Social computing is interactive and collaborative behavior between computer users. Personal computing is an individual user activity in that one user generally commands computing. In social computing, the Internet allows users to interact through many mediums, including:

- Social media sites
- Blogs
- Microblogs
- Multiplayer games
- Wikis
- Instant messaging
- Open-source development

Social computing is basically the use of a computer for social purposes. Before the Internet, computers were largely used as tools for increasing productivity. The Internet introduced a social element where users could network, share interests, publish personal insights and use their computers for more than just doing a job faster.

Social computing can still benefit businesses synergistically if it is used for business purposes. Social computing can be used to market products and promote customer relations. Online marketing and viral marketing are two types of promotional advertising that have grown out of social computing.

The term "social computing" is used to refer to a broad spectrum of cloud-based services which encourage and exploit the active participation of users and the content they create. Examples of web services that may qualify as "social computing" include online social networking platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn; content sharing sites like YouTube and Flickr; content creation sites like Blogger and Wikipedia. As is obvious from these examples, not all social computing services are similar. In some cases, the focus is on providing a space in the cloud where social interactions can occur (example Facebook). In other social computing services, the focus is on providing a platform for sharing user-generated content (example YouTube). In yet other instances, social computing tools are embedded in a primary service (example Amazon.com) wherein the web-based retailer creates collective intelligence by mining user-created content to get user recommendations, seller and buyer reputations and so on. Each social computing service is unique in its focus – what is common among them is that each of them.

A CRM system is not only used to deal with the existing customers but is also useful in acquiring new customers. The process first starts with identifying a customer and maintaining all the corresponding details into the CRM system which is also called an 'Opportunity of Business'. The Sales and Field representatives then try getting business out of these customers by sophistically following up with them and converting them into a winning deal.

Customer Relationship Management strategies have given a new outlook to all the suppliers and customers to keep the business going under an estimable relationship by fulfilling mutual needs of buying and selling.

Usually an organization consists of various departments which predominantly have access to customer's information either directly or indirectly. A CRM system piles up this information centrally, examines it and then makes it addressable within all the departments.

Lets take an example of an international call center which uses a CRM tool called 'xyz' and is integrated with a phone and a computer system or laptop. Now this system automatically perceives which customer is calling. Before the executive attends the phone the CRM system brings forth the customer details on the computer or laptop screen and also indicates what the opportunity of deals is with that particular customer, what the customer had already purchased or ordered in past and what is the probability of buying in future. Not only this, it can also highlight what all products best suit this customer. For finance department it may show the information regarding the current balance and for accounting department it may pop out the information regarding the recent purchases by the customer. All these pieces of data are stored in the CRM database and are available as and when it is needed.

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Features of CRM

Customer Relationship Management is a strategy which is customized by an organization to manage and administrate its customers and vendors in an efficient manner for achieving excellence in business. It is primarily entangled with following features:

1. **Customers Needs-** An organization can never assume what actually a customer needs. Hence it is extremely important to interview a customer about all the likes and dislikes so that the actual needs can be ascertained and prioritized. Without modulating the actual needs it is arduous to serve the customer effectively and maintain a long-term deal.

2. **Customers Response-** Customer response is the reaction by the organization to the queries and activities of the customer. Dealing with these queries intelligently is very important as small misunderstandings could convey unalike perceptions. Success totally depends on the understanding and interpreting these queries and then working out to provide the best solution. During this situation if the supplier wins to satisfy the customer by properly answering to his queries, he succeeds in explicating a professional and emotional relationship with him.

3. **Customer Satisfaction-** Customer satisfaction is the measure of how the needs and responses are collaborated and delivered to excel customer expectation. In today's competitive business marketplace, customer satisfaction is an important performance exponent and basic differentiator of business strategies. Hence, the more is customer satisfaction; more is the business and the bonding with customer.

4. **Customer Loyalty-** Customer loyalty is the tendency of the customer to remain in business with a particular supplier and buy the products regularly. This is usually seen when a customer is very much satisfied by the supplier and re-visits the organization for business deals, or when he is tended towards re-buying a particular product or brand over times by that supplier. To continue the customer loyalty the most important aspect an organization should focus on is customer satisfaction. Hence, customer loyalty is an influencing aspect of CRM and is always crucial for business success.

