IMPACT OF INCORPORATED CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP–AN INSIGHT TOWARDS HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN REALMS OF CRM INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

In the global era of competition where due to customer awareness the customers today tend to be more price sensitive,sophisticated and calculative in deciding the service providers.With increasing competition apart from the quality and brand image the relationship marketing has also gained momentum,emphasizing more on the emergence and development of Customer Relationship Management(CRM).The paper hereby is an attempt to present the importance and applicability of CRM with respect to the hotel industry.It also highlights the parameters for effective integration of CRM in hotel operations.Considering the three pivotal of effective CRM integration i.e. in Managerial Processes, ICT and Knowledge Management,the paper builds up a concrete framework establishing the relationship between effective CRM vis-à-vis increasing popularity.

Key Words: Customer Relationship Management, service sector,integration,operations etc.

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Introduction

It is a truth that a winning company not only put customers first, but put customersat the heart of their organization because the changes in customer behavior determines the growth curve of the organization,directly effecting the profits.Therefore CRM plays a pivotal role in developing strong organization. The main goal of CRM is the capability to handle customer interaction across differentchannels and functions, for building loyal and profitable customer relationships.Although cost cutting and competitive pricing strategies may attract customers from competitors, in many services industries price advantages are not a sufficientreason for customers moving between suppliers. In these situations successful competitive strategies include developing strong relationships with customers andcross-selling those other services can only pave the path towards development.

Specifically the hotel or the service industry involves CRM at its every step of operation.The hotelindustry is also experiencing increased globalization, competition, higher customerturnover, growing customer acquisition costs and rising customer expectations,meaning that hotels' performance and competitiveness is significantly dependent ontheir ability to satisfy customers efficiently and effectively (e.g. Olsen and Connolly,2000; Gilmore and Pine, 1997). The success rate of CRM Implementation is low and evidencesuggests that many organizations are finding it hardto realize business benefits from this strategy. While thereare well-known and impressive success stories (Sprint,2002), failure rates of CRM projects are high (Tafti, 2002;Mendoza et al., 2006). To enhance profitability and guest loyalty, hotelsmust nowadays focus on implementing Customer Relationship Management (CRM)strategies that aim to seek, gather and store the right information, validate and shareit throughout the entire organization and then use it throughout all organizational levels for creating personalized, unique guests' experiences (Sigala and Connolly,2004; Olsen and Connolly, 2000; Siguaw and Enz, 1999).Therefore many hotels face the challenge of effective implementation of CRM which is closely integrated to the operations,knowledge management and extremely important its dependency on information technology.Since ICT appears as a major catalyst for developing one-to-one experiences andimplementing CRM strategies, CRM in the hospitality industry has been primarilydefined by the myriad of ICT suppliers that overstate ICT's role. Consequently,many hotels have difficulty

in implementing effective CRM strategies, because theyallow software vendors to drive their approach to CRM, or retrofit a CRM strategyto match the CRM technology they have purchased.

However, CRM is not atechnology problem but a business problem that requires ICT tools and functionalityto be aligned, designed and effectively coordinated along with the businessoperations and strategy. Indeed, several CRM projects have failed due to the lack ofrobust implementation approaches and measurement tools, the bad exploitation andintegration of ICT tools with processes, people and business strategies as well as theinappropriate ICT and business re-engineering and management practices (Rigby etal., 2002; Corner and Hinton, 2002; Rheault and Sheridan, 2002). In the lack of awidely accepted framework for effective CRM implementation (Adebanjo, 2003),this paper aims to develop a model for managing and integrating ICT capabilitiesinto CRM strategies and business operations. To that end the concept, aims andcrucial factors for implementing CRM in general as well as in the hotel industry areanalyzed and summarized into a model that integrates three crucial managerialprocesses: knowledge, relationships and ICT management.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is an enterprise customer-centricapproach that uses different techniques to understand and influence consumer behavior.It is a process which has two objectives:

- To impact all aspects to the consumer relationship (improve customersatisfaction, enhance customer loyalty or increase profitability).

