

**Rasheda Begum**

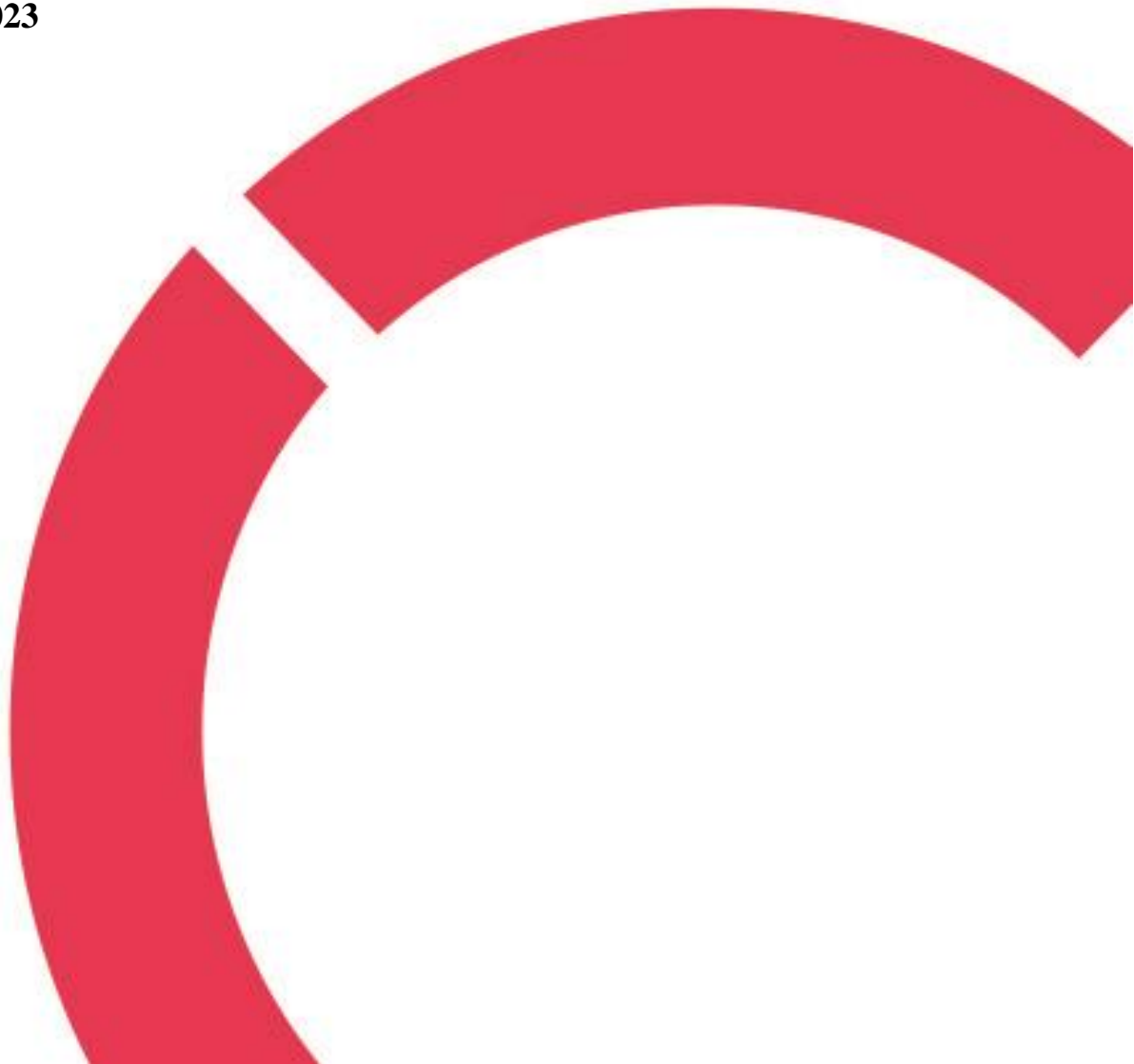
**CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Thesis**

**CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

**Bachelor of Business Administration, Business Management**

**December 2023**



## ABSTRACT

<b>Centria University of Applied Sciences</b>	<b>Date</b> December 2023	<b>Author</b> Rasheda Begum
<b>Degree programme</b> Bachelor of Business Administration, Business Management		
<b>Name of thesis</b> CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM		
<b>Centria Supervisor</b> Ann-Christine Johnsson		<b>Pages</b> 4+55
<p>The thesis aims to offer an insight into the customer relationship management methods and how it can be utilized. It aims to bring out the effectiveness of the utilization of CRM, which can further help to achieve customer loyalty and customer satisfaction and overall better performance of an organization. The technique that is used to carry out the research is a mixed method research approach. It would involve a survey to gain further information on how the business operates to achieve the objectives of customer satisfaction and loyalty and what they think of customer relationship management.</p> <p>The theoretical framework consists of the origins of customer relationship management, its effectiveness and different ways of implementation. It also highlighted the frequent mistakes made in relation to Customer Relationship Management. There was also some enlightenment on Customer Relationship Marketing as a component of Customer Relationship Management.</p> <p>The conclusion of the thesis discusses the practicability and key findings from the study. The research method used to get insights related to CRM in the Itsudemo Sushibar. It also discussed the limitations of the research conducted due to lack of samples. It also mentioned the type of businesses that can benefit from the thesis. It shed light on the possibility of small business models to be able to implement CRM.</p>		

### Key words

Business, Customer loyalty Customer relationship management, Customer satisfaction

## **ABSTRACT**

<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 The origins of customer relationship management.....	3
2.2 Types of customer relationship management .....	3
2.2.1 Strategic CRM systems.....	4
2.2.2 Operational CRM systems .....	5
2.2.3 Analytical CRM systems .....	5
2.3 The benefits of CRM systems.....	6
<b>3 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL CRM IMPLEMENTATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Practical and achievable objectives .....	9
3.2 Conducting thorough research for ideal CRM solution .....	9
3.3 A dedicated CRM team comprising department champions .....	10
3.4 Analysis of costs and benefits associated with CRM implementation.....	10
3.5 Efficiently migrating and integrating data .....	11
3.6 Comprehensive training to the team and conducting through testing.....	12
<b>4 COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID WITH CRM .....</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Not aligning CRM to the sales process .....	13
4.2 Failure to integrate CRM with marketing tools .....	13
4.3 Not setting and imposing procedures for CRM usage .....	14
4.4 Being unable to distinguish between leads, contacts and opportunities.....	15
4.5 Not deduplication the database.....	15
4.6 Incorporating too many required fields in your CRM .....	16
4.7 Lack of clear KPI definition and monitoring .....	16
4.8 Disregarding social media integrations .....	17
4.9 Failure to include CRM system into larger business strategy .....	18
<b>5 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MARKETING .....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1 Customer relationship marketing strategies .....	20
5.2 Benefits of Customer Relationship Marketing .....	21
<b>6 CASE COMPANY .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>7 RESEARCH METHOD .....</b>	<b>25</b>
7.1 Primary research and secondary research .....	25
7.2 Qualitative research .....	26
7.3 Quantitative research .....	26
7.4 Mixed methods research.....	27
7.5 Survey .....	27
<b>8 THE SURVEY APPROACH OF DATA COLLECTION .....</b>	<b>29</b>
8.1 Discussion of survey results.....	30
8.2 Summary of survey results.....	42
8.3 Existing CRM plan summarization.....	42

8.4 Limitations of the research.....	43
<b>9 CRM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR ITSUDEMO SUSHIBAR.....</b>	<b>44</b>
9.1 Objectives and implementation .....	44
9.2 Selecting CRM software .....	45
9.3 Training and familiarization.....	45
9.4 Budgeting and observation.....	45
<b>10 CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix 1/1.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Appendix 1/2.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Appendix 1/3.....</b>	<b>55</b>

## FIGURES

FIGURE 1. Conceptual framework: Types of CRM (Shopify staff 2022; Hicks 2022).....	4
FIGURE 2. Conceptual framework: Benefits of CRM (Baker 2019).....	6
FIGURE 3. Conceptual framework: Steps to successful CRM (Uzialko 2023.).....	8
FIGURE 4. Benefits of customer relationship marketing (day 2018.).....	21

## TABLES

TABLE 1. Familiarity with CRM systems .....	30
TABLE 2. Importance of building and maintaining strong customer relationships at Itsudemo Sushibar.....	30
TABLE 3. Challenges to maintaining customer relationship at Itsudemo Sushibar .....	32
TABLE 4. Openness to CRM .....	32
TABLE 5. Suggestions for implementing CRM at Itsudemo Sushibar.....	33
TABLE 6. Current Practices and Strategies for maintaining customer relationships at Itsudemo Sushibar.....	34
TABLE 7. Valuable features or functions of CRM system .....	35
TABLE 8. Importance of real time access to customer data and insights .....	36
TABLE 9. Ideas or suggestions for CRM implementation.....	36
TABLE 10. Importance of customer data management for business success .....	37
TABLE 11. Types of customer data collected by the organization .....	38
TABLE 12. Satisfaction with accuracy of customer data.....	38
TABLE 13. Customer data maintenance .....	39
TABLE 14. Utilization of customer data .....	40
TABLE 15. Additional feedback on customer data management .....	41

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive business, world organizations understand the important role of a positive relationship with customer plays in achieving continuous success. Customer Relationship Management has been established as a strategic approach to better manage customer ties. As CRM consists of the use of advance technology and keeping collection of data, it has gained quite the attention from many business organizations aiming to increase customer engagement. The thesis aims to search in detail on the implementation and effectiveness of CRM system on organization's customer relationships. By investigating the significance of CRM systems this thesis will provide valuable insights and recommendations to businesses wanting to benefit off the customer management strategies and techniques.

The introduction begins with the theoretical framework showing an overview of the significance of customer relationship management, ways it can be done. It shows that customers are more than transactional interactions and how a more customer centric approach can help to build a long-term mutual tie with customers. The limitations of a more traditional customer management approach and shedding light on a more technology-based CRM solution. The CRM concept is firstly introduced with its definitions, objectives and major elements. This would further shed light on its origins and history. The different types of CRM systems such as collaborative, analytical and operational building a conceptual basis for the study. The significance of CRM system implemented in a business will then be described. The advancements in technology along with an increased level of available customer data has enabled the development of CRM systems as useful components for managing customers. Personalized, marketing, understanding customer psychology and enhances customer service are few of the benefits provided by CRM systems which will be further explored in the study. In order to achieve the objectives or goals a mixed methods research approach is adopted. It includes a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research. The mixed method research will be in the form of survey, which will give an insight into employee's perception of CRM systems. The research structure and methodology are further explained in the subsequent thesis sections.

Finally, the importance and contribution of this research are overviewed. By observing the implementation or the lack of CRM systems this study sheds light on business organizations considering or already employing CRM strategies. The findings are expected to help other similar business organizations with decision-making process when it comes to managing customers. It is expected to help organizations overcome implementation challenges and optimize customer relationship management practices.

