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ABSTRACT
Not only the field of Marketing has intensively dealt with the topic of Customer relationship management (CRM), mostly under the category of "relationship marketing", but also the field of Information Systems has intensively dealt with the topic. The current academic discussion poses the question of what path CRM has actually taken in hindsight, what the topic's current state is in practice, where problems have existed, and what can be learned from them for the future. Our study delineates the different perspectives of CRM that have contributed to the diversification of the discipline so far, discusses the different problems that result from the different perspectives of CRM, and investigates which CRM perspectives dominate in business, and where concrete success factors and/or reasons for CRM failure can be seen on the basis of an empirical study of 503, 547, 332 and finally 606 Managers of Swiss companies in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, CRM, eCRM, Marketing and IT, Relationship Marketing

1. CRM: THE ONE-TIME BUZZWORD WITH LOTS OF OPEN QUESTIONS

Customer relationship management (CRM), once heralded in the 1990s practically as an economic "cure all", has since then run into a multitude of critical voices (e.g. Buehler and Mueller 2002). CRM was initially a buzzword for many (see e.g. Schultz 2000; Fuss 2001), which might indicate that it simply went through a phase of being the "hot" topic. Later, CRM was again discussed in the context of the lack of success in CRM projects (Harding et al. 2003; 2004; Lavalle and Sched 2004; Lovelock and Wirtz 2004; Thompson et al. 2007; Foss et al. 2008). CRM nevertheless remains a relevant element of scientific research and everyday business (see e.g. Becker et al. 2000; Tripplet 2009; Chuen-Hsien et al. 2010; McKay 2010; Segal 2010; Siems 2010).

The field of Marketing has intensively dealt with the topic of CRM, mostly under the category of "relationship marketing" (Zabian et al. 2004). This term is attributable most of all to Berry (1983), initially celebrated as a paradigm shift, the view is now that thinking in terms of relationships doesn't replace classical marketing, but instead intelligence expands upon it (Grimmores 1994; Brodie et al. 1997; Gummesson 1997; Payne 2000; Bruhn 2002; Zeddon and Philipson 2007). The unchanged importance of relationship marketing continues to be seen in both research and business, e.g. in well-established trade and scientific journals (especially the Journal of Relationship Marketing), conferences, and publications (e.g. Bejou and Painor 2005; Berret and Birkin REEP 2008; Berent et al. 2010; Holien and Oppersik 2010). Not to be forgotten is also the integration of the topic into academic teaching.

The field of Information Systems has also intensively dealt with the topic. For example, Hadasa and Casser (2009) conducted an empirical study regarding the moderating role of eCRM (electronic CRM) in the contact of product innovation emphasizing especially internal integration of the eCRM. Freeman et al. (2007) identify six factors that explain why organizations invest in CRM point solutions: reduced risk, lower cost, quick benefit realization, low integration ability, low interdependence of business units, and high business-unit differentiation. The role of CRM components in achieving CRM success has been subject to an empirical study in the Netherlands (Peelen et al. 2006).
The academic discussion poses the question of what path CRM has actually been taken in hind-sight, as technology's current use in practice, and where problems have existed, and what can be learned from them for the future. While previous research for example has been done regarding the organizational characteristics and the CRM adoption process in one selected industry in Korea (Ro et al., 2008) our study focuses on companies from different industries and business sectors in Switzerland. This is the starting point for the following contribution. First, the different perspectives of CRM that have contributed to the diversification of the discipline will be delineated. Following this, the different perspectives that result from other theoretical perspectives of CRM will be discussed. The main body of the paper is comprised of the analysis of an empirical study conducted in 503, 547, 332 and finally 608 Swiss companies in 2007, 2006, 2009 and 2010. Especially, it was investigated which CRM perspectives dominate in business, and where challenges and success factors and/or reasons for CRM failure can be seen. The paper closes with a summary of management implications and an outlook for possible future research.

