Chapter III

eCRM Integration in E-Business: First Line of Offense to Competitive Advantage

Cain Evans
University of Central England in Birmingham, UK

Abstract

Integrating an eCRM system in today’s business world is increasingly becoming the standard setting to the successful building of robust customer retention programs. However, integrating eCRM systems requires not only a technological perspective but a process perspective too. Developed in this work are several key phases that are integrated into the development of the CROSIT and CPR models. These two distinct models are developed to assist e-businesses in articulating eCRM through a combination of system, application, and process activities. The CROSIT model encompasses two central themes, with the centrifugal being the engine of the model. These attributes relate to the input and output of information flows: the customer and the e-business’s response to the eCustomer or traditional customer. The CROSIT model encapsulates a five-layered dimensional approach to integrating technologies, resources, strategy, and manageability of an eCRM system. The extension of CROSIT is the CPR model is used to gauge the readiness of the eCRM system, its applications, interrelated
Background

E-business success in today’s economic climate is becoming more dependent upon customer retention programs than on achieving fully aligned business systems. E-businesses are continuing to endeavor to compete in the new, rich, and vibrant electronic markets, only to find that their CRM systems do not always match the expectations of online customers. Achieving competitive advantage requires a strong focus on internal value chains and the sustainability of an e-business’ information technologies (Porter, 1980, 1985, 2001).

Success in today’s customer-driven markets is based upon the realization that e-businesses require a methodological approach to handling customer information and data. Once an e-business has acquired customer data from its channels, there is a need to process it. The question is what information needs to be processed and how is it to be done (Ward, Griffiths, & Whitmore, 1993).

Operations within an e-business rely heavily on information technologies (ITs), so it is valuable to understand exactly what IT is. Information technologies invariably include hardware, software, database systems, and telecommunication systems (Turban, McLean, & Wetherbe, 2001). Furthermore, as highlighted by Evans (2001), e-businesses require a structure to develop IT and the peripheral services needed to operate an e-business: this structure is known as the E-Business InfoNet. The E-Business InfoNet is a flexible approach to integrating various types of technologies with one another, either physical or organic components being expanded as and when the e-business demands changes. The need e-business has for information systems (ISs), initially, is with the capture, transmission, retrieval, and manipulation of information used by an e-business, with one or more processes taking part in the transaction (Alter, 2002).

eCRM/CRM System Interactions

E-businesses today require eCRM/CRM systems to be interactive not only with a company’s field engineers and salesmen, but more importantly with customers, both those coming through traditional routes and those coming through the World Wide Web (WWW). Online customers need to be focused upon without the firm...
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