Overall, this thesis contributes to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the types of CRM, different options of CRM integration and usefulness of CRM systems. It extends the understanding of CRM theory in context to the business organization mentioned in the case study.

## **2 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**

It is crucial for businesses to keep a record of changes such as changes in customer trends and what influences these changes hence progress towards a more customer-oriented approach. These strategies, practices and technologies used by businesses to manage customer relationships can define the term Customer relationship management (CRM). CRM is the process of gathering and analysing customer data to reinforce customer loyalty. Buttle (2009, 27) states that, CRM functions as a business tactic which involves profit and revenue maximization and satisfying customers by exploiting customer segmentation and customer centric behaviour. (Buttle 2009, 27.)

### **2.1 The origins of customer relationship management**

Per the specifications of Baran, Zerres & Zerres (2014, 5), CRM portrays an evolutionary shift in corporate mindset derived from the corporate mindset which began with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) initiative of the 1990s. The foundation of CRM was laid by ERP, a software that incorporates various business processes within a centralized platform. The development of CRM was vastly influenced by data mining techniques, segmentation and targeted research, emphasizing the priority of customer needs. Additionally progressions in promotional tools like selective binding, variable valuation and new probabilistic targeting tools like spectra has also played crucial roles in advancing CRM. (Baran et al. 2014, 5)

### **2.2 Types of customer relationship management**

In the current competitive world, it is important to have a deeper understanding of what individual business organizations need to a better service for its customers. While customer relationship management is an applicable solution, it is important for the people handling the

business to be aware of the different types of customer relationship solutions that are available. The figure 1 below represents the three main types of customer relationship management (FIGURE 1).

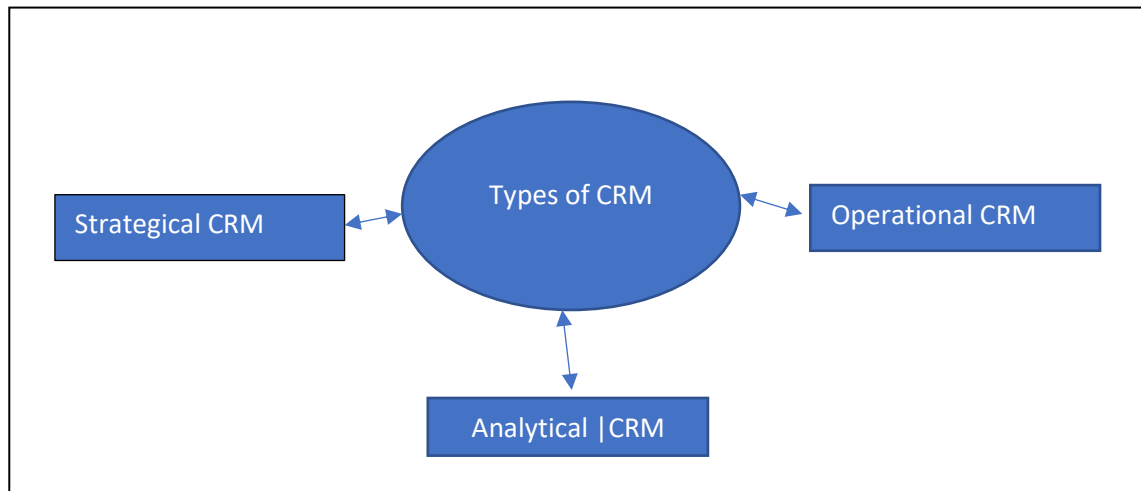


FIGURE 1. Types of CRM (Shopify staff 2022; Hicks 2022)

### 2.2.1 Strategic CRM systems

A strategic CRM approach centres around building a customer focused business atmosphere. Such atmosphere makes it a priority to acquire and retain customers by providing a superior value compare to competitors. In order to incorporate a customer centric culture, leadership behaviours, formal system designs and company narratives should reflect such philosophy. The business allocates resources in such a way to enhance customer value. Reward systems are built to encourage employee behaviours that increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. An approach like this includes systematic collection, sharing and integration of customer-derived information throughout the entire business structure. Prominent individuals within the organization often addressed as heroes, demonstrate exceptional customer service. Many businesses attempt to adopt a customer centric approach but only a few effectively implement it. The customer centric ideology stands in competition with other approaches such as sales centric approach, product centric a[approach and production centric approach. (Buttle 2009, 27-28.)



### **2.2.2 Operational CRM systems**

Within a company operational CRMs acts as an essential support for executive functions like sales, marketing and customer service. Its function is to serve as a tool that streamlines and manages various communication channels between the company and its customers. The primary objective of operational CRM is to acquire and retain customers. Such an objective is achieved through activities like generating leads, nurturing into customers and maintenance of high quality customer service standards. Marketing automation in operational CRM involves aiming specific customer segments using mediums like emails, texts and digital advertisements. There are triggers such as a purchase or visit a landing page activate these automated marketing efforts. Operational CRM efficiently handles sales cycle with the help of tracking touchpoints, automating follow-ups and offering insights for determining the best timing to convert a lead into a sales prospect. Operational CRMs are structured as a helping hand to executive sales, marketing and customer service functions. They act as a tool that manages the different ways a company communicates with customers. Making improvements in customer acquisition and retention is an essential objective of such type of operational CRM. It can be in the form of making new leads, nurturing them and transforming them into customers and upholding them the premium customer service. Sales automation also a part of operational CRM makes use of behavioral triggers to allow sales teams to spontaneously send targeted and strategic communications to customers during important stages of sales process. A system like this facilitates lead scoring, management, and generates sales forecasting reports automatically. Customer service automation integrated into operational CRM involves self-service features such as, live chat, and automated email replies. Such tools effectively deal with customer inquiries and requests, improving the overall customer service experience. (Shopify staff 2022.)

### **2.2.3 Analytical CRM systems**

Analytical CRM systems focuses solely on helping an organization examine the existing customer in collection to gain useful insights. The digital medium has made the collection of large quantities of data easier. At the same time, the analysis of data, which is required to

make a proper use of the data, is a difficult task. There are even estimates that signify that over half of the data accounted by organizations never is put into proper usage. Therefore, analytical comes with tools and elements that allows for the efficient use of data to understand customer behaviour. This information can then act as a guidance that helps the business figure out what can lead them to better sales, which in turn may increase customer retention and solve common customer problems. (Hicks 2022.)

### 2.3 The benefits of CRM systems

It is important for business handlers to understand the benefits that can come with the implementation of CRM systems in the operation. Gaining more knowledge about the benefits would further shed light on the problems the business might be currently facing. The following figure 2, shows the potential benefits that can be achieved from CRM implementation (FIGURE 2)

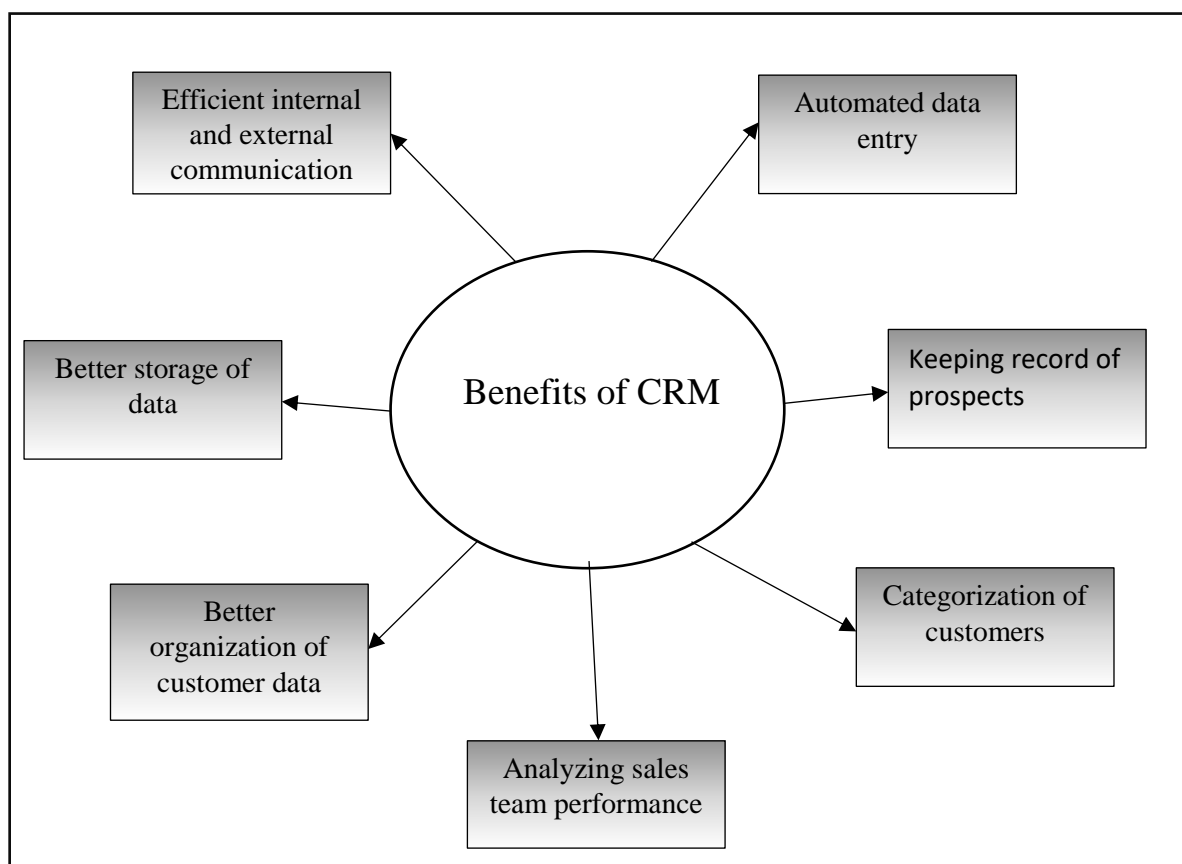


FIGURE 2. Benefits of CRM (Baker 2019)

A sales department is made easier by CRM of an organization to store all the needed data in a dominant database. This creates the data more accessible and quicker to practice through a mutual locality. It eradicates the necessity for corporations to go through an old set of data to find the piece of information they are looking for. CRM guarantees an effective internal and external communication, which further allows the internal illustrative to keep a record of customers' transaction, which may include electronic message, phone calls and more. This permits the representative to better recognize when to get back to a buyer or if they already have out to them. CRM also allows for a spontaneous data access of emails, calls, conferences and other interactions, which keeps the time of the company workforces not having to do it manually. The CRM system agrees for the data entry being recorded by the exact period they are in making it more dependable. Systemically CRM arises in handy to monitor the prospect actions building it easier for the representative of a company to interact with any panorama when needed. Information, which is recorded then, helps the sales representative by offering timely reminders concerning required follow-ups with separate prospects. Such tokens can be advantageous as the representatives efficiently list their contacts during times when their succor is most profitable to the prospects. (Baker 2019.)

