CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

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Abstract
It is well said by Connie Edlerthat "Excellent customer service is the number one job in any company! It is the personality of the company and the reason customers come back. Without customers there is no company!" As we all know, customer is the king of the market, so it becomes essential for every company to maintain strong and long-term relationship with the customers. Powerful customer relationship is the prime key to business success. In healthcare industry, Modern health clinics invest in expensive medical device and staff but they still lack in one of the most important keys to success and that is customer relationship management. Customer relationship management helps the business to grow, ensures longer customer stay and referrals to new customers. Patients must be provided with consistently high-quality experience otherwise they will not acknowledge you for outstanding healthcare. Now days, customer relationship management has become the need of the hour in healthcare industry to have strongest relationship with patients. Customer relationship management helps reorient healthcare focus towards meeting patients' needs. Happy and satisfied patients not only return to the same doctors, health clinics and facilities for their healthcare needs but also recommend healthcare companies to friends, family members and co-workers. This research paper is an attempt to identify the importance of customer relationship management in healthcare industry.

Literature Review
Customer Relationship Management
Customer relationship management may be defined as a technology for managing and improving the relationships with present customers as well as with potential customers. It helps the companies in staying connected with customers, streamline processes and improve profitability. As far as customer relationship management in healthcare industry is concerned, it can also be referred to as patient relationship management.CRM in healthcare industry helps the health centres to organize patient's data and all their relevant health information in more accurate manner. Like other organisations, healthcare firms too must utilize CRM technology so that they can reorient healthcare focus towards meeting patient's needs. Through customer relationship management, health care centres can have track on all the essential information related to patients such as past diagnosis information, diet and exercise data, family history, and allergy information etc. Having access to all these information will help healthcare centres in sending digital information about recently published healthcare studies that may be relevant to the patient and provide suggestions that will fit patient's profile.

Objectives of the study
1. To analyse the importance of adopting customer relationship management in healthcare industry.
2. To conduct SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and threats) analysis of customer relationship management.
3. To offer pertinent suggestions based on the finding of the study.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive and tries to analyse the importance of customer relationship management in healthcare industry. The SWOT analysis was conducted to understand various strengths, weakness; opportunities and threats associated with CRM software and possible solutions were also identified based on the previous studies. The research tool used for analyzing the data which amassed from different sources for this study is content analysis and the research method used is descriptive research. We have taken into consideration the qualitative aspect of the research study. This study is completely based on secondary data. A systematic review was done in detail for the collected literature.

Secondary sources of data used are i) Journals, ii) reports, iii) search engines, iv) company websites and scholarly articles, v) research papers, and other publications.

Importance of customer relationship management in healthcare industry

1. **Better Knowledge of Patients:** CRM system provides historical analysis of all the customers as well as prospects. This helps in acquiring necessary information about the customers. CRM system contains each and every bit of details of customers such as who your patients are, what medications they are on, who else provide them with care etc.

    With CRM system, you will be able to know your customers on micro level as well as macro level. On micro level, CRM provides timeline of your patient's health. On macro level, CRM gives you access to overall data about your customers which results in better decision making.

2. **Stronger relationship with patients:** The main expectations of the patients are quality service at a time of their choosing and the safeguarding of their privacy rights by the hospitals and other healthcare establishments. If the services provided do not meet the expectations of the customers, they are more likely to take second opinions and switch providers. CRM helps in building stronger relationship with customers by increasing patient inflow through automatic lead generation, resolving patient's queries faster and increase operational efficiencies, giving personalized suggestions to your patients etc.

3. **Improvement in patient engagement:** According to a survey done by the Society for Participatory Medicine, 88% of the patients surveyed believed working with their providers as a partner will help with their health. So, focus on patient engagement is very important to drive a high rate of satisfaction and build long-term relationships with them but there cannot be a 'one size fits all' strategy. CRM is the best tool to achieve this goal thorough whole-person data model that helps in segmenting and stratifying data sets to personalize the outreach campaigns touching upon the patient's underlying motivations and the solutions they look for. With the winds of digital transformation, patients are now starting to weigh their healthcare options as an online shopping experience. Healthcare organizations can actively leverage this opportunity by actively engaging them to build trusted relationships, encouraging them to stay invested in their care and remain loyal to the organization.

4. **Better marketing:** A patient's experience is a big part of marketing when it comes to healthcare industry and an adequate CRM can definitely help with that. Definitely, CRM is much beyond the creation of patient centric experience. It helps in creation of better marketing campaigns by giving insight into who your target market is, segmentation of patients for better communication, nurturing leads in order to convert more folks who are "just looking" into patients. Overall, CRM

can help you track and measure all your sales and other patient engagement activities in your practice while helping you maintain and build relationships with your current patients.

