

APPLICATION OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

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Abstract. *It is the information management, including knowledge management that is the essence of functioning of any modern company operating in the new economy. Thanks to teleinformatic technologies, information and knowledge becomes the primary engine of the economic development, as well as the decisive criterion determining the business success or failure of units, companies, regions and total economies.*

It is in the article that the issue of applying the information technology in managing relationships with customers, who are more demanding and expect the personal touch from sellers in conditions of the market of the buyer, was raised. For the reason, the enterprises use modern technologies in the customer relationship management, which are applied to intensify contacts with customers and to keep relations being based on interaction with them, what may result in maximizing the number and the value of transactions. Much space is devoted to Customer Relationship Management (CRM) – the idea of customer relationship management is characterized by a high degree of individualization of the approach towards the buyer of goods and services, increasing his satisfaction as well as building his loyalty. The special attention was paid to the technological side of the CRM concept, because it is IT that becomes a platform constituting the foundation for it. However the possibility of applying modern technologies in managing relations with customers does not mean that every company must introduce such systems. Therefore, much space was devoted to planning the CRM system and to the process of the selection of the CRM tools.

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1. Introduction

The changeability of the business world, particularly the development of information technologies and the Internet, forces modern enterprises to seek new management methods and techniques. It is the information

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management, including the knowledge management that is the essence of the functioning of a modern company in the new economy. It is possible to distinguish even certain basic features of this new paradigm, which the world economy enters. These are: the computerization, the globalization, the networking of everything and everyone, the sovereignty of customers and the key role of knowledge. Such terms as teleworking, portal, globalization, network effect, e-commerce and virtual corporation permanently entered the dictionary of the business world and they were created in order to describe this new business environment.

Thanks to the computer technology (IT), the enterprise operates in “cyber space”, where the time of the information transfer and the process of decision-making are very short. The application of the computer technology (IT) in business activities supports and increases efficiency of enterprises. It is achieved by hastening management procedures, improving the quality of numerous operations and it enables handling larger information resources. These are the information technologies that constitute the skeleton of the new economy.

The new economy describes the new business environment, in which the information and the knowledge, thanks to teleinformatic technologies, become the primary engine of the economic development, as well as the decisive criterion determining the business success or failure of units, companies, regions and total economies. The information and the knowledge create the value added, increase productivity and economic efficiency. It is currently that the most important factor in this game is the Internet. Each technology is associated with certain determinants and possibilities. Internet technologies and its applications open new opportunities of interaction between consumers, companies and trade partners².

It is in the article that the issue of the application of the information technology in managing relationships with customers, who are more demanding and expect the personal touch from sellers, was raised. It is in a customer service department that a value for any company is created, which is the determinant of the effectiveness of operating. Therefore, companies abandon mass marketing and rely on concepts of individualized marketing. The change consisting in applying the information technology in the process of the customer service and developing relations with him is a very important component. CRM (Customer Relationship Management) Systems are the examples, which enable the interactive communication with any customer and building relations with him.

² <http://www.modernmarketing.pl/index.php?pg=ene> (28.06.2011)

2. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

As a result of the global competition on the market, companies seek innovative solutions supporting by the determination of customer needs. Thanks to the detailed information, decisions are more accurate. It is CRM that is the indispensable tool for such activities and is the management system for cooperation with customers. This system is a set of activities designed to identify the most valuable customers and the ways of keeping them in the company, as well as to increase the number of transactions with them. CRM is therefore a method for a permanent contact with customers, and consequently for increasing profits of the enterprise.

The concept of CRM is a response to amendments, which have been occurring on the market since the early eighties. These changes include among other things: an increase in global competition, decline in customer loyalty, increasing costs of acquiring new customers, increasing experience and requirements of customers towards suppliers, reduced effects of promotional activities but first of all the appearance of multimedia technologies and the Internet.

