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DISSERTATION

A SOCIAL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL FOR AN IRISH ADVERTISMENT COMPANY

The case study of Well Clever

MBA in MARKETING

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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and effort. Where other sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged as required by the college.

This thesis has not been submitted before, in whole, or in part for any degree or examination at any other Institution.

Signature:

Date:

TABLE OF CONTENT

I. Declaration by candidate.....	1
II. Table of content.....	2
III. List of figures	5
IV. List of abbreviation	6
V. Acknowledgements	7
VI. Abstract	8
1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 Research Background.....	9
1.2 Research area, Research questions, Research objectives	12
1.3 Suitability of the Research	14
1.3.1 Academic background.....	14
1.3.2 Professional background	14
1.3.3 Contribution of the research.....	15
1.4 Recipients of the Research	16
1.5 Research Design.....	17
2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Customer Relationship Management	19
2.2.1 Customer relationship management overview	19
2.2.2 Customer relationship management strategies and implementations	21
2.2.3 Customer Relationship Management Strengths and Limitations.....	23
2.3 Social media link between brand and customer:.....	25
2.3.1 The new relation between brand and social media	25
2.3.2 The modern social Customer eco-system.....	27
2.4 Social customer relationship management.....	30
2.4.1 Social customer relationship management overview	30
2.4.2 Social Customer Relationship Management Tools and Strategies.....	32
2.4.3 Social CRM players	34

2.5 Practice case company	36
2.5.1 Introduction	36
2.5.2 Procter and Gamble:.....	36
2.5.3 Dell	37
2.6 Conclusion.....	39
3. CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	40
3.1 Research Methodology Introduction.....	40
3.2 Research Design.....	41
3.2.1 Research Philosophy	41
3.2.2 Research Approach	41
3.2.3 Research Strategies	42
3.2.4 Case Selection	42
3.2.5 Research Choices	43
3.3 Data Collection Instruments.....	43
3.3.1 Interviews	44
3.3.2 Observation	45
3.3.3 Secondary Research	45
3.4 Sampling.....	46
3.5 Time Horizon	46
3.6 Data Analysis Procedures.....	47
3.7 Research Ethics	48
3.8 Limitations of Methodology.....	48
4. CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS.....	49
4.1 Introduction	49
4.2 Overview of the case company	51
4.3 Analysis of the current customer relationship tools used by the company	54
4.4 Feedback from users of customer relationship tools used by the company.....	56
4.5 Analysis of the existing social media usage.....	59
4.6 Social CRM needs in a B2B company	65
5. CHAPTER 5: BUILDING A SOCIAL CRM PROPOSAL FOR THE CASE COMPANY	68
5.1 Proposal Introduction	68
5.2 Social CRM strategy	68
5.3 Implementation for Social CRM strategy	71

6.	CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS	75
	6.1 Introduction	75
	6.2 Evaluation of the findings	75
	6.2.1 Research Objectives	76
	6.2.2 Implementation Strategy	82
7.	CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	85
	7.1 Introduction	85
	7.2 Recommendations	85
	7.3 Conclusion.....	86
VII.	References	88
VIII.	Appendices	94
	1. Questionnaires	94
	2. Gantt Chart	98
	3. Self Reflections	99

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Research Design	17
Figure 2: CRM Strategy Model.....	21
Figure 3: Customer Behavior	28
Figure 4: The “5M’s” Social CRM baseline processes.....	33
Figure 5: Gartner Group Magic Quadrant.....	34
Figure 6: Basic social CRM framework of P&G	36
Figure 7: Research Onion.....	40
Figure 8: Research Choice	43
Figure 9: List of Interviewers.....	44/50
Figure 10: Sales Process.....	54
Figure 11: Feedback of the current CRM tools.....	56
Figure 12: Social Media Platform Usage	60
Figure 13a: Well Clever Facebook Page	61
Figure 13b: Well Clever Facebook Page	61
Figure 14: Well Clever Twitter Page	62
Figure 15: Well Clever LinkedIn Page	63
Figure 16: CRM and social CRM activities of sales.....	67

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

- **DBS: Dublin Business School**
- **CRM: Customer Relationship Management**
- **Social CRM: Social Customer Relationship Management**
- **IT: Information Technologies**
- **ROI: Return on Investment**
- **KPI: Key Performance Indicator**

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ABSTRACT

The following is brief abstract of my dissertation:

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this research is to analyse the advances in the Social Customer Relationship Management area, and selectively applies the practices to the case company, an advertisement company based in Dublin (Well Clever). The research aims to propose to the company a workable operations model based on the social customer relationship management approach.
- **Methodology:** For the purpose of this thesis, a case study methodology was chosen. The analysis will be based on the relevant framework developed from the analysis of the theory on CRM and Social CRM system. The data analysis is based on feedback from qualitative interviews of three stakeholders of the company case study. Therefore, the research will be reinforced throughout the benchmark of other companies that have an efficient social CRM system proving in this way the usefulness of social CRM in terms of competitiveness. Practice guidelines with the entire step necessary to build a social CRM strategy will be included as final proposal of this research.
- **Findings:** The findings of this study show how the case company can implement its marketing strategy using a social customer relationship management approach in order to gain competitive advantage in the advertising industry. Only with the interaction of a proper marketing strategy with the right social media channel to spread the company's message, it would be possible to obtain a workable model for the case company. The social CRM strategy proposed by the researcher is the result of the current state analysis of the case company, combined with theoretical and practical knowledge obtained from a detailed activity of literature review. The guidelines provided need to be evaluated from Well Clever, and adapted to the company needs, in order to achieve the best results.