- To ensure that employees within an organization are using CRM tools. The needfor greater profitability requires an organization to proactively pursue its relationshipswith customers In the real world, acquiring, building, and retaining customers are becoming toppriorities. For many companies, the quality of their customer relationships providestheir competitive edge over other businesses. In addition, the definition of *customer* hasbeen expanded to include immediate consumers, partners and resellers - in other words,everyone who participates, providesinformation, or requires services from thecompany.Companies are beginning to realize that surviving an intensively competitive

andglobal marketplace requires closer relationships with customers.In turn, enhanced customer relationships It requires the company to know and understand its markets and customers. Thisinvolves detailed customer information in order to select the most profitable customersand identify those no longer worth targeting. CRM also entails development of theoffer: which products to sell to which customers and through which channel. In selling,firms use campaign management to increase the effectiveness of the marketingdepartments. Finally, it seeks to retain its customers through services such as callcenters and help desks.

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Literature Review

According to Light (2003), Customer Relationship Management is a process of managingcustomer relations in an organized way. They aim at managing each "Moment Of Truth" thatis experienced by the customer. There are various contact points where the hotel comes indirect contact with the customer which are known as 'Touch points' in the CRM language.These touch points are considered important as there is direct interaction with the customerand they provide valuable input to the hotel. The input provided by the customer has to becaptured in such a way that it becomes information and can be used by various processeswithin the hotel. it is based on the argument that "the happier a customer is with arelationship, the greater the likelihood they will stay with an organization". Moreover, thecomprehension of the potential life-time value of a loyal customer to the company is alsoclosely connected to its development.(Chen and Popvich, 2003,). It is argued by some researchers that CRM can be seen as theorganizational implementation of a relationship management philosophy (Ryals and Knox,2001, Ryals and Payne, 2001). Through delivering more responsive and customized services tocustomers, CRM increases customer satisfaction and this, in turn, improves customer loyalty.(Croteau and Li, 2003).The importance of relationship management is increasingly beingrecognized. Kotler (1992) wrote that companies must move from short-termtransaction-oriented goals to long-term relationship-building goals. (Jackson, 1994). Theevolution of relationship management is also closely associated with the realization of theimportance of the customer to a company the advancement of technology, the diminishing ofproduct differences and the ever-increasing pressure of competition has led to

theacknowledgement that customers are one of a company's most valuable assets. (Chen andPopvich, 2003,). It is argued by some researchers that CRM can be seen as the organizationalimplementation of a relationship management philosophy (Ryals and Knox, 2001, Ryals andPayne, 2001). Through delivering more responsive and customized services to customers,CRM increases customer satisfaction and this, in turn, improves customer loyalty. Ndubisi(2003) argued that the only real sustainable business growth strategy is through autoplasticsymbiotic relationship with customers, which enables a business to understand their needsmore clearly and to create and deliver superior value. Keltner (1995) found that German hotels,in contrast to American hotels, managed to maintain a stable market position during the 1980sand early 1990s because of relationship oriented hotel strategies.(Johnson, 1999). The term also refers to a customer's perceptions of how well the wholerelationship fulfils expectations, predictions, goals and desires the customer has concerning thewhole relationship. Henning-Thurau et al., 2002). Customer Service is now more fashionablycalled Customer Relationship Management. The concept of Customer RelationshipManagement has a broader focus of not only serving the customer but also creating thecustomer and retaining him for measurable and substantial returns. Also, a review of literaturehas revealed that studies focusing on relationship management, service and satisfaction alreadyexist. (Colgate et al., 2005; Martı́n-Consuegra et al., 2006).CRM is a vast subject whereDatabase Marketing supports the concept of one to one marketing. It is also remarkable thatthere is no research on the relationship between relational benefits and customer satisfaction inretail hotel. (O'Malley and Tynan, 2000). However, all customers do not want to engage inrelationships and, in fact, it has been suggested that close customer relationships in hotel arerare, and that they are being further weakened by the increase in self-service technologies.

