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A Study on the Growing Importance of CRM Applications in Smartphones

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *The purpose of this paper is to understand what CRM is and to lay special emphasis on Mobile CRM. It deals with the benefits of using Mobile CRM since a study carried out by Innoppl Technologies said that 65% of sales representatives using mobile CRM have achieved their sales targets as compared to 22% of sales representatives using traditional CRM methods. This paper also deals with the implementation of mobile CRM by a few reputed companies globally.*

Research Implication: *This paper provides a preliminary understanding of the evolution of modern CRM which led to the establishment of Mobile CRM. It also highlights the need to opt for a more portable and customer centric approach towards CRM which is mobile CRM and not the use of the traditional desktops and computers for performing CRM activities.*

Originality: *This paper is completely original and has been written from scratch by the researcher with the knowledge and perspective obtained by reading various other research papers.*

Keywords: *CRM, Mobile CRM, customer satisfaction, loyalty.*

I. INTRODUCTION

“Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is the core business strategy that integrates internal processes, functions and external networks to create and deliver value to targeted customers at a profit. It is grounded on high-quality customer data and enabled by information technology.”

–Francis Buttle

A CRM system benefits everyone from sales, business development, customer service, marketing, recruiting or any other business by providing them with a better way to manage the external interactions with customers and build relationships that lead to success. A CRM tool enables the storage of customer and prospect contact information, recording of service

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issues, identification of sales opportunities and management of marketing campaigns, all in one central location which is then made available to anyone at the company who might need it.

CRM being inevitable for each and every business has undergone many changes due to the changing trends in the markets. Over the past two decades mobile phones have become a quintessential commodity without which people are unable to go about their daily work. Due to this shift in technology, Mobile CRM has evolved as a concept which is basically a process by which businesses and customers can interact with each other through CRM activities that are performed on mobile phones.

Before mobile CRM came into place the CRM system had gone through innumerable changes. CRM was introduced in the first half of the 19th century where it was recorded on the primitive method of using pen and paper and storing that data in huge stacks of files. Sometime later, CRM was being maintained in databases on computers and laptops from which it shifted to mobile phones since they are portable and it facilitates quicker communication.

Social CRM is one such concept that has evolved with the boom in social media. It is a subset of Mobile CRM since it refers to the CRM activities undertaken by organizations through social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked In etc. Often the terms Mobile CRM and Social CRM are used synonymously but the main difference between them is that social CRM is not only restricted to social media interaction on mobile phones and mobile CRM doesn't restrict itself to CRM activities on social media sites only but it covers all applications that a person has on their phone.

II. OBJECTIVES

- (i) To highlight the evolution of Mobile CRM and users of CRM applications through smartphones.
- (ii) To study CRM applications for smartphones.
- (iii) To differentiate CRM applications of laptops and desktops V/s. smartphones.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Matthias Hartel, Rebecca Bulander & Michael Decker (2006) deals with the implementation of mobile CRM projects. This paper helps in framing objectives that should be the main focus of mobile CRM activities and also talks about the factors that are needed for the successful implementation of mobile CRM.

- William Band (2011) has centered his paper around the right ways to implement mobile CRM because mobile CRM is essential for each and every organization and this paper acts as a guideline so that no mistakes are made while using CRM on mobile phones. This paper enumerates 5 best Mobile CRM practices as follows: (i) Understand Users' Roles And Needs, (ii) Determine Business Objectives, (iii) Define The Mobile CRM Strategy, (iv) Choose The Right Technology and (v) Follow The Correct Implementation Approach and also provides various real - life examples so as to implement mobile CRM in an efficient way.
- Laura Laitinen (2014) talks about whether mobile applications can act as a key customer base which will help organizations fulfill their CRM activities. This study reflects the current trends and the possible future trends in mobile CRM by studying the qualities of existing customer mobile applications.
- KiandokhtHadadi& Mahmoud Khalid Almsafir (2015) have based their whole study primarily on the relationship between mobile marketing and CRM. It also lays emphasis on the various types of mobile marketing and CRM through which it aims to find out which type of mobile marketing has the most significant relationship with CRM. This paper also stresses on the importance of CRM in mobile phones as compared to using CRM on computers.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE & IMPORTANCE

Social CRM is a very new and upcoming field in CRM which will prove itself as something inevitable in the future hence the topic of research is highly significant since it can help in identifying the gaps in the existing research that has been done and can serve as a base for bridging those gaps.