2. PERSPECTIVES, DEVELOPMENTS AND DIFFICULTIES OF CRM

Customer relationship management is a topic that is observed by a variety of scientific disciplines, most notably Information Systems (the technical perspective) and business administration (the business perspective) (see e.g. Schult 2000; Dowling 2002; Heuvelock and Wirtz 2004). The main thrust of this discussion is in particular the use of information technologies and algorithms from statistics and operations research to increase efficiency in customer-related company processes (Dowling 2002; see also e.g. Lovelock and Wirtz 2004). One can observe two fundamental directions of CRM development from a technical perspective: Operational and analytical CRM systems (Berson et al. 1995; Heuvelock and Wirtz 2004). The first category of operational CRM systems originates from the efforts of Information Systems developers to further extend the scope of operational processes being supported by means of information technology. The initial approaches of Information Systems for supporting operational processes mainly focused on internal activities such as material requirements planning (MRP) for manufacturing firms. By applying mathematical optimization methods from Operations Research the main issue of such systems is to optimize production lot sizes, decompose bills of materials and deduct inventory levels that are set subsequently. From this point of view, the customer is merely viewed as exploitable source of income (Laudon and Laudon 2010) and origins of demands which may be predicted and decomposed into manufacturing and purchasing orders. In order to cope with the limitation of computational power available at this time these Information Systems were built on mathematical models which contained numerous relaxations and simplifications concerning the framework conditions for manufacturing management like customers' demands and preferences. From this originating point one may describe the development of Information Systems in general and of CRM systems in particular as technology driven. Systems designers and developers in search for useful applications for the rapidly advancing possibilities of offered software platforms and operating systems turned out towards the integration of all manufacturing resources under one information system. Amongst others, sales and operations planning activities are automated by the generation of Information Systems. The paradigm shift of business process re-engineering in the 1990s forced the Information Systems development further into a direction of a more holistic view of the enterprise. The intrinsic goal of the newly emerging Enterprise Resource Planning systems (ERP) was to support business processes to the largest possible extent. One of the central principles of the process-oriented enterprise is that it is not made up of functionally segregated areas of responsibility but rather focused towards fulfilling certain process goals, i.e. to satisfy a customer demand. Hence, the different interfaces of a company's processes with the market have been reproduced within the supporting Information Systems and – as a consequence – the number of datasets concerned with customers has grown largely.

Due to this rather fragmented view on customers in traditional Information Systems, the development of operational CRM systems (oCRM) follows the approach to unify the view, a firm interacts with its customers before and after selling goods. The main issues of these specialized Information Systems are to support sales, marketing and service processes. Examples of the functionality portfolio of oCRM include lead and contact management, sales management, sales order entry and event management support as well as issue, call and service level management (Byttner 2008).

The possibilities of e-business and new media put a special emphasis on eCRM as the dialogue with the customers takes place within the Information System (see e.g. Dowling 2002). This also involves a customization of communication (Stauss 2000; also see Allen 2004). This realm is sometimes referred to as e-CRM (electronic CRM) and/or e-"Relationships" (electronic relationship) (see e.g. Gummesson 2002; Pan and Lee 2003; Kennedy 2006; Changsri et al. 2008).

Another form of eCRM is optimizing the direct customer interaction e.g. in the form of call centers, customer services, or sales personnel (see e.g. Dowling 2002; Allen 2004; Arrêt and Badrinarayanan 2005). This also includes approaches of automated customer interaction, e.g. sales force automation, marketing automation, and call center automation (Lovelock and Wirtz 2004).

The starting point for the second type of CRM systems is the fact that these operational Information Systems create a plethora of data which are potentially interesting for strategic decision-making. Hence, the goal of analytic CRM (aCRM) is to gain meaningful insights into customer behavior and preferences by deriving information from customer interaction processes which can be retracted within oCRM systems. Therefore, aCRM systems are aiming at bridging the gap between operational activities and the informational needs of managerial processes by utilizing intelligent information retrieval techniques (cf. e.g. Goodhue et al. 2002). The methodological foundation for this type of Information Systems is very similar to the so-called Decision Support Systems (DSS) which not only provide aggregation mechanisms for operational data (like Management Information Systems do) but rather utilize models and specialized methods to directly support specific decision scenarios. A first approach into this direction are database-driven CRM systems which address the optimization of customer databases. This involves the compilation and processing of data from arbitrary sources, particularly for the identification, selection, and segmentation of customer-specific information for example by means of OLAP (On-Line Analytical Processing) and OLAP-like (OLAP) (see e.g. Arnett and Badrinarayanan 2005; Chu et al. 2005; see also Dowling 2002; Pan and Lee 2003; Allen 2004; Zhang et al. 2004). One main prerequisite for applying OLAP techniques is the homogeneity of data which is frequently achieved by extracting data from customer databases (CRM) (OLAP). Upon these extractions from operational databases OLAP techniques are used to aggregate customer data within certain dimensions (e.g. customer profitability, potential, etc.). Although the users of OLAP tools are able to identify important information about customer attributes they are yet to provide the correct direction for research (Ku et al. 2005). More advanced approaches apply data mining techniques to infer meaningful customer information (Berson et al. 1999; Rytgild et al. 2002; Nga et al. 2001). In this context, statistical and mathematical methods such as data mining, Machine Learning and Data Mining are used in order to detect patterns of customer behavior or relevant relationships between business variables and customers' reactions (e.g. price sensitivity). A review of the relevant literature shows that clustering algorithms are one of the most important data mining techniques for aCRM (Detection of Similar Customers). The most prominent attributes is mainly used for customer identification (Dannis et al. 2001; Lee and Park 2005; Yang and Pessemiersbainb 2005; Verdi et al. 2006). Furthermore clustering methods are employed for cross sell and up sell purposes, as customer lifetime value (CLV) is calculated (Kim et al. 2006; Jang et al. 2006). Cross selling, for example, can be achieved by analyzing customer preferences (e.g. Chiang et al. 2003; Basens et al. 2002; Buckuro et al. 2004; Kim and Street 2004). Only a few clustering techniques have been proposed for the evaluation of customer lifetime values (Dhir et al. 2001; Rosset et al. 2003). Besides clustering, a few approaches use classification techniques, recognition, visualization, sequencing or association methods to infer CRM Information (for details see Nga et al. 2009).