Customer Relationship Management and ICT

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a crucial aspect of all business. It's a widelyaccepted truism that the more you know about your clients and prospects, the higher their prospective lifetime value will be to your organization.Data warehouses and data mining are the most popular and highly needed systemsfor providing CRM capabilities or else for defining,

developing and managing ''thesegment of one''. The theory is simple – build as much detailed information about your clients and their preferences as you can, and use that information to offer them the right products at the right time at the right price.

With the current scenario its imperative to ensure customer satisfaction by updating your database with as much information as you may incorporate in your records with respect to the clients and there family,especially the ones frequently visiting the hotel.

The reality is often different – the various touch points you have with your clients can beextremely difficult to align, making effective data management nothing but a corporate fantasy. It's not uncommon to have legacy systems, outsourced call-centres, poorly maintained transaction records, and a whole host of logistical, budget and time constraints which prevent you from building the kind of picture of your clients that you need.

It's your client data and it should be getting squeezed, interrogated and pushed as far as it can tohelp you build your revenue streams. If it's not, it's a wasted resource. It's your job to know when you could be doing more with your data, but it's ours to help you achieve it. It is arguedthat most problems in CRM implementationare not technical (Goldenberg, 2002; Finnegan and

Willcocks, 2007). Instead, common problems include organizationalchange and disruption, different views on customerinformation and changes in the business, for examplemergers (Schwartz, 2002). There are also cases wheretechnology misfit has created further hurdles(Finneganand Willcocks, 2006).