1 INTRODUCTION

This research aims to analyse the advances in the Social Customer Relationship Management area, and selectively applies the practices to the case company, an advertisement company based in Dublin (Well Clever). The research aims to propose to the company a workable operations model based on the social customer relationship management approach. The analysis will be based on the relevant framework developed from the analysis of the theories on CRM and Social CRM system. The data analysis is based on feedback from qualitative interview of three stakeholders of the company case study. Therefore, the research will be reinforced throughout the benchmark of other companies that have an efficient social CRM system proving in this way the usefulness of social CRM in terms of competitiveness. Practise guidelines with the entire step necessary to build a social CRM strategy will be included as final proposal of this research. The first chapter aims to explore the background of the dissertation's topic and its related research questions and design structure.

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND:

In an age where communication has become multimedia interaction that runs along the edge of a keyboard, is essential figure out the mechanisms and the potentiality of social media that are dominating the digital world. The first step is to retrace the historical excursus behind the social media. The dynamics of the social evolution is closely related to the development of the network, which has created the necessary basis for the use of new and participatory forms of communication. From the first email shared, Internet has had the ability, more than any other existing media, to put people in touch with each other. According to Campbell et al., (2013), the first experience of social networking was My Space in 2003; the users for the first time could fully customize their profile and interact with their friends. However, was Facebook in 2004 that revolutionized the philosophy behind social media, used not only as

platforms to know new people but also to create interaction and exchanges of opinions among them. Everyone has a network of people and Facebook allowed, through the creation of a connection with personal or professional contacts on the web, sharing with them different contents (photos, videos, articles, web pages...). To have an idea of how was quick and dizzying the growth of social media, according to the statistics elaborated by the Internet World Stats (2042) from 2000 to March 2014, there was a growth of Internet users of 706,8%. Furthermore, today there are 2.2 billion Internet users online around the world, compared to a world population of 7 billion. These data demonstrate how rapid can be the evolution of social media and how the imminent future in digital marketing can change drastically and with it the new forms by which engaging customers.

The large impact on profitability in customer retention rates was showed in the study of Reichheld and Sasser in 1990 (cited in Mc Donald, Wilson 2002). According to the authors, with the passing of the years, the marketing environment has focused more is attention on the way of managing the customer relationship in the long term period in relation to the increasing of the sales.

For the marketers, the concept of Customer Relationship Management (CRM), does not have yet a clear and precise definition, because the concept is used for a wide range of activities in the business environment (Harris, 2009). For some researchers CRM is the link between technology tools, marketing and customer, instead, for others, it is a bridge between IT, sales and service functions. According to Mc Donald and Wilsom (2002, p. 37) the customer relationship management “comprises the organization, processes and system through which an organization manages its relationships with its customers”. More specifically, CRM involves acquisitions, analysis and use of knowledge about customers in order to sell more goods or services and to do it more efficiently” (Bose, 2002, p.1). The particularity of the CRM models can be identified in their long-term goals and ability to build a marketing relationship with the company’s customer. The use of these models aims to build a long-term relationship between the business and the customers (Godin, 1999). In fact, as argued by Grönroos (1996 cited in Sinh p.86), the construction of relationships with customers is essential and represents a strong change in the marketing era towards the era of customer relationship marketing management.

Today we are in front of a substantial change in the CRM world, which is evolving in different forms that take the name of Social CRM. Digitisation has provided new opportunities to develop new ways of communications with a variety of audience. Social media have reported large increases since the advent of MySpace and Facebook. Facebook is the first worldwide social network with a utilization rate close to six hours per person per month, five hours more than MySpace's use rate (Grove 2010 cited in Campbell, Anistal I, Anistal M, 2013 p. 44). The new form of CRM has been defined by Guenberg (2009) as: "a philosophy and a business strategy supported by a technology platform, business rules, workflow processes and social characteristics, designed to engage the customer in a collaborative conversation in order to provide a mutually beneficial value in a trusted and transparent business environment" (Paul Guenberg 2009). The main aim of the Social CRM concept is to build an intimate relationship with customers and expand at the same time the customer network through previous customers. The Social CRM model is a logical evolution of the CRM model thanks to the diffusion of the social media platforms. The Social CRM combines the database system of the CRM concept with the more strictly engagement enhanced by the social media platforms (Greenberg 2009). Thanks to the social media, the evolution in the customer relationship field has brought businesses to deal with a new customer figure, which is different from the traditional one that is the social customer.

Throughout social media platforms, it is possible to predict the customer's needs and they can help the CRM sector of the business to find out the companies opportunities and to drive word of mouth (Beharam, SabbirRahman, 2012, p.272). Using the customer relationship management in today's reality can be a key of success for the company if combined and modelled with the use of social media. In fact, as stated by Alexander Muk (2013 p.84) the emergence of social media redesigned the entire world of digital media by creating new platforms for online marketing and new ways for brands to reach consumers. The brands, through blogging and social media, engage more and more customers by interacting with them in person and sharing content. The content's optimization of the various brands on social media platforms as highlighted by Lipsman, et al (2012 p. 41) can be useful to reach consumers in strategic ways.

1.2 RESEARCH AREA, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this study is analyse the advances in the Social Customer Relationship Management area, and selectively apply the practices to the case company, an advertisement company based in Dublin (Well Clever). The research aims to propose to the company a workable operations model based on the social customer relationship management approach to gain competitive advantage towards its competitors. Therefore, the research question for this dissertation can be structured as follows:

- ***How concepts of Social Customer Relationship Management can be applied to Well Clever to improve its customer relationship approach?***

Answering to the above primary question, imply the formulation and the solution of different and correlated research objectives that allowed the researcher formulating a comprehensive explanation to the main research question:

I. Analyse the customer relationship tools used by Well Clever;

In order to have a wide overview of the customer relationship management strategy used by the case company it is essential to analyse which tools are mainly adopted to build a relationship with the company's clients.