5. **Timely and accurate information can save lives:** In the healthcare industry, the margin for error is perhaps the lowest. A slight delay in assistance or the sharing of wrong information with patients might prove to be life-threatening. Imagine a patient called you to inquire about the dosage of prescribed medicine. The customer service assistant was already managing multiple patients and in hurry recommended the wrong dosage. Now, this single instance of wrong information can prove to be fatal for any patient. CRM will provide all the patient's information at fingertips. This will save may lives.

6. **Cost-effective:** In an adequate CRM system, there is very less need of paper and manual work which require lesser staff to manage and lesser resources. The technologies used in implementing a CRM system are also very cheap and smooth as compared to the traditional way of business.

7. **Increased productivity and time saving:** All the details in CRM system are kept centralized which is available anytime on fingertips. This reduces the process time and increases productivity.

Types of CRM Software
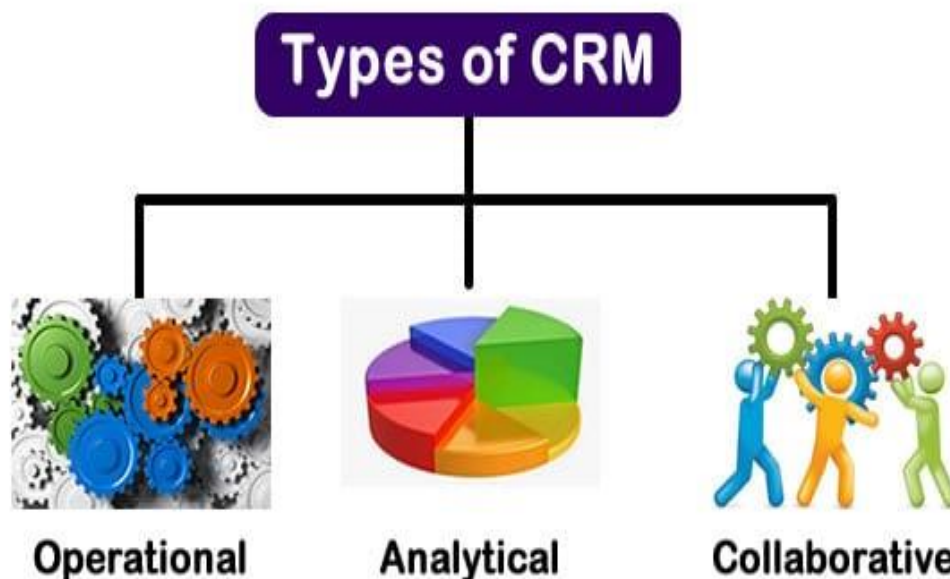
1. **Operational CRM:** Operational CRM is concerned with facilitation of operations related to customers such as contact management, helping the team in maintaining relationship with customers and converting the prospects into customers etc. With operational CRM, you can have a track of each and every customer's life cycle and record of every interaction your company have had with your customer. With this kind of data availability, marketers can improve the

quality of interaction with customers as they have knowledge about where they last left off in relationship with their customers.

Suitability
An operational CRM can be suitable for any type of business. It facilitates the three core areas of customer interaction — marketing, sales and service. This is the reason, it's specifically helpful for companies with a heavy customer focus. Businesses that want to streamline workflows, organize data and reduce down on the time spent doing manual, repetitive tasks can also adopt operational CRM.

2. **Analytical CRM:** Analytical CRM is that tool that works behind the scenes in order to make the business grow well. Analytical CRM is concerned with collection of data related to customers, storing of data securely and analysing the data so that operations can be performed more smoothly. An analytical CRM is therefore, well-structured and systematic aid to decision making. This helps in customer segmentation, anticipate trends, and plan your marketing and targeted sales for the future. In short, we can say that it facilitates warehousing and analysis of data.

Suitability
Analytical tool will be rational choice for the companies that want gathering of more hard data for more informed business decisions. It is helpful for those as well looking for finding out the reason behind why certain approaches are not working or to gain a deeper understanding of customers.

3. **Collaborative CRM:** Collaborative CRM integrates various organisational departments in order to facilitate smooth exchange of customers' data between various departments that results in better understanding of customers, improved customer retention and liberty etc.

Collaborative CRM involves modules for building profiles of each customer on the basis of information gathered during previous interactions between them. Customers' profile comprises of customer's goals, preferred mode of contact, and relevant documents. With this kind of CRM, any stakeholder inside or outside your company that requires customer information will have access to it. CRM also helps in management of channels. Each customer prefers to be reached over a particular channel, and a collaborative CRM can help you track this information. You'll see which channels are effective at attracting and converting leads and which aren't and can redirect your marketing resources as needed.