Software solutions are also mentioned in scientific economic literature (at least as a part of CRM (see e.g. Mühlbacher et al. 2005). This technical perspective of CRM is also generally referred to in literature as the database-driven approach (although it is actually only considered a part of it, see above), while the business perspective (primarily as it focuses on a long-term customer relationship) is seen as a customer needs-driven approach (Arnett and Badrinarayanan 2005; also see Dowling 2002; Zabluk et al. 2004). As the above discussion shows, the technical perspective of CRM is driven less by technical opportunities rather than by the needs of the operational or managerial processes. Hence, it can be supposed that a considerable number of reasons for the failure of CRM projects originate from a mismatch between the requirements from a business perspective and the possibilities offered by the technical perspective.
2.2 The business perspective of CRM

In business, CRM as a customer needs-driven approach finds application most of all in marketing (see Arnott and Badarinayanan 2005; also see Dowling 2002; Zubair et al. 2004). Along with CRM, the term “relationship marketing” is also applied here, again showing that the focus is a company developing and maintaining a long-term relationship with its target groups (Gummesson 2002; Bruhn 2003; Homburg et al. 2005).

Strictly seen, “relationship marketing” is not really a “new” field within marketing, but instead represents a bundle of methods focused on the development of different approaches (particularly those that emerge from services and B2B marketing) that had been discussed even before the term “CRM” started to be used (Dowling 2002; Gummesson 2002; Sheth and Parvatiyar 2002). Examples here include the Nord-School of Services Marketing (Hemmig-Thurow and Hemmig 2000; Schulz 2002). Relationship marketing has been called by name and used widely in scholarship and business since the 1990s. Together with the term “customer orientation” (Grönroos 1990, 1994, Gummesson 1987, 1984, 2002; Bruhn 2003), Allen (2004) talks about an “orientation that moved from product to customer.” The spread of this concept was assisted by approaches by Reichheld and Sasser (1993) who showed the profitability of a long-term customer relationship. And today, relationship marketing approaches are applied far beyond just the original realms of servicing and B2B marketing. They are also found in consumer goods marketing (see e.g. Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995; Gaborosi 1995; O’Halleran and Tyman 2000) as well as in not-for-profit marketing (see e.g. MacMillan et al. 2003; Bryne 2007; Knox and Gнут 2007).

"Traditional" marketing instruments and approaches (e.g. the 4 Ps of product, price, promotion, and place) as well as newer instruments (e.g. customer cards and club memberships) are discussed as ways to achieve the goals of relationship marketing (Homburg et al. 2005). Accordingly, not everything here is necessarily "new", but often just "newly applied" with the new and/or re-emphasized goal of a long-term customer relationship.

In the above-mentioned technical sense (e.g. customer databases and/or software solutions), CRM as a business perspective represents a technically supported application of a traditional and fundamental marketing principle. Markets are heterogeneous, so thinking must be done in terms of marketing strategies, and the different segments must be handled differently (see e.g. Walker et al. 2008; West et al. 2008). This fundamental thinking is not only included in the discussion on product and price differentiation, but also in direct marketing approaches as well (see also Gummesson 2002; also see Allen 2004).

