Improving Customer Relationship Management Practices at a Financial Services Provider in South Africa

Eunice N. Nqobo-Badi
Master's Degree Student
Department of Business Management
College of Economic and Management Sciences
University of South Africa

Dr Barnes Sookdeo
Senior Lecturer
Department of Operations Management
College of Economic and Management Sciences
University of South Africa

Abstract

Organizations that do not have an accurate view of their customers and their needs, urgently require a customer relationship management (CRM) system. CRM should be viewed as a strategic process to better understand and meet the needs of customers. This article presents the findings of research that sought to investigate customers' needs and experiences of the services provided by a financial services provider. The aim of the research was to provide recommendations for improving CRM practices. An interpretivistic research paradigm, was adopted, denoting a qualitative study; and a structured questionnaire and non-probability purposive sampling were used for the empirical investigation. The results indicated that if suitable customer relationship management is employed, customer needs are met, leading to long-lasting relationships. Customers are the building blocks of any organisation; therefore, organisations should pay attention to maintaining their existing customers and establishing good relationships with them.

1.0 Introduction and background

Organisations that do not know who their customers are and what their needs are, or lose customers to a competitor are in serious need of a customer relationship management (CRM) system, (Wailgum, 2017). The implementation of CRM is regarded as desirable by organisations due to the benefits that accrue from these strategies among their customers, such as greater loyalty and resulting profits, (Berndt, Herbst & Roux, 2005). CRM systems help you to better understand the needs of your customers and how to meet those needs while enhancing your bottom line. Machado and Diggines (2012) define CRM as a strategic approach that integrates processes, people and technology to improve stakeholder value. It also delivers profitable and long-term relationships to ultimately understand their customers. The quality of service is the dominant element in a customer evaluation since it determines customer satisfaction. The existing assumption is that all organisations dealing with customers should be aware that customers may evaluate their service based on their perception of it (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2012).

This study was based on a financial service provider in South Africa (Company X), that provides savings, investments and funeral options to its customers. The company is situated in one of the nine provinces (Province A) in SA that has a population of 6.5 million people and does not have the infrastructure of the more developed provinces, for example, Province A, which has a population of almost 14 million (Gauteng Population, 2018). Company X provides services to customers from a multi-racial society; therefore, the needs and wants of the different racial groups vary considerably. Its vision is to be the best in the economic environment by caring for its customers since all organisations rely on their customers for growth and survival, (Smith & Colgate, 2007). Their

mission statement shows that customers and stakeholders will be given the best service in the expected time with a zero defect; and their employees are expected to live up to the values that they promote. These are integrity, respect, accountability and pushing beyond boundaries (Old Mutual, 2013).

Company X offers complex products and services that include savings and investment options. Customers due to their literacy levels do not easily understand these products and services. Only 11.7% of the population has completed secondary schooling and 19.8% have no schooling at all. These customers find it difficult to read and understand the correspondence. Furthermore, certain customers are financially vulnerable and may, consequently, not benefit from the advantages of the savings and investment opportunities. Many of Company X's customers are regarded as "unique" due to their age, low literacy levels, disabilities; and they also live far away in rural areas that lack modern and technologically advanced facilities and infrastructure; and they live far away from the service hub. All customers need to be treated with fairness and dignity, irrespective of their race, gender or age. The author believes that unique customers should be provided with a unique CRM practice to assist them. In the event of missing documentation, customers have to commute long distances, sometimes at great cost, to retrieve the required documentation and then travel back. This is frustrating, time-consuming and a waste of their limited financial resources. Although sufficient literature and studies exist regarding the concept of CRM, there are no studies that concern unique customers. This study is significant and relevant, given the fact that it fills this gap. The findings indicated that if a suitable CRM system is employed, unique customer needs would be met, leading to long-lasting relationships. This article begins with the problem statement, which is followed by the objectives; the literature review and research methodology; the results and a discussion on of the study. The article concludes with a discussion of the limitations, the conclusions and recommendations.