ICT's supporting role for fostering business process reengineering and restructuringprocesses around the customer is widely argued and does not stop at thetraditional organizational boundaries. Aligning the ICT with the organizational infrastructure is critical so that the numerous systems at the customer touch points(e.g. Internet, PMS, EPOS, CRS, etc) do not become ''islands'' of uselessinformation. Within the hotel sector, Sigala et al. (2001) argued the need tointegrate yield management (YM), customer databases, corporate and distributionsystems for maximizing yield per individual guest during his/her business lifetime,per distribution channel and/or per hotel chain or properties-network. Currently,Fairfield and LeMeridien integrated their YM and CRM systems for personalizing their rates, products, services and
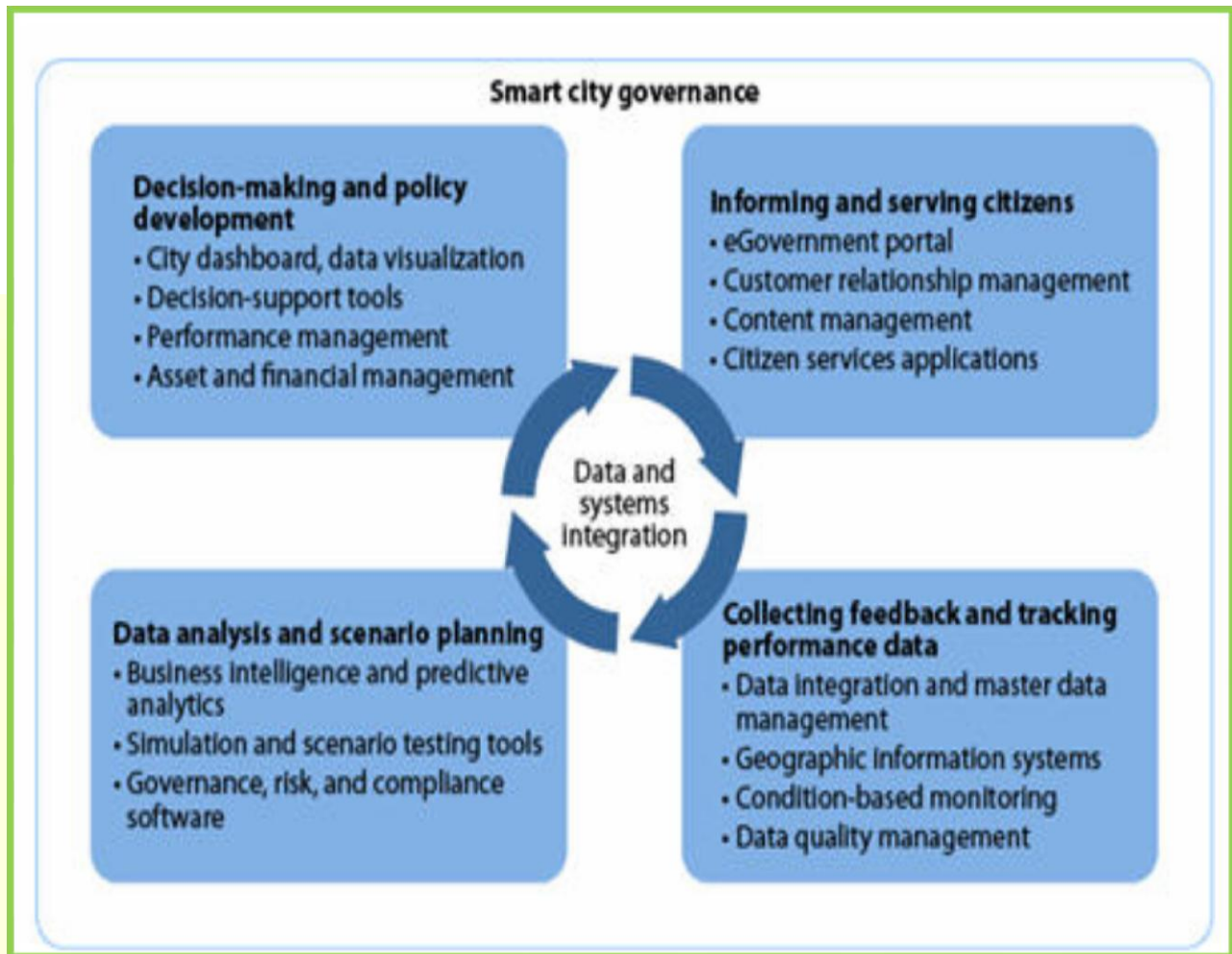
promotions to their frequent guests. Wells et al.(1999) described how electronic networks allow the distribution and share of guestdatabases across Ritz Carlton hotel properties allowing staff to accommodate andtreat individual guests based on preferences from previous visits. MarriottInternational hotel chain installed a ''Codification System'' to virtually convert

what all its employees knew about hotel day-to-day operations and standardoperational procedures in order to provide consistent customer services (Gupta andGovindarajan, 2000). The company also designed a reward system for those whoshared, created and mobilised new knowledge relevant to the firm. Accor is installingcomputers to their lounges for providing information access to employees, who donot have and need computers for their operations. Similar operations are initiated inRitz Carlton hotels (Sveiby, 2000) for enhancing customer loyalty .Therefore the base emphasis on effective maintenance of customer data base through various IT softwares.

CRM-OPERATION

Relationship marketing (internal and external)Within this new paradigm, interacting with customers and satisfying customerneeds are vitally important (Christou, 2003b). Customer relationships are not builtand sustained with direct (e)-mail themselves, but rather with the types ofprogrammes and communication strategies that are available and for which e-mailmay be a delivery mechanism. Winer (2001) argued that a comprehensive CRM is acollection of integrated components such as customer service (0800 numbers,faxback/customer comments cards, e-mail, FAQ), frequency, loyalty and rewardprogrammes, customisation and community building (e.g. virtual communities). Theaim of these integrated customer communication channels is to support the customercycle (i.e. acquisition, enhancement/cross-up-selling and retention) by identifyingprofitable customers, differentiating the services/products offered to differentmarkets of ones, interact with individual customers in an integrated way acrosschannels and customise/personalise customers' experiences. Individual resistance combined with organizational resistancecan create barriers for an overall integration. Variablessuch as senior management support/sponsorship,selling change internally, putting a change infrastructurein place, providing effective end-user training, business processre-configuration and establishing rewarding systemsplay an important role (Pettigrew, 1985).