This study can prove to be of importance for the following:

- (i) Legal scholars
- (ii) Marketing professionals
- (iii) Research scholars, academicians etc.
- (iv) Students

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is based only on secondary data from books, journals, newspaper articles, websites etc. which may work as a limitation of the study.

VI. SUGGESTIONS AND FINDINGS

Advantages of using Mobile CRM

- With the help of cloud computing that is accessible on mobile phones, every employee of the business who needs information can gain access to the updated and complete data at the touch of his fingertips.
- There is a direct interaction with the customers which will speed up the sales cycle and improve the customer relationship.
- It mutually benefits the customer and the businesses by increasing sales for the business and providing the customers with better service and timely follow-ups.
- Mobile CRM makes tasks easier for the company's agents since it also allows them to approach the customer with much more clarity and information which has a direct effect on their closure rates.
- Mobile CRM helps in increasing transparency and reducing discrepancies by not only maintaining a record of the data of customers but also by maintaining a record of the data of the employees of the organization.

Why is Mobile CRM preferred over CRM in desktops and computers.

Before the boom of mobile phones, CRM activities were being performed on computers and desktops but since mobile phones have become an integral part of our daily lives, CRM has also shifted to mobile phones due to the following reasons:

- We live in a world where live updates and information can change the actions of people and so in such a world phones tend to be with us throughout and hence even when we're not at work we can access information anywhere and at any time.
- It acts as a good and secure database because after an employee makes a sales visit he can directly key in the results and his analysis of that visit on his mobile phone instead of waiting to reach the office and then adding the information to the database because it won't be feasible to remember all the key information. The information stored through Mobile CRM is entered in real-time and it is not a cobbled together recollection made a week later.

- Desktops use various software platforms and on-site servers which are very expensive to maintain and install while on the other hand none of these expenses are involved while using CRM on mobile phones.
- Mobile CRM has a higher user adoption rate as compared to the traditional method of CRM because the latter is designed and built to be used in the office itself and they are incredibly difficult to use.

Examples of Mobile CRM

- Apple

Apple is one of the most recognizable brand not only for tech lovers but for anyone who has used an Apple product. The brand appeal that comes along with Apple is not only due to its slick, stylish and sturdy products but because of how it treats its customers and has a knack for building long-lasting customers. Every Apple user needs to form an apple ID for using any Apple product like iTunes, iPad, iPhone etc. and whenever they use another device they need to sign in using their Apple ID. These IDs are synchronized across all devices and remember music and film selection-s made by the user and provide personalized recommendations based on user activity. This offers convenience to the users and helps Apple to understand the mindset of its users and can make the necessary changes in the future.

- BMW

BMW is a major producer of luxury cars, producing over 2 million vehicles per year and showing no signs of slowing down its success rate. BMW teamed up with Legacy Lifestyle to create a luxury loyalty scheme called 'The Owners Circle.' This scheme lets BMW track the car's financing and maintenance and this information is also made available to the owner of the car for their use. Through this scheme points are also given which can be used on a variety of luxury brands which promotes BMW's status as a luxury brand.

- Uber

Uber became a pioneer as soon as it was introduced in 2009. Uber as a company gives huge importance to its CRM strategies due to which it uses a CRM software called 'Salesforce.' This software helps Uber in extracting data from people engaging with Uber as a brand on social media and helps Uber reply to its customer complaints. Uber also runs its own loyalty program called 'Uber Rewards' which gives points to customers for using its car services or food providing services.

- Starbucks

Starbucks is an American coffee house chain operating almost all over the world. It aims at not only providing good quality coffee but also provides an ambience perfect for all its customers. Due to its importance on customer satisfaction it has been termed as a giant in undertaking good CRM activities. Starbucks introduced its own loyalty program called 'My Starbucks Rewards' which has three levels namely - welcome, green and gold. A customer earns stars for every purchase made which can help them to increase their status to a gold user as well as redeem the stars for free food and drinks. The Starbucks Loyalty Program has seen great success in its mobile payment option at a time when many other mobile payment apps have been struggling but this data is primarily for the US, it is yet to pick up pace in India.

VII. CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, mobile CRM is a quintessential tool for each and every business nowadays so that they can acquire new customers while at the same time maintain their existing customers because mobile phones serve as a good medium to bridge the gap between the company and its customers. Above all, the major conclusion that stands is that the implementation of mobile CRM hugely determines the success of the CRM initiative.

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