II. Collect the feedback from users of the current customer relationship tools used by the company;

In order to a have a different point of view of the customer relationship software used by Well Clever, and understand what the key strengths and weaknesses are of the tools used.

III. Research how Well Clever is managing its social media channels and how the company is engaging with its potential client;

The aim of this objective is to discover which are the social media platforms used by the case company, and how they can be integrated into a new social customer relationship management strategy.

IV. Evaluate how Well Clever can improve its customer relationship strategy throughout a proper Social Customer Relationship Management approach;

In order to evaluate how Well Clever can improve its customer relationship management strategy is important analyse what are the social CRM strategies for a B2B organization as the case company.

Resolving and developing all these research objectives it will enable me to formulate a correct and suitable proposal for the company, with the aim to provide clear guideline to build a solid and proper social customer relationship management approach.

1.3 SUITABILITY OF THE RESEARCH:

As stated by Saunders et al (2009), the choice of the dissertation topic has to be taken by someone that is capable to work in the chosen area and is excited to explore this area of study to improve his skills or stimulate his imagination, having at the same time a genuine interest in the topic.

1.3.1 Academic Background

The researcher has different years of experience in the marketing sector. To shape better his knowledge in this area, he is attending a MBA course at Dublin Business School in the marketing stream. He discovered his strong passion for the marketing and customer management field thanks to a previous work experience in the digital marketing field at the International Digital Service Centre. He was able to enrol himself in Master's Degree abroad thanks to a scholarship won from European Union in partnership with his region Apulia.

Previously he got a bachelor degree in Political Science and a Master's Degree in Administration Science at the University of Bari "Aldo Moro", in Italy.

1.3.2 Professional Background

My previous jobs as intern at the International Digital Service Centre in Dublin has reaffirmed my interest in this field of work and helped me to develop an ability to communicate with the customers with enthusiasm. I have dealt with online research into digital media companies in EMEA, I managed Social Media blogs, developing the company's market place. This experience enabled me to improve my leadership skills and increase my awareness of the dynamics of small and medium-sized businesses.

1.3.3 Contribution of the Research

This research aims to analyse the advances in the Social Customer Relationship Management area, and selectively apply the practices to the case company, an advertisement company based in Dublin. The research aims to propose for an advertisement company based in Dublin, which has already a previous CRM system, a workable operations model with the new social relationship management. I am going to present a proposal for social CRM to the case company, which is formulated in relation to the feedback got from three different stakeholders of the company, additionally supported by qualitative feedback from different Social CRM strategies adopted by other two case companies.

The dissertation topic subject is very important for the researcher because he aims to work in the customer relationship management sector. Through this dissertation, the researcher intends to create a real value for his curriculum vitae. The researcher will try to put in practice his 5 years background in marketing and management to provide a dissertation of master's degree level as relevant and interesting as possible.

1.4 RECIPIENTS OF THE RESEARCH:

The main recipients for this research include:

- I. Dublin Business School;
- II. Dr. Chantal Ladias: Thesis supervisor;
- III. The researcher (Marco Ignazio Cirillo) full time MBA student at Dublin Business School.

The secondary recipients for this research are:

- I. Well Clever (Case Company);
- II. John O'Connor (Well Clever CEO)
- III. Nênci Obregon (Well Clever Sales and Business Development Coordinator)
- IV. Verónica Sáez (Well Clever Business Development)

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN:

The research design is articulated in two main parts. The first one is based on theories and literature analysis, which aims to build, through a detailed literature review on the customer relationship management field and the new relation with the social media, the conceptual background frames to develop the research objectives of the thesis. The second part of the dissertation is focused on the data collection and analysis built thanks to the feedback received from three interviews done with three stakeholders of the case company (Well Clever), selected as the main data source to reach and build the final proposal.

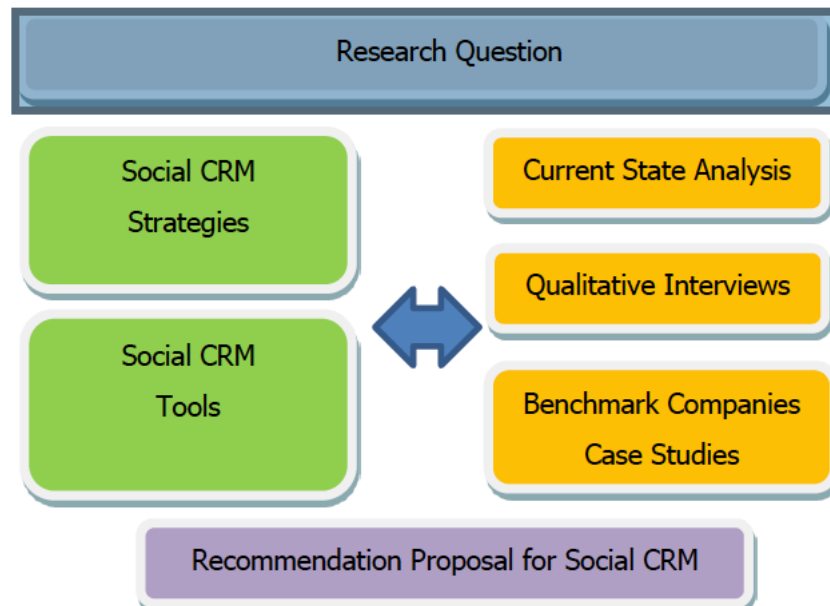


Figure 1: Research Design

The organisation of the dissertation will be structured as follows:

- *Chapter 1:* Overall introduction of the dissertation with a brief background of the topic research. It includes the presentation to the reader of the case company. Furthermore, there will be an anticipation of some parts of the research methodology such as the research area, the research question and objectives to allow the reader understanding the path that the dissertation will follow.