5. **Customer Retention-** Customer retention is a strategic process to keep or retain the existing customers and not letting them to diverge or defect to other suppliers or organization for business. Usually a loyal customer is tended towards sticking to a particular brand or product as far as his basic needs continue to be properly fulfilled. He does not opt for taking a risk in

going for a new product. More is the possibility to retain customers the more is the probability of net growth of business.

6. **Customer Complaints-** Always there exists a challenge for suppliers to deal with complaints raised by customers. Normally raising a complaint indicates the act of dissatisfaction of the customer. There can be several reasons for a customer to launch a complaint. A genuine reason can also exist due to which the customer is dissatisfied but sometimes complaints are launched due to some sort of misunderstanding in analyzing and interpreting the conditions of the deal provided by the supplier regarding any product or service. Handling these complaints to ultimate satisfaction of the customer is substantial for any organization and hence it is essential for them to have predefined set of process in CRM to deal with these complaints and efficiently resolve it in no time.

7. **Customer Service-** In an organization Customer Service is the process of delivering information and services regarding all the products and brands. Customer satisfaction depends on quality of service provided to him by the supplier. The organization has not only to elaborate and clarify the details of the services to be provided to the customer but also to abide with the conditions as well. If the quality and trend of service go beyond customer's expectation, the organization is supposed to have a good business with customers.

Importance of Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

A CRM system consists of a historical view and analysis of all the acquired or to be acquired customers. This helps in reduced searching and correlating customers and to foresee customer needs effectively and increase business.

- CRM contains each and every bit of details of a customer, hence it is very easy for track a customer accordingly and can be used to determine which customer can be profitable and which not.

- In CRM system, customers are grouped according to different aspects according to the type of business they do or according to physical location and are allocated to different customer managers often called as account managers. This helps in focusing and concentrating on each and every customer separately.

- A CRM system is not only used to deal with the existing customers but is also useful in acquiring new customers. The process first starts with identifying a

customer and maintaining all the corresponding details into the CRM system which is also called an 'Opportunity of Business'. The Sales and Field representatives then try getting business out of these customers by sophistically following up with them and converting them into a winning deal. All this is very easily and efficiently done by an integrated CRM system.

- The strongest aspect of Customer Relationship Management is that it is very cost-effective. The advantage of decently implemented CRM system is that there is very less need of paper and manual work which requires lesser staff to manage and lesser resources to deal with. The technologies used in implementing a CRM system are also very cheap and smooth as compared to the traditional way of business.

- All the details in CRM system is kept centralized which is available anytime on fingertips. This reduces the process time and increases productivity.

- Efficiently dealing with all the customers and providing them what they actually need increases the customer satisfaction. This increases the chance of getting more business which ultimately enhances turnover and profit.

- If the customer is satisfied they will always be loyal to you and will remain in business forever resulting in increasing customer base and ultimately enhancing net growth of business.

The Benefits of CRM

- They include automation of the upstream and the downstream sales and marketing processes.

- Businesses can benefit from the linking of sales and marketing activities, which would considerably reduce the amount of manual labor and manual processes needed.

- CRM solutions also add value by business intelligence and data mining of the customer database that is also known as data warehousing.

- Businesses can invest in an ERP or Enterprise Resource Planning system which when integrated with the CRM software can lead to synergies and efficiencies from the various disparate organizational processes that are now linked together.

Customers can be of following types:

1. **Loyal Customers-** These types of customers are less in numbers but promote more sales and profit as compared to other customers as these are the ones which are completely satisfied. These customers revisit the organization over times hence it is crucial to interact and keep in touch with them on a regular basis and invest much time and effort with them. Loyal customers want individual attention and that demands polite and respectful responses from supplier.

2. **Discount Customers-** Discount customers are also frequent visitors but they are only a part of business when offered with discounts on regular products and brands or they buy only low cost products. More is the discount the more they tend towards buying. These customers are mostly related to small industries or the industries that focus on low or marginal investments on products. Focus on these types of customers is also important as they also promote distinguished part of profit into business.

3. **Impulsive Customers-** These customers are difficult to convince as they want to do the business in urge or caprice. They don't have any specific item into their product list but urge to buy what they find good and productive at that point of time. Handling these customers is a challenge as they are not particularly looking for a product and want the supplier to display all the useful products they have in their tally in front of them so that they can buy what they like from that display. If impulsive customers are treated accordingly then there is high probability that these customers could be a responsible for high percentage of selling.

