

# Original Article: Investigating the Purposefulness of Relational Marketing on Customer Management in Companies

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## ABSTRACT

Customer relationship management is a strategic necessity in all organizations, the effective implementation of which can increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and attract them, resulting in more sales and repeat purchases. However, the implementation of CRM is not always accompanied by the expected results because the attitude of many organizations towards CRM is from a technological viewpoint. Therefore, managers of organizations have paid special attention to find out the factors that create success in CRM since identifying these key elements can help organizations to implement it more successfully. The process of identifying factors influencing the successful implementation of CRM should be based on several criteria and components. By changing the paradigm from product-oriented to customer-oriented and given that in today's competitive environment, the use of traditional marketing methods has created many limitations for organizations, customer relationship management to create a special relationship with customers and create value. It is mostly provided for organizations. In the past, customers expected timely delivery, good quality, and cheap goods and services from manufacturers. Business was mostly relationship-oriented and middlemen were powerful in the distribution chain. With the wide distribution of products, the main competition was on maintaining the service and product development to the customer and facilitating the customer's purchase, not maintaining the relationship with the existing customers. However today, organizations operate in a dynamic and complex environment, the competition between organizations has increased, the life cycle of products has decreased, and the life cycle of organizations is reaching its decline stage faster.

## Introduction

Efforts in customer relationship management are one of the major competitive advantages that companies can exploit to prevent customers from transferring to other

companies. Every organization that deals with customer relationship management, but some organizations are ahead by giving importance and studying the factors affecting the CRM success in this field. Although it is clear that customer relationship management has an

effect on the organization's performance. Still many organizations fail to properly implement customer relationship management. In fact, many evidences can be provided of the failure of organizations' investments in customer relationship management. Therefore, organizations need to identify the most important factors in customer relationship management to increase their chances of success in this relationship and attract their most precious capital, i.e. customers.

Factors affecting customer relationship management are those factors that focus on them will improve the CRM effectiveness and not paying attention to them will prevent programs from achieving their goals. Therefore, investments such as purchasing management consulting services in the field of designing customer relationship management strategy, re-engineering business processes, purchasing, or developing, and implementing information technology tools for customer relationship management and employee training, etc. Customer relationship management is necessary, in case of failure in the implementation of customer relationship management; it leads to direct and indirect financial losses and the cost of many opportunities to companies. Therefore, identifying the factors that, by focusing on them, reduces the risk of failure of customer relationship management plans in companies can have a significant impact on obtaining economic returns from the investments made in this background.

#### *Operational definition of research words*

**Customer relationship management:** The process of achieving and maintaining a continuous relationship with customers and through appropriate and diverse behavior with each customer based on their interests, which enables the organization to provide special services to each customer.

**Organizational structure:** Organizational structure expresses the manner and method based on which people and jobs are established in an organization in such a way that the

implementation of organizational work is provided [1].

**Information technology:** In this research, it includes IT infrastructure, technological integration between systems, application (operational), use of collaborative tools, information management, and customer contact management (2).

**Organizational culture:** A pattern of basic presuppositions that a particular group has created, discovered, or created in the face of problems to adapt to the external environment and achieve internal integration and coherence (3).

**Knowledge management:** Dynamic learning ability includes procedures for creating customer knowledge, procedures for sharing customer knowledge, procedures for applying customer knowledge, reviewing customer knowledge, and updating it.

**Strategy:** Strategy can be defined as the process of determining long-term fundamental goals, adopting work methods, and allocating the necessary resources to achieve these goals [4].

**Network analysis process:** The network analysis process provides a comprehensive and powerful method for accurate decision-making by using experimental information or personal judgments of each decision-maker and by providing a structure for organizing different criteria and evaluating the importance and priority of each of them. Compared to the options, it makes the decision-making process easier. The network relationship of the ANP analysis process method not only determines the dependence between different criteria, but also calculates the relative weight of each component.

#### *TOPSIS technique*

The TOPSIS model was proposed by Huang and Yun in 1981. This technique is based on the concept that suitable options are options with the minimum distance to the positive ideal solution (best possible state) and the farthest distance to the negative ideal solution (worst possible state). In this method, some options

are evaluated by indicators. It is assumed that the desirability of each index is uniformly increasing or decreasing [5-7].

**Fuzzy theory:** The theory of fuzzy sets was first proposed by Professor Lotfizadeh in 1965. With this theory, Lotfizadeh explained the uncertainty caused by the ambiguities of human thoughts. The main advantage of this theory is the ability to provide data that are uncertain. Likewise, this method is able to use mathematical operators in the field of fuzzy data. The use of fuzzy sets in decision-making problems is one of the most important and efficient applications of this theory in comparison with the theory of classical sets. In fact, the theory of fuzzy decision-making tries to model the inherent ambiguity and uncertainty in preferences, goals, and limitations in decision-making problems.

### *Customer definition*

From a legal viewpoint, a customer is a person, person, or organization that contracts with another to provide goods or services. From economics perspective, a customer is someone who provides a need for him, an individual or an organization. It is possible that this need is related to some kind of food, beverages, computers, medical services or personnel services [8]. In the field of quality, a customer is someone who receives an output from another person, department or organization (Zaribaf and Roshani Barab, 2008, p. 48). A customer is a person who is in charge of conducting a transaction in a competitive environment, and in an interactive situation, he gives something and takes something else (Mohammadi, 2003, p. 44). Today, organizations seek to use methods to retain customers and make one purchase a prelude to subsequent purchases and commitment to the organization.

### *Types of customers*

Nowadays, innovative and creative organizations have received services, given that different groups of customers are widely different in their behavior, inclinations, and reactions to marketing activities, the ground can be prepared for a significant increase in

profitability. For example, Federal express completely changed its previous marketing philosophy by classifying its commercial customers based on their profitability into three categories: good customers, bad customers, and unpleasant customers. Now, instead of doing marketing activities for all customers equally, the company focuses its marketing efforts on good customers and tries to convert bad customers into good customers. Now, understanding the needs of customers at different levels of profitability, matching, and adapting the supply of services to different levels is more sensitive and vital for organizations than in the past. Especially, examining the profitability of customers gives the organization the possibility to increase the customers profitability, both now and in the future. The customer pyramid is a tool that enables the organization to increase customer profitability by classifying customers based on profitability levels. Below we refer to the pyramid of Jupiter.

To classify customers, a framework called customer pyramid is used, which includes four rows. These four rows are as follow:

**Platinum tier:** Customers of this row include very profitable customers of the organization, who are usually high-consumer people, indifferent to the price, interested in investing and testing new products, and very loyal to the organization. Over time, the customer buys more products from the organization. The cost of their maintenance is low, and positive word-of-mouth advertising of the organization's products is launched, including the customers for whom the organization has spent a lot of time, moral and material costs, and who have not yet achieved the desired results, including that part of the market. It is difficult to do business with them.

