

Use of CRM in University/Institutions -A Better and Transparent System

Neeta Sharma

School of Engineering and Technology

Noida International University

Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

In Universities/Institutions are realizing that achieving better results in the organization a transparent system is required for providing satisfaction of their students/management in day to day operations. In Education System, it is not easy to collate, agglutinate and transform the student's data necessary for creating standardizes the system. There are so many reasons for this difficulty, including educational structure/body, improper management of data and number of formalities resulting complexity in education system. One of the most important model, CRM (Customer Relationship Management/Model) strategy and its associated information system plays vital role for performing effective working in education system. CRM attempts to produce better connection or bridge the gap between management and their students. This paper presents a modified CRM or eCRM information system for universities (large system) and institutions (small system) for inputting, accessing and transforming information. Also the paper examines the use of applying CRM strategies on education system.

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem definition/statement

Students get frustrated often with the response time and lack of compassion they face from the organization, when they have lots of questions about the university/institution or problem with whole process of student life cycle (starting from admission to award of degree), which are as follows:

- a. Non availability of detailed information related to the various courses.
- b. Non availability of counseling related information and Application forms off line.

- c. Non availability of clear status of the candidate in the entrance exam
- d. Non availability of timely information on Confirmation / Cancelation of admission
- e. Non availability of current information regarding processing of fees, status of document submission and refund of fees.
- f. Prevailing ambiguity on myriad of problems related to conduct of examination at the University/Institution like date sheet, issuance of admit cards and attendance disputes etc.
- g. Declaration of semester/ term-end result, result discrepancies and re-evaluation etc.

These similar types of problems can be avoided by the implementation of CRM (Customer Relationship Management/Model). Universities/Institutions can establish the benefits of CRM in the overall experience of the student while navigating the system of the university/college, making the college system information more interactive, efficient and useful for solving the queries of the students and smoothening the student-college communication process.

1.2. Need of CRM

All universities and educational institutions seek to maintain information of all its currently enrolled students, affiliated colleges, Departments, alumni and participants. Moreover in the modern scenario it has become the need of Universities or Institutions to consider their students as e-Customers for providing them 100% satisfaction. As a result of increasing enrolments day by day, there is a need of support system to better manage the ever increasing data and work processes. Currently, day to day operations of a university are carried out by manual process. Also, to monitor any activity sometimes it requires the physical appearance of the student. Therefore, there is a great need to automate the university's manual

processes using the CRM approach. It will optimize its operations by automating routine tasks and standardizing best practices to improve the day to day activities and of course the students'/management's satisfaction level.

Currently universities websites are the only source to provide the information to the existing students enrolled in the various courses, announcements and other activities but it is a one way communication as students can't interact with the websites but only get relevant information from them. Also, if we look into the "Contact Us" section of most of the universities just provide contact details of the University departments and don't have any separate "Student helpdesk/Support" units to resolve the students' concerns on daily basis. So, every university/institute needs to improve its workflow systems by providing better support and strengthen student base with the help of CRM.

1.3. Introduction of CRM

"CRM (Customer Relationship Management) is an enterprise approach of understanding and influencing customer behaviour through meaningful communications in order to improve customer acquisition, retention, loyalty, and profitability" (Swift 12)[1].

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a model for managing organization's interactions with current and future customers. It includes technology to automate, synchronize, and organize like customer services, technical support etc [3]. CRM mainly has two objectives in the universities/institutions:

- Retentions of current students by increasing loyalty
- Attraction of new students by providing best services

Organizations should be benefited economically with the suitable CRM implementation. According to Ronald Swift's Accelerating Customer Relationships, trenchant CRM increases revenue/profit in six ways:

- Lowering recruiting costs
- Dissipating recruiting needs
- Reducing cost of sales
- Higher customer/student profitability

- Increasing customer/student retention and loyalty
- Evaluating customer/student profitability[2]

Moreover, University of Michigan research shows in an article based on CRM model that it can increase clients' satisfaction by only 1%, then the organization for which this model was implemented will increase its market presence by an average of 3% (Siebel, 2003)[4]. In these ways, universities/institutions will benefit by implementing CRM system.