4. **Need Based Customers-** These customers are product specific and only tend to buy items only to which they are habitual or have a specific need for them. These are frequent customers but do not become a part of buying most of the times so it is difficult to satisfy them. These customers should be handled positively by showing them ways and reasons to switch to other similar products and brands and initiating them to buy these. These customers could possibly be lost if not tackled efficiently with positive interaction.

5. **Wandering Customers-** These are the least profitable customers as sometimes they themselves are not sure what to buy. These customers are normally new in industry and most of the times visit suppliers only for confirming their needs on products. They investigate features of most prominent products in the market but do not buy any of those or show least interest in buying. To grab such customers they should be properly informed about the various positive features of the products so that they develop a sense of interest.

Operational CRM

Operational CRM is mainly focused on automation, improvement and enhancement of business processes which are based on customer-facing or customer supporting. The main importance of a CRM system lies on how the selling, marketing and service oriented processes are automated, and for which operational CRM systems are embedded with following major automation applications:

1. **Marketing automation-** As the name implies, marketing automation is basically focused on automating marketing processes. In marketing, campaign management involves marketers to use customer specific information to determine, evaluate and develop communications that are targeted to customers in individual as well as multilevel or multichannel environment. Campaigns developed to communicate customers individually are easy and involves unique and direct communications. For multichannel environment the implementation of marketing strategies and campaign management is quite difficult and challenging. For example, some retailers have multichannel transactions like shops or stores, wholesale stores, websites, home shopping and even television shopping. Here integration and implementation of communication strategy is difficult and evaluation of performance and quality of campaigns needs to be automated and should be technologically sound across each of the channels. For handling this, a CRM marketing strategy called event-based marketing is inherited. Using event based marketing communication and offers are presented to customers as and when they are required. For example, credit card customer calls the call center for inquiring the current interest rates, this indicates that customer is specific about the interest rates and is trying to compare the interest rates and may switch to different competitor to find specific deals which suits him. Without wasting time the automated CRM system pops up an event of offer which is best suited for that customer and helps to retain him back.

2. **Sales-force Automation-** A CRM system is not only used to deal with the existing customers but is also useful in acquiring new customers. The process first starts with identifying a customer and maintaining all the corresponding details into the CRM system. This process can be distributed into many stages which includes generation of lead and then qualifying those leads as prospects. The Sales and Field representatives then try getting business out of these customers by sophistically following up with them and converting them into a winning deal. Automation of selling process is efficiently handled by Sales-force automation which automates all the methodologies or sales cycle and above described process sophisticatedly.

3. **Service Automation-** Service automation deals with managing organization's service. The actual interactions with customers such as contact, direct sales, direct mail, call centers, data aggregation systems, web sites and blogs etc. are examples of operational CRM. Each interaction with a customer can be collected to the client database generally known as 'customer's history' and the information can later be used wherever necessary. Any one in the organization can have access to this information about customer which gives a clear view of customers needs and important information on the customer such as products owned, prior support calls etc. It naturally eliminates the need to obtain this information individually from the customer. On the basis of the information, if required, the customer can easily be contacted at right time at the right place.

Operational CRM refers to services that provide support for various 'front office' business processes in helping organization to take care of their customers. Focus on customers' value is important for a successful operational CRM strategy. Different customers have to be treated differently so information on variables like customers' ranking, actual value and potential value is of strategic value.

Analytical CRM

Analytical CRM supports organizational back-office operations and analysis. It deals with all the operations and processes that do not directly deal with customers.

there is a key difference between operational CRM and Analytical CRM. Unlike from operational CRM, where automation of marketing, sales-force and services are done by direct interaction with customers and determining customer's needs, analytical CRM is designed to analyze deeply the customer's information and data and unwrap or disclose the essential convention and intension of behavior of customers on which capitalization can be done by the organization.

Primary goal of analytical CRM is to develop, support and enhance the work and decision making capability of an organization by determining strong patterns and predictions in customer data and information which are gathered from different operational CRM systems.

The following are the **key features of analytical CRM:**

P Seizing all the relevant and essential information of customers from various channels and sources and collaboratively integrating and inheriting all this data into a central repository knowledge base with a overall organization view.

P Determining, developing and analyzing inclusive set of rules and analytical methods to scale and optimize relationship with customers by analyzing and resolving all the questions which are suitable for business.