- *Chapter 2: Literature Review* based on the customer relationship management theories. This section includes theories related to the new role of social media tools in helping businesses to reach better the target audience.
- *Chapter 3: Research Methodology*, in which the researcher explains how he is going to carry out the research in order to answer his research questions and satisfy the selected research objectives.
- *Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings*, based on the qualitative analysis carried out from the interviews done with three stakeholders of the case company.
- *Chapter 5: Building a Social CRM proposal* for the case company, the researcher will set up a social CRM strategy that will help the case company to implement its CRM system to reach better its customer, building a strongest linkage with them.
- *Chapter 6: Discussion of the findings*, the researcher will go through all the data collected in this dissertation, in order to evaluate the social CRM strategy proposal.
- *Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations*, the researcher will focus on the final recommendations drawing his conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

The section presents an overview of the fundamental change happened in the relationship management fields due to the technological revolution that hit the marketing scenario. The researcher, in this literature review section, will go through the CRM concept analysing its strengths and weaknesses and its strategies and implementation model. After that, the researcher will focus the attention on the new link between brand and customer created throughout the social media platforms. This passage is necessary to fully understand the development of the classical CRM model in a new a modern social CRM. In the final part of this chapter the researcher will examine two case company study that have adopted for their businesses social CRM strategies, to collect benchmark to use for the dissertation case company Well Clever.

2.2 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT:

2.2.1 Customer Relationship Management Overview

In the early 1980, in the marketing scenario started to appear the concept of Relationship Management as model that aimed to work closer with the customer. The businesses started to understand that building a relationship with their customers, could increase the value of the sales and generate more revenue for the company. Levit, in 1983, was one of the first marketers to introduce the concept of Relationship Management. This concept started to spread quickly among marketers, and became a successful model to follow by the businesses (Peelen, 2005). However, some business preferred not use the RM as model for its lack in

revenue in a short-term period and the excessive cost of maintenance of huge database with all the information of the company's customer. In the last decade with the rapid introduction of the new technology, the concept of Relationship management was re-thought with a new name Customer Relationship Management (Xu, Yen et al, 2002).

The concept of Customer Relationship Management (CRM), has not yet for the marketers a clear and precise definition, this because the concept is used for a wide range of activity in the business environment when there is a relation with the customer (Harris, 2009). For some researchers the CRM is the link between technology tools, marketing and customer; for others instead a bridge between IT, sales and service function. According to Anderson and Kerr (2002), the customer relationship management concept can be defined as particular approach to create, maintain and develop a relationship with the customer. As stated by Bose (2002, p.1) the CRM is an integration of technologies and business processes used to satisfy needs of the customer during any given interaction.

More specifically, CRM involves acquisitions, analysis and use of knowledge about customers in order to sell more goods or services and to do it more efficiently" (Bose, 2002, p.1). The particularity of the CRM models can be identified in his long-term goal and in its ability to build a marketing relationship with the company's customer. The use of this model aims to build a long-term relationship between the business and the customer (Godin, 1999). In fact, according to Grönroos (1996 cited in Sinh p.86) the construction of relationships with customers is becoming essential, representing a strong change in the marketing era towards the era of customer relationship marketing management. Gummesson (2002, p. 3) defines the relationship marketing as follows: "Relationship marketing is marketing based on interaction within networks of relationship." The main aim of the relationship marketing is to focus the attention on long-term relationship with its customer spread in different transaction. This long-term relationship aims to reach the customer satisfaction that will set the base for a long-term relationship with mutual benefits. (Grönroos 1996, cited in Sinh p.86). In the last decades, the IT sector has introduced new infrastructure in our economies creating new challenges and way of communication for marketers. These new channels of communication and new way to build relationship represent for the marketers a strong opportunity to engage with their customers creating new models to interact with them. The web panorama is becoming today "a market where you buy and sell, and an arena for experience and social

contact.” (Gummesson, 2009, p.103). The relationship marketing and the customer relationship management play an important role in this new relationship scenario.

2.2.2 Customer Relationship Management Strategies and Implementations

A customer relationship management approach to work properly in a business needs a proper strategy and implementation process. Payne and Frow (2006) have designed a basic CRM strategy that can be considered as the main implementation process to follow for a company to create an own person CRM approach, based on its nature and exigencies.