CRM also largely depends on staff attitudes, commitment and performance andso, success on the external marketplace requires initial success on the internalbusiness by motivating and getting employees' commitment (Gronroos, 1994).Hence, apart from developing the four P's of the marketing mix, a host of otherresources and as well as of front-of- and back-of-house activities should be achieved(e.g. handling guests' complaints and requirements) (Bitner, 1995). Although most ofthe people involved in customer-invisible activities are not part of the marketingdepartment, their attitudes towards customers and their ways of executing their tasksare imperative. According to Gummesson (1990), these employees must be trained tobecome part-time marketers. According to Peppard(2000), from a customer perspective the channel they

choose at any point in time should be the most convenient.Integration of these channels or touch points thereforebecomes highly important. To date, channel integrationremains complex and goes beyond integration of technology.

While the idea of maximizing transactions is nothing new, what is different is thatthis style of guest interaction will demand substantial conceptual skills from everyemployee. Because it might be impossible to create ideal guest experiences solelythrough expert systems, organizations might have to create intelligent-responseteams comprising of employees with broad knowledge bases cutting acrosstraditional organizations functions. For dealing with guests' experience-relateddesires, employees will be required to have advanced social skills such asunderstanding of role conflict, role theory, communications and personalityidentification (Olsen and Connolly, 2000). Employees will need to be contentexperts who do not only know how to work with and exploit technology, but alsocan manage the information exchange and match guests to experiences. Moreover,as such knowledge-based work may take place electronically; staff should be ableand know how to work collaboratively and electronically irrespective of their spatial,396 M. Sigala / Hospitality Management 24 (2005) 391–413time and cultural differences. For example, on its corporate website, Wyndhamoperates a virtual community and discussion forum for its women businesstravelers, which requires enhanced and specific techno centric communications skills(e.g. knowing the netiquette discipline) from Wyndham employees who moderateand operate this online community. Overall, CRM calls for new job descriptions,organizational structures, motivational thinking and reward systems.

Smart city governance

Decision-making and policy development
- City dashboard, data visualization
- Decision-support tools
- Performance management
- Asset and financial management

Informing and serving citizens
- eGovernment portal
- Customer relationship management
- Content management
- Citizen services applications

Data and systems integration

Data analysis and scenario planning
- Business intelligence and predictive analytics
- Simulation and scenario testing tools
- Governance, risk, and compliance software

Collecting feedback and tracking performance data
- Data integration and master data management
- Geographic information systems
- Condition-based monitoring
- Data quality management

CRM-KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMNT

The success of relationship marketing heavily depends on the collection andanalysis of customer information that are used for developing highly personalized offerings. Buttle (1996) pointed out that marketing problems are by natureinformation handling problems. Romano (2000) andMassey et al. (2001) stronglyadvocated the relation of CRM with KM and specifically customer KM, while thesignificance of customer knowledge is highlighted in several CRM studies (see reviewin Stefanou et al., 2003). However, information should not be confused withknowledge. Knowledge is produced when information is analysed and used to enableand leverage strategic actions. Sigala (2003c) argued that this confusion has ledseveral businesses to make vast investments on ICT projects which have in turnyielded marginal results. To overcome

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the ICT productivity paradox, hotelmanagement needs to embed ICT-generated customer and competitive informationinto its decision-making processes. These processes involve three broad phases thatrun in parallel (Tiwana, 2001) namely, information acquisition, sharing andutilisation. Hence, the collection and creation of insights, skills, and relationships(knowledge acquisition), when they are disseminated and shared (knowledgesharing) are followed by integration of learning, insights and experiential knowledgethat in turn support effective decision-making processes (knowledge utilisation).