1.1. Problem statement

The purpose of the research study was to explore a suitable CRM system, which will be appropriate for Company X's customers, given their unique needs. Organisations are obsessed with meeting and exceeding customer expectations (Lindsay, 2011). This compels organisations to make sure that systems are used as yardsticks to determine relationships and suitability for the various needs of customers. Company X concentrates mainly on using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a yardstick to determine customer satisfaction and loyalty for customer retention. The NPS is a management tool that can be used to gauge the loyalty of an organisation to its customer relationships. However, the NPS cannot be the only tool to assess customer relations, because the customers also need human interaction. Hence, the justification for the study as CRM practices at Company X are not being evaluated to determine its effectiveness.

1.2. Objectives of the research

The objectives of the study were to investigate customer needs and experiences of customer service provided by a financial services provider. The aim was to provide recommendations for improving CRM practices.

2. Literature Review

The purpose of the literature survey was to gain insights into the requirements for this study. The central theme of this article is the emphasis on CRM practices at a financial services provider.

2.1. Overview of CRM

The aim of all organisations should be to improve customer loyalty to attain maximum revenue and profits. Van Vuuren (2011) stipulates that customers are loyal to an organisation when satisfied consistently. Research indicates that organisations often do not build and maintain relationships with existing customers, instead they concentrate on getting new customers while maximising profits at the expense of existing customers (Ryals, 2008). Chung, Hsu, Tsai, Huang and Tsai (2012) refer to CRM as an operational model that allows organisations to recognise and influence the behaviour of customers to acquire new customers; keep existing customers; increase customer loyalty and enhance customer benefits. Buttle (2009) states that CRM is the core business strategy that integrates internal processes and functions to create and deliver value to customers at a profit. In the process of understanding customers, the first goal is to identify those customers the organisation wants to reach out to, (Machado & Diggines, 2012). Organisations should respect their customers and practice selflessness. There is a proverb that says: *"the customer comes first."* Organisations that provide life insurance products to customers should realise that they need to build relationships with such customers (Du Plessis, Strydom & Jooste, 2012).

It is important to build and maintain good relationships with customers, because this may impact on the profit of the organisation. Ryals (2008) identified various aspects of customer behaviour, which can become cost drivers; and pinpoints the need for information and continuous customer service support. The CRM used by an organisation should help the organisation to respond to user needs as quickly as possible (Rigby, 2013). CRM integrates and combines people, processes and technology with the long-term objective of offering customer's value for their money. This process is meant to provide an understanding of how the organisation manages its relations with customers. The CRM comprises three types of management, namely, strategic, operational and analytic management.

2.2. The influence of the customer in CRM

2.2.1. Customer centricity:

Customer centricity implies that organisations should put their customers first and gather information about customers to provide a better service (Berndt & Tait, 2012). Creating meaningful value (to the extent that the service would satisfy the needs of the customer) means that organisations take the interests their customers at heart (Du Plessis, et al., 2012). Customer centricity is important for developing relationships and focusing on individual needs.

2.2.2. Customer satisfaction:

Customer satisfaction results when customer expectations are met or exceeded with a specific transaction (Olajide & Israel, 2012). Customer satisfaction is one of the vital elements when building customer relationships. If customer satisfaction cannot be achieved, it would be difficult to create customer loyalty and ultimately to achieve customer retention (Du Plessis et al., 2012). It is for this reason that it is important for organisations to establish whether the customer was satisfied or dissatisfied with the service immediately after delivery.

2.2.3. Customer relationship:

Organisations face the challenge of working with their customers transparently to develop the existing relationship. Manning and Bodine (2012) propose that organisations should investigate bringing customers and employees together to develop customer experiences. O' Sullivan, Stem and Willner (2009) state that it is important to monitor the service and interaction with customers, since they could be prospective customers.

2.2.4. Customer loyalty:

Customer loyalty speaks to customers who are committed to the organisation's products and/or services and are not easily attracted to those of competitors (Berndt & Tait, 2012). This means that these customers have a sense of belonging to a specific organisation and its products and/or services. Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2012) indicate that when customers are committed to an organisation, they will not easily switch to a competitor, especially if they feel positive about the service delivery.