With this being the case, the technical perspective of CRM is often seen as a subsection of the commercial aspects of relationship marketing (see e.g. Bruhn 2003). In turn, the purely technical viewpoint of “CRM = software solutions” is considered insufficient (see e.g. Fluss 2001; Bruhn 2003; Allan 2004; Lovekock and Vörtz 2004).

2.3 Holistic, integrated perspectives of CRM

The multifaceted nature of CRM has been intensively discussed in existing research (see e.g. Schultz 2000; Dowling 2002; Agarwal et al. 2004). One past way of thinking found that reducing the topic to two perspectives, particularly the two shown above (technology and business), in some cases may not be sufficient. Zubair et al. (2004) for example recommend two perspectives: process, strategy, philosophy, capability and technology. Lichtenburg and Vercorneal (2004) claim that CRM performance is positively affected by aligning CRM activities according to the following business dimensions: strategy, monitoring and control, organization and processes, employees and culture, and finally IT. They also conclude that integrating CRM strategy, customer insight, customer contact, and marketing is a critical success factor.

On the other hand, the findings on the two perspectives have led to a more comprehensive overall understanding: CRM is without question a result of both business and technological innovations (Allen 2004). From this comes the implication that CRM is particularly successful when the individual perspectives involved are brought together and effectively and completely taken into consideration (Becquer et al. 2009; Chun-Hsien et al. 2010). This specifically means that marketing and IT (in spite of and especially because of the completely different ways of thinking that both fields bring to the table) should in reality work closely together (Allen 2004; also see Agarwal et al. 2004). And with today’s clearly to see Agarwal et al. (2004). And with today’s, understanding of CRM in mind, both strategic and organizational aspects are of central importance for success (see e.g. Chang 2007).

The two views of CRM discussed above should also be critically examined in the case where they are followed too unilaterally. This is particularly the case with the technological perspective solely offering “CRM as an IT solution” (“pure technical perspective”). Strategic and organizational aspects are missing here, and marketing as a user of CRM software is simply neglected or downright ignored. A somehow Business-IT-alignment has to take place when adopting CRM solutions (e.g. Richard et al. 2007).

If the other way around with a (purely) marketing perspective (“pure business perspective”). The danger here is that old marketing instruments are simply “repackaged” to adhere to a purely operative marketing approach (e.g. CRM implementation = introduction of a customer loyalty bonus program). In addition, a purely marketing perspective brings with it the danger of neglecting technical aspects and new technological developments, undermining the ability of IT and new technologies to power business, and reducing the opportunity to profit from competitive advantages that arise from them. So an integration of both the IT and marketing approaches of CRM is more than sensible ("Integrated perspective"). This approach assumes a corresponding integration of CRM on the company strategy level that can apply the marketing as well as the IT approaches to achieve the critical idea of both customer orientation.

More recent approaches as a result increasingly emphasize the importance of embedding CRM projects into a consistent CRM strategy, and the necessity to adapt processes, organization, and the company culture accordingly (Roberts et al. 2005). After all, CRM initiatives can only be successful when they are accepted and carried out by employees (see e.g. Bruhn 2003; Tyman 2005; also see Gummesson 2002).

2.4 CRM difficulties and research question

As mentioned in the introduction, the lack of success when applying CRM has recently been repeatedly discussed (Harding et al. 2003; LaValle and Scholz 2004; Agarwal et al. 2004; Loveckock and Vörtz 2004). Here, it can be assumed that this lack of success is attributable to the sometimes one-sided perspectives applied in CRM and lack of understanding of the advantages of a comprehensive approach towards it (see above). Poss et al. (2008) make clear: "Poor planning, lack of clear objectives and not recognizing the need for business change are the key reasons for CRM failures." Loveckock and Vörtz (2004) similarly find that "Unfortunately, the majority of CRM implementations fail. […] A key reason for this high failure rate is that firms often equate installing CRM systems with having a customer relationship strategy. They forget that the system is merely a tool to enhance the firm's customer servicing capability and is not the strategy itself." Siems and Wachler (2010) conclude that "CRM software solutions can be a helpful instrument to achieve relationship marketing objectives, the real success of relationship marketing however depends on distinct marketing strategies as well as the refinement and adoption of tools." Tyman (2005) also mentions factors that negatively impact success (he speaks of "The... biggest CRM mistakes") which include "Don't think, just buy", "Don't involve the sales team", "Pay no attention to process", "Go it alone", and "Don't define success." This raises the question of whether and to what extent these problems are important in everyday business and are recognized as such. At the same time, the different CRM perspectives pose the question of which of them are more prevalent in business, and whether or not this happens to be changing. Against this background, an empirical study was conceptualized in Switzerland and carried out in the past four years (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010). The concepts and results of this study will be shown in the following.