**Gold tier:** The difference between this tier and the platinum row is the level of customer profitability. Customers of this class have lower profitability than platinum customers. Perhaps the reason for that is the customer's inclinations and expectations towards receiving discounts, which leads to the limitation of the profit margin (gross profit). Although these

customers may have a high consumption rate in the type of product, they do not have much loyalty to the company, and instead of doing their transactions with one seller, they enter into transactions with several different sellers in order to reduce their risk to the minimum possible.

**Iron tier:** This row includes those customers who have allocated a significant amount of the organization's production capacity, but their levels of consumption, loyalty, and profitability are not enough to deserve special services.

**Lead tier:** The customers who are placed in this row are very costly for the organization, they are high-expecting customers and are problematic in terms of profitability and low consumption rate, they complain about the organization to others, and waste the organization's resources (Zeithmal et al., 2001, p.124).

### *History of customer relationship management*

During the last 50 years, there have been significant changes in the target markets, diversity of customer demands and progress in marketing approaches. It is possible to summarize the history of topics related to CRM in the following courses:

**Mass marketing (one-to-many communication):** In the beginning, there was mass marketing (one-to-many communication). In the era of mass production, customization was no longer possible. In 1915, Henry Ford sold 355,276 Model T cars, and interestingly, all customers chose the black color. In fact, the lack of variety was completely accepted by customers (Haj Zamanali, 2004, p. 9).

In the era of mass production, customer loyalty and customer retention could only happen if the market share was reduced, because communicating with a large number of customers at the same time was not profitable at all, and this was while having a higher market share in company's goals were prioritized.

**Target marketing (one person's communication with the target group):** In the early 1980s, the remote marketing

approach was implemented through direct email and direct communication with a group of customers. Marketing on the basis of information databases related to customers has become more targeted and directed towards potential customers, but marketing in a random way also brings mediocre results.

**One-to-one communication (customer relationship management):** In the 1990s, studies showed that maintaining a customer is 6 times cheaper than acquiring a new customer. Statistics like this pushed the industries towards knowledge and closeness with customers. On the other hand, increasing the loyalty of beneficial customers, reducing customer dissatisfaction, offering different prices, and products to different customers, etc. are things that should be concerned. In today's era, customer relationship management has become one of the essentials of all major industries, which has led to the shift of paradigms and models from focusing on business to focusing on the customer. Forrester and Gartner have predicted that companies will pay an average of 11 billion dollars in the coming years to set up CRM. Many definitions of the title of business strategy have been introduced, which includes focusing on the business process based on knowledge, organizational structures around customers, and the scope of the organizational vision.

To the extent that communication with customers becomes more electronic, naturally, customers want to do their buying and selling more innovatively, more intelligently, and more easily. Therefore, another paradigm that has changed is effective electronic communication with customers, which provides the possibility of conversation and integrated communication with each of the customers (Mousavi et al., 2007, pp. 5-6).

### *Concept and definitions of customer relationship management*

Customer relationship management is not a new concept, but it has become practical due to the advances made in information technology. CRM is often referred to in the literature as one-to-one marketing. In the past, sales force

automation (SFA) tools have expanded greatly. SFA soft wares have performed repetitive tasks such as recording customer transactions and forecasting. SFA allows the sales staff to focus more on sales and pay less attention to administrative tasks. It should be noted that CRM follows its approaches in relational marketing and seeks long-term profitability by changing the attitude from interactive marketing to customer retention through customer relationship management. Therefore, CRM is a modern and developed tool for data. It is a mining of customer information fed into the system using different communication points

and creates a comprehensive view of the customer. Technology, recording, and analyzing customer behavior allows companies to easily identify good customers and focus marketing efforts on customers who buy from the company. A better understanding of the current customer allows the company to significantly increase the customer retention rate by interacting, responding, and effectively communicating with them. So far, several definitions of customer relationship management have been stated, some examples of which are mentioned in table 1 [9].

**Table 1:** Some definitions of customer relationship management [10]

Customer relationship management is the process of acquiring, maintaining, and growing profitable customers. This process requires a real focus on service attributes (which create value for the customer and drive loyalty). Customer relationship management includes five elements: strategy, segmentation, technology, process, and organization.	Henden (2000)
CRM is an intellectual investment, creation of a business process and policies designed to gain customer retention and service. CRM is not a technology, but technology is only a means to make CRM active and powerful.	Greenberg (2001)
CRM is customer knowledge management to understand and provide better services to them. In this concept, the customer is at the organization center. Customer service is one of the most important components of CRM, although CRM is also coordinated by communication with customers during all business activities from meetings and interactions viewpoint.	Boss & Sagamaran (2003)
CRM is a solution in which all employees, process, and technology are used to maximize communication with external customers, members of distribution channels, suppliers, and internal customers.	Fredwirsema (2003)
CRM is a comprehensive business and marketing strategy that integrates technology, processes, and all business activities around the customer.	Feinberg (2003)

The common point of all the mentioned definitions can be summarized in one sentence that customer relationship management is the process of combining business and technology. A process that seeks to know the company's customers in terms of who the customers are and what they do and what they like?

CRM is basically a two-step concept. The task of the first stage is to focus on the customer base and building. This means that companies should move from product-oriented to customer-oriented and define market strategies from the outside to the inside and not from the inside to the outside. They should focus on

customer needs and not on product features. In the second stage, companies should develop customer orientation by integrating the customer relationship management system through the chain of experiences they have gained from customers by relying on technology to provide valuable products to customers at the right time. These steps are based on four attitudes.

1. Customers should be considered and managed as valuable assets.
2. Customer differences in usefulness; not all customers are equal in this favor.

3. Customers are different in their needs, tastes, and buying behavior and price sensitivity.

4. By understanding the characteristics of customers and their profitability ratio, companies can maximize the overall value of their customers by providing suitable offers [11].

In a number of companies, CRM is just a technology that improves the organization's activities by developing databases and sales force automation tools by connecting sales and marketing tasks. In some other companies, CRM is considered as a tool for mutual communication with the customer (one-to-one) and the sole responsibility of sales department, services, call centers, or marketing department. However, CRM is not just a software package for marketing, sales, or services, but if it is presented in a comprehensive and multi-tasking, customer-oriented, and integrated technology, it will lead to the maximization of customer relations and will include the entire organization. CRM business strategy maximizes the benefits of customer interaction with the organization using marketing levers, sales operations, customer service, human resources, research and development, finance, as well as information technology, and the Internet. From the customer's viewpoint, CRM includes tailoring, simplifying, and facilitating transactions regardless of the communication channel used. The CRM implementation in many organizations has increased competitiveness, increased income, and reduced operational costs. Efficient and effective management of customer relations has led to an increase in customer satisfaction and their retention rate. CRM helps organizations to evaluate customer loyalty and profitability in terms of repeat purchases, purchase amounts, and purchase periods. CRM helps organizations answer the following questions:

What goods or services are important to our customers?