Suitability
Collaborative CRM is ideal for large scale businesses that have well established customer base because retaining such a large customer base will be their first priority. It's also helpful for companies that want to increase customer retention and loyalty or gain a better understanding of their customers so they can offer more effective content.

SWOT Analysis of Customer Relationship Management

Strengths
- Automate customer Support
- Strong Brand Image
- Improved Conversion rates
- Customer retention
- Better Segmentation

Weaknesses
- Security issues
- Bigger and Complex Data
- Users require comprehensive training
- Costly
- Third Party Access

Opportunities
- Scope of great Sales & Marketing
- Boosting of CRM functionalities
- Smooth exchange of data over elctronic devices
- More analytical & Net based
- Integration of CRM & social media

Threats
- Non-veteran CRM solution provider
- Integration Incompetencies
- Getting used to the latest CRM
- Complexity in choosing right CRM
- Non-retrieving enough actionable insights

Strengths

CRM as a tool has emerged strong than ever with its awareness in marketers.Delayed response is one of the top reasons why customers reduce and leave you at the risk of competitors. Nothing makes a customer happy and satisfied than a faster response.

According to Ubisend study, 21% of consumers believe chatbots are the easiest way to contact a business.
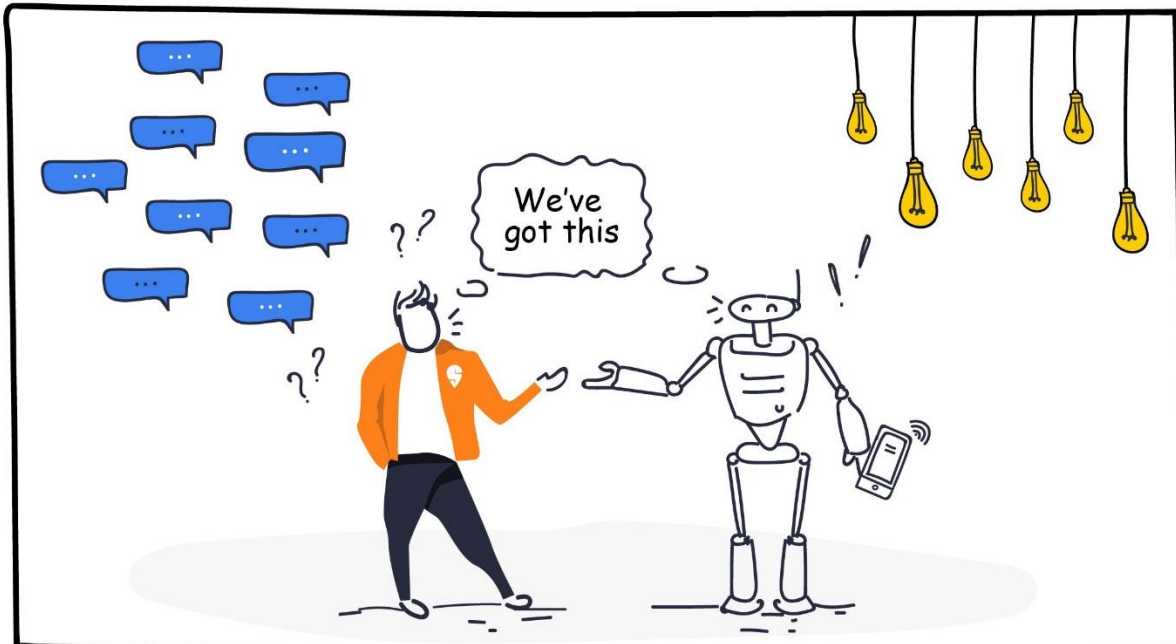
Automating customer support with the best chatbots can redefine your customer satisfaction rates by improving your response times, engagement, and your customers' interests. Real-time service is invaluable in retaining your current relationships and prospects as well.

ELIZA was the first chatbot used in healthcare in 1966 imitating a psychotherapist using pattern matching and response selection. However, ELIZA had limited knowledge and communication abilities. Today, chatbots offer diagnosis of symptoms, mental healthcare consultation, nutrition facts and tracking, and more. For example, in 2020 WhatsApp has tied up with the World Health Organization (WHO) to make a chatbot service that answers users' questions on COVID-19.Patients when treated well & satisfied properly, they will definitely spread the good word about your hospital. This will help in building brand image.

If customers are satisfied with your service they turn to their friends and family for recommendations. Referrals convert at 3-5 times a higher rate than other marketing methods. The referred customers are more loyal and have higher lifetime values.

With CRM software you can provide services to your customers more efficiently and effectively. Better services results in better satisfaction of customers which ultimately leads to increase in customer base and retaining of customers for long term.