3. EMPIRICAL STUDY: CRM IN SWITZERLAND

3.1 Study design

The pilot study (2007) was conceptualized as follows:
The target group of the survey were the people responsible for CRM in medium and large companies in Switzerland. Depending on the company, this included e.g. owners, department managers, heads randomly selected and other middle managers that do their business in Switzerland was acquired, consented and had the choice of doing the survey online via an e-mail link or by filling out a paper study, which corresponds to a return rate of about 32%.

Of the companies that completed the survey, a third of them were (measured by annual turnover and number of employees) large corporations, while 58% were medium sized companies, and the rest were small companies. The latter were not originally intended as part of the population parameter, and the results are consequently not representative for this group.

A broad pallette of industries was found among the participating companies. CRM-savvy service industries such as banks, insurance companies, telecommunications, and mail order businesses comprised 10.7% of the sample size. Other service companies accounted for 35.5%, 39.1% were in the from the survey and not included in the sample building process before were state and agricultural operations.

The 2008, 2009 and 2010 studies were conceptualized according to the same pattern: 1,232 of 1934 and received their choice of an online survey sent to them via e-mail. A paper survey sent to their obtained for the evaluation, which corresponds to return rates of about 23% (2009), 19% (2008) and 32% (2010). Of the companies completing the survey, about a third of them were (also seen in the breakdown above) large corporations 2008: 36.8%; 2009: 41.1%; 2010: 32.5%, while 57% (2008), were fewer than 50 employees were surveyed in these years, with amounts of 6.7% (2008), 6% (2009) and two studies as well. CRM-savvy service companies such as banks, insurance companies, telecommunication and mail order businesses comprised 10.4% (2008), 14.5% (2009) and 8% (2010) of the sample size. Other service companies accounted for 36.7% (2008), 36.6% (2009) and 28.2% (2010) were in manufacturing, while 13.7% (2008), 12.9% (2009) and 18.2% (2010) were construction/construction companies.

A data analysis was done on the written survey, which contained mostly closed questions. Organizations were done with the involvement of an interdisciplinary research team comprised of members of the research team and the data, and coming from the fields of information technology, business information and avoidance of possible bias that might have resulted from an overly one-sided perspective of the topic.

3.2 Results of CRM perspectives

A central question posed each year of the study was to what degree CRM adheres to one of the two perspectives (pure technical perspective, pure marketing perspective), and/or whether CRM is actuality is shown in Figure 1.

The following could be seen: In all years, about the half of the companies (51.3%, 55.0%, 51.3%, 49.7%) had a comprehensive understanding of CRM as an organizational and leadership principle. While the operational (marketing) perspective of CRM remained nearly unchanged at 30% (±3%) and the perspective of CRM as being primarily an IT issue nearly unchanged at 19% (±3%). The slightly better results seen in 2008, the second year of the study (in the sense of a more comprehensive CRM perspective) probably is due to the same sample being used in 2008 and 2009. Here, companies were able to learn from the study and improve their CRM perspective. This is why a new sample was chosen for 2009 and 2010.

Of particular interest during the evaluation of the results was whether the answers given about CRM perspectives had anything to do with a company’s individual characteristics, in particular company size or the industry they operate in.

For this, the answers on how CRM is understood were first binary coded for each of the three possible answers (Definition I is yes/no with l = 1, 2, 3 and yes = 1, no = 0). The average values of these binary variables correspond to the percentage of those surveyed who presented their understanding of CRM as their own. Based on this, t-tests (statistical mean comparison tests) were able to check whether significant average value differences (and as a result, differences in terms of the occurrence (frequency in %) of each category existed between the relevant (aggregated) company size categories (medium and large companies).

In 2007, 2008 and 2010, all of these statistics showed no effects: All of the values for the t-tests were not significant (2007: sig=0.193; 0.998; 0.993; 2008: sig=0.850; 0.577; 0.709; 2010: sig=0.342; 0.933; 0.240). I.e., with this variables, we could not identify differences between large and medium sized companies.