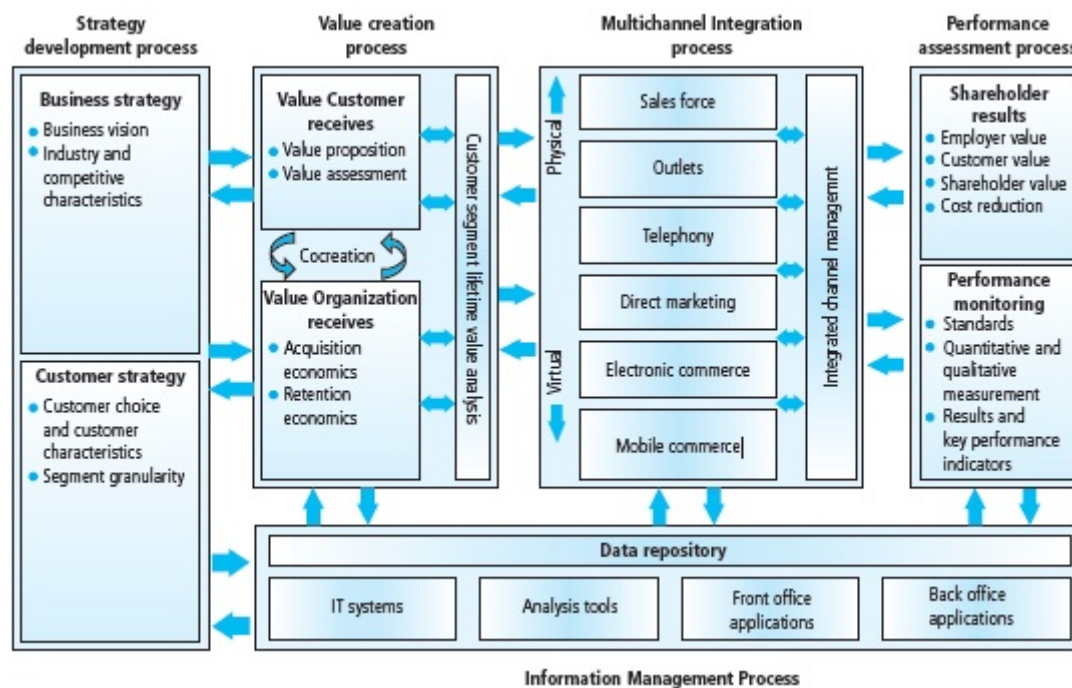


Figure 2: CRM strategy model

Source: Payne and Frow (2006)

The figure 2 above shows the CRM strategy model developed by Payne and Frow (2006). Throughout a detailed observation of the Fig 2 it is possible identify four critical components: CRM readiness assessment, CRM change management, CRM project management and employee engagement. As stated by Payne and Frown (2006), to get the maximum results from this CRM strategy the critical four components identified above have to be integrated

with five core CRM processes:

- *Strategy development*: This stage consists in the planning of the company's business strategy. It is important in fact for the organization set up a vision and a mission that it aims to achieve. After this point the company has to put in place a SWOT analysis to evaluate what are the potential threats and opportunities from the external environment and the strengths and weaknesses that own itself. Finally the businesses can proceed to analyse its own client segment to adopt the best strategy for its consumers.
- Value creation process: The process aims to create a value towards the relation between businesses and clients and vice versa. The mean to acquire this value creation is the IT software that converts the analytical data into measurable data for the company. Payne and Frown (2006) have identified three core elements that are necessary to reach a value creation process: definition of the potential value from the company to the clients; definition of the value that the company can provide to the organization; finally throughout the value correlation between company and client, maximization of the lifetime value of the targeted customer.
- Multi-channel integration process: This stage implies the managing by the organization of every touch points available between them and the clients. Could be defined as touch points every physical and virtual tools and actions put in place by the organization such as: personal selling, call centre, mail, text messages (Payne and Frow, 2005, p.172). The multi-channel integration process aims to build throughout different communication vehicles a stronger relationship with the potential client but at the same time collect information and relevant data on customers to apply in the future the best approach for that targeted segment.
- Information management process: The process involves the collection of data from different customer's touch point with the aim to generate valuable insights data for better sales and marketing approach. The main element of the information management processes are represented by:

1. Data repository: phase in which all the customers' information are stocked and capable of data analysis
 2. IT systems: is related to the hardware and software used by the organization.
 3. Analytical tools: that allow the selection of relevant data from the general data collected previously to gain valuable information and insight about the customer.
 4. Front office and back office applications: The first applications consist in the IT tools used by the businesses to support direct interaction with the clients. The second instead are applications that help to manage internal activities such as supplier's relationship, financial processes and so on. (Payne and Frow 2006).
- Performance assessment process: The final phase allows assessing the success or failure of the company's objective. It is important for the organization that all the objectives are met and at the same time collect valuable key measures that can improve new strategy in the future to get better results.

2.2.3 Customer Relationship Management Strengths and Limitations

The aim of the customer relationship management system is to generate for the company a broadly overview of the customers to understand their needs. In fact through the CRM model is possible make forecast of the customer necessity, and elaborate consumer trends to anticipate the customer demands. (Xu and Yen et al, 2002). In the sense, the CRM model can be used as tools to create a cross-functional cooperation between the various marketing tools and the different department of a company, to achieve the unique goal to generate revenue for the company (Edwards 2007).

However, as highlighted by H.Kale (2004) a total commitment towards the Customer Relationship Management model could generate a failure for the company goals. The failure can be caused from different elements such as:

- Non considering customer lifetime value

- Lack of management support
- Undervaluing data analysis
- Rigid business process
- Loss of customers real demand

To avoid the failure the company according to Strategic Direction 2002 has to interact with the customer and not just follow the forecast generated by the use of CRM model. The balance between the analytic tools to analyse the customer needs and the genuine interaction and dialogue between company and customer is the key to succeed with the CRM model.

The CRM model can be divided into three areas of actions: Operational, Collaborative and Analytical (Metagroup 2007). The collaborative CRM is focused in all the interactions that the company has with its customers, from text, data, to video, chat, email. The tool that allows managing all this form of interaction C2B and B2C is the collaborative CRM. The operation CRM dealt with customer transaction, including campaign execution and traditional customer support. Finally, the analytical CRM is the element that generates insight about customers in order to classify the different customer behaviours and optimize the collaborative and operational elements of the CRM model.