The usage of CRM systems permits sale representatives to save an account of all the acquaintances and any related records irrespective of the buyer's journey. It contains information such as if the contacts stayed the website, downloaded content from the site, or interconnected with any other member of the trades division beforehand. CRM allows the clients category from the data recorded about them throughout a period. The classification can be finished based on different issues such as location, company size or deal stage. This bounces the transactions representatives a better clue of how to extent out to each segment, which in turn increases the possibility of conversion. Sales report is an essential part of customer relationship management. It offers a crucial impression of prospects, deals and contacts by providing structures identical sales dashboard and reporting tools. These machineries sales reps can modernize their workflows, automate processes, and powerfully knob their pipeline relations. This also allows them to observe single presentation, fixed, assess goals, and stay on track to meet their quotas. Transactions reports facilitate a complete view of a sales manager, team growth towards quota achievement and allows them to analyze the amount of successfully closed deals. Such reports action as a basis to assessing team performance and identifying zones that need progresses. (Baker 2019.)

### 3 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL CRM IMPLEMENTATION

A strategic approach and careful planning are needed for starting successful CRM implementation process. It is crucial for a business to invest on appropriate sources and incorporate effective strategies to ensure a smooth transition, which in turn can help the business to maximize its profits. In relation to this understanding, the key concepts of successful CRM implementation become essential. Invaluable insights are provided by these concepts such as necessary investment steps that a business may follow to embark on this transformative path with adequate confidence level. The utilization of these notions can help businesses create an easy route for a prosperous CRM implementation and therefore explore the utmost potential of their customer relationships. (FIGURE 3) (Uzialko 2023.)

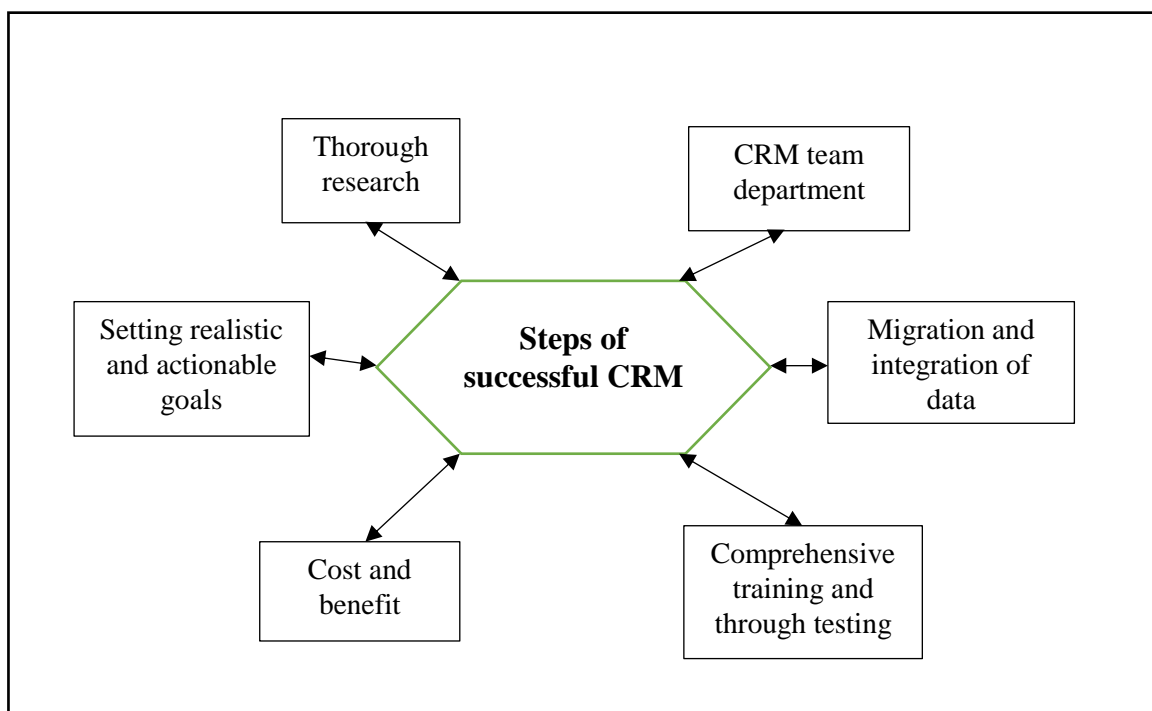


FIGURE 3. Steps to successful CRM (Uzialko 2023.)

### **3.1 Practical and achievable objectives**

It is important to have a clear and sorted out structure that is synonymous with the main functions of the business when selecting a CRM system. Identifying objectives and making a short overview on how CRM can contribute to the desired impact. Making an outline of CRM tools and features that may help to accomplish set goals. One of the mistakes in CRM implementation can be treating CRM platforms as an additional tool or extensions instead of treating them as an integrated solution. Although CRM systems can provide additional processes and functionalities it is important to make sure that, they play the role of a means of serving objectives and not the objectives themselves. These systems should not divert the focus from the original mission. To figure out the appropriate CRM software in relation to a business it can be helpful to go through several questions such as, does the new system align with existing business practices. Is the business aiming to streamline existing processes or fully transform them? As suggested to Business News Daily by Barton Goldenberg president of ISM and author of CRM in Real Time: Empowering Customer Relationships prioritize the process over the technology. He stresses on the idea that the software is more of a tool that helps execute the business story. His golden rule of thumb is: “Process first, people second, technology third”. (Uzialko 2023.)

### **3.2 Conducting thorough research for ideal CRM solution**

A careful consideration and research are needed, as currently there is a wide availability and variety of CRM options. Even if the mission statement can serve as a valuable guideline, narrowing down the vast selection of options to top three CRMs may prove to be challenging. It is also important to understand that there is not any right or wrong choice, it is not as, mathematical as it may seem. However, certain options may be more appropriate than others may. Key factors such as pricing, ease of use, the applicability of CRMs tools to the business and available integrations is crucial when making a decision. It is always advisable to start with a simple implementation while considering possible future upgrades. Even if it is basic, a successful launch that aligns with objectives is able result a greater short-and long-term benefits compared to an overly ambitious approach that surpasses immediate requirements. (Uzialko 2023.)

### **3.3 A dedicated CRM team comprising department champions**

Assembling an efficient and skilled creation unit should come after finalizing the choice of CRM platform that aligns with the company's values and ideas. Carrying out daily tasks and driving progress throughout the CRM implementation process will be the responsibility of this specialized team. The team formed should be comprised of project manager (leader), systems developer (installation), data analyst (data migration), QA engineer (Testing), champions (representatives). The size and complexity of the business and CRM implementation would determine the number of individuals needed to fulfil each role. As suggested by Alex Haimann partner and head of business development at Less Annoying CRM that having champion's team is vital. The role played by these champions is crucial as they endorse the product and act as intermediaries between upper management and CRM daily users. It is also suggested by Haimann that at least one of team members should be an experienced salesperson. Within the respective teams the champions should be respected leaders specifically those who will be the primary users of the CRM. The influence from them is vital as it encourage widespread adoption of CRM, even among the employees who may be hesitant to change their habitual routines and processes. Haimann stresses on the point that how important is communication in implying that the CRM is a tool that benefits individuals at all levels within the organization. The understanding opens door towards a positive mind set for CRM adoption and shed light on its potential to improve operations across the board. (Uzialko 2023.)

### **3.4 Analysis of costs and benefits associated with CRM implementation**

The business should cooperate with its cross-functional team to forecast the determined impacts that CRM implementation will have on the business. This may involve the analyzation of the expected effects at different stages of the process: the implementation phase, the initial phase six months after launch as the team adjusts, and the subsequent 12 months when the CRM becomes an integral part of daily operations. In order to get a more accurate overview, it is needed to work closely with the team to generate useful reports, such as cost benefit analyses and implementation timelines. It is to be noted that productivity may

experience temporary dips at certain stages of the rollout as resources are directed towards and employees adapt start adapting to new practices. It has also to be kept in mind that there might be increases in general expenses especially related to training and consulting services. A clearer understanding of what to expect will be gained by having concrete numbers and metrics. Which in turn would allow the business to refine actionable goals and secure buy in from the executive team. Metrics that shows the improvements in customer retention and conversion rates can be particularly persuasive, even for the most sceptical stakeholders. At the same time, it is required to put value into the feedback received from the team and executives because they may be able to uncover hidden details or discover valid concerns. Such insights are crucial in addressing potential pain points, which may arise at the learning process, and ensuring a smoother transition. (Uzialko 2023.)

### **3.5 Efficiently migrating and integrating data**

One of the time-consuming aspects of implementation is the process of cleaning and migrating data into the new CRM platform. (Uzialko 2023). The transfer process is likely to take several weeks even with the presence of an ideal data set that included accurate and up to date information on customer, messaging services and finances. Addressing any missing or incorrect data is crucial to ensure the effectiveness of CRM. It is recommended to prioritize which data is essential to migrate in order to streamline the data integration process. By keeping the focus on relevant information, you are able to minimize costs and save time associated with working with needed or irrelevant data. As suggested by Barton Goldenberg the additional or excessive data specifically during the initial launch may prove to be burdensome for users. The critical steps such as cleaning and validating data acquiring missing information and fixing any inaccuracies are to be taken to ensure the quality and integrity of the migrated data. The effort and time investment in this process an organization can optimize the functionality of their CRM system and maximize its value in supporting customer interactions and overall business operations. (Uzialko 2023.)

### **3.6 Comprehensive training to the team and conducting through testing**

After a successful launch of the CRM platform, entrust the champions with the task and responsibility of conducting training initiatives for their respective teams. Champions should have a deeper understanding of the system at this stage such as its advantages and how to utilize its tools and effectively. It is also a practice that many CRM providers offer training and consulting programs to support businesses in maximizing the benefits of their platforms. During the testing stage, it is recommended to make use of the IT team to run quality assurance tests. Although encountering some bugs is unavoidable, it is important to minimize the presence of urgent IT fixes during the live operation of the system, as it can negatively affect the user experience. With the proper utilization of the expertise of champions and taking advantage of available training resources, you can make sure of a smooth transition and ongoing adoption of the CRM platform throughout an organization. Additionally, being involved in through quality assurance testing ensures the identification and addressing of any remaining issues, safeguarding the systems stability and functionality for maximum performance. (Uzialko 2023.)



## **4 COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID WITH CRM**

CRM software can have various positive effects that can enhance business performance when it comes to sales and retaining customers. At the same time, there can be some commonly made mistakes that can be better avoided if businesses pay more attention to some factors.