It is hard to explicitly define the CRM, both because of its scope as well as arising alterations. It seems to be the most concise and accurate formulation that CRM consists in the mutual adaptation of the customers and companies, being aimed at building the long-lasting, partner relation “the company – the customer”³. The CRM, as a customer oriented business strategy, integrates marketing, promotion, sale as well as service and supporting processes; aims at transforming contacts with customers (earlier limited only to the sale and the shopping) into the long-term partnership, being based on interaction⁴. It is an amendment to the philosophy of the company aiming at having and dealing with loyal customers rather than with “indifferent buyers”, originating from the relationship marketing.

According to the Wioletta Wereda`s customer relationship management concept, CRM is the long-run process of first – gaining clients and then – keeping them by a company. If the company wants to achieve the success in implementing the CRM strategy, the process should consist of such elements as: values for the customer, high quality of products/ services, proper communication with the customer, segmentation and purposeful selection, personal promotion tools, personal employees` policy

³ See: K. Storbacka, J. Lehtinen, *Art of building lasting relationships with customers*. CRM, ABC, Krakow 2001, pp. 17-20.

⁴ M. Capiga, *The capital of the bank customer. Selected aspects of management and evaluation*, Twigger, Warsaw 2005, p. 62.

and internal marketing, special loyalty programmes, partnership relations with a competition⁵.

The definitions cited above refer to CRM in the business meaning. Another approach – IT approach, considers CRM as software with wide telecommunications and telemarketing abilities from the group “front office”. It is from the point of view of the enterprise that the most important aim of CRM is to maximize the number and values of transactions per 1 customer (what has always been an aim of marketing and all sale operations) by developing the relation “the customer – the organization”.

In the field of CRM systems, there are distinguished three kinds of them⁶:

- operating CRM;
- analytical CRM;
- interactive CRM.

The difference between them consists in tactics applied by the organization, while implementing the concept.

The operating CRM is a concept orientated towards capturing and gathering information on activity of customers on all levels of the cooperation. It applies both to basic contacts with sales representatives, visits in company shops and salons, phone calls, visits on websites, as well as to inquiries or contacts resulting from trade negotiations. The operating CRM integrates functions of marketing and customer services in it ensuring the personal touch to each of customers and the full knowledge about their needs. It enables the registration and the analysis of all events with customers.

The analytical CRM is focused on the analysis of the data collected by other systems functioning in the enterprise i.e. sales, supply or logistics systems. It allows to identify customer preferences and behaviours, trends in sales at various intervals, groups of contracting parties, of goods as well as to analyse systematically best-selling products. Moreover, it identifies the best customers and employees. Thus, it enables to create proper offers, examine their good and weak elements in order to increase profits and to minimize costs. The analytical CRM accomplishes the following functions⁷:

- inspecting the marketing base of customers;
- analysing the effectiveness of marketing-commercial actions and of the sale;

⁵ W. Wereda, *Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and the behaviour of buyers in the services market*, Difin, Warsaw 2009, p. 187.

⁶A. Mazur, K. Jaworska, D. Mazur, *CRM Customer Relationship Management*, MADAR, Zabrze 2001, pp. 21-22.

⁷ J. Wachnicki, P. Komornicki, *Analytical CRM*, „Modern Marketing”, nr. 02/2002.

- analysing the effectiveness of web pages;
- obtaining the information on visits on web pages.

The interactive CRM (is called cooperative or contact CRM). It is a communications centre, a network coordinating contact channels with customers, suppliers and business partners. It can be a portal, PRM application (Partner Relationship Management), a centre of interaction with the customer – CIC (Customer Interaction Centre). The means of communication applied are: a phone, an SMS, a Web page, an e-mail, a fax, voice applications or even a traditional mail. It is used mainly in service departments at a technical assistance, sales and marketing departments. The combination of all CRM systems mentioned above in one gives us an integrated system. It combines all functionalities, by what it provides the comprehensive realization of needs of the company in creating positive contacts with customers. One should however mention that developing a CRM strategy is an individual matter of each company, since the fully integrated system does not have to be the optimal solution. The architecture of an integrated CRM system was presented in the figure 6. The fundamental difference between individual types of the CRM concept is that the operating CRM facilitates the access to the information about the customer, however the analytical one allows for analysis of this information by providing the access to the customer preferences and habits. Such knowledge can be used in processes of the decision making in relation to the customer relationship management.