Davenport and Prusak (1988) identified the following KM critical success factors:

ICT and organizational infrastructure; friendly culture for knowledge sharing, creation and management; change in motivational practices for encouraging andrewarding staff when information is collected, shared and used; and openorganizational structure. Malhotra (1998, p. 58) stressed the importance of ICT394 M. Sigala / Hospitality Management 24 (2005) 391–413 for developing KM: ''ICT embodies organizational processes that seek synergisticcombination of data and information processing capacity of information technologies,and the creative and innovative capacity of human beings''. Several other authors (Earland Scott, 1999; Zack, 1999) also highlighted the importance of a customer KMstrategy and the crucial leadership role that visionary knowledge officers should playfor bringing together all the CRM stakeholders (e.g. frontline, finance, ICT andother staff) to share a common platform of beliefs, expectations and commitment.

Tiwana (2001) also stressed that a knowledge-based CRM strategy requires thedevelopment of boundary spanning communities of practice whose members areempowered and inspired by a culture of trust that in turn fosters cross-functionalcollaboration, sharing of expertise andcreation of new knowledge. Indeed, buildingtrust and driving out fear of knowledge management are fundamental issues forsupporting and fostering staff empowerment, as when they are established employeesare confident that taking risks and decisions based on new information, customerinsights and knowledge will be rewarded and not penalized. On the contrary, culturesthat do not drive out fear face two side effects: they force employees to focus onshort-term at the cost of long-term performance; and they encourage employees tofocus on the individual rather than the collective organization.However, Dev and Olsen (2000) reported that

although hotels captureconsiderable amount of customer data, those data are rarely assembled to createuseful knowledge about customers. Cline and Warner (1999) also found that thecollection and use of customer information are frequently intermittent, delayed andfragmented. The lack of ICT applications' integration and the legacy systemsdesigned along functional lines creating fragmented guests' profile have beenreported as the major reason of duplication, inconsistencies, incompleteness andinaccuracies of customer data in hotels (Sigala, 2003a). Overall, knowledge-basedCRM in hospitality requires:

- A hotel culture whereby every customer interaction is perceived as a learningexperience and each customer contact as a knowledge-building opportunity and achance to collect new information about hotels' guest (Olsen and Connolly,2000);

- A knowledge information system shaping the technical basis for informationaccumulation, retrieval and distribution of explicit knowledge, leadership that willmotivate knowledge workers and orientation and team structures and knowledgecircles that promote the personalized transfer of tacit and explicit knowledge(Bouncken, 2002);

- Incentives and rewards to staff's efforts to capture, use and share knowledgefor personalizing customer interactions/experiences (Siguaw and Enz, 1999;Bouncken, 2002);

- A redesign of customer data across the organisation and a customer-centric ICTintegration and infrastructure (Sigala, 2003b);

- Understanding of guests' value drivers and requirements as well as of the ways inwhich hotels contribute or fail to create customer value (Dube and Renaghan,2000).

Implementing Integrated CRM Model

Many of the world's leading firms are developing a newmodel of industrial organization based on systems integration(Hobday et al., 2005). Organizations face the challengingtask of integrating their distributed organization units,information systems, and business processes for improvedoperation and attainment of organizational goals (Giachetti,2004).

