of the types of data collected as a result of the implementation of CRM systems.
- Improved productivity - Effective identification of the targeted market, reduce the number of old management, the provision of accurate calculations on-site, rapid assessment of the availability of inventory and ordering directly from the field to help shorten the sales cycle.
- Increased concern about the user - There is more time for users due to reduced load of administrative work, the ability to monitor customer service levels and the possibility of emphasizing existing or potential problems on customer service and responsiveness to their needs.

CRM applications, thanks to the great advantages of technological innovation allows small enterprises to collect and analyze customer data, interpretation of customer behavior, develop predictive models, timely and effective communication and delivery of customized products and services to individual customers. Using technology to optimize interactions with customers of the company have a comprehensive view of customers to learn from past interactions to optimize future.

The use of eCRM is manifested in the following way:

- STRATEGY - The life cycle of a buyer as a global goal; keeping customers and reducing costs as much as possible;
- PROCESSES - Transparent communication with customers; high automatization of interaction; real-time processes;
- CHANNELS - web site; E-mail; WAP;
- INTERFACE SYSTEM - Designed for front-end applications which when it comes to interface with back-end applications go through data base and knowledge base (data mart);
- CLIENT'S COMPUTER - Web browser is the customer's portal to e-CRM;
- ADJUSTMENT AND PERSONALIZATION OF INFORMATION - Highly customized "dynamic" views are based on purchases and wishes which are possible. Every kind of customers are provided with individual customizations;
- FOCUS OF THE SYSTEM - The system is designed for customers' needs (for external use). Companies which have big portals are designed in such a way that they are not limited to single departments or business units;
- SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND MODIFICATION - Decreased time and expenses. Systematic implementation and expansion can be directed from a single location using one server.

According to the website www.smallbizcrm.com without its pretension to be the most authoritative 10 leading CRM software for small enterprises are:

1. InfluxionSoftSale
2. Nexus
3. CapsuleCRM

4. InTouch CRM
5. WORKetc
6. Relenta
7. ProphetCRM
8. CenterBase
9. iCintactPro
10. Oprius

BARRIERS TO ADOPTION OF CRM WITHIN THE SMALL ENTERPRISE

A common problem of small enterprises in adopting e-CRM is dealing with customers. It is important to find the right balance between the virtual and face-to-face contact because they can play different and complementary roles. The issue of trust in the online context is widely studied and many authors have concluded that it is difficult to gain the trust on the internet. Further, the power of Internet technology to proactively manage information is partially limited by the risk of misuse and data loss. Security is crucial in e-CRM in which the perceived risk is a serious obstacle to overcome.

Small enterprises (Halligan, 2006) include limited resources and expertise. CRM initiatives have failed in many cases and some of the reasons for this can be cited:

- Most small enterprises have a dozens or hundreds of users and the main problem is to find new and efficient development of existing users.
- CRM systems are not considering a change related to the existence of the Internet and informing end-users and therefore the behavior of the purchase and evaluation process based on what is happening on the Internet.
- CRM systems are essentially databases with application forms filled in by the user. They are excellent for maintaining and organizing formatted data but are critical when dealing with unformatted data. Therefore, useful knowledge about users is kept in the mail of workers instead in the CRM system. This is actually the knowledge that can really help in solving issues related to buying and individuals.
- CRM is mainly easy to use by the "authorized" individuals or authorized CRM IT person. The main tasks are beyond the reach of people who have a day job outside of IT. This problem is not confined to the "old school" CRM companies but also to those who base their enterprise on the Internet.
- CRM requires end users to take actions that are not part of their job in order to "update" the system. After all, the result of CRM is as good as the input data. Most end users in small enterprises interact with customers via email system (usually Outlook). The procedure of opening the browser, passwords, account creation and filling in forms essentially waste users time.
- Today's CRM is more beneficial for companies involved in the transfer/transactions (call centers) than for small enterprises in which attention is paid to relations with customers. Formatted data set is just what you need for individual-centered call center. This set limits the team collaboration when working on complex sales oriented on relations/solution.
- Small enterprises should take many things into consideration when it comes to implementing e-CRM, because of the barriers that exist.

CONCLUSION

In setting up the CRM there is a need to face the dilemma of how to properly select the structural elements that will show the existence of the system and guarantee its implementation. First of all for a successful CRM project there must be a set of criteria. Choosing a reliable and flexible solution is one of the key success factors. The recommendation is to focus on solutions that are highly acceptable for use. If the system is not accepted and not used there will not going to be the return on investment. Although many small companies do not see CRM as a key criterion for success of future operations, CRM can play an important role in gaining competitive advantage of small enterprises. Very little attention is devoted to the study of these factors and deficiencies of CRM in small companies. The main problem is lack of processes of the adequate integration or approach. Small enterprises that are ready to implement CRM solutions are aware of the existence of different contacts with customers, and they are very competitive and constantly perform differentiation of customers. Seen from this aspect CRM can be explained as an approach to managing multiple relationships with customers.

CRM implementations that do not always coincide with the needs of small enterprises are another obstacle to be overcome. Many CRM solutions for small enterprises are less developed and existing CRM systems mostly do not meet the needs of small enterprises. Together, they add to the complexity of systems that makes it too difficult to work by the small enterprises. When properly performed, CRM implementation is designed as a cycle that continues to improve in order to create long-term competitive advantage. When companies use CRM technology and redefine their enterprise processes related to acquiring new customers and retain existing ones, it strengthens their capabilities in key areas that determine customers' decisions regarding the purchase, including prices, product quality, marketing, sales, service for creating the cycle of digital loyalty.

There is considerable difference of views between the user and the perception of the company. The view of the company is only one side of the picture and must be estimated well from the perspective of the user. A deeper insight of the user can provide a new perspective of the CRM and provide for further considerations of CRM strategy. More studies could be conducted on the topic of success of CRM implementation in small enterprises to obtain a basis that would lead to the identification of new measures and criteria of importance.

CRM for small enterprises is a promising area for further research. Most researches have focused on CRM on the level of the big enterprises and little attention is devoted to the area of small enterprises.

Given the small amount of operations and the needs of small enterprises, I believe that the small enterprise CRM is sufficiently specific area and that should be considered as a whole. The concept of CRM is relatively new for small enterprises and can create many benefits for companies and become a promising topic for future research.

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