How should we communicate with our customers?

In addition, customers clearly believe that they have saved time and money, received better information, and been treated more appropriately.

### *Emergence fields of customer relationship management*

Patricia Seibold (2000) has listed the following three principles in her latest book:

1. Customers are in control.
2. Communication with customers is valuable.
3. Customer experience is an important issue.

Seibold believes that customers are in control. Referring to the revolution created in the music industry, which caused this industry to go towards customers, he admits that the power of customers and users cannot be stopped today. Seibold believes that the relationship between the customer and the supplier should be at the top of the organization's priority list. Acquiring customer costs money and maintaining these relationships can cost more. However, if these connections are not maintained, the cost of acquiring new customers or replacing new customers will be much higher. Understanding the complete customer experience is much more than making a good product or providing information to those who interact with customers. The customers' experiences show how important the process and strategy of dealing with customers is for the success of the organization.

Investing in CRM technology by itself cannot replace better dealing with customers, but processes and methods should also be considered along with the culture of "The customer is really an important issue". Organizations have countless opportunities to improve their methods of managing their customers using CRM as a basis, but this issue should be created in the relationship with them: Customer-friendly culture and business processes should ensure such a thing [12].

## Components of customer relationship management

### A) Customer

The customer is the only source of current profitability and future growth of the organization. The customer is the only source of the company's current profit, future growth, and a good customer, that is, the one who creates the most profit with the least cost, is always rare. Because customers have the ability to get a lot of information and the competition in the market is very intense. Sometimes it is difficult to identify the real customer because the purchase decision is often a working group in the decision-making process between partners.

### B) Communication

The relationship between a company and its customers includes a mutually directed relationship as well as an ongoing relationship. A relationship may be short-term or long-term, continuous or discontinuous, repetitive or non-repetitive, and theoretical or behavioral. That is, even though the customers have a positive attitude towards the company and its products, but their buying behavior strongly depends on the conditions. For example, the purchase pattern for plane tickets depends on whether the buyer wants the ticket for a family vacation or for a business trip. Communication can be short-term or long-term, continuous or discontinuous, repetitive or non-repetitive, and theoretical or behavioral. CRM includes the management of this relationship, and therefore it is very necessary and beneficial for companies, and customer lifetime value is a tool to measure this relationship.

### C) Management

CRM is not an activity that is limited only to the marketing unit. More precisely, it includes continuous changes in the organization's culture and processes. Customer information is collected and becomes a coherent knowledge that guides the organization towards the

activities obtained from the information and the opportunities of a profitable market [13].

### Principles of communication with the customer

The processes and application programs of customer relationship management are based on the following basic principles (2001; Garry & Byun):

**Targeting individual customers:** One of the principles of customer relationship management is that customers with many choices and customers want their own products. CRM treats each customer individually as it is based on the exclusive and customization philosophy. Customization means that the contents and services provided to customers should be designed based on their preferences and behaviors. This action causes the convenience of the customer and increases the costs of changing the source.

**Attracting and maintaining customer loyalty through personal communication:** When specialization takes place, organizations need to maintain this relationship. Continuous contacts with customers, especially when these contacts are designed to meet preferences, can lead to loyalty.

**Customer selection based on the concept of customer lifetime value:** In customer relationship management, this principle has been taken into account that different customers have different values for the organization, so the most profitable ones should be attracted and retained. Through differentiation, an organization can allocate its limited resources to obtain better efficiency. In short, customization of products, customer loyalty and their selection based on the concept of life value are the basic principles of CRM implementation [13].

### Basic assumptions of customer relationship management

Actions based on habit basic idea of CRM are that the future behavior of the customer is determined by their previous similar behavior. In other words, people behave as they did yesterday or last month. This assumption is

partly true and partly false. Behavior patterns change over time. Therefore, the important issue is to predict the future behavior, by doing so, the organization can respond to the changing demands and preferences of its customers in a better way.

**Current customer information is always correct:** Maintaining the quality of customer behavioral and demographic information (age, gender, and income, etc.) is of great importance. Correct decision requires correct data and information. Can we trust and believe the data in the database or data warehouse? The customer database is obtained from different sources and by different input methods. It is necessary to periodically pay attention to the sorting and cleaning of data and pay a considerable amount for it, so that it is useful for use in CRM. Institutions should be updated as soon as customer information changes. For example, people move, their income levels change, marriages, and births and deaths happen. Although many correct decisions are sometimes made from incorrect data, this rarely happens.

**Customers want unique and diverse behavior, services and products:** The basic premise of CRM is that customers always want unique products and services. However, this assumption cannot always be fulfilled because an organization cannot always provide all the necessary goods and services. In addition, instead of product specialization, customers' purchase decisions for goods and services follow a specific process. Technological development is also important in the decision-making process. Therefore, some believe in the importance of providing the right goods and services at the right time instead of providing specialized goods and services [7].

### *Stages and processes of customer relationship management*

In this section, some viewpoints are explained in the field of CRM implementation and customer relationship management process. The customer relationship management process is divided into three stages: CRM

implementation, CRM improvement, and communication channel management.

### *Implementation of CRM*

According to the opinions of Brash and Bradshaw (2001) to deal with the challenges of communication with customers, all companies, and even completely customer-oriented companies need to have three views necessary to establish proper communication with customers:

Creating CRM in the operational department (counter) is only a start and should include supporting departments such as production, completion, and billing. Establishing communication through multiple media requires proper technical infrastructure that allows companies to communicate in a stable and stable way through multiple media.

**Creating a suitable strategy for customers:** For a newly established organization, the strategy of "meeting customer preferences on average" can be a suitable strategy, but for a large organization, this instruction is a disaster. There is a triangle in CRM. The purpose of this triangle is to make sure that the organization fully knows its customers, and then acts based on the needs of the customers and the benefit of the organization. Every organization that implements CRM should coordinate the operational, support, and analytical systems. The support department solves the needs of customers. In general, the tasks related to customers in this part are billing, procurement, etc. and apart from these tasks, contact with customers is done more in the operational department.

Analytical software allows organizations to obtain patterns for collecting data from customers, the results of which are strategic and operational information. Strategic information can be used to determine future strategies, and tactical (operational) information helps to modify, and improve existing activities. In addition, tactical information is further used in interaction with the customer. The current focus of CRM is more towards the operational system. The CRM expansion in multiple media means the



integration of the operating system and parts of the support system with different communication channels which is done by technical methods, and the organizations that perform this act, think, and act carefully about the required technical infrastructures.

Establishing communication with customers through multiple media does not mean that one should consider the same facilities for each media or provide the same level of service. Doing this may be harmful. Media are different and requests are answered in different ways. For example, people may be able to wait an acceptable amount of time to talk to a call center, but they will not accept the same amount of time to communicate with a call center, say an IVR. Some interactions are more expensive than others, and there is also a difference between the communication made by people and the one made by automatic machines. A communication-commercial model built on the basis of machine interactions cannot support a large amount of human communication, organizations should initially decide on two main issues.