In principle, customer is the heart of the CRM view, front processes, whereas product is the heart of backprocesses. On the other hand, no enhancement could be applied without improved infrastructure;consequently the enterprise should start automation by its product chain while it should handle its referenceparts as human resources and asset category. So, the implementing blocks are as figure 6. In the era of global business competition, businesses areconstantly finding ways of staying competitive hence businessesare deploying new technologies such as CRM systemsto get close to the customer (Yu, 2001). According to Yu,interest in such systems as CRM continues to grow. The order of implementing doesn't mean to complete all blocks first and follow it with other blocks. Thefirst blocks are reference and fundamental blocks. It's needed to implement them in order to meet therequirements. For instance, enterprise should know its human resources to assign them to production phasesand customer contact center but there is no need to complete employee and personnel managementprocesses, at first. In a factory to manufacture a product, they should design product phases and determinephases of product and parts of the product; then they should product the parts. So they should know how toassign the raw material for different parts. That's they can find in *asset*. Furthermore, they should assign Proper human resource to plan, build and control the parts and the product as well as making relation withcustomers and suppliers; consequently, they should know their *human resources*. After starting the productchain implementation, they can start managing their order management. They know their product and maymap the orders to products; moreover they should know their customers to predict their future orders andmeet their needs. In order to assign customer to orders that's enough to know customer name and it's ID inreference table. In this way, they can enhance their implementation, step by step while integration isguaranteed. In the same phase, they can start to control suppliers and their offers. After building referenceblocks and their dependency, they can start to complete different blocks. However, implementing

thoroughly depends on enterprise situation. If it has enough budget and human resources, many blockscould implement in parallel after knowing their dependency. The most important point is starting theintegration with a core as the model shows that is implementing reference blocks such as human resourcesand assets; then relating them to production, suppliers and customers.
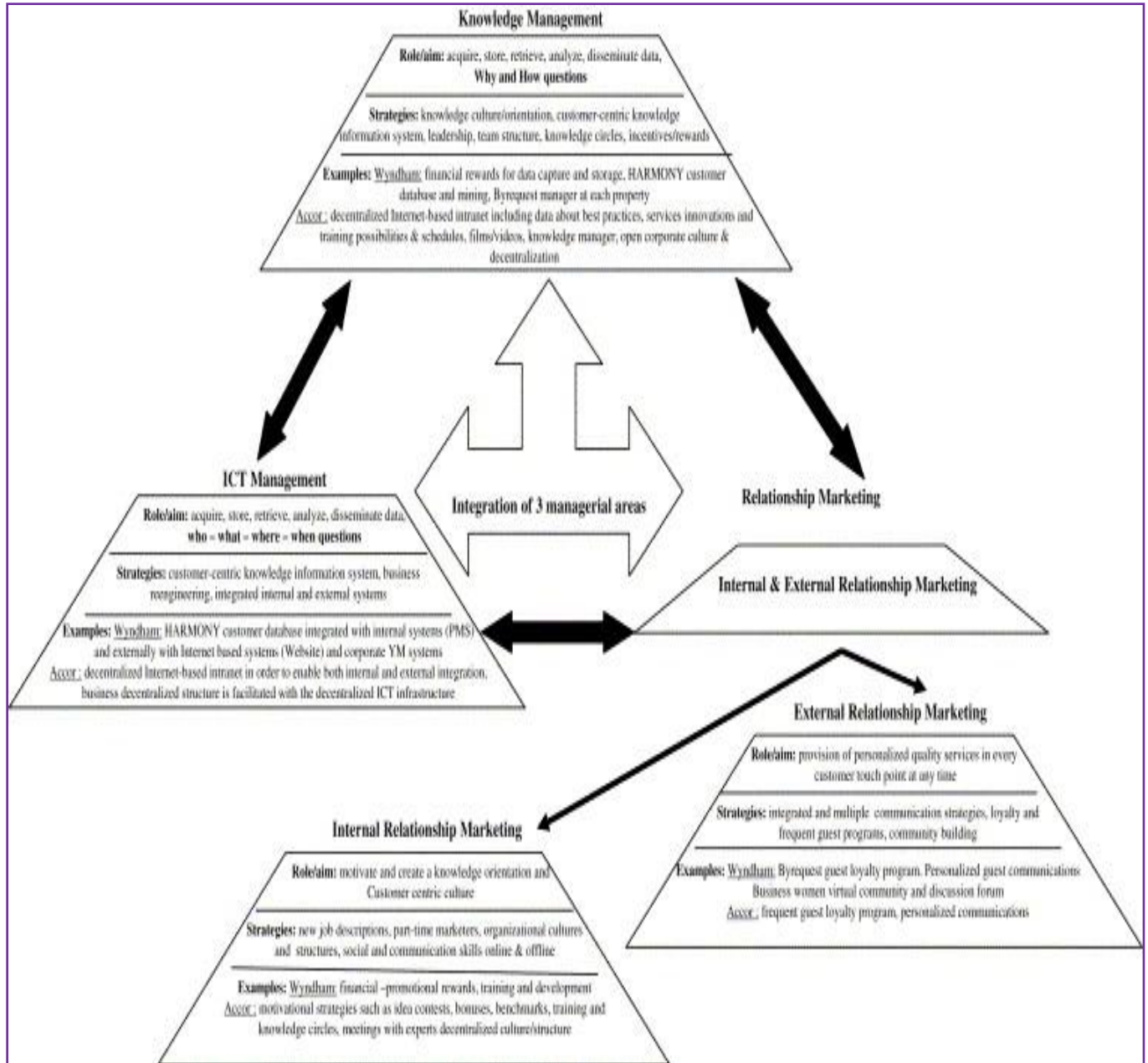
Conclusion & Recommendation