However CRM is not only a computer system, it is a strategy, a philosophy of operating of a company, which is aimed at improving and intensifying contacts with customers and thus at a rapid growth measured by an increase in the company value. It is for the purpose that the software facilitating achieving assumed purposes is used. It is possible to hazard a guess that CRM tools are currently the basis for the implementation of the strategy of increasing the sales efficiency. A professional, modern CRM application effectively supports all contact areas with customers, as well as information exchange inside the company. The support includes individual elements of activity of the company⁸:

- sales (administering customer accounts, all events associated with customers);
- marketing (marketing campaigns, distribution lists, e-mails and phones);

⁸ A. Stachowicz-Stanusch, M. Stanusch, *CRM Guide for implementing staff*, Placet Publishing Agency, Warszawa 2007, p. 94.

- customer service (call centre, contracts, customer complaints);
- workflow (calendars, tasks, holidays, HR, knowledge base, version management and document flow, project management);
- managing contracting parties (enables collecting of such information as: teleaddress data, the segmentation and profiles of customers);
- Reporting (thanks to it, it is possible to analyse the various spheres of the customer relationship management and to examine the work efficiency of persons responsible).

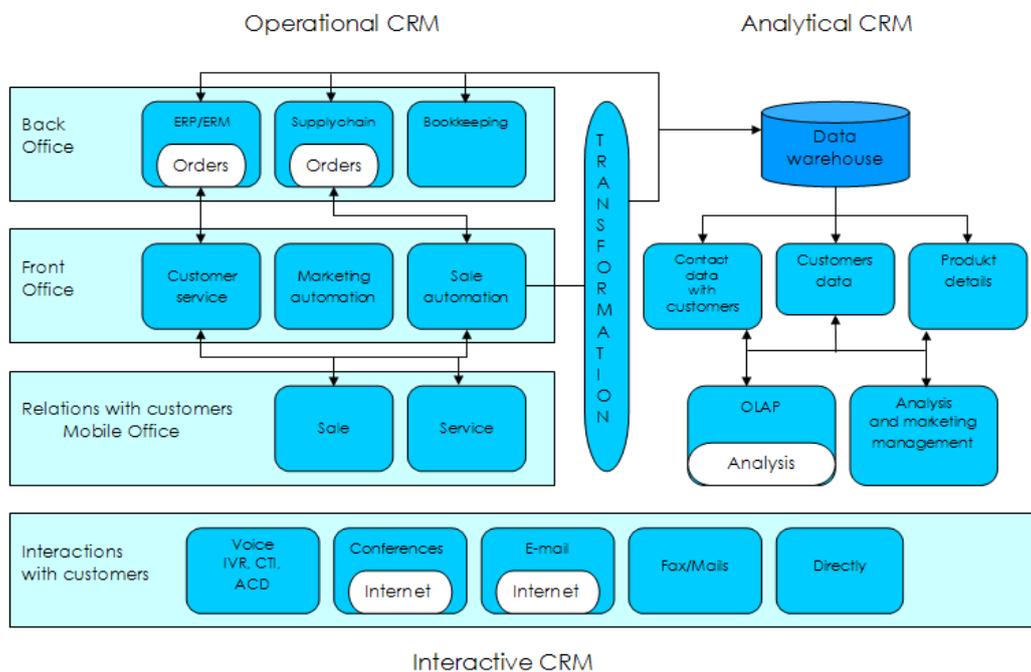


Figure 1. CRM architecture.

Source: A. Mazur, K. Jaworska, D. Mazur, *CRM Zarządzanie kontaktami z klientami [CRM Customer Relationship Management]*, Madar, Zabrze, p. 23.