2.2.5. Customer retention:

Matanga (2008) states that "customer retention is a measure of customer loyalty based on an organisation's success in retaining the business of its existing customers". Hoffman and Bateson (2006) state that customer retention is one of the benefits of relationship marketing; and customer retention refers to concentrating on the organisation's marketing efforts directed to the existing customer base. Business survival is dependent on customers; therefore, organisations need to focus on meeting the needs and wants of customers (Nieuwenhuizen 2011). The two main tasks of an organisation are to acquire customers and keep them (Du Plessis et al., 2012).

2.2.6. Customer service:

Minsker (2014) argues that 'satisfactory' service is not simply delivering a service. Promises are usually made and not fulfilled. It is important to keep promises, since it builds confidence with the organisation's customers. Management intervention in customer service is just as vital, because it indicates accountability. Driggs and Holland (2014) pointed out that if errors are made, they erode customers' confidence in the organisation.

2.2.7.   The impact of CRM on the financial sector:

During a study on the use of CRM to improve the performance of insurance organisations in India, Chaudhuri (2013) revealed that the acquisition of customers is challenging because employees are not fully equipped to assist and respond to customer needs. Gizaw (2014) analyses the direct and mediating effect of customer satisfaction on the link between service quality and customer loyalty in the insurance sector in Ethiopia.

He stipulates that insurance organisations should cement their customer relationships by meeting the needs of their customers. Good service leads to customer satisfaction and retention. Poor service delivery may result in the customers switching to competitors. This switch could result in damage to the reputation of the organisation. Gizaw (2014) argues that it is important that insurance organisations develop a system that monitors service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty; and that employees are involved in such a system. It is clearly imperative for organisations to meet the needs of their customers since this may lead to increased customer retention. Gizaw (2014) also states that retaining customers is less expensive than acquiring new customers and that loyalty is influenced by good quality service.

In order to boost loyalty, organisations should establish closer relationships with their customers and respond to their needs to remain sustainable in the economic climate. Insurance organisations should also embark on a CRM system that understands customer needs and products tailor-made for customers; thereby, empowering employees to ensure organisational success Chaudhuri (2013). Research conducted by Roberts-Lombard (2011) on how CRM impacts on customer retention at financial service providers in South Africa (SA revealed that advertising for new customers is more expensive than retaining the existing ones. The CRM can assist financial services providers in building lasting relationships and surviving competition.

2.2.8. Relationship marketing:

Relationship marketing is described as the cultivation of a lasting and mutually beneficial connection with customers. In order for organisations to succeed in serving their customers, an appropriate and positive approach to communication is important (Harris, 2013). Interactions between organisations and their stakeholders are crucial for long-lasting relationships. All stakeholders have an impact on the success of the organisation (Van Rensburg, 2008). It is imperative that organisations look after their relationships with customers, since their survival and growth depend on building and maintaining such relationships (Van Zyl, Van Noordwyk & Du Toit, 2012).

2.2.9. Service quality:

Quality of service is the dominant element in customer evaluation **i**n the financial service sector, since it determines customer satisfaction (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2012). Sandhu and Bala (2011) state that to ensure success and survival in today's competitive environment, delivering a quality service is of paramount importance. This is an indication that all organisations dealing with customers should be aware that customers may evaluate their service based on their perception of it. Customers will relate their experience with any organisation.

2.2.10. Reflections on the theoretical overview:

CRM has a vital role to play in the insurance sector for the customer and the service provider. Good quality customer service leads to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and is not determined or limited to one's geographical location. Customer service is directly proportional to customer satisfaction; and customer satisfaction is directly proportional to customer retention. It is important for organisations to note that getting new customers is more difficult; therefore, they should have a good relationship with their existing customers. This comes from having an effective CRM in place to suit the unique needs of every customer. It is expensive to find new customers; therefore, it is better for organisations to retain the customers they already have, by providing an excellent service to them. Insurance organisations should have a CRM system in place that could monitor their customer relations to prevent their customers from switching to competitors.

3. Research methodology

The purpose of the study was to evaluate CRM practices at a financial services provider and make recommendations for improvement to a financial services provider. This implies an understanding which locates the study in the interpretivistic research paradigm, denoting a qualitative study, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This research study falls in the field of marketing research.