CRM in this context is not just a software package but acomprehensive strategic approach to manage our evolvingrelationships with customers which require continuous adaptation inresponse to changing needs. In order to managethese customer relationships and promote a unified customerservice approach all aspects of a business would needto work like a well-

rehearsed orchestra. The integration ofthe existing cultures, processes, technology with an ownershipof people from all parts of the business becomes paramount.

Our study confirmed that CRM is no panacea and cannot belimited to hardware and software applications. A wellplanned CRM strategy can act as a strategic tool in acquiring,but most importantly retaining and developing existingand future relationships with customers. Our multi-layeredapproach integrates current academic and practitionerunderstanding of CRM implementation and offers further insightsthrough its application to the communities of practice featured in the three case studies. The multi-layered approachedproved a useful conceptual framework to assistcompanies in developing their CRM strategy.

Recommendations

- The manager should focus on the staff's scientific and practical skills andcapabilities. To raise their positive psychological level, to live up to the best level of dealingwith consumers in line with the concept of Customer Relationship Management, thereshould be more training and increase their motivation by rewards.

- The company must continue in management studies in order to identify the consumers'present and future needs and desires to meet their desires and needs as well as they expected.This will be achieved by qualified and trained staff cope with the development of current andfuture surroundings to win the consumer's satisfaction.

- The institution should deal consumers trustworthily and credibly through commitment tothe delivery dates of orders without bias to gain consumer's trust of the hotel institution.

- The institution must take care of the staff's external appearance in order to win theconsumer's satisfaction.

- The institution must allocate places for waiting provided with hospitality services so thatthe consumer does not feel bored during the waiting period this service increases consumer'shappiness and satisfaction.

- The directors of the Hotel should improve the image of the Hotel with regard to theconsumer's point of view by good technique and speed in completing the work whichincreases consumer's happiness and satisfaction.

- The hotel institution must increase the interest in the periodical awards to consumers,which increases the level of satisfaction and loyalty to the organization.

- The hotel institution must increase its attention and focus on consumer complaints andsuggestions, which increase the level of satisfaction and loyalty to the organization and keepthe consumer for the longest possible period.

- The hotel institution should classify offering services regarding to the consumer groupsin line with their culture and demographic factors, which increase the consumer's satisfaction.

- Consumers must be noticed that they have guarantees on their deposits. These guaranteesshould be activated to increase consumer's confidence in the organization.

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Asian Journal of Finance & Accounting ISSN 1946-052X 2012, Vol. 4, No. 1121 www.macrothink.org/ajfa