### **4.1 Not aligning CRM to the sales process**

In the customer relationship management process, it is important to recognize the software's true potential. In order to reach its full ability, it is important to explore the customization section of CRM process. The sales process and overall customer experience should be aligned seamlessly with the tailor-made adjustments. Suppose an organization uses the MEDDIC method for lead qualification, it can in turn yield significant benefits from the CRM process. With the customization and integration of CRM with the existing processes, the managers in turn gain the ability to examine the current state of their sales pipeline through dashboards. (Meincke 2017.)

### **4.2 Failure to integrate CRM with marketing tools**

A common misconception among business organizations can be having the perception that CRM is solely a software tool confined to the sales department. However, for the purpose of unlocking the full potential of CRM and maximizing its impact, it is important to acknowledge the immense value of integrating CRM with marketing tools in collaboration with the marketing department. Such integration present circumstances for the sales representatives to receive a steady stream of useful leads to pursue, propelling their

effectiveness and productivity. For enjoying benefits of CRM, it is needed to be integrated completely with the Marketing Automation Platform (MAP) as well as other marketing tools. Meincke (2017) discusses the statistics, which indicate that 80% of marketing automation users report an increase in leads, while 77% witness a surge in conversions. The CRM integration into marketing department helps with time management as sales representatives are provided with not only valuable source of leads but also crucial insights on such leads. (Meincke 2017.)

### **4.3 Not setting and imposing procedures for CRM usage**

The success of CRM system for a very huge part is heavily dependent on the consistent and active involvement of sales representatives. Although there is, one common mistake that businesses make that is not making sufficient efforts to establish and enforce procedures for CRM usage. Many employees at the beginning stage of CRM implementation might show resistance towards adopting to the system and would require proper guidance to navigate its functionalities efficiently. To weaken this challenge, a business can develop standardized procedures outlining or directing how representatives should enter data into the CRM. (Meincke 2017.)

Moreover, comprehensive trainings programs can be implemented to guarantee that representatives are equipped with the essential skills and knowledge to utilize CRM effectively. It is also to be considered that implementation and training are insufficient without proper enforcement. With a view to encourage CRM usage and accountability, it is suggested to set up a policy where sales activities that are not recorded in the CRM are not counted towards commissions or performance evaluations. Such approach sheds light on the significance of CRM as a central repository of sales related information and provides incentives for representatives to embrace its usage. Additionally business organizations can develop a culture of CRM adoption by organizing sales contests that promotes best practices and discourages CRM mistakes. Such contests can serve the purpose of an engagement

platform, which highlights the benefits of CRM, aiding representatives to actively participate and utilize the system to its fullest potential. (Meincke 2017.)

#### **4.4 Being unable to distinguish between leads, contacts and opportunities**

Having an adequate amount of knowledge is essential for successful CRM utilization. CRM applications and platforms like salesforce draw a clear distinction between leads, contacts and opportunities. However, such definitions may not always align with the colloquial terms commonly used within the department. It is pivotal to recognize that these distinctions in CRM are not merely semantic but hold significant relevance in understanding the state of the sales cycle. A failure to grasp the terminology can result in a confused CRM system that lacks capability to forecast sales. To secure an effective CRM usage it is important that all CRM users comprehend the distinctions between leads, contacts and opportunities. They should have the knowledge to understand the process and rationale behind converting leads into opportunities and comprehension of adding additional contacts to an account. At the initial data import into the CRM, it is recommended to import them as leads. It is needed to be understood that not all contacts are immediately potential opportunities and therefore should not be treated as such in the CRM system. With the help of accurate categorizing and understanding the different stages of leads, contacts and opportunities, businesses can effectively leverage the insights provided by CRM, resulting in a more accurate sales forecasting and informed decision-making. (Meincke 2017.)

#### **4.5 Not deduplication the database**

In the CRM realm, the data quality plays a pivotal role in empowering teams to leverage its full potential in the midst of the various threats of compromised data integrity, duplicate entries are likely to be the most prevalent and determining. The presence of multiple entries existing for the same prospect within the CRM makes the information accessed by users become less useful and insights derived from data analytics lose their reliability. While at the

implementation process, it is vital to prioritize the deduplication of data when importing it into the CRM from multiple sources. This important step guarantees that redundant entries are eliminated, and data integrity is upheld. At the same time, it is to be noted that the task of deduplication is not only limited to implementation. A regular checking for duplicates is a much-needed practice even after the initial phase. Many CRM applications provide automated tools to facilitate this process, nonetheless manual checks can also be employed to identify and resolve duplicate entries effectively. (Meincke 2017.)

#### **4.6 Incorporating too many required fields in your CRM**

While implementing CRM system, it is important to maintain the right balance in terms of required data fields. Although CRM platforms have the capability to capture a wealth of information about individual leads, appointing an excessive number of mandatory fields can discourage users from actively utilizing the CRM. The engagement and adoption of CRM system may be hindered if users are burdened with the task of inputting extensive data all at once. It is suggested to streamline the initial data entry process by requiring only the bare minimum of information about a lead to serve the purpose of an efficient CRM usage. An approach like this would reduce the burden on users, and therefore making it easier and more enticing to enter leads into the system. It is to be highlighted that any additional information can be added gradually over time allowing users to enrich the lead profiles as they gather more insights. (Meincke 2017.)

#### **4.7 Lack of clear KPI definition and monitoring**

An effective CRM implementation for the sales team is more than just the adoption for the sake of it, it should have the focus on achieving measurable goals. The organization need to determine specific objectives aimed to be accomplished through CRM implementation and figuring out the key performance indicators (KPIs) to gauge success. A favourable approach incorporates measuring different KPIs across multiple areas of concern, providing a holistic

view of performance. A regular assessment of the progress is crucial to ensure the alignment with your goals. If the business comes across falling short of meeting the desired outcomes, it is important to take proactive steps to analyse the reasons behind such shortfall. An analysis would provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and paves the way for making necessary adjustments and improvements. (Meincke 2017.)

#### **4.8 Disregarding social media integrations**

In current business scenarios, social media has emerged as a major influencer in the purchasing decisions of B2B buyers, with around 75% of them utilizing social media platforms. A sales team harnesses the true potential of social media and develop a strong online presence gain a competitive edge over their counterparts who underestimate its importance. Modern CRM applications come with useful social media integration tools that should not be ignored. Potential leads and opportunities for engagement are lost by the sales representatives who fail to take advantage social CRM tools. It is to be said that presence on social media should not only be limited to monitoring mentions of the company rather an active engagement with potential customers is required. For identifying relevant prospects social media platforms such as LinkedIn can be a fruitful option. (Meincke 2017.)

It should be compulsory to educate sales representatives on utilizing social CRM tools efficiently and engage in best practices for social selling as a part of the comprehensive CRM training. Sales representatives being equipped with the knowledge and skills to navigate social media integration within the CRM facilitates the to explore the vast potential of social networks fostering meaningful customer interactions and expanding their reach. (Meincke 2017.)

#### **4.9 Failure to include CRM system into larger business strategy**

CRM should not be limited to the realms of sales and customer service departments alone. It is crucial to acknowledge that the entire business revolves around the objective of serving customers better. Therefore, the data accumulated within CRM system should be easily accessible across multiple departments, developing a cohesive and customer centric approach throughout the organization. Marketing is one of the departments that can greatly benefit from CRM integration. With the proper use of CRM, data marketing teams can gain valuable insights into customer needs, enabling them to refine their campaigns and strategies effectively. With the understanding of the efficacy of marketing efforts, becoming more data driven and informed would result in more targeted and impactful customer interactions. (Meincke 2017.)

Additionally, the integration of CRM insights into product development allows the product team to synchronize their efforts with customer preferences and demands. The creation of new Products and services can be better informed by leveraging CRM data, which in turn can help the organization to better meet customer expectations and drive innovation. With the effective utilization of CRM across all aspects of the business, it has the potential to become a transformative tool that enhances sales, improves customer retention and drives overall organizational success. Therefore, with the avoidance of the pitfall of disregarding. CRM integration into the broader business strategy organizations would be able to unleash the full potential of CRM and accomplish growth and customer satisfaction. (Meincke 2017.)

## 5 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

Customer relationship management (CRM) can be considered one of the key components of Customer relationship marketing (CRM). Customer relationship management (CRM) is more of a concept that focuses on broader strategies, processes and technologies that are implemented by an organization to enhance customer relationships while Customer relationship marketing (CRM) specifically emphasizes on the marketing quotient of building and maintaining customer relationships. Customer relationship marketing CRM be defined as a strategic approach that revolves around developing strong and lasting relationships with customers to establish loyal and get the optimal customer value. It dives deeper as compared to the traditional transactional marketing mind-set as it focuses on personalized interactions, customer satisfaction and long-term engagement. Within CRM, organizations utilize customer data and feedback to gain a profound understanding of their customer needs, preferences and behaviours. Such information enables customization of marketing efforts and delivery of relevant products, messages and experiences that is relatable to individual customers. With the purpose of building trust and emotional connections, CRM targets to establish customer loyalty and advocacy. (Day 2018.)

Contradictory to transactional marketing which mainly aims to maximize individual sales, CRM rather takes a holistic view of the customer journey and aspires to nurture relationships at every touchpoint. It values the long-term ability of customers, acknowledging that repeat business and customer advocacy can enable sustained growth and profitability. The satisfied and loyal customers are not only repeat buyers but also play the role of brand ambassadors by spreading positive word of mouth suggestions, which in turn contributes to the company's reputation and success. (Day 2018.) Overall, Customer Relationship Marketing can be described as a customer centric approach that solely prioritizes factors such as relationship building, personalized interactions and customer loyalty. (Day 2018.)

## 5.1 Customer relationship marketing strategies

Customer relationship marketing strategy targets to improve customer interactions and develop brand loyalty. Such strategies incorporate several approaches such as delivering exceptional customer service, understanding customer needs and implementation of loyalty programs with rewards for repeat customers. For an effective implementation of customer relationship marketing, companies often leverage the internet and social media platforms. An approach like this also benefits small businesses as they can invite customers to visit their websites, engagement through blog posts and communicate on platforms such as Twitter and Instagram. (Day 2018.) The core purpose of customer relationship marketing is to establish trust and engagement with customers, which in turn can contribute to brand development and loyalty and reduce customer churn. One common strategy widely used by businesses is focusing on emotion. Many successful brands involved with customer relationship marketing embody nostalgia into their campaigns as it makes a powerful connection between consumers and the brand. Therefore, brand merchandising has become essential in many successful marketing campaigns. (Day 2018.)