3.1. The population and sampling in the study

The population of the study on which this article is based comprised 101 participants (Table 1) with unique characteristics such as illiteracy; a disability; or living far away from the service hub.

Their selection was based on the fact that they visited the service hub. Permission was obtained provided that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained regarding customer information and participation. A non-probability purposive sampling, popular in qualitative research was utilised to select the participants. Non-probability purposive sampling simply looks for participants who can help build the substantive theory (Gouws & Shuttleworth, 2009). All the participants participated in the study, contributing to a 100% response rate.

Table 1: Distribution of participants according to level of education and gender

	Female		Male		Total	
Level of education	**n**	**%**	n	%	n	%
No Schooling	1	1,6			1	1,0
Grades 1 to 5	4	6,3	2	5,4	6	5,9
Completed primary education	3	4,7	2	5,4	5	5,0
Grades 8 to 11	13	20,3	5	13,5	18	17,8
Completed Grade 12	9	14,1	16	43,2	25	24,8
Current student at tertiary institution	9	14,1	3	8,1	12	11,9
Completed undergraduate studies	4	6,3	8	21,6	12	11,9
Completed post graduate studies	21	32,8	1	2,7	22	21,8
Total	**64**	**100**	**37**	**100**	**101**	**100**

3.2. The measurement instrument

The primary data were acquired by means of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. The first section of the questionnaire focused on obtaining the personal/demographic details of each participant, while the second section focused on questions related to customer satisfaction and the quality of customer service.

3.3. Data collection

Data were collected via a two-phase approach. In Phase 1, secondary data was collected to gain insights into customer relations policies, functions and information on the sales figures. Phase 2 made use of the structured questionnaire to elicit responses regarding the customer services being provided. Pilot testing obtained the opinions of group of customers (10) on the representativeness and suitability of the questions. The researcher selected participants via direct observation and based on their unique qualities. One-on-one discussions were conducted with questions being clearly outlined and responses being written, verbatim.

3.4. Data analysis

Data were analysed, using pivot tables in Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The responses were captured in an Excel file created for the study. The questionnaire data were imported into the SPSS program to perform the statistical analysis. Basic frequencies were performed for each question; and descriptive analyses of all questions were performed to look at the distribution of the respondents. Descriptive analyses include numeric descriptions (Richard & Morse 2013) and text descriptions. The text was analysed, using qualitative coding. The goal of coding is to uncover repetitive patterns (Saldana, 2013:5).

4. Results and discussion

The results and discussion comprised four categories, namely, customer demographics, rating of service, customer needs and wants and the mode of transport used by customers to travel to the service hub. The discussions and analysis covered any combination of the above aspects in an endeavour to investigate significant differences in the various categories.

4.1. Customer demographics

4.1.1. Age: The distribution of participants, according to gender, indicates that female customers (63,4%) outnumber their male counterparts (36,6%).

4.1.2. Levels of education: A total of 1% had no schooling; 10,9% had primary school education; 24,8% had completed secondary education, 21,8 % had a post-graduate university education, indicating that almost 50% of

the participants are literate, although English is not their first language. However, an important point to note is that those who indicated that they had completed primary education did not fully understand English.

The researcher had to explain the questions to them in their own language. Most of the respondents were under 66 years of age.
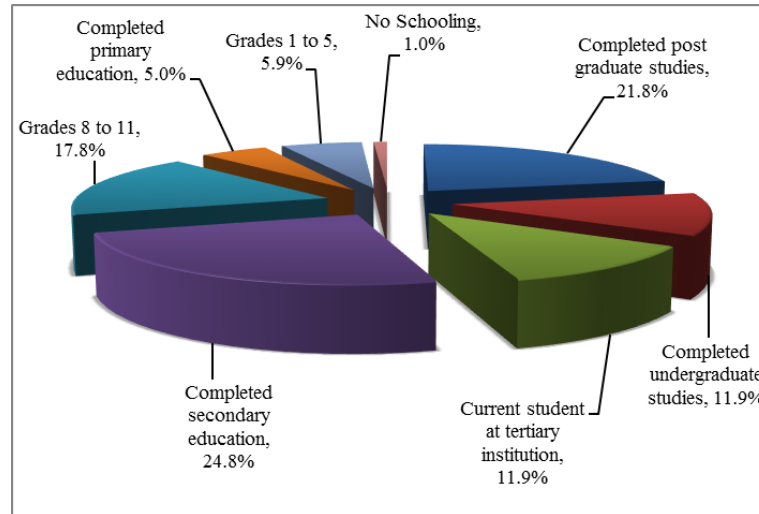
Figure 1: Participants level of education