CRM establishes a communication channel between business and customers through which all the necessary information regarding customers is acquired. This information helps in classifying customers according to their interests and criteria. CRM enables businesses in the proper segmentation of market in a systematic way.

Weaknesses
CRM has certain weaknesses in the form that it can lead to drastic failure for a company if it is not used adequately. As the data collected is stored at one centralized place. There are very high chances of data being lost or hacked by someone. Employees may enter manipulative figure or inadequate data leading to drastic failure in accurate decision making. This is the major drawback of CRM.

Whenever an organization embraces CRM software, with the passage of time, the databank gets bigger, multifaceted, complicated, bulky, and burdensome to handle and maintain and the database user needs to have a comprehensive training in order to maintain the complex data.

Various sensitive information related to customers that has been saved in CRM software can be attained and misappropriate used by other parties. There are many web hosting companies that takes and sell CRM data to the third party resulting in loss to the people.

Implementation of CRM system requires heavy cost to be incurred by the business. CRM software are too costly as it came with different price packages as per organizational requirements. It increases the overall expenses of the business.

Opportunities
CRM has lot of opportunities in its way to make every company that much capable that it can make single customer satisfied and maintain good relationship with each and every customer. CRM software with new gen technology help in sales and marketing to a great deal. This can be done by calculating the

better results attained by marketing team. There is immense scope of CRM being integrated with other platforms in the near future that will boost its functionalities leading to great progress and development of company and organizational activities.

In near future, linkage of social media with CRM will gain more popularity and more users will get benefitted due to this. Apart from this, users will be able to have smooth exchange of data over electronic devices more easily like never before with new CRM.

In coming days, CRM will be more analytical and net-based. With the most trending technologies of CRM such as data analytics and other matrices, companies will be able to analyse business performance more accurately.

Threats
CRM faces many threats in the path of making customers satisfied and maintaining good relationship with them such as non-veteran CRM solution provider, Integration in competencies, Getting used to the latest CRM, Complexity in choosing right CRM, Non-retrieving enough actionable insights.

It is vital to evaluate business objectives, strategy, budgets, and customization needs before choosing a CRM solution. As part of this, it is essential to ensure you have well experienced CRM solution provider by your side. They will help avoid the pitfalls while implementing the CRM system. The provider must offer consultation with future insights. They must advise on how to address and eradicate potential risks and challenges for the possible CRM system.

Implementation of a central CRM system also comprises of integrating the existing software and information systems. The lack of support from the vendor staff of the existing methods for CRM integration will result in a massive burden for the company. As a result, it may consume hours of productive work time for the staff without possible outcomes. Therefore, a planned approach to CRM project by considering future needs will help avoid the implementation overkill.

Choosing a wrong CRM is one of the toughest challenges to resolve. The idea of replacing the existing system, with a one that might not be a good fit for the company, can cause serious disruptions. It is essential to note that the system's functionality on whether CRM needs meet the company requirements for now and future. Also, it is crucial to assess its compatibility with the existing applications within the company. It is also important to gauge the scope of post-implementation service scenario.

Conclusions and Suggestions
In general, we can say that hospitals are yet to develop an integrative approach that focuses on patient's needs and satisfy them. As hospital's IT infrastructure is very complex and other systems can be used to harness the provider's needs such as case management and care team collaboration so there is huge requirement for the hospitals to use CRM for patient communication. Mid-sized and small hospitals take a different perspective on their CRMs, using them for self-improvement. This approach is noteworthy as well, as here caregivers aim to uplift care delivery within the clinical setting. They compose multi-department care teams and ensure effective collaboration with technology.

With the emergence of covid-19 pandemic, physical interactions and mobility have been limited to a great extent. CRM emerged as a key to this problem. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, consumer buying behaviour drastically changed. With the changes in customer buying patterns, companies have been

forced to adapt their CRM systems through technology to enhance relationships and engagement with customers. One of the most notable innovations is a shift to virtual customer engagement in response to the increase in remote working and growing popularity of mobile-based services.

The hospitals should adopt a patient centric approach. Patient relationship management should come first before customer relationship management. In a competitive environment, the hospitals should also adopt marketing skills rather than depending only on its healthcare skills. Hence, new services should be constantly introduced to ensure the growth of the hospitals and to be competitive in the market and to keep up the enthusiasm of the employees as well as the patients. Web sites should be developed to increase the experience of the patients. It should be realized that relationship with patients cannot be built overnight. CRM should be considered as Continuous Relationship Management. Data gathered from the patients should be given proper value and it should be properly utilized. Decision making authority should be extended to field force and some resources should be given for faster implementation.

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