There are different ways where the strategies of Customer relationship marketing (CRM) can be exploited. A demonstration of appreciation could involve surprising and delighting the customers through spontaneous acts of recognition and unexpected gestures. The utilization of social media monitoring tools to engage with comments and to address any concerns or complaints raised by customers. The strategy should involve identifying customer interests and creation of content that is able to directly address their needs such as informative videos related to their recent purchases or personalized newsletters featuring customer stories. By going beyond the typical rewards program and providing the customers with offerings genuinely loved by them or acknowledging them in a unique and unexpected ways. Consistent communication is crucial to fostering strong relationships, so it is important for the business to interact with customers frequently through social media channels, email and messaging. At the same time, it is also to be ensured the communication that is taking place is adding value for customers and does not become too personal or excessively frequent. Leveraging Real Time Interaction Management (RTIM) is to be considered to communicate with customers in a relevant and timely manner. (Day 2018.)



## 5.2 Benefits of Customer Relationship Marketing

When companies embrace customer relationship marketing CRM, they efficiently utilize the customer data to identify important customers and make informed decisions. Such approach is time and resource saving as they are focused on customers who are less costly to maintain relationships with and uncovering untapped potential others. In addition, CRM increases customer satisfaction and communication levels as customers with strong connections engage more often and provide insights through customer data platforms. By making existing relationships a priority over acquiring new customer's businesses can save money and benefit from customer loyalty. (Day 2018.)

Moreover, implementation of customer relationship marketing strategy brings forth additional advantages that can be found from the picture below (FIGURE 4).

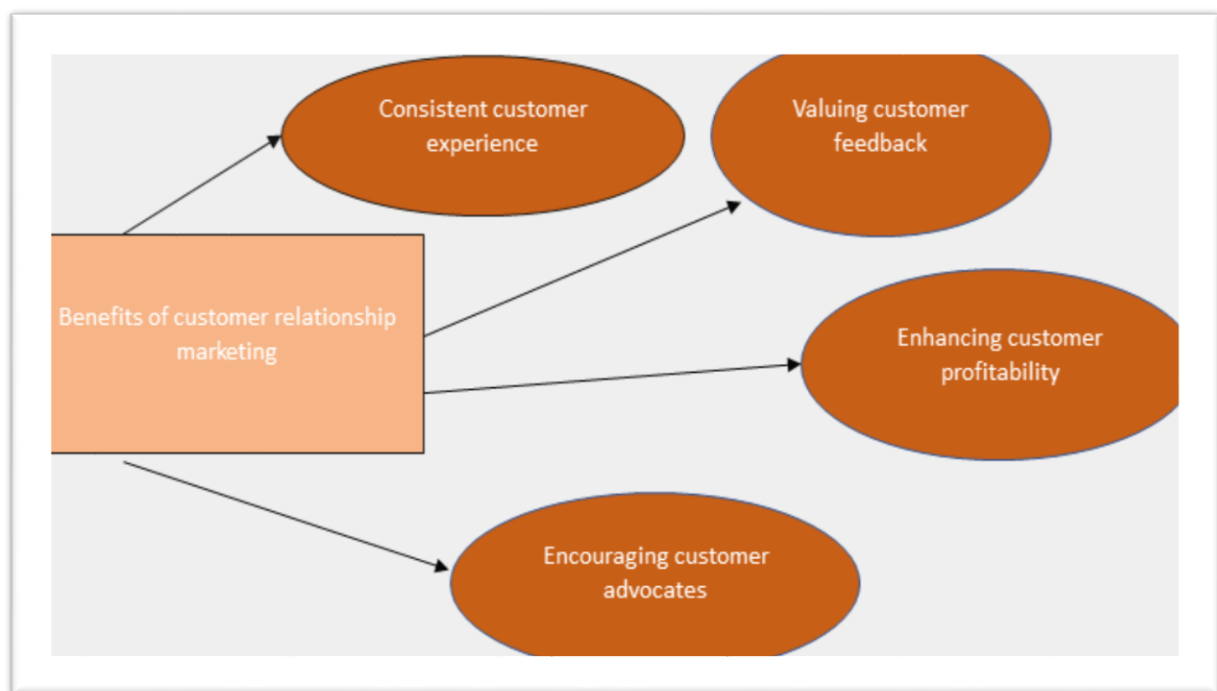


FIGURE 4. Benefits of customer relationship marketing (Day 2018.)

With the adaptation of customer centric approach and prioritizing customer relationships, companies align their various touchpoints and collaborate across departments to serve the purpose of meeting customer needs, enhance satisfaction and ensure a consistent and outstanding experience. A strong customer relationship prioritizes effective communication

and companies highly appreciate collecting feedback to make informed business decisions that encourage stronger relationships and drive continuous improvement. Loyal customers are likely to spend more with brands and today's customers tend to put more in customer experience over cost when making purchasing decisions. With the nurturing of customer relationships companies can improve customer profitability and push sustainable business growth. The customers that are satisfied and feel valued are more than likely to become brand advocates spreading positive word of mouth recommendations. With development of strong relationships and consistent delivery of exceptional experiences, companies can generate favourable reviews and increase their chances of customer advocacy, which can be in form of word of mouth where a customer influences a non-customer to purchase from the brand. (Day 2018.)

## 6 CASE COMPANY

The case company is Itsudemo Sushibar which operates under a company called Spartao Oy, which was the leading catering company founded in Finland in 2018 with the grand mission of sharing the food culture of Asia with the global community. Out of the many sushi places established under this company, the author has chosen the one that is situated in Kokkola, Currently at this branch, there are 7 employees in total working including the two team managers. The sushi bar is open seven days a week from 10 am to 7 pm. The branch of this place was first opened in dash year. They make and sell many types of sushi out of which the Nigri and Maki sushi types are known to be their speciality. The company follows a set of vision that include empowerment of employees with better career prospects and a platform for entrepreneurship. The delivery of products and services that meet customers' expectations and keep them coming back. The establishment of a globally recognized Asian brand. In addition, the company such as takes a collection of core values into consideration. To have customer satisfaction as a top priority. Encouraging lifelong learning among the team. Honesty and integrity that drives all their actions. Work motivated by passion and dedication. (Itsudemo 2023.)

The company seeks like-minded partners who share a mutual philosophy and aspire to build global food brand together. Spartao OY currently has 11 Itsudemo sushi buffets and over 50 Itsudemo sushi bars around the world. Their innovative business model is said to be crucial in their success. Since 2022, they have made plans of the expansion of their plans to other European countries and are interested in collaborating with partners who align with the vision. At Spartao Oy they have strong believe that the well-being of their employees and the satisfaction of their customers are essential to their achievements. As employers, they take pride in showing care for their staff and having genuine interest in each individual. Their commitment to equality and diversity ensures that all employees are treated with respect. They have around 400 employees and their motive is to be the largest employer in the sushi industry. They teach the employees that has been recruited from the beginning so that previous experience is not mandatory. As they have numerous branches across Finland, they are constantly seeking chefs and managers for sushi bars across the country. The language

proficiency in English is sufficient, as they do not in particular require knowledge of Finnish. Their head office based in Espoo offers promising career advancement opportunities. For the maintenance of the transparency and ethical conduct, they have introduced a whistle-blower notification channel. This platform allows current or former employees job seekers and other stakeholders to report any potential illegal or unethical practices. (Itsudemo 2023.)

## **7 RESEARCH METHOD**

Research is at times mistaken for gathering information, documenting facts and rummaging for information (Leedy & Ormrod 2001, as cited in Williams 2007). Research is the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data in order to understand a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod 2001, as cited in Williams 2007). A structured framework is utilized in a research process where objectives are defined, data is managed, and the findings are communicated according to established guidelines. Such frameworks and guidelines serve the purpose of signposts for researchers, which in turn offers a direction on what elements to include in the research, how the research can be conducted, and the types of inferences are plausible based on data collected. (Williams 2007.)

Research emerges from at least one inquiry about one phenomenon of interest. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods are the three most commonly used research methodologies. Researchers figure out what type of data is required to address the research question at hand. This judgement helps to make a choice out of the previously mentioned three methodologies. The quantitative approach is usually chosen for questions necessitating numerical data, the qualitative approach is suitable to questions that have a textual data and the mixed methods approach is applicable for questions requiring both numerical and textual data. (Williams 2007.)

### **7.1 Primary research and secondary research**

The practice of research involves the collection of information and evidence from a wide variety of origins Primary sources calls for unprocessed data and original evidence, which can be in the form of interview transcripts, statistics and artistic reactions. It ensures a direct insight into the research subject. On the other hand, information and commentary collected from other researchers can be described as secondary sources. For example, academic journals, scholarly books. Secondary research involves the explanation and analyzation of

primary sources. While it is said that primary sources provides a stronger credibility as evidence, an effective research is known to use the combination of both primary and secondary sources (Streefkerk 2023).

## **7.2 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research can be explained the collection of information through examination of non-numeric data, such as text, video or audio to get an insight into concepts, opinions or experiences. It aims to dive deeper into a subject or encourage novel research ideas. A method like this is often utilized in humanities, social sciences in the field of anthropology, sociology, education, health sciences and history. Different research approach involves the use of one or more data collection techniques. There are some prevalent qualitative methods such as, comment, it is the recording of detailed field notes based on observation, heard or encountered. Interviews, which involves providing questions personally to individuals in one to one conversation. Focus group entails presenting questions and triggering discussions within a group of people. Survey includes the distribution of questionnaires with open-ended questions. Secondary research, which is the compilation of existing data in different forms like texts, images, audio or video recordings, etc. (Bhandari 2020).

## **7.3 Quantitative research**

Quantitative research involves the collection and analyzation of numerical data to explain, predict or control variables of interest. It focuses on testing predefined theories or hypotheses and generalize to wider populations. Such a method can be seen used commonly used in the field of economics, psychology, sociology and marketing. (Sreekumar 2023.)

## 7.4 Mixed methods research

Mixed methods research is the combination of the features of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches to address a research question. Such research offers a more in-depth understanding compared to being solely dependent on either qualitative or quantitative methods as it makes use of the strengths of both. Mixed methods research is often resorted to in the behavioural health and social sciences, specifically in complex multidisciplinary research settings and studies that involve intricate societal dynamics. Such an approach to research is an applicable option when it is obvious that dependency on either qualitative or quantitative data will not appropriately address the research question. There are a few common conditions that warrant the use of mixed methods research. Often in qualitative research a smaller sample size is utilized which limits its generalizability. Mixed methods research tackles such limitation by the strength of large-scale externally validated practices in quantitative research. Involving both, the methods makes it possible for researchers to place their findings in context and provide a more comprehensive and nuanced conclusion. The use of qualitative data to complement quantitative results adds depth to the analysis. The credibility of the results is positively influenced when diverse methods are utilized to collect data on the same subject. When qualitative and quantitative data align, it strengthens the validity of the conclusions through a process known as triangulation. (George 2021.)