P Implementing or deploying the results to enhance the efficiency of CRM system and processes, improve relationship and interaction with customers and the actual business planning with customers.

P Combine and integrate the values of customers with strategic business management of organization and value of stakeholders.

Advantages of implementing and using an analytical CRM are described below.

1. Leads in making more profitable customer base by providing high value services.
2. Helps in retaining profitable customers through sophisticated analysis and making new customers that are clones of best of the customers.
3. Helps in addressing individual customer's needs and efficiently improving the relationships with new and existing customers.
4. Improves customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Analysis is done in every aspect of business as described below:

1. **Customer Analytics-** This is the base analytic used to analyze customer knowledge base. It provides a better view of customer behavior and by modeling, assessing customer values and assessing customer's portfolio or profiles and creates an exact understanding of all the customers.

2. **Marketing Analytics-** This helps discovering new market opportunities and seeks their potential values. It also helps in managing marketing strategies and scale and plan marketing performance at district, regional and national levels. Marketing analytics also focus on campaign management and planning, product analysis and branding.

3. **Sales Analytics-** Sales analytic provides essential environment to plan, simulate and predict sales volumes and profits by constantly analyzing organizational sales behavior. It helps in pipelining all the selling opportunities in an efficient way by indulging and improving the sales cycle.

4. **Service Analytics-** Analytical CRM has major role in enhancing the services which answering all the questions regarding customer satisfaction, quality and cost of products, complaint management etc. It even helps in improving and optimizing the services by sophistically analyzing the service revenue and cost.

5. **Channel Analytics-** This type of analysis helps to determine the customer behavior on channel preferences, like web channel, personal interaction, telephone channel etc. This information is efficiently integrated in customers' knowledge base so that they can be contacted accordingly.

Markting CRM

CRM leverages and amplifies customer base of an organization through efficacious and efficient marketing. In fact CRM has brought up new dimensions in the field of marketing by significantly improving marketing functioning and execution. Intuitive CRM associated marketing strategies like direct marketing, web marketing, e-mail marketing etc.

Web Marketing- With the growing popularity of web, customers are tending towards web marketing or web shopping. This helps both customers and suppliers to transact in a real time environment irrespective of their locations. Some of the major advantages of Web Marketing are listed below:

- P It is relatively very inexpensive as it reduces the cost for physically reaching to the target customers for interaction.

P   Suppliers can reach to more number of customers in lesser amount of time.

P   The online marketing campaigns can be easily tracked, traced, calculated and tested.

P   The selection process of any product or brand is simplified due to proven online research and analysis techniques.

P   Online marketing campaigns are more promotional as compared to manual campaigns.

2. **Email Marketing-** Email marketing has turned out to be more efficacious and inexpensive as compared to mail or phone based marketing strategies. Email marketing is direct marketing which is data driven and leads to more accurate customer response and effective fulfillment of customer needs. More attractive features include newsletters, sending of eCoupons, eCards, provision of saving events into calendars etc.

3. **Analyzing customers buying behavior online-** A CRM system provides a platform to analyze the customers buying behavior online. This interactive strategy provides great accuracy with high speed which includes profiling services furnishing elaborated bits of information regarding customers purchasing habits or behavior. Individualized analysis of this behavior also helps to identify to which product or brand the customers are more tended. For example an online selling website www.xyz.com can analyze the customers buying behavior by installing an in-house service with the help of a full-fledged CRM that checks what all products are being purchased by a particular customer and under which specific group they fall. This is achieved by personalized analyzing the buying history of customers in the past which predicts the future business with those customers also. This accomplishes to build a long-term relationship with customers by properly canvassing customer needs and resulting in customer satisfaction. Analyzing this particular buying behavior of customers online also helps to fix or change of marketing techniques or strategies to mould the system according to the future perspectives.

4. **Forecasting future marketing strategies-** Down the line marketing strategies keeps on changing according to the emotional behavioral change of customers. CRM market forecasting techniques help to understand this change through regression and statistical analysis of customer behavior online. These are some complex but more accurate analysis techniques provided by CRM system which are proved to be one of best marketing strategies. This innovative approach is carried out with greater risks but is believed to outturn astonishing rewards.

5. **Building business impact models-** It is important for an organization to have check on marketing performance regularly so that the techniques never deteriorate and always match to yield greater results. These CRM oriented models help in delivering accurate measurement of marketing performance throughout the organization and to do better every time.