For what type of customer and in what situation do they decide to use a particular media?

How and by what method do they intend to guide the customer to use the chosen media of the company?

**Employee participation:** The biggest issue of CRM is the need for employees to get records and data. But some employees do not accept the methods that cause them to fade and reduce their presence and not show their value. Organizations should encourage CRM users, starting with key supporters. Employees should be sure that they gain more value and credibility by placing information in the CRM system.

**Integration of CRM system:** People in organizations have different views towards a customer. Marketers may be of the opinion that: "He continues to buy, so we should sell to him" while the opinion of the financial manager is: "He has not paid his bill, so we should stop selling to him." Accordingly, there is a need to

know the customer, and the CRM system in the entire organization must work in a unified and coherent manner. In addition, if the customer's records are not easily accessible when they become valuable for the company, by the time information becomes available, it may be too late to coordinate marketing activities. The CRM system is successful when we have access to the correct information needed at the desired time.

**CRM technology and tools:** It is very important to spend time searching the IT market to find the right tools and technology for the organization. Customer communication tools in the mid-90s did not include SMS, Internet, and digital phones. At that time, only mail and fax were available, but today there is television interaction, networking, digital telephone systems, and electronic mail, which has created a learning curve.

**Long-term view:** For some organizations, expensive and complex CRM systems are useful. These systems require a long time to develop, a lot of input information and consultation. In this case, management should be patient and draw a long-term picture in mind without being sensitive to short-term costs. This is all that organizations need. If there is no viewpoint beyond the expenses spent, it will cause problems.

**Managing the relationship between consultants and sellers:** Although communication with consultants and sellers may be expensive and troublesome. These people are often the ones who are able to see further and bigger pictures. Therefore, this communication is important for the management organization and expands the acceptable expectations of the parties. Evaluating the success rate of CRM strategy, but with a little patience, it may take some time for a CRM strategy to show its results. Most organizations pay a lot of money for CRM but do not budget for culture change or training. CRM is not a 5-minute event, sometimes it takes a decade to return the investment.

**Keeping CRM simple:** The CRM investment should be done based on business needs. What the organizations do not need should be

removed and the CRM system should be implemented in a place that will gain value for the organization. A large system needs two years to develop and the type of work and instructions of the organization will change. Likewise, it should be noted that CRM needs are different in different fields.

**Sourcing from outside the company:** If organizations do not progress according to the learning curve, it is necessary to source from outside the organization. Often hired external sources are trained and run customer contact centers. If the customer's needs are met, they do not care about the rank of the person they are dealing with. Today, some sources outside the organization who have customer information sell it to organizations or use it to implement CRM in the organization [5].

### *CRM improvement*

According to Diche (2001), companies do not implement CRM without having a clear goal of what they want to do. Organizations that implement CRM use various tactics to increase customer value and loyalty, including side sales, they use sales promotion, maintenance, and after-sales service to customers, customization, etc. [4].

### *Side selling and sales promotion*

Promotion means encouraging existing customers to buy more products, and side selling means delivery of one product to a customer as a result of buying another product. Today, this practice is very common because this sales method will lead to more services to existing customers and increase the profit from it and reduce the cost of acquiring new customers. Doing the right side selling requires understanding that not every customer is a suitable option for side selling. The need to improve side sales operations is another reason for increasing the CRM use in marketing.

### *Customer care*

It is difficult to know the customers who have left the company and to understand the reason for their leaving, and it is even more difficult to

find the root of the reasons for the customer's withdrawal and to implement this knowledge in business activities and tactics that will encourage customers to stay. Analysis of withdrawal and abandonment of customers is done because keeping existing customers is much more effective than finding new customers in terms of cost savings. The more customers are lost, the greater the profit reduction, the loss of initial investment to acquire new customers, and the reduction of potential market for buying new products.

### *Behavior prediction*

Behavior prediction helps companies determine what customers are likely to do in the future. Complex models and data analysis techniques are used to predict behavior and customer history is used to predict his future behavior. These analyzes include various types:

**Analysis of purchase intention:** Knowing that a particular customer is willing to buy which product?

**Sequence of next purchases:** Predict which product will be purchased by the customer in the next purchase?

**Product dependency analysis:** Knowing which one of the products will be purchased together with other products also known as "shopping basket analysis".

**Modeling price elasticity and pricing:** Determining the optimal price for a specific product, sometimes for a specific part of the market. By understanding customer behavior, the organization can make marketing decisions, which include:

- Applying price discounts or waiving wages and fees for current customers.
- Making smaller and limiting the target market to a smaller number of customers or specific products.
- The packaging of related products at a fixed price to sell more goods, increasing the efficiency and profitability of cross-selling products that seem to be bought with other goods.

The key to all these analyzes is to know who your best customers are.

### *Optimizing communication channels*

Organizations must decide how to best communicate with customers. Management of communication channels means optimizing channels within the range of channels outside the range of communication with customers and choosing the best solution for each one.

### *Customization*

Customizing the adaptability of communication with the customer is based on the knowledge of his preferences and behaviors during the interaction. Personalization, in most people's terms, is appropriate messages for a particular customer or part of customers. These appropriate messages can include everything from including the name of the online store to the use of customer details and records to personalize the website content. Personalization technology can organize messages for people in such a way that every time a customer visits the website, it uses his personal information such as name, etc. to create a personal connection. Internet interaction with customers: Internet gives customers three new ways to communicate with the organization.

### *Web-chat*

Establishing a telephone connection through the Internet.

### *E-mail*

### *Web-chat*

Web chat allows website visitors and sellers to have one text conversation at a time in a window provided by the chat program. Likewise, it allows organizations to establish a one-to-one relationship with the customer.

### *Telephone conversation over the Internet*

Callback facilities allow customers to enter their phone number and call and talk to the

company's sales representative via the Internet. This type of confrontation with the customer has spread rapidly after conventional call centers.

### *E-mail*

Customers tend to email because they do not want to wait to be contacted by an available sales representative. Organizations also show more interest in it due to the fact that salespeople can answer more emails per hour than telephone communications.

### *Technology factor*

For a long time, information technology has been recognized as a tool for fundamental re-engineering of work processes and improvement in organizational performance. Using IT, it is possible to create new innovative ways to connect the company with customers, suppliers, and internal stakeholders. Customers, developing prediction models, providing answers to customers with the communication tools they want. Innovation in network infrastructure, server/server computing, and business intelligence tools are the main factors in the CRM development. CRM systems collect, store, maintain, and distribute customer knowledge throughout the organization. Therefore, effective information management is a key element in the success of CRM. In addition, data warehousing, organization resource planning system, and Internet are the main infrastructures in the CRM development.