In order to evaluate the success of the CRM system inside a company, there are two different performance measurements. The first one is the lifetime value of the customer and the second one is the share of customer. The lifetime value aims to quantify how much the client worth for the company, and understand which customer is more valuable for the customer than others. The share of customer aims to understand what is the potential value of a particular customer, and if it is under or over the customer lifetime value. (Godin 1999, p.117)

Through this analysis, it is possible having a general overview on the CRM system, understanding its strengths and weaknesses. As stated before, the company to gain competitive advantage towards its competitors and increase its value, should balance the use of the CRM system through a real interaction with its customers, to understand with different prospective the customers' demands. The CRM system facilitates also the forecasting of the market trends and the identification of the clients that are more valuable for the business.

2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA LINK BETWEEN BRAND AND CUSTOMER:

2.3.1 The new relation between brand and social media

The recent evolution of new technology and new communication channels have led the marketers to discover new communications tools to engage with the customers, enabling them to communicate with new target audiences. According to Muk (2013 p.84), the emergence of social media redesigned the entire world of digital media by creating new platforms for online marketing and new ways for brands to reach consumers. The brands through blogging and social media engage more and more customers by interacting with them in person and sharing content. The content's optimization of the various brands on social media platforms as highlighted by Lipsman, et al (2012 p. 41) can be useful to reach consumers in strategic ways.

Examples may be represented by the sharing of content from brand to consumer; the content re- shared by connections and social marketing tools such as those found on Facebook "Sponsored Stories" advertising unit. A research conducted by ComScore (October 2011, cited in Shaw, 2012) showed that Facebook users spend 49% of their time on news feed and profile pages. As highlighted by Solis (2010 Pag.82) "activity feeds and life stream represent a new publishing medium for the brand". In fact, the News Feeds are considered in the context of social network, the first place in which the content of the brands are consumed. These new tools are projected to share short updates, whether you are publishing new information, content or media into a unique place where people can read, respond, interact not only each other but also with the brand. Facebook's news feed, combined with the new Facebook connect infrastructure is setting the stage for a global conversation platform that may go unrivalled. Facebook is already hosting channelled conversations sourced from twitter, friendfeed, and many other notable communities. According to Haven (2007): "the growth in social media activity related to peer and friend recommendations, user generated content, and product reviews are increasingly playing a central role in consumer-brand engagement." Lipsman, et al. (2012 p. 42) identify for the brand content on Facebook platform, two types of potential audience. The first type is represented by the "former" that can be defined the fans of the brand, while the second type of potential audience is represented by the "latter", that can be identified as the friend of the fans themselves.

Therefore, when a brand shares its content with their fans, indirectly also the friends of the fans are exposed to the attention of the shared content. Analysis by Media metrix (May 2011, cited in Shaw 2012) Facebook has approximately 160 million visitors per month, of which the majority visit the site daily. Compared with other platforms of social networking site Facebook, is nowadays the most activity social media, in fact another research conducted by (comScore, October 2011 cited in Shaw, 2012) demonstrates that 3 in 4 minutes on social networking sites are spent on Facebook. The success of Facebook as a strategic social platform for the brand derives as stated by Lipsman, et al. (2012 p. 41) from several factors that have attracted new consumers. One of them is the original use of the "like". Through the "like" in fact, the user can become a fan of the brand and express in this way interest on it, with the opportunity to share opinions on the brand image. Furthermore, the “like” process encourages the comparison of point of views between a brand and another, getting offers and deals daily as well. Many are the brands that crowd the landscape of Facebook, including big names like Coca Cola, Starbucks, Disney, who each have more than 20 million fans. ComScore 2012 (cited in Shaw, 2012) describes what the social media process is in order to engage with customers. Customer engagement is defined as active interactions with a firm, with prospects and with other customers by Kumar et al (2010 p. 297). Three simple steps to engage costumer on social media and reach the max audience compose this process:

1. The “Cut through” phase. It consists in getting fans, delivering brand messages and reaching fans in news feed;
2. The “Engagement” phase. At this stage, fans may start talking about newsfeed content;
3. The “Amplification” phase. This represent the moment in which news feed content should be disseminated to friends;
4. The “ROI” phase. The last step of the process is based on the achievement of the main goals, which is the engagement with customers with success.

The rising empowerment for customers in this new media scenario is changing the marketing landscape and it drives companies to start a conversation with them. In fact, according to Cooke and Buckley, (2008) social media will become a catalyst for brand driving the consumer to 'pet talk' via a link on Facebook, a pin on Pinterest, a video on YouTube, or tweet about Twitter.” Nowadays, social media assist and strengthen the initiative and action of the brands providing an incredible collection of consumer data. The concept of customer

engagement highlights the need to focus the brand attention on building personal two-way relationship with their target audience despite the past.

2.3.2 The modern social Customer eco-system

The figure of the customer has been changeable in the last decades, influenced by internal forces (customer behaviour) and external factor (technological revolution). According to Greenberg (2008) the people around the 1960s-1980s had no a real control of the information and knowledge that they could be acquired throughout media and public information channel nowadays. In fact during 1960s-1980s the marketing environment, has experienced the Fordist socio-economic system. It is based on mass production and mass consumption concept, after this decade the marketing experience is totally changed towards a new model characterized by flexibility, activity and innovative market with rapid shift in relation to the customer need (Cornelissen, 2001, p.486). As highlighted by Cornelissen (2001, p.484), this change represents a strong passage from a marketing model form focused on mass communication model with strong pressure on the traditional media in everyday life, to a new one more individualistically oriented with an increasing fragmentation and segmentation of the target audience. The drastic technology revolution has led the marketers to move toward a segmented marketing characterized by the use of new communication channels different from the traditional one (Kotler and Armstrong, cited in Lee and Park, 2007, p. 224). Thanks to these new communications channels the marketers can gather mass information from the customers and use it to engage with them at the best (Lee and Park, 2007, p.224).