In big and developed CRM systems, its functions are most often in separated modules. Due to the diversified approach towards the issue of CRM, individual producers of computer applications create the architecture of the software in different ways. It is possible, however, to mention the modules, which are designed by the majority of producers⁹:

1. Account Management (managing contracting parties). It is the module, which stores the information associated with customers,

⁹ A. Stachowicz-Stanusch, M. Stanusch, *CRM Guide...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 94-106.

contracting parties and sometimes with competition. It is called a Customer Charter most often. The function of customer data allows collecting information on: the teleaddress data, the activity sector, the industry, the region, turnovers, the organizational structure as well as on who is responsible for contacts with the given customer. Furthermore, there is an easy access to the history of accounts with the contracting party, invoices, obtaining information about sale conditions, the amount of the merchant credit, and the like

2. Contact Management (managing contacts). This module collects the data about employees of companies, with which the interaction appears. It enables to enter such information as: the full name, the position, the place in the organizational structure, the teleaddress data and the level of discretion. The history of contacts allows for displaying the date, the hour, the matter subject of all contacts, which occurred with the given employee. Simultaneously, it is possible to get reports on relations, which connect employees of individual companies.

3. Sales Management (sales management). It enables to define the sales cycle depending on the product, type of the customer and the like CRM Systems facilitate the registration of all contacts with contracting parties at each stage of the sales cycle, which in particular consists of accepting of an inquiry, negotiations, detailed arrangements and contract itself.

4. Time Management Tools (time management). The calendar function displays the list of scheduled meetings, events and activities to be carried out within specified period. Besides, it assigns tasks to the specific person and gives them priority. The alarm function is aimed at reminding the approaching deadline for the task or passing time of the meeting.

5. Customer Service (managing the service). This function collects the information on service notifications. It is in CRM systems that the data on the user of the product, damaged elements, the preliminary diagnosis, the configuration and the place of the user are collected. It also enables registering service contracts and benefits associated with repair. Furthermore, there is a constant access to tracking the progress in the accomplishment of the customer complaint. It is reporting all service events that is also essential for analysing, i.e. statistics of repairs and damages.

6. Telemarketing. The module allows for creating lists of companies and persons that will be subject to telemarketing through choice based on specific criteria. The system automatically dials the numbers to customers from the earlier created list. It contains features enabling the construction of the base of outgoing calls and features of automatic selection of

numbers from the determined database, registrations of talks and keeping their statistics. Additionally, there is a possibility of managing price lists, marketing campaigns (budgeting, accounting for campaigns, conducting direct actions).

7. Marketing. This function collects the information on: the name, the model and series, the technical specification and prices as well as photographs. The advanced CRM systems allow conducting customer-specific price lists, to archive previous prices and the ways of allocating discounts. This module facilitates entering essential data into the campaign (the target market, targets, applied promotion measures and its plan). Settlement of campaigns carried out allows creating their history. On the basis of the data from previous campaigns, the system helps to determine, which promotion and advertising measures are most effective in order to achieve a large turnover.

8. Partner Relationship Management (managing partners). It consists in making a CRM application available to business partners – most often through the Internet. They can use it in the diversified extent, depending on the pursued policy. Thanks to that, the owner of the CRM system can systematically follow all actions of partners, their commercial actions, forecasts and plans resulting from the data, they enter into the application.

9. Knowledge Management (knowledge management). There is a possibility of creating of any category and subcategory of the entered information as well as contextual searching for the collected information, including publishing them in the company Internet. Furthermore, the application of managing documents facilitates their storing and making available of chosen information for users, as well as of attaching marketing documents in any format (text, graphics, and video).

10. Business Intelligence (data mining). It is through the function of supporting market researches that the system gives the possibility of building forms. Additionally, it collects data from them and analyses them. It also gives a possibility of forecasting and planning any variables on the basis of the data from the CRM base. **E-business.** The base is functioning of online shops. The one supported by CRM systems increases the sales volume. The system, on the basis of the current shopping of the customer, analyses his interest and submits a next offer to him, which perhaps will meet his expectations. After placing an order, the customer can follow the realization status of his order.