In the study 2009, it was a little bit different: This study indicated that while the marketing-related operational definition showed no significant differences in the frequency of the answer given, the first category (CRM as software) was named by medium sized companies significantly less (sig=0.001) than by large corporations (average value of binary coded variables: 0.279; 0.109). With the third CRM definition (CRM as a comprehensive organizational principle), it’s the other way around (sig=0.001; 0.585; 0.391). Interestingly, it was the large corporations who, compared to the medium sized compa-
In order to check the effects and/or non-effects with alternative methods, analyses of correlation were done using the deggregated indicator variables of company size, i.e. turnover (of the previous year), profit (also of the previous year), and amount of employees. Because the size categories surveyed here were not metric, but ordinal scaled, Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient ($r_s$) was used (a regression analysis was not done for the same reason). 2007’s results (with the three different binary coded definitions, see above) were all not significantly correlated with the different company size indicator variables. The same was true for 2008 and 2010.

For 2009, the analyses of correlation confirmed the previous result: The variable “comprehensive understanding” (yes/no) was generally weak ($r_s$=0.3), although significant ($sig=0.05$), and negatively correlated with turnover ($r_s$=-0.185; $sig=0.008$) and amount of employees ($r_s$=-0.174; sig=0.000). The greater the amount of employees and/or turnover, the lower the possibility of a comprehensive (sensible) CRM perspective. The opposite was seen with a perspective of CRM as a software solution, although here, the coefficient was significant only in terms of turnover ($r_s$=0.491; sig=0.003). The greater the turnover, the greater the chance is that the (less sensible) understanding of CRM as a software solution will exist.

Variance analyses were conducted with the 2009 and the 2010 data to investigate the dependency of the results of CRM perspective according to the industry sector a company is in. The results showed that in 2009 none of the three perspectives is significantly influenced by industry sector (CRM as software: ANOVA sig=0.191; CRM as marketing: ANOVA sig=0.789; CRM comprehensive: ANOVA sig=0.328). Disaggregated pairwise comparisons between industry sectors using t-tests also showed no significance. No significant results were found in the comparisons between partially aggregated variables such as “CRM-savvy banks (branches, insurance, telecommunications, and mail order) compared to others.” This latter result in particular is surprising. It indicates that even being in a CRM-savvy branch is no guarantee that a company will handle the topic of CRM more sensibly than those sectors considered to be less CRM-savvy.

In 2010, we found small differences: The results of the variance analyses showed that on an aggregate variable level only the perspective “CRM as software” is significantly influenced by industry sector (CRM as software: ANOVA sig=0.039; CRM as marketing: ANOVA sig=0.234; CRM comprehensive: ANOVA sig=0.019). More interesting are the details: Disaggregated pairwise comparisons between industry sectors using t-tests showed differences especially for telecommunications, the metal industry and the chemical industry: For the telecommunications, the perspective “CRM comprehensive is” in 4 of 12 industry-t-test-comparisons significant less relevant and the perspective “CRM as marketing” in 5 of 12 Industry t-test-comparisons significant more relevant than in other industries. In the chemical industry, especially the perspective “CRM as software” is significant more relevant than in other (5 of 12 industries) industries. In the metal industry, the comprehensive perspective of CRM is significant less important than in a few other industries (2 of 12). In 2010, also small significant results were found in the comparisons between partially aggregated variables such as “CRM-savvy banks (branches, insurance, telecommunications, and mail order) compared to others”: Being part of a CRM-savvy branch influences the relevance of the perspective “CRM comprehensive” significant positively (ANOVA sig=0.018). Interestingly, effects on the other both CRM perspectives of this aggregate variable could not be seen.

3.3 Results of CRM success and difficulties

Along with the CRM perspective and where it is located within a company, an additional item investigated was whether and where those surveyed perceive current CRM successes and difficulties.

The existence of problems was clearly seen in the answers to the question regarding CRM success. It was specifically asked how successful (in terms of ROI) previous CRM efforts are categorized. As Figure 2 makes clear, almost half of those surveyed did not see this category (none) CRM success at all, mostly not at all, or only partially. The figures here are relatively constant over the years, and there is no indication of a statistically significant development.

**Figure 2: Success of previous CRM projects (2006/2007)**

The most interesting of these results is that a strong correlation exists between the perception of success and another value in all years of the study: The perception of the degree of CRM success is clearly influenced by how the term itself is perceived.

Companies indicating a more “pure technical perspective” (CRM as an IT solution) claim to have a significantly lower rate of CRM success in all studies (2007: $r_s$=0.267, sig=0.000; 2008: $r_s$=0.137, sig=0.002; 2009: $r_s$=0.187, sig=0.002; 2010: $r_s$=0.167, sig=0.000).