### *Data storage technology*

Data warehousing is one of the information technology management tools that allow organizational decision makers to have continuous access to information through the collection of customer data in the organization and the integration of all databases and operational systems such as human resources, sales and transaction processes, financial affairs inventory, purchasing, and marketing system. In particular, the data warehouse makes available a historical course of customer

transactions by obtaining, refining, changing, and managing a large amount of data from heterogeneous systems. As a result, the need for traditional market research tools such as field research and focus groups in extracting knowledge from customers is reduced. In this way, it is possible to identify and report on the basis of products or services, geographical areas, distribution centers, customer groups, or specific customers. As a result, all communications related to customer interactions in the organization are available. In fact, data warehousing technology has made it possible to implement CRM. Because CRM has led to a better understanding of customers by summarizing, linking, and transforming customer data into processed information. Customer-related data includes data on sales, promotions, and customer service activities. Other information generated from internal services can develop our understanding of customers and their purchasing patterns. The ability of data warehouses to store thousands of gigabytes of data has enabled rapid functional analysis. The benefits of data warehousing for organizations are summarized as follows:

- More accurate and faster access to information to facilitate answering customer questions.
- Increasing data quality and filtering data to remove inappropriate and duplicate data.
- Rapid data extraction, manipulation for profitability analysis, customer reach, and customer retention modeling
- Advanced data summarization and analysis tools for designing higher level reports and access to report details.
- Calculating the current value and estimating the future value of each customer [12].

### *The impact of the Internet*

The increasing growth of the Internet has brought a new meaning to create a relationship with its customers, more access by customers to the organization, such as online requests, has brought a new paradigm in providing services.

Recent studies show how successful websites have succeeded in creating a lasting relationship with electronic customers by providing services that could not be provided through traditional methods. The survey further shows that in traditional business, the ability of organizations to establish one-on-one relationships with customers has been effective in their success or failure. The customer expects the organization to anticipate his needs and provide continuous services above his expectations. Conversely, the customer will be loyal to the organization for a longer period [5].

### *Changing business processes*

In a not so long time in the past, companies with more facilities and resources could provide customers' needs with standard products and create advantages through increasing productivity and reducing costs. In this era, mass production and marketing were very successful as long as customers were satisfied with standard products. As more companies entered the market, mass marketing techniques lost their true position, which was just selling products. In this way, the market segmentation and the selection of the target market caused the company's focus to change the product and perform marketing activities according to the customer's needs. Changes in customer needs and preferences made companies define smaller and smaller departments [2].

Today, companies and organizations live in a customer-oriented economy where the customer is the true ruler of the market. This approach is the result of excess production capacity. In fact, the inequality of customers against products is the reason for the emergence of this type of market. Therefore, companies must learn how to move from a focus on product production to a focus on customer ownership. They should consider customers as a financial asset that needs to be managed and maximized like any other asset. In this attitude, customers are considered an asset that is increasing in value. In this way, recognizing the value of this asset, companies should redesign their marketing system to

achieve an increase in the share of customers. As a result, in contrast to transactional marketing, relational marketing emerged with the aim of increasing profitability in the long term. The tool used in relational marketing is to emphasize customer retention through effective management of customer relationships. In a study in 1996, Richard found that a 5% increase in customer retention leads to an increase in customer lifetime between 35% and 95% and increases the company's profitability significantly. Richard further stated the following four basic reasons for keeping customers:

1. The cost of acquiring new customers is very high. Therefore, to compensate these costs, they should be kept in the long term.
2. After the initial cost of acquiring new customers is covered, then we will reach profitability.
3. Considering that there is an experience curve in customer relations, companies become more efficient in serving them. Therefore, the number of customer purchases increases and profitability increases, communication is also considered a value for customers. Therefore, the retained customers show less sensitivity to the price.
4. Relational marketing techniques are focused on each customer and by targeting profitable customers in the long term; it seeks to create effective communication to maintain them. Relationship marketing transforms product-oriented organizations into customer-oriented organizations.

Customer-oriented organizations are continuously engaged in integrating marketing processes and other business processes to provide customer service and respond to market pressures. Companies that have grown to this stage benefit from the benefits of production and marketing interaction and gain the flexibility to efficiently and effectively satisfy the changing needs of customers. Contrary to the snow-based view, the philosophy on which CRM is based is relationship marketing, customer profitability, customer lifetime value, customer retention,

and satisfaction created through the management of work processes. Therefore, CRM has been defined as an approach to manage customer relations through re-engineering customer values to improve services and the competitive position of the company's products. CRM is further defined as a combination of work processes and technology. The combination of work processes and technology in CRM seeks to understand the truth about who is the customer? What does it do and what does he like? In fact, businesses are constantly warned that they will fail if they believe that CRM is just a software package.

The saying that "keeping a customer is more profitable than building a new relationship" is especially true in the ever-changing Internet market. The Boston Consulting Group estimates that it costs \$6.8 to transact with an existing customer on the web and \$34 to acquire a new customer [12].

CRM strategy helps organizations to acquire new customers and more importantly to maintain current customers and strengthen relationships with them. Customer relationship management is a customer-oriented model in the entire company, which should be based on the customer. Customer relationship management is a continuous effort that requires re-engineering the main processes from the customer's point of view with the participation of the customer and receiving feedback from him. To implement CRM, C-Beled Group starts by asking customers what are the obstacles facing them from the company. In the product-oriented approach, the goal is to find customers for products using mass marketing efforts. But in the customer-oriented approach, the goal is to develop products and services to adapt to customer needs. In C-Beled studies, five stages in the design of a customer-oriented organization have been suggested:

- 1) Make business easy for the customer.
- 2) Focus on the end customer.
- 3) Reengineer the activities related to extra-organizational communication and pay attention to the flow of information between them and intra-organizational activities.

4) Strengthen customer loyalty by proactively dealing with them.

5) Review and improve processes continuously.

The goal of customer-oriented models is to increase revenue, increase customer loyalty, reduce sales and service costs, and improve performance. Optimizing customer relations requires a complete understanding of all profitable and unprofitable customers; the work process should be designed to respond to each customer based on their needs and values [10].

#### *Change of staff*

Implementing an organizational technology such as CRM requires a change in organizational culture. Although both technology and work processes are necessary for the success of CRM, it is the personnel of the organization who are the cornerstone of customer relations. Successful implementation of CRM requires attention to different dimensions of management and personnel of the organization. The commitment of top management is one of the essential factors for the success of CRM projects. Of course, the commitment of top management is much more than expressing the hope of top managers for the success of the CRM project. Customer-oriented management requires the support and commitment of top management during CRM implementation. Without the support of top management, this movement will quickly disappear. This view has been confirmed according to the recent studies of Meta Group (1998), which stated that "The support and participation of management is a key factor in the implementation of CRM". Like other efforts to create change, objections and disagreements between different task departments that occur in the process of reengineering and implementing CRM can only be resolved through the direct involvement of top managers and usually lead to a change in organizational culture. Meta group found that investing in CRM without customer-oriented thinking is a waste of the organization's capital. DK also warns against the implementation of CRM projects in

which the top management does not deeply believe in re-engineering the customer-oriented business model. The implementation of CRM projects requires the full-time involvement of the project implementation team with representatives from sales, marketing, production, customer service, and information technology departments (ibid).