11. Workflow (group work). It consists in defining processes, which occur in the company, the way of the document and the information flow. It is for its designing that special graphic tools are used. It assists in

assigning tasks to individual persons and groups at all stages of the process. It also notifies on approaching deadlines. Summarizing the above information, it should be stated that properly implemented CRM systems support the company management at all levels. Without any doubt, they make the work easier both in large corporations with extended organizational structures as well as in average and small-sized enterprises.

3. Planning the CRM system

The CRM system causes the change of the operations of the entire company. This change is not the consequence of the implementation of the system, but one of its fundamental objectives. The appropriate planning determines the success or the possible failure of the entire implementation. Therefore, the CRM implementation program requires understanding and the strong dedication to customer orientation as well as the compliance with its goals. Furthermore, it is both from the management and the employees that the constant vigilance and commitment in relations with customers are required. The success of the system depends on the entire company¹⁰. The effective CRM system changes both the way, in which the organization cooperates with customers but also the way, in which the buyers cooperate with the company. The tendency of employees to the change of their duties and processes constitutes the key component of the success.

The CRM as a computer system is not a system, which every average company and much less a large company should have. The organization cannot be a subject to the trend and invest in the system, without which it efficiently works for this reason. While determining real opportunities of the implementation, the company should analyse, whether it has a sufficiently large number of customers as well as whether it carries enough transaction out. If the reply to one of the above issues is negative, the investment in the big management support system for relations with the customer does not have any justification. Simultaneously, the companies, which offer rather small number of products or support few markets, should also not implement it. CRM is combined with after-sales services i.e. the service and the technical support. Therefore, the companies, which do not have such services in their offers, should consider the implementation of the system of the CRM class¹¹.

¹⁰ J. Dyche, *CRM customer relationships*, Helion, Gliwice 2002, p. 149.

¹¹ J. Walas-Trębacz, *CRM – business strategy and tool supporting customer relationship management* [in] B. Domańska-Szaruga (ed.), *Building customer relationships*, Studio EMKA Publishing house, Warsaw 2009, p. 51.

All companies, which want to move towards CRM, should correctly prepare for it. It is below that the basic steps are presented, which should be carried out to enter the path to CRM. In particular, they include analysis of all areas of activity of the organization, which are essential from a point of view of the effective implementation of CRM. It is in order to prepare correctly the company for the implementation of the CRM concept that one should determine main reasons of the implementation and then settle, what one wants to achieve thanks to it. It is also important to analyse of the current business model of the company and to evaluate its current adaptation for implementing guidelines of CRM. It is worthwhile also to estimate the influence of the implementation of the system on the general corporate strategy. It is in order to bridge the gaps in the process of planning that additional steps should be taken like examining the risk of the failure of the implementation of the system in the given company. It is simultaneously essential to analyse the benefits of the implementation of the system for the organisation¹².

In order to understand how much the correctly implemented CRM system can bring, it is necessary to define clearly the benefits for the company. According to the classification suggested by A. Stachowicz-Stanusch, they can be divided into two basic groups. It is the first one of them that advantage at the strategic level constitutes. One may include here¹³:

- the possibility of obtaining of the synergy effect thanks to the cooperation of the company with chosen crucial customers;
- increasing the customer loyalty through their satisfaction;
- increasing sales and simultaneously profits generated by the company;
- implementing the consistent customer service system for the entire company.

It is necessary to wait for the above results most often for some time. These benefits will be visible only after about one year from the date of the implementation of the system.

The second group of the benefits is created by the ones experienced by individual users of the system. They are termed operational benefits.

¹² W. Grudzewski, I. Hejduk (ed.), *The company of the future – strategic vision*, Difin, Warsaw 2002, p. 324.

