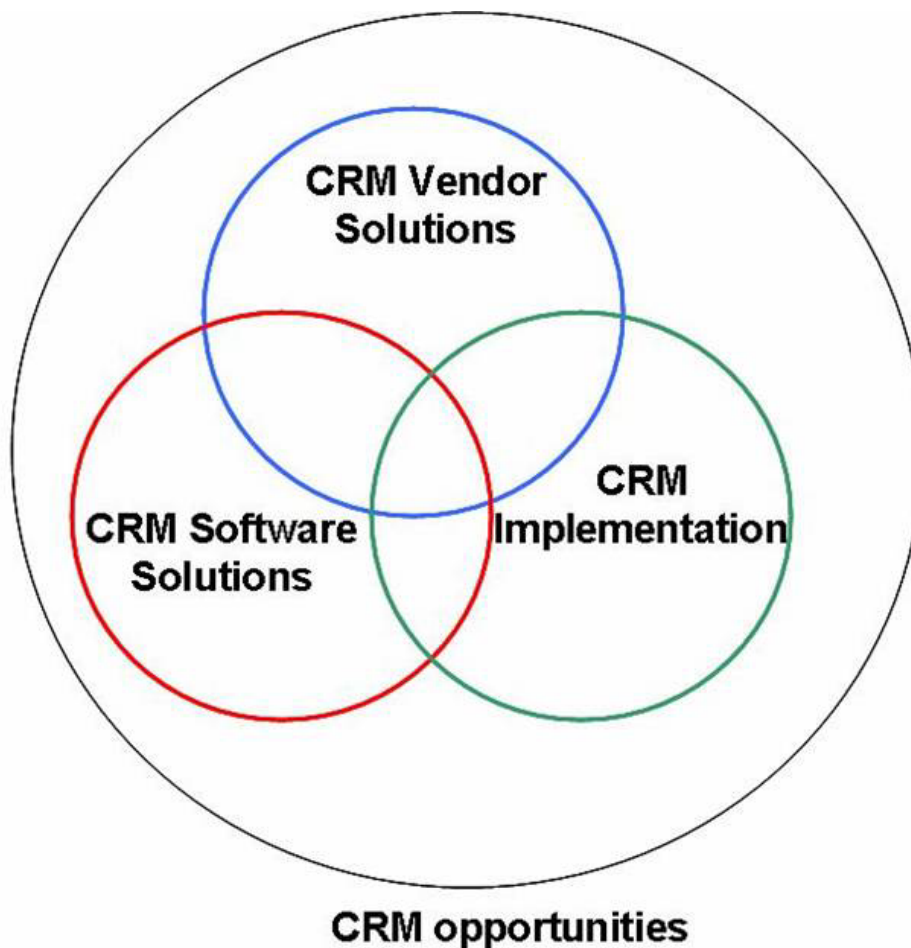


Is it CRM software or CRM vendor or CRM implementation?

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CRM (Customer relationship management) Best Practice - Is it CRM software or CRM vendor or CRM implementation? What defines your best practices? Is your best practice circle of influence of CRM solution same as the customer influencing circle (customer satisfaction and marketing opportunities)?



Circles of CRM implementation types and CRM (customer relationship management) opportunities

Usually, many companies either select a CRM vendor or a CRM software and claim to start implementing CRM business strategy. Some companies have enough leadership diversity and courage to chart the whole map of CRM strategy and implement carefully segment by segment of CRM requirements and its solutions which I am terming as CRM implementation. The question is: Is your circle of CRM strategy same as the circle of customer needs and marketing opportunities?

Since we all accept that CRM is a customer centric business solution for faster and better business development, product/services development and for profitability, the CRM principles and the customer needs and customer expectations are key for understanding what you need for your CRM solution. Thus if CRM strategy is the key business model then the CRM strategy should include the delivery of the following customer centric principles.

First let us understand what is important or what defines customer centric business model.

- *Customers are served well for their needs.* The needs could be as simple as asking a 'how to' question about the product or seeking an explanation on 'what the service is'. Or it can be a complicated question such as I left a file when I vacated the room, and thank you for sending me the files by express mail, but I also kept one important one pager inside the safe box which was not sent. Please check the safety locker for any paper that might be sticking to the sides and send it to me as soon as possible and charge me collect. Imagine level of trust and confidence that the customer will have once this last request is immediately positively satisfied. CRM is about serving well for the need; the rest comes later. (**relevant to the customer needs**)
- Customer needs are served immediately with an acceptable answer or solution. Real time solution to the customer is the key. If customer is going to get answer after 4 weeks (typical fulfillment services parameters), it is not CRM, it is marketing services in the old way. In the above example, while it is acceptable if the front desk at the hotel says that they will get back in an hour. If they say, on the other hand, that they will get back tomorrow, it is not attending to the concerns and needs of the customer. The paper may be such an important document, the customer does not want to go through the anxiety for full 24 hours. The best solution is that the service people immediately go to the room and check out the safety locker and communicate it to the calling customer. (**immediate, acceptable, and responsive communication or interaction**)
- Customers have a way to get service/solution through the self-service web CRM, 7x24 whenever possible. (**self service web CRM**)
- Customers expectation that their latest information is available in the file and if not have a quick way to change that information in the system is fulfilled (**latest customer information**)
- Customers expectation that all their interaction, irrespective of how different channels by which they have been interacting (**channel integration**)
- Customers expectation that always the CRM response system has the latest information, as late as just the last minute (**real time CRM system**)
- CRM system taking advantage of marketing relevance (right person, right message, at the right time) in real time during the customer interaction however the customer wants to be served? However, the system (includes

- people, software and hardware) should be implemented in such a way that they are very intently listening to the customer that they do not push selling over and above the immediate customer relevant issue (marketing opportunities)
- CRM system or CRM software or CRM implementation (solution)is actively soliciting customer experience with the service/product/CRM interactions (CRM interaction satisfaction research).
 - CRM system or CRM software or CRM implementation (solution)is providing you with faster and better product/service development information that the system influences the product/service development (influence product/service development)

Now think about your CRM vendor, CRM software and/or CRM implementation (solution); whatever your current strategy is. If the current strategy does not satisfy with an emphatic yes to all the above list of principles of CRM operation, you are short in really taking advantage of the promise of CRM solutions. Understanding how short your CRM implementation strategy is and whether it is too short that it will fail your CRM investment is a different topic to explore.

Never ask any thing less in your CRM (customer relationship management)system or from your CRM vendor. Otherwise you are shorting your CRM investment.

The question is: Is your best practice circle of influence of CRM solution same as the customer influencing circle (customer satisfaction and marketing opportunities)?

Of course all these things will bear better result on the profitability only by using intelligent CRM operation, which is a whole different dimension to CRM (customer relationship management) implement - the dimension of CRM intelligence.

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