This new marketing scenario, represented by the strong shift from mass consumption marketing to a targeted is a strong challenge for the marketers. In fact, the new technology led not only the marketers to receive more information about their customers, but also this new channels represent for the customer a new way to receive more information about the brand and the product. This aspect hides behind itself also a negative side. In fact, this waterfall of information the customer every day receives can represent for him confusion and a distortion of brand image. “This unexpected development is due to the fact that the marketers tend to neglect to integrate and coordinate these various messages and communication channels”

(Lee and Park, 2007, p.224). In relation to this point, in fact as highlighted by the authors the need for a systematic integration of the communications channels is becoming a practically pressing problem that urge be solved, to improve the customer experience with the communications marketing tools, and the IMC if well applied can represent the solution for this problem. Considering, the different and multidimensions channels in which the concept of IMC works, Cathey and Shumann (1996, cited in Lee and Park, 2007 p.225) have identified three important aspects as the most important elements related to the IMC concept: “*integration of messages and media*”, “*assessment of impact*” and “*audience orientation*”. Through the identification of these three important aspects, they want underline the importance of the coordination messages through media channels to create the best experience for the customer in different stage of buying process. The vision proposed by Cathey and Shuman is focused on the integration of channels that has to be oriented towards the customers and not from the perspective of the advertising agency. Today, according to Lehtinen, (2011) it is possible identify the customer as social customer that has a full control of the business ecosystem due to the wide spread of information related to the development of the Internet and social media platforms. Nowadays the customers are not anymore passive actors but they play a primarily role in the marketing organization decisions (Greenberg 2010). As shown by figure number 3, in 21th century there are different types of customer in relation to the behaviour:

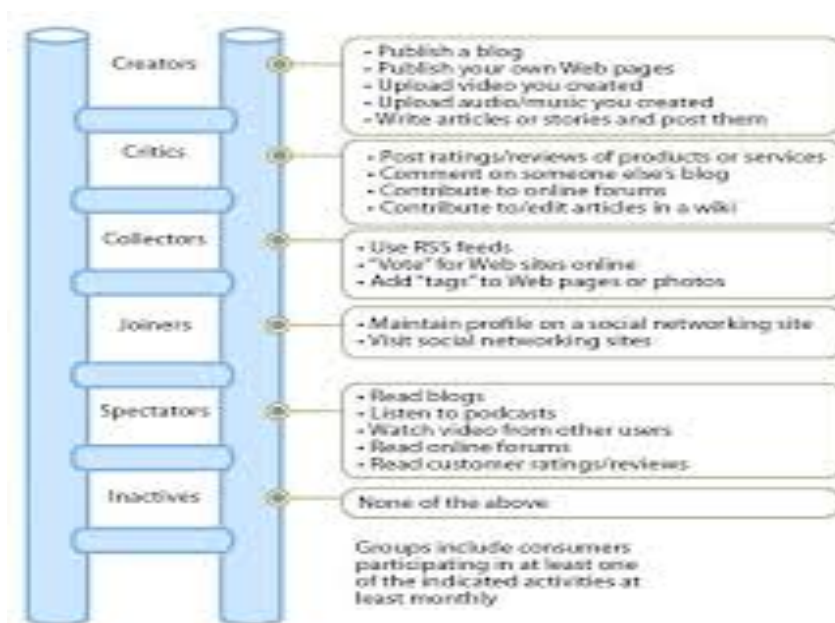


Figure 3: Customer Behaviour

Source: (Tuten et al 2013)

Throughout the picture above is possible understand how far the customer behaviour is changed from a businesses prospective, the clients are no longer the object of a sale but are the direct subject of the businesses marketing and sales experience (Greenberg 2010).

2.4 SOCIAL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT:

2.4.1 Social customer relationship management overview

The rapid evolution of the post-modern society has affected the processes correlated to the perception of a commercial product. This changing is evident through Internet, where users collaborate to create new fashions and trends of thought and where the unconventional marketing sinking part of their roots. Digitisation has provided new opportunities to develop new ways of communications with a variety of audience. Social media have reported large increases since the advent of MySpace and Facebook. Facebook is the first worldwide social network with a utilization rate close to six hours per person per month, five hours more than MySpace's use rate (Grove 2010 cited in Campbell, Anistal I, Anistal M, 2013 p. 44). The digital media introduction in the world of the communications was totally revolutionized. It has been changed the way in which the message is delivered, the social media words have introduced algorithms and automat system for managing connections redesigning the entire communications scenario. This transformation represented a strong challenge for media companies and marketers, because the digitization of media constituted a new stage in the communication history. The element brought by this digitalization are various and different touching a multitude aspect of the previous communications model. The networked information economy is changed, modifying the format from print message to digital one, and the way in which express the content that is digital as well (Mulhern, 2009, p. 92). The digital networked media, differently from the mass communication, enables making:

- Infinite production sharing;
- Modularity content;
- Consumer network;
- User-Control and content production;
- Customized content;
- Information stream;

This spread of the social media and new technology has led in the customer relationship field to a shift from CRM model to a new Social CRM concept. According to Gartner (2010) the

Social CRM concept can be defined as follows: “Social CRM is a strategy for harnessing communities to support customers and prospects, as well as sales, marketing and customer service organizations, along with a purposeful and mutually beneficial business process.” (Gartner 2010 p. 84).