¹³ A. Stachowicz-Stanusch, M. Stanusch, *CRM Guide...*, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

We rank increasing productivity and reducing operating costs above all among them. It is possible mainly thanks to¹⁴:

- reducing the time that sellers allocate for administrative activities;
- increasing the effectiveness of performed after-sales actions;
- reducing costs of the recruitment and staff trainings;
- reducing the number of the customer complaints;
- increasing the efficiency of promotional measures at simultaneous reducing their costs;
- reviewing sales departments' functioning as the result of the assessment of conversations with customers.

Most of these benefits are possible to notice soon after the implementation of the system and are more and more visible along with users' are getting acquainted with the system. Furthermore, according to the experience of the companies, which effectively managed to introduce the CRM system, they managed to reduce operating cost even by the 30%.

There were discussed benefits above that result from the correctly planned and introduced CRM system. However, in spite of numerous benefits, there are also problems at the stage of the process. The companies experience many problems and they make also costly mistakes. The most important ones were characterised below¹⁵.

Technological rather than process approach. While introducing the CRM system, it is often forgotten that it is a philosophy of a company not computer software. Its implementation indicates above all the change of the company policy, processes occurring in it and the organizational culture. In fact, the companies implementing CRM solutions excessively confine only to the technology sphere focused on due configuring the software.

Biased pre-execution analysis. The implementation of the CRM system is inseparably associated with the corporate strategy. The companies executing the pre-execution analysis often limit themselves for diagnosing the spheres associated with the functionality of the given software omitting analysis of substantive guidelines for the existence of the company. Such approach causes that not all needs of customers are identified and the system is implemented up to the current concept of management rather than the one being based on the CRM concept.

The start of the implementation at the moment, when the company is still not prepared for it. It happens many times that companies invest in

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 118.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 133-134.

CRM systems disregarding that their models of the business do not match the concept of the management outlined by CRM. The philosophy, which sometimes requires changes in the approach towards buyer, the manner of the support, the verification of the company's objectives, motivation systems and often in the very strategy. Such problems emerge only at the moment of the start of the implementation, what affects its extending in time and increases costs.

The inappropriate choice if the IT solution. There are currently several dozen systems of the CRM class in Poland at present offered by companies. They are diversified both under the price as well as the functionality, from basic managing contacts with the customer till developed systems. Due to the lack of objective norms and standards, it is not possible to compare them very often. Simultaneously, it may happen that the system matching the current model of operating of the organization will not be useful in future.

In order to create a proper CRM system, it is necessary to develop a detailed, solid plan, in which all aspects necessary for achieving success will be included: people, techniques and processes. The next important element is to formalize the approach towards RIO (Return on Investment). RIO is a profitability ratio applied in order to estimate the profitability of the return on the investment. Generally, this indicator puts together costs incurred for given investment to generated (anticipated) income. It is in CRM that the ratio has to take into account¹⁶:

- the costs of investment (the purchase and the use of CRM);
- the change in operating costs resulting from the implementation of CRM;
- the change in profits on sales of products and services;
- the non-measurable benefits (among them the higher level of customers' and employees' satisfaction).

The next important element is the choice of relevant components for the CRM implementation. There are two fundamental classes of tools to distinguish: first one helps to get data, however the second one supports analysts in acquiring the information from the data warehouse. The main reason for creating data warehouses is the possibility of taking decisions in relation to the segmentation of buyers and associating products with specific profiles of customers. Archaeology of the data in the CRM system consists in the accumulation of the information about customers and

¹⁶ A. Mazur, K. Jaworska, D. Mazur, *CRM Customer... op.cit.*, p. 17.

products. The levels, on which the information should be kept, are in particular¹⁷:

- Contact information: who the customer is, what are the methods of reaching him;
- Information on the household: what links exist among customers, whether there is a possibility of applying group promotions;
- Group Information: with which groups customers are connected, history of the customer;
- History of the promotion: what current promotions resulted in the desired effect;
- Purchases of products: whether it is possible to classify behaviour of the buyer depending on the type of purchased products and the size of the purchase;
- History of the interaction: the channels being the best way of contacts with the customer.
- Comparing, collecting, uniting and removing the repeating information as well as the data management is a big challenge.