Companies indicating a more “pure business perspective” (CRM as marketing) claim to have in most of the studies a significantly lower rate of CRM success (2007: $r_s$=0.106, sig=0.018; 2008: $r_s$=0.106, sig=0.017; 2010: $r_s$=0.103, sig=0.018). Only the study 2009 shows an exception: The coefficient ($r_s$=0.112) is positive, but not significant (sig=0.002), so the partial effect cannot be seen in this year.

Companies indicating a more comprehensive understanding of CRM claim to have a significantly higher rate of CRM success in all studies (2007: $r_s$=0.204, sig=0.000; 2008: $r_s$=0.195, sig=0.000; 2009: $r_s$=0.234, sig=0.000).

What should be additionally stated is on the one hand, a variance analysis (using the original nominal scale for the CRM definition and assuming the scale for the success as nearly metric) also confirmed this result (2007: ANOVA sig=0.000; 2008: ANOVA sig=0.000; 2009: ANOVA sig=0.000; 2010: ANOVA sig=0.000).

To be sure, a correlation is not automatically an indication of a cause-effect relationship, and a variance analysis is also not able to “indicate” actual causality. But the result remains clear: For whatever reason, there is a clear connection between success and CRM perspective.

Along with the interdependencies shown in relation to the success or non-success of CRM projects, concrete (possible) details regarding success or non-success in CRM projects from the viewpoint of Swiss firms were analyzed more closely in all four studies. On the basis of available literature, particularly regarding the publications on CRM success factors (Dary 2002; Knox et al. 2003; Salomann et al. 2005; Ynami 2005), along with expert interviews carried out by the authors of this paper prior to the study, those people in companies responsible for CRM were presented with a list of possible success factors in CRM projects. Here, the managers were asked to state (in their opinion) what the three most important success factors for the implementation of CRM were on this list. Whether a “success factor” was to be seen as having a negative or positive impact was in the German formulation left
Four factors are each seen by a majority of those surveyed as essential for success, and are in a near dead heat in all years in the support by top management (2010: 62.2%, 2009: 59.3%).

The same list was used to determine the most important obstacles in terms of the own experiences of those surveyed when implementing CRM in their respective companies. But here, they were allowed to name more than three factors. Those answering the survey were asked to state which factors had led to problems in their own past CRM projects. The answers are shown in Figure 4.

The results are interesting on a variety of levels. Independence of the success factors discussed, three aspects appear to clearly dominate when it comes to CRM obstacles: lack of resources, processes that are not clearly defined, and poorly maintained customer data.

Clear differences are evident when compared to success factors. Top management support (seen as an important success factor), was only of minor significance here. A possible interpretation of this is that those surveyed themselves had no problems in their own companies, but were in fact supported by management, and as a result saw this as very important.

The inverse was seen with resources. While their influence on success was regarded as relatively low, problems seemed to arise when they were directly related to the own situation. It should also be noted that the figures here remain relatively constant over the course of the survey years, no real changes or trends could be identified.

4. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND OUTLOOK

As shown, there can be different CRM perspectives. What's particularly interesting is that in the first three years of our study was conducted, it's the perspective on CRM itself that strongly influences how CRM success is perceived. The figures on CRM perspective, and particularly the nearly total lack of change over time when it comes to this concept, are cause for concern. It would appear that in many businesses in Switzerland, a one-sided notion of CRM continues to be the order of the day.

The answers regarding success factors and their related problems are themselves an appealing appeal for a more comprehensive understanding of CRM. IT solutions or operational marketing approaches alone are simply not enough. Instead, a variety of more widely applied elements, including organizational realms, can play an important role (most notably the support from top management, as well as process management).

This study and the results presented are limited to large and medium sized companies in Switzerland. This was done because the perspectives we were interested in for this study involved these two business constellations in particular. But future research potential can only be defined here as well (Siems 2010; Siems and Wache 2010: Small enterprises often know their customers very well, intuitively perceiving changes in their needs via direct contact and the manageable amount of people they deal with. Here, they react with corresponding communication and recommend products to the customers as a result. This is exactly in line with CRM thinking. You might say that CRM is not suitable for small enterprises because technical solutions don't really make sense for them. But, CRM (in the sense of a strategy) might very well be typical for small enterprises, because here, it can definitely function without technical solutions. Only with increasing company growth is assistance by technical means necessary. On the one hand, it could be interesting to observe small enterprises to inquire on important fundamental CRM principles for large and medium companies and achieve a benchmarking. On the other hand, it might also be interesting for small enterprises to be caught up on the latest in CRM, and see what kind of growth opportunities it could provide them with.