## 7.5 Survey

Survey research consists of questions presented to a group of individuals and evaluating their responses. It is an atypical practice across industries and disciplines, which allows for businesses and researchers to uncover specific and crucial insights. A wide range of topics are covered by these inquiries and can be framed in various ways. In order to ensure the reliability of the data collected it is important to carefully design and develop the questions. Contrasting to a census that involves studying every member of a population, surveys assemble information from a selected portion of the target audience. Most surveys are not public opinion polls; rather they handle a particular administrative, commercial or scientific objective. In numerous fields, surveys serve as a valuable source of fundamental knowledge. Economists, psychologists,

health professionals, political scientists and sociologists all utilize surveys. They dive into deeper subjects such as household income and spending, the origins of ethnic and racial biases, the impact of health issues and voting tendencies, amongst others. (Anand 2022.)



## 8 THE SURVEY APPROACH OF DATA COLLECTION

In this research, the author utilized a mixed method research approach. The author utilized a survey as a tool to collect information or data. The survey was created through Google forms (APPENDIX 1). As a result, the recipients filled out the survey virtually. There were nineteen questions in the survey, out of which nine were short, answer open-ended questions while the other ten questions were multiple-choice questions. The survey was mainly sent to the manager of the Itsudemo Sushibar of the Kokkola branch. The author made a request to the manager to have the survey shared in the workers group chat, which included seven workers including the manager and the author. The manager kindly agreed and shared the survey link himself in the group chat. Initially, the author intended to send the survey exclusively to the manager, aiming to obtain singular and clear perspectives on the Itsudemo Sushibar's insights. However, upon receiving the approval for sharing the survey within the group chat, the manager personally initiated to distribute the survey link, which in turn served as a motivation for a few workers to participate in filling out the survey.

Subsequently three out of the seven workers provided responses. The author is included in the number of workers, which is seven, but as the author cannot fill out the survey, we would count the number of workers to be six. Therefore, we can conclude the survey response rate, as a 50% response rate. Although the response rate might appear modest, it however offers valuable insights into the internal dynamics of Itsudemo Sushibar. This insight is utilized in the author's forthcoming task, which is making a CRM implementation plan. Notably, some respondents skipped certain short answer questions, and a few of those questions were entirely skipped. However, the survey results offer valuable overview of how the manager and workers perceive CRM, their ways of working with customer data and some of the challenges they might face. The topics addressed in the survey are familiarity with CRM. Perception on the importance of CRM, challenges faced in relation to dealing with customers, receptiveness to CRM adoption. Any ideas or suggestions for CRM implementation, current CRM practices in the Sushibar, if there are any. What they think to be an important function of CRM in relation to their workplace. Practices for handling customer data, influence of CRM for the success of their business, and space for additional feedback. The data collected

serves as a guideline for designing a CRM implementation plan altered to the preferences and concerns of the workers in their interactions with customers at Itsudemo Sushibar.

### 8.1 Discussion of survey results

The first question asked how familiar are you with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and their possible benefits for businesses (TABLE 1)?

TABLE 1. Familiarity with CRM systems

Level of familiarity	Percentage
Very familiar	66.7%
Somewhat familiar	33.3%
Not familiar	0%

It can be concluded from the results that most of the respondents are either very familiar or somewhat familiar with CRM systems. Which indicates a decent level of awareness in working place regarding customer relationship management (CRM). Question 2: How do you perceive the importance of building and maintaining strong customer relationships in the success of Itsudemo Sushibar?

TABLE 2. Importance of building and maintaining strong customer relationships at Itsudemo Sushibar

Response option	Count	Percentage
Improved customer satisfaction and loyalty	2	66.7%

Enhanced communication and personalized interactions	2	66.7%
Effective customer feedback collection and response	3	100%
Accurate tracking of customer preferences and order history	1	33%

The table reflects the responses to the question of the perceived importance of building and maintaining strong customer relationships to the workers of Itsudemo Sushibar. The option “Improved customer satisfaction and loyalty” were selected by two respondents. It suggests that the establishment of strong customer relationships can result in higher levels of satisfaction hence customer loyalty. Similarly, the option “Enhanced communication and personalized interactions” also had two respondents. It signifies the role of personalized interactions and effective communication in creating and maintain strong customer relationships. The option “Effective customer feedback collection and response” received an agreement from all the three respondents, suggesting unanimous belief in the significant role of customer feedback in relationship building. It gives the idea that being responsive to customers is seen as vital for success.

Only one respondent chose the option “Accurate tracking of customer preferences and order history”. It may have received less unanimous support compared to other options; it still sheds light on the importance of understanding and utilizing customer data for a personalized experience.

Overall the data shows a strong consensus on the significance of maintain and building strong customer relationships at Itsudemo Sushibar.

The third question asked are there any specific challenges or pain points related to maintaining customer relationships that you currently face at Itsudemo Sushibar?

TABLE 3. Challenges to maintaining customer relationship at Itsudemo Sushibar

Respondent	Response
Respondent 1	Not speaking fluent Finnish
Respondent 2	Not any that comes to mind
Respondent 3	No response provided for this question

The results gives an insight of specific challenges or pain related points related to maintain customer relationships at Itsudemo Sushibar. Respondent 1, states one challenge in particular which is language barrier. This could potentially create problems ineffective communication and customer interaction. Respondent 2 does not state any problem in particular that they may have on the top of their mind. This suggests they do not currently perceive any practices or lack of activities to be a challenge in maintain customer relationships. This response does signify a positive outlook of the present status of customer relationship management. Respondent three chose to not answer this question and therefore no insights was collected from them. At the same time, the limited sample size should be acknowledged as this question was answered by 2 out of the 3 respondents. To conclude the responses shed light on the importance of communication in multilingual environments.

The fourth question asked how open are you to adopting technology solutions, such as CRM system to enhance customer relationship management at Itsudemo Sushibar?

TABLE 4. Openness to CRM

Response option	Percentage	Count
Very open	33.3%	1
Somewhat open	33.3%	1

Not open	33.3%	1
----------	-------	---

The table reflects the distribution of responses regarding openness to adopting technology solutions such as CRM to enhance customer relationship management at Itsudemo Sushibar. All the options were met with an equal percentage of agreement, which in turn shows a division of opinions. One of the respondents is shown to be very open to adopting CRM system therefore showing willingness to embrace technology solution for customer relationship management. Another respondent seems to be somewhat open which shows moderate level of willingness. The third respondent on the other hand shows unwillingness to technological solution such as CRM and therefore suggesting alternative preferences or approaches. Overall, the responses represent a wide range of perspective on the topic of CRM adoption, which should be taken into consideration when implementing such systems at Itsudemo Sushibar.

The fifth question asked, based on your experience what suggestions or ideas do you have for implementing CRM at Itsudemo Sushibar in the future.

TABLE 5. Suggestions for implementing CRM at Itsudemo Sushibar

Respondent	Response
Respondent 1	Personalized service for customers and tracking preferences
Respondent 2	No specific suggestions
Respondent 3	The Sushibar business model is not suitable for using a CRM

The table represents each of the respondent's opinions as suggestions for implementing CRM at Itsudemo Sushibar. The first respondent suggests personalized service for customers and tracking their preferences. This suggestion emphasizes the importance of customizing interactions to meet individual customer preferences, which in turn can result in higher customer satisfaction levels and loyalty. The second respondent does not offer any specific suggestions for CRM implementation at Itsudemo Sushibar. This shows that they might not have any suggestion in particular or might need more information to come formulate a recommendation. The third respondent stated his/her opinion that the Itsdemo Sushibar business model is not compatible for using CRM. This could suggest a perceived incompatibility between the current business model and CRM system implementation. This could also suggest that the respondent thinks of CRM systems only to be applicable to certain business models or sizes. All in all the responses accentuates on the importance of careful consideration in effectively integrating a CRM system into the business model.

The sixth question asked are there any current practices or strategies that Itsudemo Sushi Bar currently uses to maintain customer relationship? If yes, please describe them.

TABLE 6. Current Practices and Strategies for maintaining customer relationships at Itsudemo Sushibar

Respondent	Response
Respondent 1	Yes, Itsudemo Sushibar has a good maintenance for customers. They are active on social media, respond to complaints and offer rewards like free sushi. You can check the website.
Respondent 2	Not on an individual customer basis that I can think of
Respondent 3	No

The table represents the current practices and strategies for maintaining customer relationships at Itsudemo Sushibar. The first respondent indicate that the business is involved in effective

practices such as maintaining active presence on social media and responding to complaints and offer free sushi to make for any complaints. The second respondent does not suggest any specific practices. This response indicates a need for more tailored approaches to customer relationship management. The third respondent also does not suggest anything in particular by responding simple “no”. Altogether, the responses give insight into the Itsudemo Sushibar practices such as social media interaction and complaint resolution to maintain customer relationships. However, there seems to be room for improvement in terms of personalized approaches for individual customers.

The seventh question asked what features or functionalities would you consider valuable for a CRM system implemented at Itsudemo Sushibar?

TABLE 7. Valuable features or functions of CRM system

Response option	Percentage	Count
Online reservation management	66.7	2
Loyalty program management	66.7	2
Customer feedback and review management	66.7	3
Personalized offers and promotions	66.7	2
Order history tracking for individual customers	100	2

The table gives an overview of the features and functionalities that are considered important by the respondents. The responses signal a strong consensus amongst the respondents on how much they value these CRM features. Each option has received a high level of agreement with the option of “Customer feedback and review management” being unanimously valuable. Such features altogether stress upon the role of personalized service, effective feedback management and prioritizing customer loyalty through programs.

The eighth question asked how important is it for you to have access to real time customer data and insights to make informed business decisions?

TABLE 8. Importance of real time access to customer data and insights

Response option	Percentage	Count
Very important	33.3	1
Somewhat important	66.7	2
Not important	0	0

The majority of respondents consider the importance of real time access to customer data and insights to be somewhat important while the minority considers it very important. It can be concluded that the respondents understand how crucial such data can be to making informed decisions.

The ninth question asked based on your experience what suggestions or ideas do you have for implementing CRM at Itsudemo Sushibar in the future?

TABLE 9. Ideas or suggestions for CRM implementation

Respondent	Response
Respondent 1	Personalized service for customers and tracking preferences
Respondent 2	No suggestions
Respondent 3	Not applicable at this time

The table provides recommendations and ideas for the implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) at Itsudemo Sushibar based on the respondents' experiences. The first respondent came up with the suggestion of personalized service for customers and tracking their preferences. This suggestion underscores the importance of alternating interactions to individual customer preferences leading to increased customer



satisfaction level and loyalty. The second respondent does not provide any suggestion in particular for CRM implementation and therefore no insights were collected from them. The third respondent states not applicable at this time, which may be an indication that they may not have relevant insights or experiences in this context, or they might consider CRM not be compatible with the business currently. Such responses are better to be taken a close look at when making a CRM implementation plan.

The tenth question asked how important is customer data management for the success of your business?