One of the most difficult elements by implementing the CRM system is to determine the measures of successes. It is important to recognize the organizational limitations for the system at the very beginning. In fact, the entire enterprise, starting from managers to programmers, must adapt the identical vision of CRM. These are mainly long-sighted managers that emphasise it, since it allows for creation of the general-company CRM program. As it can be seen, the organization must consider numerous aspects before implementing the CRM system. However, the efforts put into the planning stage will allow avoiding problems in the future. It is essential to convince the whole company of the need of CRM system implementation starting from the management board through employees of individual divisions, who will work with the system. While summarizing the above information, it must be stated that there are a lot of problems, which have to be faced by companies wanting to introduce the CRM system. While facing them, the company has to be sure that the given system is essential. Furthermore, it must demonstrate the determination at every implementing stage. The fact that the experience of consulting companies in this respect is increasingly bigger is an advantageous aspect. It is necessary above all to answer the question, in which extent the CRM system is needed by the company.

¹⁷ W. Grudzewski, I. Hejduk, *Methods of designing of management systems*, Difin, Warszawa 2004, p. 140.

4. The choice of tools and the CRM implementation

The main challenge of the modern CRM system is to increase the number of loyal customers. In order to achieve it, the company must be transformed into a customer-oriented enterprise in all areas of its activity – its marketing, sales and customer service. The identification of key interactions in the life cycle of customer and understanding his expectations are elements of this process. By the CRM system is meant the software supporting the registration and the accumulation of data, planning events with customers and analysing the registered information in all sorts of sections. The implementation of this strategy requires the considerable knowledge about the own enterprise and customers, at who we direct services or products. It also requires much effort from all employees of the company.

The implementation of the CRM system is associated with high costs of purchasing the required software, consultation but also because of the time devoted by employees for accustoming to it. This system positively affects the way of performing the work by the team responsible for contacts with customers, what directly reflects in getting new orders and carrying out the earlier ones. In order to implement the CRM system with a success, the absolute approval of the team for customers is required. The analysis of processes occurring in the operations of the organization, of the CRM role in its plans and objectives, which will be achieved as the consequence of CRM implementation, is essential. These aims can include¹⁸:

- increasing the number of new customers;
- reducing the number of customers abandoning the partnership;
- shortening the sales cycle;
- more effective using possibilities;
- applying new channels of the market penetration.

After determining such objectives and setting priorities, a form of map is created to choose an appropriate system.

The procedure of creating the system of the consumer relationship management includes activities associated with planning, forecasting and the analysis of customers. All actions taken in order to implement the system and its development can be defined as the process of its improving.

¹⁸ K. Burnett, *Relationships with key customers*, Oficyna Publishing House, Kraków 2002, p. 287.

K. Burnett mentions eleven steps of the implementation of the CRM2 system¹⁹:

- 1) formulating and understanding objectives of the company and the evaluation of its key competencies.
- 2) Preparing an overall business plan.
- 3) Creating the database on customers and identification of key customers.
- 4) formulating the strategy of keeping and developing key customers.
- 5) calculating needs and organizing team for key customers.
- 6) providing motivation for team members and gaining support of the higher management.
- 7) preparing detailed development plans on relations with key customers.
- 8) establishing the system of evaluations of the customer profitability.
- 9) creating the information system on customers.
- 10) creating the system of satisfying customers.
- 11) Joint negotiations in order to achieve the stability and the profitability.

The implementation of the CRM system is a long and extensive process. There is no explicit, universal development scheme. The more complicated the final version is, the more extended the implemented project is. Therefore, there are distinguished two ways of the effective implementation of the system. The first one covers the space from the operating to the general-organizational variant. The second one determines detailed steps by implementing.