#### *Technological dimensions of customer relationship management*

According to the definition of Geffen and Riding (2002), CRM is divided into three areas:

#### *A- Operative B- Analytical C- Collaborative*

##### *Operational CRM*

From the point of view of Romano (Romano, 2003), operational CRM is also known as customer relationship management in the queue or at the counter, which makes communication with customers simple and effective and includes an area in which direct communication with customers is established. For example, the call center or e-mail is part of the operational area or the CRM counter.

##### *Analytical CRM*

It is known as the strategic element of support or feedback and includes the understanding of customer activities that occurred in operational CRM. The Raqader organization makes it possible to analyze customer communications by extracting data [8]. Analytical CRM requires the existence of technology to collect and process a large amount of customer data to facilitate the analysis and processing of business to increase loyalty and profitability.

##### *Collaborative CRM*

According to Fireman (2002), collaborative CRM can mean a communication channel such as web, and E-mail, etc. Fireman further admits that collaborative CRM can also mean network strategies. In other words, according to the definition of Koch and Schubert (2002), collaborative CRM includes any activity that

creates interaction between the customer and the distribution channel. According to Greenberg, the goal of CRM is to recognize and treat the customer as a person who is of three types CRM uses (3).

### *Implementation of customer relationship management*

By implementing a CRM strategy, organizations can improve sales, marketing and service programs in all customer touch points. The term touch points in CRM are used to refer to different ways of interaction between companies and customers [5].

#### *Customer contact points are as follow:*

- Person to person,
- Phone and fax,
- Web network,
- Direct mail, and
- E-mail.

In fact, CRM needs a comprehensive view of customer contact point interactions, purchase behaviors, functions, and interests of customers.

#### *Cost and time*

In 1999, the studies of Cap Gemini and I. D. C came to the conclusion that the average total investment in CRM made by European and American companies was 1.3 million dollars. More than 69% of companies have spent less than 5 million dollars and more than 13% of companies have spent more than 10 million dollars. According to Gartner Group data, the cost of implementing a CRM system depends on the industry, the size of the project, and the required tools. The average cost of CRM implementation can be between \$15,000 and \$35,000 per user in a three-year project.

### *Advantages of implementing customer relationship management system*

It should always be kept in mind that having more information and advanced technology is

not value alone, the value is summed up in customer knowledge and the way the company uses customer knowledge to manage relationships with customers. According to Newell's opinion [1], the only knowledge is CRM itself. Unfortunately, few companies convert customers into knowledge, and therefore companies lose the opportunity to create value for their customers. However, CRM is a tool that, if used correctly, will bring other benefits. If the company turns customer data into knowledge and then uses this knowledge to establish a relationship, loyalty will be created and profit will follow. According to Swift [2], companies get many benefits from CRM. He states that the benefits of CRM usually fall into one of the following categories:

- Low customer acquisition costs,
- No need to acquire a huge amount of customers with the intention of maintaining a uniform volume of business,
- Reducing sales costs,
- Greater customer profitability,
- Customer retention and greater customer loyalty, and
- Ability to evaluate the customer's profitability.

Gary and Biun (2001) propose the advantages of CRM in another way. The most important advantages of CRM from his viewpoint are as follow:

- Faster response to customer questions,
- Increasing efficiency through automation,
- Deeper understanding of customers,
- Increasing sales and marketing opportunities,
- Identifying the most profitable customers,
- Obtaining feedback from customers that leads to better and newer products and services,

- Obtaining information that can be shared with other stakeholders,
- Improving the organization's ability to attract and retain customers,
- Maximizing the lifetime value of each customer, and
- Improving service without increasing the cost of service (Gray & Byun, 2001, p. 26).

### *Important factors in the success of customer relationship management*

Customer relationship management is a strategic necessity for all organizations because its effective implementation can increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and attraction, and as a result more sales and repeated purchases. Some organizations have problems in CRM implementation because their attitude towards this category is purely technological, that is, they consider customer relationship management strategies to be the same as CRM technology. While CRM is not a technological issue, it is a business issue that information technology tools should be assigned to, designed, and coordinated with business operations and strategies. The failure rate of CRM projects is more than 65%. It is clear that the stoppage or failure of these projects is often the result of not understanding what activities are needed to implement CRM. In 2005, Sigala considered the absence of a framework for the effective implementation of customer relationship management as the cause of such failures. Customers are the best assets of an organization and the increasing number of organizations shows the importance of becoming customer-centric in today's competitive world.

Likewise, organizations should create knowledge about customers of products and services internally (different functions of the organization) and externally (contact points with customers). Therefore, the organizational managers are drawn to be aware of the important success factors of relationship management with their customers. In 2002, Gamson considers CRM as a necessary rule for

organizations that needs further development and progress, and in this regard, identifying the key dimensions of CRM is very important.

### *Existing patterns in the field of factors affecting the success of CRM implementation*

1) In a model, Holland and Light (1999) divided the effective factors in the implementation of customer relationship management into two strategic and operational categories and defined several variables for each of these factors.

2) The model (4) while identifying factors affecting the successful implementation of customer relationship management, these researchers examined six factors of senior management support, organizational culture, appropriate technology, communication, performance evaluation, and project team and its impact. They discussed the success of customer relationship management.

3) Nelson's model (2001): Nelson examined nine factors and their effect on the success of customer relationship management in a proposed model. These nine factors are: The support of the top management of the organization, the transformation of the organization's strategy, knowledge management, the desire to share and share data, the desire for the change process, technological readiness, changing the culture towards customer-centricity, the ability to change the process, and the ability to integrate system.

4) The patterns of Wells *et al.* (1999), Peppard (2000), Chen and Pepovich (2003), Campbell (2003), Chen *et al.* (2004), Sin *et al.* (2005), Sigala (2005), and Lin *et al.* (2005) have presented the important factors in the successful implementation of customer relationship management as six factors: Knowledge management, information technology, senior management, personnel, personalization of services, and integration of systems in the organization [3].

5) Adam Lind Green *et al.* (2006) consider nine factors necessary for the success of CRM,



which can be measured by the following indicators:

**1) Customer strategy:** Customer selection, customer life cycle analysis, and customer classification as well as developing relationships with valuable customers.

**2) Customer interaction strategy:** Registration of customer profiles, analysis of customer contact points, coordination with customer strategy, development of interaction channels, and acquisition of customer information.

**3) Value creation strategy:** Improving quality to increase market share, identifying customer needs, continuously improving activities to create added value are included.

**4) Culture:** It consists of creating a customer-oriented culture in the organization, creating an adaptable and responsive organizational culture, cleanliness, and office design.