TABLE 10. Importance of customer data management for business success

Response	Percentage
Very important	100%
Somewhat important	0%
Not important	0%

This question had only 2 respondents as it was skipped by one of the three 3 respondents. It is indicated by the response rate in the table that 100% of the respondents of this question consider customer data to be an important factor for the success of their business. This collective agreement highlights the critical role of effective handling of customer data in the overall success of a business. It also shows that the surveyed individuals put a lot of value in this aspect of their operations.

The eleventh question asked what types of customer data does your organization collect?

TABLE 11. Types of customer data collected by the organization

Response	Count
Contact information (name, email, phone number, etc.)	0
Purchase history	1
Demographic information (age, gender, location, etc.)	0
Preferences and interests	1
Website browsing behaviour	0
Social media interactions	1

Only one of the three responded to the question in the survey. The tables represent the types of customer data that is recorded by the organization based on single respondent's input. As per the respondent the organization records information related to past customer purchases. Such data can be crucial for understanding buying patterns and altering marketing efforts to individual preferences. The business also collects data on customer preferences and interests. Data of this sort is helpful in personalizing products and marketing messages to be aligned with what matters the most to customers. The organization also involved in social media interactions. Such interactions can be valuable in understanding customer behaviour in the online sphere. It is also to be noted from the table that the organization does not currently collect contact information or demographic data. Such attitude is suggestive of the focus on transactional behavioural data from customers rather than personal information or demographic segments.

The twelfth question asked how is data currently stored and managed in your organization?

This question did not have any respondents and therefore no insights was concluded from it.

The thirteenth question asked are you satisfied with the accuracy of the customer data currently available in your organization?

TABLE 12. Satisfaction with accuracy of customer data

Response	Percentage
Very satisfied	0%
Somewhat satisfied	0%
Not satisfied	100%

The table reflects the response to the question where only one out of the three respondents offered feedback. The one respondent that provided their feedback appeared unsatisfied with the accuracy of the current customer data. Such response raises concerns about the reliability of the data within the organization; however, given that only one respondent provided feedback it is important that the data on the table be approached with caution.

The fourteenth question asked what challenges, if any, do you face in managing customer data effectively?

This question also had only one respondent out of the three. The one respondent did not provide any specific response regarding the challenges in managing customer data. The respondent had a simple reply of “no”, and therefore no table to show the different responses of respondents of difficulties faced.

The fifteenth question asked how frequently is customer data updated and maintained in your organization?

TABLE 13. Customer data maintenance

Response	Percentage
Regularly(e.g., daily or weekly)	0%
Occasionally (e.g., monthly or quarterly)	0%

Rarely(only when necessary)	0%
Not sure	0%

This table is supposed to represent the frequency or how often customer data is updated in the business. This question in the survey was filled out by 2 of the 3 respondents. 0% of the respondents chose the option “Regularly (e.g., daily or weekly)”. This portrays that customer data is not updated on a regular basis and suggests that there might be room for improvement when it comes to keeping customer data accurate or current. The option “Occasionally (e.g., monthly or quarterly)” also had 0% respondents and similarly implies that data maintenance may not be a frequent practice in the organization. The option “Rarely (only when necessary)” did not have any respondents either hence 0%. Reflecting the same idea as previous responses to options, that data maintenance is not a priority for the business. The option “Not sure” had both of the respondents choose it to result in 100% response rate. This give the notion that the respondents were uncertain regarding customer data updates. This signals a gap in communication and awareness in the organization when it comes to data maintenance practices.

The sixteenth question asked how is customer data used in your organization?

TABLE 14. Utilization of customer data

Response	Count
Personalizing customer experiences	0
Targeted marketing and advertising campaigns	0
Customer segmentation and profiling	0
Analysing customer behaviour and trends	0
Improving customer service and support	1

The table gives us an overview of how the customer data is utilized in the organization. In this question, only 1 out of the 3 respondents provided their feedback. As per the respondent,

it is indicated that the customer data is utilized to improve customer service and support. This supports the idea that the business makes use of customer information to offer a more personalized experience and meet customer needs more effectively. While the single response does provide with one aspect of how customer data is utilized because the sample size is limited it is safe to approach the data with caution.

The seventeenth question asked what improvements or changes would you like to see in the way customer data is managed at your organization?

This question was also skipped by 2 of the 3 respondents. The single respondent provided the simple response of “No”, which could suggest they do not have any specific recommendations for improving customer data management. This could also indicate they are satisfied with current practices or lack of interest and hesitation to provide feedback. Since the response rate to this question is limited, it is only fair to utilize the information with caution, as it may not reflect the perspectives of the entire organization.

The eighteenth question asked what do you do to maintain customer satisfaction? Describe in your own words.

The response rate of this question is also 1 out of 3. The single respondent answered, “Ensure product quality and ensure food safety”. This response emphasizes the importance of product quality and food safety maintenance for maintaining customer satisfaction. However, with only 1 out of 3 response it is important to consider additional feedback for a better understanding of organization practices at Itsudemo Sushibar.

The nineteenth question asked is there anything else you would like to share or any additional feedback you have regarding customer data management?

TABLE 15. Additional feedback on customer data management

Respondent	Additional feedback

Respondent 1	No
Respondent 2	Our sales model cannot effectively collect customer information and is not suitable for using CRM

This question had 2 out of 3 respondents as shown in the table. The first respondent did not have any suggestion regarding customer data management. The second respondent on the other hand underscores an issue according to them, which is that they think the current sales model is ineffective at maintaining and collecting customer data, and therefore is not compatible with Customer Relationship Management (CRM). This response highlights a crucial challenge in customer data management within the organization.

## 8.2 Summary of survey results

The present condition of customer relationship management (CRM) practices at Itsudemo Sushibar was highlighted through the survey results. Most of the respondents showed awareness with CRM systems, which signals a proper understanding of their possible benefits for the business. The structure and maintenance of strong of solid customer relationships seemed to be an unanimously recognized priority with emphasis on effective feedback collection and response specifically. At the same time obstacles in the form language barriers were acknowledged which highlighted the importance of effective communication in a multilingual environment. Even though respondents expressed different levels of willingness to adopting CRM technology, the valuable feedback stressed upon the requirement for thorough consideration during an implementation.

## 8.3 Existing CRM plan summarization

Features like order history tracking and customer feedback management seemed to be highly valued in the organization, which shows their commitment to personalized service, and

improvements that are feedback driven. Moreover, for making informed decisions access to real time customer data was acknowledged as somewhat important. The data collected such as purchase history, preferences, and social, media interactions mostly revolved around behavioural information. Although concerns were raised regarding the accuracy of the customer data which should be looked into. Furthermore, the inconsistency in the maintenance of customer data calls for an area that can do with further improvement. The organizations utilization of customer data essentially to improve customer support and service mediates their dedication to an enriched customer experience. One of the respondents shed light in an issue such as the applicability of the sales model to be able to collect customer information effectively and therefore the scope for improvement in CRM practices.

#### **8.4 Limitations of the research**

The diverse perspectives within the organization may not have been fully represented due to the limited number of respondents. The depth of the insights were limited as some of the questions received a feedback from only one of the respondents. The actual practices at the organization may not align with data collected as they are based on responses, which are formed on individual perceptions. To summarize although the findings from the data collected offers valuable insights for CRM implementation at Itsudemo Sushibar at the same time its crucial to recognize the limitations and progress accordingly with the data.

## **9 CRM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR ITSUDEMO SUSHIBAR**

Itsudemo Sushibar a sushi store that is situated at the Finnish chain of hypermarkets, Prisma offers customers the options to purchase prepacked sushi and customize their own. This CRM implementation plan has the goal of enhancing customer satisfaction, streamline operations and incorporation of data driven strategies.

### **9.1 Objectives and implementation**

Sales optimization and management of inventory by identifying and making more of high selling sushi combinations to optimize inventory. The staff can record daily sales data such as trending sushi packages. The CRM system should track trends influencing the inventory decision. Establish customer loyalty through a reward program. Implementation of a point-based loyalty system, where customers receive points for purchases. The chosen CRM system software should handle program enrolment, tracking of points and redemptions.

Acknowledgment of dietary restrictions such as allergies and sensitivity. The staff could place warning stickers on sushi packages for common allergies or food sensitivities which in turn would make the customers buying it more secure and taken care of. Enhancement of customer satisfaction by addressing feedback thoroughly. It can be done by creating an accessible channel for customer feedback such as on the website or a complain box. It would be effective to assign a specific member of staff to handle and resolve complaints logged in the CRM system. Display dedication to quality by compensating customers with valid complaints. In case of genuine complaints from customers related to quality, offer a complimentary sushi package or discount voucher for the next visit. Making sure of the accuracy and frequency of customer data updates. Conducting training or guidance session from the manager about the importance of precise data entry. It is important to go through the customer data more often to identify inaccuracies.



## **9.2 Selecting CRM software**

The Itsudemo Sushibar should opt for a specialized system, which is efficient in management of customer data, feedback handling, and loyalty program integration. A focused CRM system can come in use for the streamlining of data collection, automated processes and equips the business with analytical tools for informed decision-making process. Some of the popular CRM software options the business can choose from is, Monday sales CRM, Salesforce Sales Cloud, Lime CRM, Hubspot CRM, Capsule, Zoho CRM etc.

## **9.3 Training and familiarization**

Ensuring that all the staff members are skilful in using the CRM Making an in-depth training resources such as user guides, video tutorials and practices documents. The Sushibar could conduct interactive workshops for workers at the beginning stage of CRM system integration. The workshops should simulate real world scenarios and data entry.

## **9.4 Budgeting and observation**

There are costs related to CRM implementation such as subscription cost, even though there are CRM soft wares that offer a free program initially later on there should be an estimated yearly cost as subscription in order to take full advantage of all the features of a CRM system software. There needs to be finances set aside for offering rewards and incentives to the regular loyal customers. Allocation of budget for investment to be made in training materials and workshops. The business should monitor CRM system effectiveness using key performance indicators (KPIs) such as repeat business rates and sales data analysis. The plan should be altered according to the needs of the organization for optimizing results.

## 10 CONCLUSION

Throughout the thesis, there was an in-depth examination of CRM (Customer Relationship Management). CRM has made a space for itself, as its significance in modern business landscapes is quite evident. With the focus discussing its origins and gaining a perspective on its different classifications, this research offers an in-depth framework for effective CRM strategies. The portrayal of CRM into different categories sheds light on its multidimensional nature. CRM encompasses a wide range of functionalities from long-term relationship building to day-to-day interactions and data driven overviews, which can all come in use of enhancing the customer satisfaction and engagement. The thesis also highlights the benefits granted by CRM systems which can be transformative, the revolution of data management, customer segmentation and communication. With effective utilization and implementation, such advantages cultivate into increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The thesis also aims to offer a clear understanding of what factors can be crucial for a business before CRM implementation. Such as clear objectives, dedicated teams and precise planning. These steps amalgamate the foundation for a successful integration. Businesses can take advantage of such information before considering integration if a CRM system within the organization. Simultaneously the research paper discusses cautionary guides by warning of common pitfalls. Making certain of alignment with sales processes, effective database management and sensible application of resources come forth as critical considerations in optimizing efficiency. Within the thesis, Customer Relationship Marketing comes forth as a key strategy, which highlights the importance of developing authentic connections with customers. Businesses can drive profitability through long lasting relationship establishment, which can be done through gestures of appreciation, active listening and the provision of value.