Although this study was limited only to Swiss companies, it hopes to pave the way for future research to apply its results to the analysis of potential problem issues found in other countries, and in doing so, provide insight and solutions. We currently hope to find research cooperation partners in universities abroad as a way to expand this research to other countries.
CRM and those who use it in research and business will hopefully learn from studies such as ours to apply a more integrated perspective ("Integrative CRM") as a means to use and/or achieve a broader application of what it has to offer. A comprehensive understanding of CRM that unifies technical and business aspects can undoubtedly play an essential role in reducing CRM failure that results (as seen is an overly-sided perspective. All of this can help develop and implement CRM strategies and projects that are not only effective, but that promise future success as well.

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TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE, INTERNET STRATEGY AND MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS OF E-COMMERCE BUSINESSES IN THAILAND: MODERATING EFFECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DYNAMISM

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine the influences of technology acceptance and internet strategy on marketing effectiveness of E-Commerce businesses in Thailand via environmental dynamism as a moderator. Here, 399 E-Commerce businesses in Thailand are the sample of the study. The results show that technology acceptance has a significant positive effect on internet strategy, and technology acceptance has an important positive impact on marketing effectiveness. Also, internet strategy has a potential positive influence on marketing effectiveness. For the moderating effects, environmental dynamism positively moderates the technology acceptance-internet strategy relationships, the technology acceptance-marketing effectiveness relationships and the internet strategy-marketing effectiveness relationships. In summary, technology acceptance is the antecedent of both internet strategy and marketing effectiveness; internet strategy is the factor of driving marketing effectiveness; and environmental dynamism is the moderator of the relationships. Potential discussion is efficiently implemented in the study. Theoretical and managerial contributions are explicitly provided. Conclusion and suggestions and directions for future research are also highlighted.

Keywords: E-Commerce, Technology Acceptance, Internet Strategy, Environmental Dynamism, Marketing Effectiveness

1. INTRODUCTION

Interestingly, electronic commerce (E-Commerce) has become an important business in Thailand. E-Commerce businesses have generated Thailand’s economic growth, stability, survival, and sustainability. Executives have implemented the E-Commerce in doing their business activities, and researchers have examined the research issues and topics relating to the E-Commerce activities. Here, this study investigates the associations among technology acceptance, internet strategy, environmental dynamism, and marketing effectiveness of E-Commerce businesses in Thailand. Technology acceptance becomes a main driver of both internet strategy and marketing effectiveness; internet strategy is a key player in explaining marketing effectiveness; and environmental dynamism is a moderator of these relationships. Accordingly, the aforementioned relationships are elaborately examined.

Technology acceptance is the independent variable of the study, it is an important player in explaining firms’ Internet strategy and marketing effectiveness, and it refers to the ability to accept new technology within specific circumstances (Greenfield and Rohde, 2009). Internet strategy is the mediating variable of the study and it refers to firms’ policies and plans used to achieve business goals, better firm performance, growth, and sustainability when information exchange facilitates execution of activities through value chains and supports the decision-making underlying these activities (Akgiyan et al., 2006). Environmental dynamism is the moderating variable of the study and it refers to the degree and instability of change in a firm’s environments (Li and Ye, 1999) and the uncertainty and the lack of information that affects the ability of firms to predict future events and investigate the impacts on their performance and profitability. Also, marketing effectiveness is the dependent variable of the study and it refers to a function of improving how marketers turn to markets with the goal of optimizing their marketing spending to achieve even better results of both the short- and long-term objectives (Nwokah and Ahiazu, 2008).

Technology acceptance is a potential antecedent of internet strategy and marketing effectiveness via moderating effects of environmental dynamism. Hence, the objective of this study is to test the associations among technology acceptance, internet strategy, environmental dynamism, and marketing effectiveness of E-Commerce businesses in Thailand. In the model of the relationships, marketing effectiveness is the dependent variable; technology acceptance is the independent variable; internet
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We proudly present to you the International Journal of Strategic Management (IJSM), Volume 12, Number 1, 2012 issue. In this issue, we present to you 15 research papers in business policy/strategy areas.

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This issue is dedicated to our contributors' active participation in the development of conceptual and applied work for the international strategic arena of business and economy.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions on this issue. We look forward to your paper submissions for future issues.

Best regards,
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