4.1.3.Disability:

Only 6.93% had a disability. The list of disabilities included arthritis, hearing and speech impairments, some were paraplegics and bound to wheelchairs. It is essential that people with disabilities get the same service as those without a disability. The disabilities presented the a few challenges, for example, the researcher had to speak up so that those with a hearing impairment could hear. This experience emphasised the importance of customer relations training for staff to deal with customers with special needs.

4.1.4.Place of residence:

Twenty-two different places of residence were identified, as well as the distances travelled to the service hub. The largest group (26.7%) travelled between 40 to 100 kilometres. Among the participants, 63% indicated that they were very unhappy or felt ignored, because they had to travel long distances and could not always complete their business. Participants were sometimes left frustrated because they had to travel more than once to the service hub to obtain additional information.

4.2. Rating of services received

4.2.1. Customer service: 78,2% rated the service as very good. Although this rating is high, Company X should consider improving the balance of the 21,8%. Quality of staff was rated at 75%.

4.2.2. Quality of service: 75.2% rated the service as very good. Hours of operation was rated at 69.3%; and ability to solve problems was rated at 77.8%, which is very good.

4.2.3. Resolution of problems encountered: Staff professionalism was rated at 81,2%. The standards and rules of Company X state that they should strive for zero defect.

4.3.Customer needs and wants

The results indicated that 84.4% of staff are aware of the needs and wants of the participants. This rating is exceptionally high. It is crucial for consultants to meet the needs and wants of participants. Figure 2 shows the various queries and transactions with which participants requested assistance.
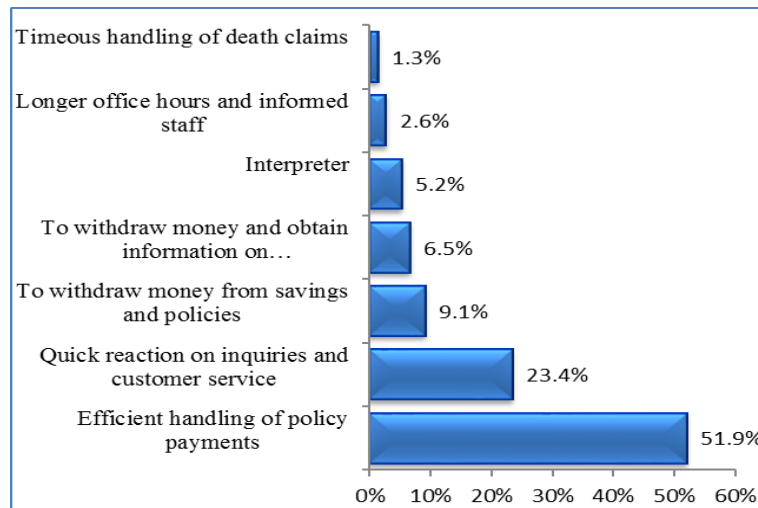
**Figure 2: Participants transactions and queries**

4.4. Transport

4.4.1.   Mode of transport: - 59.41% of participants travelled by minibus taxi and 34.65% used their private vehicles.

4.4.2.   Cost of transport: - An amount of more than R300.00 is spent on using minibus taxis or their private vehicles. The participants have limited resources, so spending R300.00 is considered as a high travelling cost to get to the service hub.

4.4.3.   Distance travelled: - As mentioned earlier, the largest group (26.7%) travelled between 40 to 100 kilometres to the service hub. They travel long distances which involve high costs for petrol and taxi fares.