2. Literature review

As a consequence of the level of maturity and standardization the ubiquitous technologies achieved recently, the ubiquitous computing is gradually becoming the thrust in commerce that follows the e-business (E. Fleisch and C. Tellkamp, 2005) [5].

In the CRM field, Schloter and Aghajan have proposed a prototype for a real-time CRM system that relies on the distribution of Radio Frequency Identity (RFID) readers all over the business and space and providing the customers with RFID-fitted cards. The system tracks the customers and collects information about the customers' presence or persistence using different times to be used as marketing information (Schloter and Aghajan, 2005) [6].

Yang and Rhee proposed a model of ubiquitous CRM (uCRM) utilizing RFID technique for managing the customers by collecting the customer data, and storing them under the ubiquitous environment, and acquire the information of customers in real time (Yang and Rhee, 2007) [7].

In access control, for instance, Corner and Noble used Bluetooth technology as an authentication token that provides the authentication to laptops or doors in the concept of transit authentication (Corner and Noble, 2002)[8].

In Metro future store, an RFID-based shelf and shopping cart content tracking system is used to track the inventory electronically and to allow customers to check-out without a cashier. Similarly banks launched pilot programs for RFID-enabled bank cards in the United States and Europe that aim to provide more personalized service to their customers (R. Sedgewick, 2004) [9].

Combining the features of the enterprise, the county postal CRM system not only meets the requirements of traditional services, but also provides the mindset which builds post enterprise CRM system based on a data warehouse centre (Chen J M, 2004) [10].

In short, business process reengineering, which is based on the customer relationship management strategy, provides a general direction that enable the enterprise to adapt to the contemporary environmental change, survive and develop steadily. Customer relationship management needs each department to integrate the customer-oriented information, ~~and~~ activities and create a customer-centric enterprise. Only in this way can we achieve the overall management. As a business strategy, customer relationship management calls for the implementation of business process reengineering, so that the business process is optimized to make it more in line with the business philosophy - customer-centric (Mingilang Chen, Feng Qian, Yibin Tang, 2004) [11].

3. Variation/types of CRM

There are different kinds of CRM Systems available for different organizations (small, medium & large size) which are as follows:

- 3.1 Operational CRM: It focuses on using software applications which help incorporate the various sets of information available on each customer into one useful file. For example contact information, previous communication information if any etc.
- 3.2 Sales force automation CRM: It will use to record all process at every stage and helping automate activities like preparing reports, scheduling mails and calls.
- 3.3 Analytical CRM: It focus into student/customer data from a wider analytical angle to better performance with new and long strategies that can be effective for future. It will also look into data from all the different databases, by using techniques like data mining, with new trends & patterns.
- 3.4 Collaborative CRM: It will look on integrating external contacts and providing data to its students/customers through an extranet. It provides new technologies and tools like instant messaging.

- 3.5 Campaign management: It is a mixture of Operational and Analytical CRM which can store, track & analyze various strategies of the organization. It provides emails & calling services [11].

4. Solutions provided by the CRM

The universities provide lots of courses, which have lots of queries/concerns from the students on daily basis. Result discrepancy, attendance issues & assignment submissions discrepancies etc. are the most common issues faced by the students. Currently, either student needs to rush to the university administrative personally or need to write them a mail. There is a limited transparency in the existing system; a student doesn't know who is looking after his/her problem and how long it is going to take to get it resolved. Also, there is no way to access the accountability of the concerned staff for the management. So, CRM provides many solutions for these types of problems with quick & accurate responses.

- 4.1. Applying ticket/case creation approach: CRM offers the Support application by which users can create the tickets/case for his/her problem. In a university, every student can be quickly identified by his/her enrollment number. By implementing Web application a student can log- in by providing his/her enrollment number as login id then ticket can be dispatched to the queue to concerned work group like Examination, Finance, Admin etc. CRM system will automatically fetch all the information related to that student.