**5) People:** It includes appropriate reward system, capable employees, employee participation, employee satisfaction, employee training, support, commitment, and senior management involvement.

**6) Organizational structure:** Process and customer-focused teams, cross-functional integration, inter-unit communication, defining

procedures, and providing standards are concerned.

**7) Information technology:** It comprises the IT infrastructure, technological integration between systems, application (operational), use of analytical tools, use of collaborative tools, information management, and customer contact management.

**8) Process:** Quality of services and products and organizational activities, integration of processes, goal setting, welcoming, gaining familiarity, customer development, problem management, and return are included.

**9) Knowledge management and learning:** Dynamic learning capability, procedures for creating customer knowledge, procedures for sharing customer knowledge, procedures for applying customer knowledge, reviewing customer knowledge, and its updating are important [5].

6) Mendoza *et al.* (2006) proposed a model based on the key success factors of CRM implementation, which was confirmed as a valid model. This model consists of 13 factors along with 3 key dimensions' human, process, and technology (Table 2) [5].

**Table 2:** Key factors of CRM success from the perspective of Mendoza *et al.* (2006)

Persons	Process	Technology	Key Success Factors	Row
*			Support of high-ranking managers	1
*	*		Creation of multitasking teams	2
*			Definition of goals	3
*	*		Coherence between internal departments	4
*	*		Communication of CRM strategy to employees	5
*			Employee commitment	6
		*	Customer information management	7
	*	*	Customer services	8
	*	*	Sales automation	9
	*	*	Marketing automation	10
*	*	*	Supporting operational managers	11
*		*	Customer contact management	12
		*	Integration of information systems	13

**7) Tourinier's Model (2003):** In a category of measurement criteria for the successful implementation of customer relationship management, he has divided into four categories, sales revenue, service cost, efficiency, and customer satisfaction [4].

In Table (3), the research done by researchers in the field of influencing factors on the success

of CRM implementation is shown representing the critical factors of CRM system improvement. In this research, by examining the key success factors of CRM, a research conceptual model was formed; the explanations of some of these factors are as follow.

**Table 3:** Success factors of customer relationship management (Source: Hadizadeh Moghadam et al., 2010, p. 7)

Research fellow	Factor
Pinto and Swain (2000), Standish International Group, and Mozo (2007)	CRM project management
Pinto and Swain (2000), Standish International Group, Shiah (2005), Sower (1993), Mendoza (2006), and Boehling (2006)	Support and support of senior managers
Pinto and Swain (2000), Standish International Group, Shiah (2005), Sower (1993), Mendoza (2006), and Boehling (2006)	Clear CRM strategies and objectives
Pinto and Swain (2000), Lindgren (2006), and Mozzo (2006)	Information Technology
Pinto and Swain (2000), and Lindgren (2006)	People of the organization
Shiah (2005), Sower (1993), and Lindgren (2006)	Corporate Culture
Sower (1993)	knowledge management
Lindgren (2006), Mendoza (2006)	Organize
Lindgren (2006), Pinto and Swain (2000), and Shiah (2005)	Management of internal and external communications
Boehling (2006) and Mozo (2007)	Change management

### Background research

Eskandari *et al.* (2010) in a study entitled "Investigation of effective factors on the successful implementation of CRM in the Qur'an Foundation and Etrat Sepah" divided the effective factors into three categories: Organizational, cultural, and technological, and each of these factors further includes criteria. The findings of this study showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational, cultural and technological factors with the successful implementation of CRM.

Al-Badawi and Haji Zamanali (2008) in a study entitled: "A model for customer relationship management in Iran (Homa Airlines Company)" sought to provide a model for CRM in Iran. They extracted their common components in three areas of technology, processes, and human

issues and tried to present a compatible model according to the conditions of Iran after validation evaluation in case studies.

Hesami (2010) in his thesis entitled: "Identification of effective factors in the implementation of customer relationship management system in Lewitt model insurance companies including four factors of technology, process, people, organizational form, and structure" are studied as effective factors. The research results showed that none of the above factors were effective in customer relationship management in these companies and more studies are needed in this field.

Hasangholipour *et al.* (2011) in a study entitled: "Customer Relationship Management Framework in Private Banks with a Cognitive Map Approach" found that one of the reasons for the failure of customer relationship

management in organizations is the lack of a comprehensive standard, and using the cognitive map approach, the obvious factors and intangibility studies relationships with customers. The results of this study showed that the communication process with customers is influenced by environmental conditions.

Dehmardeh *et al.* (2010) studied the cultural, technological, strategic, and structural factors in the telecommunications company of Sistan and Baluchistan Province in a study titled identifying and ranking the influencing factors in the process of implementing the customer relationship management system (CRM). The results of this study showed that cultural factors have the highest role and structural factors have the lowest role in the implementation of customer relationship management. As a result, it was suggested that serious attention to cultural factors is necessary.

Keramati and Nikzad Shahrivar (2010) in a study entitled: "Evaluation of the key success factors of the customer relationship management strategy in the textile industry (with a fuzzy approach)," three key aspects of the human factor, technology, and processes were studied as the key success factors. In this study, key factors were prioritized using the fuzzy technique, which is a guideline for the implementation of customer relationship management in the textile industry.

Mehrabi *et al.* (2009) in a study entitled: "Providing an integrated model for the implementation of the concept of customer relationship management in Bank Mellat." This study was conducted as a case study in the central building of Bank Mellat. The results of this study showed that organizational culture changes, technological changes, and organizational structure changes have a significant and positive effect on the successful implementation of customer relationship management.

Motmani and Jafari (2009) in a study entitled: "Reviewing the fields of CRM implementation in the hotel industry" identified important factors in the implementation of CRM technology".

They mentioned that the hotel industry in areas such as paying attention to changes in the customer's life cycle, collecting information, analyzing it, and turning it into knowledge to be used in hotel planning, using new methods such as websites and so on has a fundamental weakness and has strengths in the field of the senior manager's attention to attracting customers and getting feedback from customers.

Hadizadeh Moghadam *et al.* (2010) in a study entitled: "Presenting the Success Model of Customer Relationship Management Implementation in Banks" by literature study and interviews; 10 factors of CRM project management, support and support of managers, strategy and clear goals, information technology, organization people, organization culture, knowledge management, organization, communication management, and change management were identified as effective factors on the success of customer relationship management implementation. Among these factors, the people of the organization had the most influence, and in the current situation of the bank, the factors of knowledge management, organization, and communication management were not in a suitable condition.

Osarenkhoe and Bennani (2007) in a study called an exploratory study for the implementation of customer relationship management strategy sought to identify the main components of CRM in Swedish institutions. The results of this study showed that communication is not only a technical tool, but also a strategic approach in seller-buyer exchanges. In addition, they mentioned that the implementation of CRM requires the commitment of top managers, cross-functional communication, and training programs for customer loyalty.