4.4.4.   Participants feelings regarding distances travelled: – The participants have mixed feelings about the distances they travelled to reach the service hub. Figure 3 indicates their concerns.
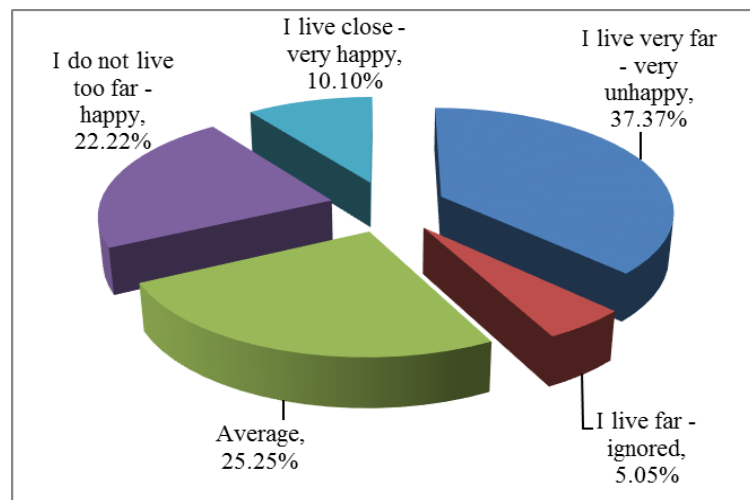
Figure 3: Participants feelings regarding distances travelled

5. Limitations and further research

Like most research studies, this study was not without limitations (Van der Merwe & Nienaber 2015). A limitation of this study is that several customers who entered the service hub were reluctant to engage in the interview process, since they were either in a hurry or were not prepared to share their experiences. Another limitation is that the study was conducted at one financial services provider only. CRM is not restricted to the financial sector.

For future research purposes, a comparative study could be extended to other sectors to specifically determine customer experiences, satisfaction and loyalty, which may lead to improved CRM practices.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to explore a suitable CRM system for the customers of Company X, given their unique needs. The objectives of this study were to investigate customer needs and experiences of customer service provided by a financial service provider. The aim was to provide recommendations for improving CRM practices. Blocker, Flint, Myers & Slater (2011) suggest that responding to customer requests remain a critical aspect to satisfy customer needs. Company X concentrates mainly on using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a yardstick to determine customer satisfaction and loyalty for customer retention purposes.

A synthesis of the literature review showed an overview of CRM; the impact of the customer on CRM and the impact of CRM on the insurance sector; and were used as indicators for developing the research instrument. The results and discussion of findings consisted of four categories, namely, customer demographics; rating of service received; customer needs and wants; and the mode of transport utilised by customers to travel to the service hub. It also showed an integration of the literature review and the results and discussions. The conclusion of the study was divided into the same four categories from the results and discussions. The following noteworthy conclusions were drawn from this study:

6.1. Customer demographics:

The majority of participants were females (63.4%). Only 25% of participants had secondary education; and a sizeable percentage of participants did not understand English. The results indicated a gap in the education levels of customers. Some respondents are educated while others are not. This resulted in the researcher experiencing difficulties in conducting the study, since not all of them could understand English. Almost 7% had some type of disability. Twenty-two different places of residence were identified. Almost 25% travelled between 40 to 100 kilometres to and from the service hub.

6.2. Rating of services received:

In general, the feedback given by respondents on the service rendered was positive. The customer service, quality of staff, quality of service   and ability of staff to solve problems were found to be very good. Although these aspects indicate a high rating, it falls short of the company's standards and rules which state that they should strive for zero defect.

6.3. Customer needs and wants:

An above 80% rating is evidence that participants felt that staff were aware of their needs and wants. Participants have various needs and wants to be considered. The participants indicated that they preferred an office near where they live; or alternatively a consultant to travel to them. The participants were concerned about the business hours and suggested that closing time be 17h00 instead of 16h15.

6.4. Transport:

The participants used different modes of transport to travel to the service hub; and the costs of travelling were high. The long travelling distances posed problems since regular petrol price increases inevitably lead to increases in minibus taxi fares. The participants revealed mixed feelings about travelling distances. Research revealed that if customers are unhappy they will switch to competitors to seek the service they need.