Once a case is dispatched in the appropriate queue, any employee can accept the case and start resolving on that case. As soon as a case is "accepted" by an employee the mail would be sent to the student regarding the status of the case till its closure. If no employee accepts the case with in time frame then CRM automatically can send the escalation mail to higher authority. This process will improve the accountability as well as provide quick resolution of the problems.

- 4.2. Problem ticket creation using email: CRM can be integrated to the Email server which can offer a quick, professional, cost-effective way to

handle growing inbound inquiry email, Web form, and online application volumes at colleges and universities. It can parse the mail against the student and automatically route each incoming email message to the appropriate staff member based on specified parameters, such as email subject and its content, language, staff member workload, constituent-staff associations or relationships, geography, code, agent skills, and time zones. As a result, the staff members can provide precise, timely, relevant, accurate responses quickly.

It has Powerful productivity features, including a comprehensive library of pre-built response templates and a knowledgebase of articles and FAQs ensure staff members provide personalized, consistent, accurate answers to all inquiries in a manner that is grammatically correct and approved by internal resources.

- 4.3. **Phone:** Phone lines can also be integrated with a CRM for efficiently and cost-effectively manage telephone interactions by merging data from different sources and threading a constituent's entire interaction history into a single comprehensive system. It provides top-notch constituent service with an optimized desktop. Students can be connected to IVRs (Interactive voice response) systems to enable sophisticated, customizable caller identification and notification features (Screen Pops) that provide unified contact history access.

It provides consistent answers with dynamic call scripting features which allowing your staff to build a script library using a simple graphical user interfaces. Calls and contact information arrive simultaneously into the phone workspace. Access the entire contact history from all channels in a single click. It Use automatic employee availability settings to accept, reject, transfer, and terminate calls. Perform warm-call transfers to another user or conference others in; transfer all associated context and data to that new user and offer efficient third-party application access. Students can be connected to IVRs, ACDs (Automatic Call Distributor), and phone switch telephony equipment using industry-standard methods.

- 4.4 **CHAT SESSION:** CRM integrated Chat enables institutions to communicate in real-time with online visitors, providing a dynamic way to answer questions, offer immediate assistance, or proactively engage visitors on the Web site. A

cost-effective solution, staff members can proactively or reactively interact concurrently with multiple people while delivering personal and immediate attention to enhance the constituent's experience. All chat session transcripts are automatically logged and added to the constituent's unique contact record.

For added security, CRM encrypts sensitive information, such as credit card details and Social Security numbers. Employees can quickly respond to inquiries using a knowledgebase of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), response templates, Web links, and documents. As needed, employees can conference individual or multiple staff members into a chat conversation. Supervisors have a special chat workspace to view current queue status and chat session reports to monitor employee performance and load levels.

- 4.5 **Ticket creation by SMS:** CRM will automatically parse the text message and route them in a default queue. Also, CRM integrated SMS Text Messaging allows you to broadcast short messages and reminders. For example, if admissions department changes the timing for a recruiting event; they will then be able to notify all attendees through an SMS blast about the updated timing, based on segmenting prospects by the region or by more specific class criteria if applicable. Whether Financial Aid wishes to remind qualified students of application deadlines or Student Services need to communicate an emergency notification, in real-time SMS Text Messaging can be leveraged by most departments on campus.

- 4.6 **IT helps desk:** It provides a central point to receive help on various issues. CRMs have the separate module for help desk which typically manages incident (ticket) tracking system that allows them to track user requests with a unique ticket number. The help desk can often be an extremely beneficial tool for the universities when used to find, analyze, and eliminate common problems in a university environment.

- 4.7 **Information portal:** Every university maintains its information through its internal web site or portal. CRM can be also be targeted to University's portal and the knowledgebase,

which would be a powerful and robust system, that enables constituents to instantly locate correct answers to their specific questions 24x7 via the Web site.