Furthermore, priority is placed on customer centric approaches, accentuating the purpose of loyalty and satisfaction programs in promoting advocacy and boosting profitability. The theoretical framework of the thesis can help business owners understand CRM realize it may

not be as complicated, which in turn may encourage practical integration. This part of the thesis offers an in-detail exploration of CRM effectiveness, its significance and its role in achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty, which was the initial intention of the author. During the thesis research which was done by implementing a survey in the Itsudemo Sushibar, findings such as CRM awareness and familiarity. In the course of conducting research in the thesis, which involved a mixed methods approach and followed the distribution of a survey to Itsudemo Sushibar workers, valuable findings were obtained. These findings comprised of insights into the levels of awareness and familiarity with CRM within the business, the presence or therefore lack of CRM practices, and customer data management.

While it is acknowledged that such findings may differ amongst different businesses, they emphasize the importance of gathering such information as an essential step prior to formulating a CRM plan for any business. The thesis has incorporated a customized CRM plan created by the author, based on the CRM insights gained in the survey results. The plan intentionally avoided immediate large-scale CRM integration, taking into account the specific business model of Itsudemo Sushibar. Considering that Itsudemo Sushibar is a simple business selling a single item within a hypermarket, a large scale CRM integration would unnecessarily complicate and prove to be impractical. Hence, the author aligned a CRM plan with the simplicity of the Sushibar business model, making an attempt at a practical approach for not only Itsudemo Sushibar but also other similar businesses situated in hypermarkets like Prisma, selling similar food items.

Overall the writing and research process was as educational and informative for the author as it was intended for the businesses. The writing and research procedure attested to be an equally enlightening experience for the author as it was designed to be for businesses. The author acquired valuable insights into various CRM possibilities and dug into key CRM components such as CSAT and loyalty programs. The task of analysing primary data also proved to be a new and educational challenge for the author. In conclusion the successfully showcased a substantial theoretical framework of Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) adjacent to empirical segment which concentrated on research methodology, data collection and analysis. The thesis aimed to familiarize businesses with Customer Relationship

Management (CRM) and it sought to accomplish this objective through the all-encompassing information provided within the study.

## REFERENCES

Anand, A. 2022. *What is a Survey?* Available: <https://www.analyticssteps.com/blogs/what-survey?fbclid=IwAR1PhAKVeUETeqwZlAnN1WtHmiXCHaQjqWoroH160JpNhdLzxZTGI tZl2Ig> . Accessed 12 August 2023.

Baran, R., Zerres, C., & Zerres, M. (2014). *Customer Relationship Management* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.).

Baker .K. (2019). 15 Key benefits CRM systems provide to the business. Available : [https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/benefits-of-crm?fbclid=IwAR35OT4TFzKH5NqOO4kSQjQwa-5ch0E-4gBp\\_UdGVYt4wxTGnmJzaimkUJo%20.%3A](https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/benefits-of-crm?fbclid=IwAR35OT4TFzKH5NqOO4kSQjQwa-5ch0E-4gBp_UdGVYt4wxTGnmJzaimkUJo%20.%3A). Accessed 10 August 2023

Bhandari, P. 2020. What Is Qualitative Research? | Methods & Examples. Available: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-research/?fbclid=IwAR1LT-qUfSYy1BspIG1vkkU0TWTbqVkJUTWwHVmC3-YttqpFY00aieY-1tIc>. Accessed 10 August 2023.

Buttle, F. (2009). *Customer Relationship Management: Concepts and Technologies*(2nd.).

Day, j. 2018. *what is customer relationship marketing? definition of customer relationship marketing, strategies, benefits, and more.* Available:[https://www.ngdata.com/what-is-customer-relationship-marketing/?fbclid=IwAR1UMMBXqrp7axkbsb2k2Yb\\_gIiz6ogiyNvBYyhdSwxGqgfFTKf7BFRZ1IU](https://www.ngdata.com/what-is-customer-relationship-marketing/?fbclid=IwAR1UMMBXqrp7axkbsb2k2Yb_gIiz6ogiyNvBYyhdSwxGqgfFTKf7BFRZ1IU) . Accessed 12 July 2023.

George , T. 2021. Mixed Methods Research | Definition, Guide & Examples. Available: [https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/mixed-methods-research/?fbclid=IwAR1JK-k\\_nTV1zH0dOBAWtcCdfeWwbsUd4wMpl7B327VHHPgpG8jK4zIYGPU](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/mixed-methods-research/?fbclid=IwAR1JK-k_nTV1zH0dOBAWtcCdfeWwbsUd4wMpl7B327VHHPgpG8jK4zIYGPU). Accessed 10 August 2023.

Hicks, K. 2022. 3 types of CRM and how to choose the best one for your business. Available: [https://www.zendesk.com/blog/3-types-crm-everything-need-know/?fbclid=IwAR35OT4TFzKH5NqOO4kSQjQwa-5ch0E-4gBp\\_UdGVYt4wxTGnmJzaimkUJo](https://www.zendesk.com/blog/3-types-crm-everything-need-know/?fbclid=IwAR35OT4TFzKH5NqOO4kSQjQwa-5ch0E-4gBp_UdGVYt4wxTGnmJzaimkUJo) . Accessed 14 May 2023.

Itsudemo, n.d. About us. Available: <https://itsudemo.fi/company-page/> . Accessed 20 July 2023

Meincke, J. 2017. 9 CRM Mistakes to Avoid. Available: [https://www.closeriq.com/blog/2017/04/crm-mistakes/?fbclid=IwAR1FPklf12oIURHmZ9es0cWdU3IREWO10aTMqZHwHM7\\_eRit7cQVgHqF\\_eE](https://www.closeriq.com/blog/2017/04/crm-mistakes/?fbclid=IwAR1FPklf12oIURHmZ9es0cWdU3IREWO10aTMqZHwHM7_eRit7cQVgHqF_eE) . Accessed 7 July 2023.

Streefkerk, R. 2018. Primary vs. Secondary Sources:Differences & examples. Available: <https://www.scribbr.com/working-with-sources/primary-and-secondary-sources/?fbclid=IwAR0LVEi4HYOxoMYZuq4Z0NkgNhr4ZOmwY7DdBuS8DafGXwM2XqWCucCovM> . Accessed 10 August 2023.

Sreekumar, D. 2023. *What is quantitative research? Definition, methods, types, and examples.* Available: <https://researcher.life/blog/article/what-is-quantitative-research-types-and->

[examples/?fbclid=IwAR1ZIGxbNB46BuH9HQQJoltvmFVEVFnahjHTXHi7cz3GubxESpPaNnCupF9k](#) . Accessed 10 August 2023.

Shopify .2022. *What is CRM? A guide to CRM software types, Benefits, and Features*. Available:[https://www.shopify.com/blog/crm?fbclid=IwAR3RRCJcV3\\_SuHS5tSzMkTnSPCwwcArSwXXCA45DjnI1MIBs9\\_17\\_A7edC4](https://www.shopify.com/blog/crm?fbclid=IwAR3RRCJcV3_SuHS5tSzMkTnSPCwwcArSwXXCA45DjnI1MIBs9_17_A7edC4) . Accessed 14 May 2023.

Uzialko, A. 2023. *6 Steps to a Successful CRM Implementation*. Available:<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/15956-crm-implementation-steps.html?fbclid=IwAR1nnyruZU9TW80nd0wiB6WxLy09HKwx-ujHWiLFmRCcEgWmhVRRLfwtyIA> . Accessed 1 July 2023.

## Appendix 1/1

### Survey questionnaire

1. How familiar are you with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and their possible benefits for businesses?
  - a. Very familiar
  - b. Somewhat familiar
  - c. Not familiar
2. How do you perceive the importance of building and maintaining strong customer relationships in the success of Itsudemo Sushibar? (Select all that apply)
  - a. Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty
  - b. Enhanced communication and personalized interactions with customers
  - c. Effective customer feedback collection and response
  - d. Accurate tracking of customer preferences and order history
3. Are there any specific challenges or pain points related to maintaining customer relationships that you currently face at Itsudemo Sushibar?
4. How open are you to adopting technology solutions, such as CRM system to enhance customer relationship management at Itsudemo Sushibar?
  - a. Very open
  - b. Somewhat open
  - c. Not open
5. Based on your experience what suggestions or ideas do you have for implementing CRM at Itsudemo Sushibar in the future?
6. Are there any current practices or strategies that Itsudemo Sushi Bar currently uses to maintain customer relationship? If yes, please describe them.

7. What features or functionalities would you consider valuable for a CRM system implemented at Itsudemo Sushibar? (Select all that apply)
- a. Online reservation management
  - b. Loyalty program management
  - c. Customer feedback and review management
  - d. Personalized offers and promotion
  - e. Order history tracking for individual customers



**Appendix 1/2**

8. How important is it for you to have access to real time customer data and insights to make informed business decisions?
  - a. Very important
  - b. Somewhat important
  - c. Not important
9. Based on your experience what suggestions or ideas do you have for implementing CRM at Itsudemo Sushibar in the future?
10. How important is customer data management for the success of your business?
  - a. Very important
  - b. Somewhat important
  - c. Not important
11. How important is customer data management for the success of your business?
  - a. Contact information (name, email, phone number, etc.)
  - b. Purchase history
  - c. Demographic (information age, gender, location, etc.)
  - d. Preferences and interests
  - e. Website browsing behaviour
  - f. Social media interactions
12. How data is currently stored and managed in your organization?
  - a. Manual paper based records
  - b. Spreadsheets or databases
  - c. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system
  - d. Marketing automation platform

e. Customer data platform (CDP)

13. Are you satisfied with the accuracy of the customer data currently available in your organization?

a. Very satisfied

b. Somewhat satisfied

c. Not satisfied

14. What challenges, if any, do you face in managing customer data effectively?

**Appendix 1/3**

15. How frequently is customer data updated and maintained in your organization?

- a. Regularly (e.g., daily or weekly)
- b. Occasionally (e.g., monthly or quarterly)
- c. Rarely
- d. Not sure

16. How is customer data used in your organization? (Select all that apply)

- a. Personalizing customer experience
- b. Targeted marketing and advertising campaigns
- c. Customer segmentation and profiling
- d. Analysing customer behaviour and trends
- e. Improving customer service and support

17. What improvements or changes would you like to see in the way customer data is managed at your organization?

18. What do you do to maintain customer satisfaction? Describe in your own words.

19. Is there anything else you would like to share or any additional feedback you have regarding customer data management?