As a final conclusion, Chaudhuri (2013) states that:

"Financial services providers should embark on a CRM system that understands customer needs and products, tailoring their products to suit their customer preferences and simultaneously empowering employees to ensure an organisational success".

7. Recommendations

The following tabulated recommendations are based on the above conclusions.

Table 2: Categories and recommendations

Category	Recommendations
	It is recommended that….
CRM implementation	a suitable CRM system should be implemented: this can assist in building lasting relationships with their customers and help the organisations survive competition in the insurance sector.
	the customer relations manager should be reintroduced, since it is essential to look after the unique needs of customers.
	a customer satisfaction index should be used to measure the satisfaction of customers' interaction with staff.
	the NPS should not only be an indicator or a measure to determine customer retention, but also to acknowledge that the customers have different levels of education.
	facilities, similar to those of the other affluent regions should be made available.
	employees should be empowered to ensure organisational success.
	organisations should pay attention to maintaining existing customers, since acquiring new customers is more expensive.
Customer demographics:	
	staff should learn different languages, including sign language to overcome problems associated with the language barrier.
Rating of services received:	
	management should ensure that staff with expert knowledge of all products and processes are available to assist customers.
	management should conduct workshops that focus on CRM applications and practices.
	employee attitudes should be improved to ensure improved customer service.
	employees should foster a culture of "the customer comes first". This will help to build customer relationships.
	management should "tailor" their products to their customers' preference.
Customer needs and wants:	
	more attention should be paid to the unique needs and wants of customers.
	insurance organisations should embark on a CRM system that understands customer needs and wants.
	the CRM system should take the unique customer and their need and wants into consideration.
	preference should be given to the sick, elderly and those with disabilities.
	a service booth should be provided for the sick, elderly and those with disabilities.
	an express lane should be provided for sick, elderly and those with disabilities.
	timeous feedback should be provided: to attend to the needs of customers and provide timely and prompt feedback to assist in keeping relations healthy.
	there should be increased communication: to improve service

	delivery.
	there should be continuous communication as this encourages customer retention. management should encourage positive interactions with customers to prevent customers from being attracted to the competitor. computer systems should be updated in line with the latest technological developments. problems: management should try their utmost best to ensure that system problems are kept to a minimum.
	management should immediately take corrective action to limit the "downtimes" associated with system problems.
	an analysis of all customer-related problems should be made to look at improvements.
Transport:	company X should consider opening at least one office to serve customers who are living far away from the service hub. management should consider the long travelling distances and provide a quick service to these customers.
	management should look at interventions for staff to visit the sick, elderly and disabled in their areas. mobile vans should be considered to go two or three times a week to the relevant areas.

8. References

Berndt, A. & Tait, M. (2012). Relationship marketing and customer relationship, management. (2nd ed). Cape Town: Juta and Company.

Berndt, A., Herbst & F, Roux, L. (2005). Implementing a customer relationship management programme in an emerging market. Journal of Global Business and Technology 1(2), 81-89

Blocker, CP, Flint, DJ, Myers, MB & Slater, SF. (2011). Proactive customer orientation and its role for creating cusomer value in global markets. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science 39, 216-233.

Buttle, F. (2009). Customer relationship management. Concepts and technologies. (2nd ed.). Oxford: Butterworth Heineman.

Chaudhuri, D. (2013). Customer relationship management to improve the performance of insurance sector in India. International Journal of Research in Social Sciences, 226 – 231. [Online] Available at: http://www.ijmra.us

Chung, YC Hsu, YW, Tsai, SC, Huang, HL & Tsai, CH. (2012). The correlation between business strategy, information technology, organisational culture, implementation of CRM and business performance in a high-tech industry. South African Journal of Industrial Engineering.

23(2), 1-15.

Denzin, NK & Lincoln, Y. (2013). The landscape of qualitative research. (4th ed.). California: Thousand Oaks.

Driggs, W, & Holland, R. (2014). Putting customer before politics. CRM Journal. Jan, p5 [Online} Available at http: //www.destinationCRM.com.