5. Impact of CRM in universities or institutions

Implementation of CRM in the Universities/Institutions provides positive impact/benefit in following ways:

- 5.1 Quick resolution of the problem: A CRM integrated with the Email server, phone lines and chat sessions, provides a quick resolution of the problems thus helps to handle growing outbound/inbound enquiry at colleges and universities.
- 5.2 Improve accountability: If any complaint/query is filed by the student than concerned authority is bound to answer the case as the update status mail regarding the case would continue to be sent till its closure. In case the query could not be resolved within stipulated time frame, CRM can send the escalation mail to higher authority automatically. This process will improve the accountability.
- 5.3 Improve retention rate and trust: We have very serious quality problem in our Universities/institution. Creating long term relationship with the students is a win-win solution and good for both. In the current scenario of academic environment, students have many options with them. So, CRM plays a significant role to attract, retain and foster stronger relationship with students.
- 5.4 Cost-effective: A CRM is cost-effective solution, for staff members because they can proactively or reactively interact concurrently with multiple people while delivering personal and immediate attention to enhance the constituent's experience with chat, manage telephone interactions by merging data from dissimilar sources and threading a constituent's entire interaction history into a single comprehensive system and improve constituent's satisfaction with tools to provide timely, relevant, and accurate responses with email.
- 5.5 Enhance staff productivity: Powerful productivity features, including a comprehensive library of pre-built response templates and a

knowledge base of articles and FAQs, ensure staff members provide personalized, consistent, accurate answers to all inquiries in a manner that is grammatically correct and approved by internal resources.

- 5.6 Increase constituent satisfaction: CRM enabled Knowledge base offers an intuitive user interface and flexible workflow experience that supports individual problem-solving approaches, improving first-time resolution rates. Inquiries are easily answered, as the solution actually opens the appropriate document and highlights the respective answer.

6. CONCLUSION

A student is one of the most important assets for the universities/institutions. Effective Customer (student) Relationship Management System guarantees to achieve competitive advantage for the universities/institutions. The advantage of the proposed approach for CRM systems in universities/institutions is that it provides great ability of evolution to cope with the students' problems and management requirements. CRM systems are more quick, cost-effective and convenient to be understood and managed by the management. So, CRM attempts to produce better connection or bridge the gap between management and students. This paper examines all the advantages or impact of implementing CRM in the Universities/Institutions. With the implementation of CRM we can easily analyze the performance of the employees and satisfaction level of the students.

7. References

1. Wendy Fan, Robert Luck, Katy Manier, Jaclyn Pierce & Lauren Pool, "CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT FOR A SMALL PROFESSIONAL TECHNICAL SERVICES CORPORATION", 09-04-2013.
2. Swift, R., "Accelerating Customer Relationships" New Jersey: Prentice Hall PTR, 2001.
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Customer_relationship_management
4. Siebel Systems, "Siebel Systems", <http://www.siebel.com/whatiscrm/whycrm.shtml>, 2003.
5. E.Fleisch and C.Tellkamp. The Business Value of Ubiquitous Computing Technologies. Ubiquitous Commerce, January 2005.

6. C. Philipp Schloter and Hamid K. Aghajan. Wireless RFID Networks for Real-Time Customer Relationship Management. In EUC Workshops, volume 3823 of Lecture Notes in Computer Science, pages 1069–1077. Springer, 2005.
7. Seungjeong Yang and Jongtae Rhee. Propose of UCRM System Displaying Powerful Efficiency in RFID Computing Environment. In MUE '07: Proceedings of the 2007 International Conference on Multimedia and Ubiquitous Engineering, pages 190–195, Washington, DC, USA, 2007. IEEE Computer Society.
8. Mark D. Corner and Brian D. Noble. Zero-interaction Authentication. In MobiCom '02: Proceedings of the 8th annual international conference on Mobile computing and networking, pages 1–11, New York, NY, USA, 2002. ACM.
9. R. Sedgewick. Real-Time CRM: A Competitive Advantage Today, A Competitive Imperative Tomorrow? Customer Interaction Solution, 22(8), February 2004.
10. CHEN J M. The Principle, Design and Application of Data Warehouse [M]. Beijing: China Waterpower Press, 2004.
11. Mingilang Chen, Feng Qian, Yibin Tang, "customer relationship management theory and software." Zhejiang University Press, 2004.
12. "Different types of CRM", <http://project-management.com/different-kinds-of-crm-systems/>, 16-10-2013.