In spite of existing differences in the ways of implementing CRM systems, there are some permanent measures of the success by developing the system, which apply to every project. One may rank among them²⁰:

The gradual development. It means that the enterprise gradually receives the next scope of the CRM functionality in equal intervals. It arises mainly from the fact that the majority of divisions of the company cannot adopt complicated changes of functions and processes, which are associated with entering the new system at once. The next CRM stages create good atmosphere amongst the interested parties of employees and members of the management who see its value for themselves. Another possibility of implementing the system is to introduce all its functions at

¹⁹ U. Kałużna-Drewińska, *CRM systems in the process of customer relationship management* [in] B. Domańska-Szaruga (ed.), *Building customer relationships*, Studio EMKA Publishing House, Warsaw 2009, p. 128.

²⁰ J. Dyche, *CRM customer relationships*, Helion, Gliwice 2002, p. 221.

once. However, it is associated with rapid changes within the company and unpleasant events resulting from it appearing very often.

Development determined by requirements. It means that for creating and adapting individual functions according to the expectations of the company, the persons developing the CRM are responsible. Moreover, they are aware of the significant functionality to it. Implementing the system according to the requirements ensures that users will receive what they exactly expected.

Continuous user involvement. It is very often that teams introducing CRM systems involve users from companies only at the beginning and at the end of the process. Simultaneously, they omit the middle period of its development, which is also very essential and sometimes has a primary importance. It means that final users assess the concept, determine the thematic scope of CRM. Moreover, there is a regular communication amongst the developing team and employed employees as well as the founder of CRM.

Rigorous implementation process. In order to optimize the implementation of the CRM system, it must be planned and carried out according to structured processes. It will ensure the accurate knowledge of the range of activities of individual individuals and employees at every stage of development activities. Furthermore, the properly designed implementation plan will ensure that the involved persons will focus on the very implementation to a lesser degree and will direct their attention for real delivering the valuable functionality to the CRM system.

Enterprises are more and more ready for organizational amendments brought by the introduction of CRM systems. The providers of IT systems aware of it, having an adequate knowledge and experience are also ready to take the risk associated with the investment in systems of such type. After delivering the installation and training, the technical problems associated with the implementation should be solved. Because it is very often that the requirements for the system grow along with the development of the enterprise and increasing the functionality of assisting solutions – and hence of the knowledge and the automation. The changes brought by CRM systems are processes embracing the entire organization. The cooperation of the company with the supplier of computer systems becomes essential, so as that the entered technical solutions aim at appropriate objectives. It is worthwhile to notice for summarizing that introducing CRM systems brings more benefits than losses even though its implementation can be very expensive at the beginning. It should be noticed that CRM facilitates

the work of users, what results in their becoming more effective and their contact with the customer is faster and more efficiently. The company furthermore gains the better contact with buyers and the correctly introduced system contributes to the great marketing success.

5. Conclusions

The experience of the last years shows that enterprises, which occupy the dominant position on the market owe their success to the customer-oriented strategy. In order to meet fully the needs of customers, the company must learn them first, what is supported by CRM tools. They enable to reach customers directly, at the time and the place favourable for him, by using means of communication most popular with a given person. These tools increase the effectiveness of actions of the company and the effectiveness of the communication between the parties. They enable the accumulation and analysis of the obtained information, which are one of the most valuable resources of the company. The competent use of the knowledge dispersed in the entire organization is a determinant of the success of the company.

The implementation of the CRM system is not only the installation of the software allowing to increase the productivity but also the change of the way of thinking of the entire organization and the careful preparation and planning all actions. The CRM implementation should always be started with defining the objectives and preparing the right business strategy. It results in amendments in the organization, the culture and processes. However, the changes and achieving the benefit from them are possible thanks to application of the IT technology. Just such a sequence allows the effective implementation of the CRM strategy. The reverse approach consisting in beginning the implementation with the technology never is effective in practice.

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