Du Plessis, PJ, Strydom JW & Jooste, CJ. (2012). Marketing management. (6th ed.). Cape Town: Juta and Company.

Gauteng Population. (2018). Population of city and country in 2018, Archieve, Region.

Gizaw, KD. (2014). The mediation effect of customer satisfaction on service quality –customer loyalty link in insurance sector of Ethiopia. (Online): International Journal of Marketing and Technology 4, 184-197.

Harris, EK. (2013). Customer service: a practical approach. (6th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.

Henning E, Van Rensburg W & Smit B. (2004). Finding your way in qualitative research. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Hoffman, KD & Bateson, JEG. (2006). Services marketing: concepts, strategies and cases. (3rd ed.). Mason, OH: Thompson South-Western.

Hough, J, Neuland, EW & Bothma, N. (2003). Global business environments and strategies. (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lindsay, E., (2011). The management and control of quality. (8th ed.). Canada: South-Western Cengage.

Machado, R. & Diggines, C. (2012). Customer service. Cape Town: Juta & Company.

Manning, H & Bodine, K. (2012). The Power of putting your customers at the centre of your business. USA: Amazon Publishers.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, GB. (2011). Designing qualitative research. (5th ed.). California: Thousand Oaks Sage.

Matanga, A. (2008). An investigation into the impact of customer service quality on customer satisfaction with particular reference to the carbonated soft drink industry in South Africa. Published MBL dissertation, University of South Africa.

Minsker, M. (2014). Amaze every customer every time: 52 tools for delivering in the most amazing customer service planet.

Niewenhuizen, C. (2011). Business management for entrepreneurs. (2nd ed.). Cape Town: Juta & Company.

Olajide, O & Israel, A. (2012). Effect of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty among selected bank customers in Ado-Ekiti metropolis, Nigeria. Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business 3 (11), 228-236.

Old Mutual Website 2013 www.oldmutual.com. Accessed 22 March 2018.

O'Sullivan, PJ, Stern, EH & Willner, BE. (2009). Client relationship management. [Online] Available at: http://www.google.com/patents/US20110153642.

Parumasur, S & Roberts-Lombard, M. (Eds). 2012. Consumer behaviour. (2nd ed.). Cape Town: Juta & Company.

Rigby, DK. 2013 Management tools (2013). An executive's guide. Bain & Company, Inc, Boston.

Richard, L. & Morse, LM. (2013). Resource guide for qualitative methods. (3rd ed.). California: Thousand Oaks.

Roberts-Lombard, M. (2011). Customer retention through customer relationship management: The exploration of two-way communication and conflict handling. [Online] African Journal of Business Management. 5(9). 3488-3496.

Ryals, L. (2008). Managing customer profitability. John Wiley & Sons. Chichester.

Saldana, J. (2013). The coding manual for qualitative researchers. (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publishers.

Sandhu, HS & Bala, N. (2011). 'Customers' perception towards service quality of life insurance corporation of India: a factor analytic approach', International Journal of Business and Social Science, 2(18), 219–231.

Smith, JB. & Colgate, M. (2007). Customer value creation: A practical framework. Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 15 (1), 7-23.

Van der Merwe, MM & Nienaber H. (2015). Factors hindering strategy implementation as perceived by top, middle and frontline managers in a South African electronic organisation. Journal of Global Business and Technology. 11, 2. Fall 2015.

Van Rensburg, LRJ. (Ed.) (2008). Business management: an introduction. (2nd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Van Vuuren, T. (2011). Customer loyalty in an optometric practice – A case study perspective. Unpublished Master's dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

Van Zyl, J, Van Noordwyk, A. & Du Toit, R. (2012). Business functions: an introduction. Cape Town: Juta & Company.

Wailgum, T. (2017). What is a CRM system? Your guide to customer relationship management. CIO from IDG Communications, Inc.

Wilson, A, Zeithaml, VA, Bitner, MJ & Gremler, DD. (2012). Services marketing: integrating customer focus across the firm. (2nd ed.). United Kingdom: McGraw-Hill.

World Competitiveness Report. 2012. www.google.com.