Smith and Chang (2010) in a study entitled: "Improving customer-centric outcomes through the implementation of customer relationship management in Taiwanese public companies". They investigated the CRM effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The findings of his study showed that companies that focus more

on a customer-oriented approach enjoy significant benefits.

Enjiin *et al.* (2007) in a study entitled: "Strategies for successful implementation of customer relationship management show how CRM", if used correctly, can increase the company's ability to achieve the ultimate goal of retaining customers and gaining It is a strategic advantage. They mentioned that CRM should be developed according to the business strategy and a suitable plan should be created for its implementation. In addition, obstacles to the successful implementation of CRM are also listed.

Ball (2003) in a study entitled strategic issues in the implementation of customer relationship management in a manufacturing company in England seeks to provide a model for the implementation of customer relationship management. While expressing the complexity of CRM; Information technology, effective leadership, goals, resources, and evaluation strategies are among the important factors in implementing customer relationship management.

Ranjan and Bhatnagar (2009) in a study entitled: "Principles for analyzing the successful implementation of customer relationship management seek to identify the principles that are critical in business for CRM". He considers 16 principles, including the evaluation of existing systems, the relationship between CRM strategy, business processes, flexibility in software, information technology infrastructure, costs, the organization's vision, and motivational factors, etc. They lead to the successful implementation of CRM and help the organization in measuring the effectiveness of marketing activities.

Zablah *et al.* (2004) have emphasized both the input and the output of this system for the conceptualization of the evaluation tool of communication with customers. Based on this conceptual framework, customer relationship management can be successfully implemented with the connection between the knowledge management process that leads to customer intelligence (internal process) and the interaction management process that controls

the relationship with customers (external process). This framework emphasizes that different aspects of this concept should be considered according to the conceptual view of the system.

Shum *et al.* (2008) in a study entitled: "Emotional commitment of employees to change: The key factor in the successful implementation of CRM with an exploratory method and through interviews with the managers of three banks provides the initial framework of the research. Among these three banks, two banks had little focus on change and little success in CRM implementation, and only one bank paid much attention to change management and critical factors for implementing customer relationship management. The results of this study showed that the relationship between employees' commitment to CRM initiatives and bank performance is positive.

Lo *et al.* (2010) in a study entitled: "Customer relationship management in Hong Kong hotels", investigated the functions related to the CRM implementation. In this study, a semi-structured interview with 45 hotel managers was used to identify the functions and in two parts of customer value (customer portfolio analysis, intimate relationship with customers, value fit development, customer cycle management, evaluation, and control) and customer retention. Functions were studied with indicators of leadership and culture, information technology, people and processes.

The findings of the study showed that most of the customers consider evaluation and control factors as important. Yu *et al.* (2008) have presented a model based on a scoring card to measure customer relationship management. In this model, he quantified the evaluation indicators by using the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation mathematical model. Concerning the vagueness and quality of some indicators, they have presented a model that measures them with a fuzzy approach. Although the indicators of the balanced scoring card have shown themselves to be operational in different environments, it is a result-oriented approach and does not have a comprehensive view of this

issue. In this model, with the fuzzy approach, the measurement deficiencies of some indicators have been resolved, but like other existing evaluation models, it suffers from the problem of lack of comprehensiveness.

## Conclusion

The information technology variable was recognized as the third most important factor in the successful implementation of CRM. Today, information technology has brought about a huge transformation in relationships, and without it, things would be realized in a much slower process than now. In this regard, Hadizadeh Moghadam *et al.* (2010), Lo *et al.* (2010), Ranjan and Bhatnagar (2009), and Ball (2003) have all proposed information technology as one of the important factors of CRM implementation. Change management was identified as the fourth important factor of CRM implementation in this research. Nowadays, it is no secret that change has become an integral part of companies. Changing markets will change the needs of customers and, as a result, the marketing strategy will also change, and then the structure and knowledge of employees should also change. Therefore, it is concluded that one should manage the change and understand the needs of the customers and not act in a static way. In this regard, before this study, Mehrabi *et al.* (2009) mentioned that culture, technology and structural changes have a positive effect on CRM implementation. Shum *et al.* (2008) consider change management as a key factor in successful CRM implementation. Motmani and Jafari (2009) in a study stated that one of the strengths of successful implementation of CRM in the hotel industry is attention to changes in the life cycle of customers.

Processes were identified as the fifth most important factor in CRM success in this research. CRM is not only specific to the marketing unit, but also includes continuous changes in organizational processes. In other words, it should consider certain processes such as targeting, attracting and retaining customers. Customer-oriented organizations are constantly integrating marketing processes

and other business processes in order to provide customer service and respond to market pressures. In line with process engineering, customer feedback can also be used. In this regard, Lo *et al.* (2010) identified work processes as one of the functions related to the implementation of CRM in hotels. In a study, Ranjan and Bhatnagar (2009) confirmed the relationship between CRM strategy and business processes. Keramati and Nikzad (2010) in a study introduced processes as a key success factor.

People were identified as the sixth factor related to the successful implementation of CRM in this research. People are considered to be the internal customers of the organization and if they are satisfied, they will attract external customers. The people who deal with the customers are in a way the representative of the company and they play a great role in shaping the perception of the customers about the company. Communication management in the organization causes the formation of a kind of coherence about how to deal with customers by employees. Another factor that was identified related to the success of CRM is communication management. Marketers have always promoted close relationships with customers. Today, due to the advances made in information and communication technology, person-to-person communication, customer value analysis and mass production of orders have become possible. Customer relationship management uses technology leverage to coordinate organization interactions with the aim of building long-term loyalty.

Technological advances in the last decade have turned business into communication with customers, which provides the possibility of conversation and integrated communication with each customer. The relationship between the customer and the supplier should be at the top of the organization's priority list. Acquiring customer costs money and maintaining these relationships can cost more. However, if these connections are not maintained, the cost of acquiring new customers or replacing new customers will be much higher. In this regard, previously Na *et al.* introduced communication as one of the success factors of CRM. Hadizadeh

Moghadam *et al.* (2010) considered communication management as a successful factor in CRM implementation. Lindgren (2006) and Shiah (2005) also identified internal and external communication management as an important factor of CRM success.

Previously, Dehmardeh *et al.* (2010) listed culture as one of the success factors of CRM. In a study, Mehrabi *et al.* (2009) found organizational culture changes to be effective in the successful implementation of CRM in Bank Mellat, Eskandari (2010) stated that cultural factors have a significant relationship with the successful implementation of CRM. Based on the data of this study, the most important factor in the customer life cycle analysis strategy and customer classification in culture is under the criterion of creating an adaptable and responsive organizational culture, in people under the criterion of appropriate reward system, in information technology under the criterion of using analytical tools, in the process welcome sub-criterion, in knowledge management under the dynamic learning ability criterion, in support and support under the criterion of customer focus in planning, in change management under the criterion of promoting a positive attitude towards change, and in communication management under the criterion of immediate response to customers from the most priority.

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