The main aim of the Social CRM concept is to build an intimate relationship with its customers and expand at the same time the customer network through previous customer. The Social CRM model is a logical evolution of the CRM model thanks to diffusion of the social media platform. The Social CRM combines the database system of the CRM concept with the more strictly engagement enhanced by the social media platforms (Greenberg 2009). This evolution in the customer relationship field thanks to the social media has brought businesses to deal with a new customer figure different from the traditional one: the social customer. The traditional customer is the individual that buys products in relation to the discount and great deal, basing its purchase logic on the relation between product and price. According to the DEIW study (2008), 70% of consumers have the experience of using social media to get information on a product, brand or a company. This data has shown the important shift from in the interaction between the customers a company. In fact, in the first moment the dialogue was B2C but today is C2C.

2.4.2 Social Customer Relationship Management Tools and Strategies

The social CRM concept is workable for the company using different tools. The aims of these tools is to provide for the business a communication pipelines with the customer to create regularly an interaction with them. There are different tools that can be applied on the social CRM scenario, such as blogs, social networks to shared bookmarking to video podcasts.

- Blogs are one of the most mature form of social media tools. The blog can be defined as web based journal (Greenberg 2009). Typically is used by the companies to reach out customers, the aims is to create awareness through the sharing of information and opinions and at the same time start a discussion with them. (Greenberg 2009).
- Social Search is new concept of internal search introduced with the arrival of the social media. The difference between social search and Internet search can be identified in the combination of corporate structured data with external unstructured data such as profile information from Facebook or customer feedback to external forums. (Greenberg 2009).
- Podcasts that represent for a brand a unique resource to share content on-line, the Poadcast can be defined as an audio file that uses RSS (Really Simple Syndication) to distribute the broadcast to subscribers or allow them to download it. Podcasts provide a truly viable platform for content delivery and a real opportunity for unique branding.

The company to achieve at the best its interaction with the customer should use a combination of tools to target a wide range with the customer and engage with them in different ways.

From a strategic point of view, the social CRM model presents different choices that are related to the needs of the company. One the most workable strategy is provided by Altimeter (2010) throughout a 5M's process that deploys a customer insight program.

The “5M’s” of Social CRM: Baseline Processes

	Why It's Important	Resources and Requirements	What they don't always tell you	Vendors to watch
Monitoring	Provides listening capabilities to filter out noise from the social sphere. Encapsulate both metrics and measurement. Extract insights making measurement more effective.	Brand monitoring software that monitors and scrapes the social web, has team-based workflows and connects to existing CRM databases.	Use tightly scoped keywords to define the search parameters. Yet don't go too tight or you miss key opportunities – going too wide results in too much noise.	Biz360, Buzzmetrics (Nielsen), Cymfony, Radian6, SAS Institute, Scoutlabs, Visible Technologies
Mapping	Mapping solutions identify relationships. Due to lack of single identity, companies must link social profiles to customer records to provide a holistic experience.	First, find existing public profiles to match, like LinkedIn and Google profiles. Additional database fields must be created that match customer records to social profiles.	The trick is to get them to map their profiles for you. Entice them with rewards, better service, and special deals in an opt-in manner	Facebook (profiles), Gigya, Google (profiles), OpenID, SalesView, Spredfast, Sprinklr
Management	Management systems bring CRM processes to life. Without a purpose, social data is unactionable. Business rules and processes are needed to triage the right information to the right teams in real-time.	Tie back the social world and channels to existing innovation, marketing, sales, support and service processes. Triage profiles to create prioritization frameworks.	Companies must develop a crises plan for the worst possible scenarios and conduct internal fire drills. Expect the worst to happen on Friday afternoons when management is not available.	Infor, KANA, Oracle, RightNow Technologies, SAP, SAS, SugarCRM
Middleware	Middleware technologies glue the social world to the enterprise. Social CRM connects to nearly every customer facing system. Data will have to seamlessly flow between systems, and advanced dashboards that provide intelligence.	Apply technologies such as complex event processing, business process management, business rules, workflows, data integration, and process orchestration among disparate systems.	Develop business rules based on your unique processes. They will include: workflows, complex event processing, and enablement technologies to respond.	Boomi, D&B Purisma, IBM, Informatica, Oracle, Pervasive, Progress Software, SAS DataFlux, SOA Software, Software AG, TIBCO
Measurement	What you can't measure you can't improve, therefore organizations must be able to benchmark what's been done.	Advanced dashboards that provide intelligence. Measure based on business objective like improved satisfaction, spread of message.	Rely on data to provide benchmarks, trending, prediction, and sentiment. Bring the insight into actionable state.	IBM Cognos, Information Builders, Microsoft, Oracle Hyperion QlikView, SAP Business Objects, SAS Institute

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Figure 4: The “5M’s” Social CRM baseline processes

Source: Altimeter 2010,p.10

The figure above shows a new customer approach for the businesses not only focused on the management of the clients but also on starting a collaborative dialogue to add value on the customer insight. This new strategy proposed by Altimeter (2010) is based on a reactive approach that the company should have towards the client. The Social CRM process according to Altimeter (2010), starts with the listening action, the company has to listen carefully the needs of their customers, capturing only the essential information relevant for future

sales and eliminating the rest of the noise. Through this process, the company not only will be able to collect relevant information from the clients but also will be able to forecast their sales behaviour.

As observed before in the CRM strategies and implementation, also here the Social CRM process closes with the phase of measurement. It is important in fact for the businesses evaluate their actions and measure the success. In fact, without a proper measure the company will not be able to improve its results in the future.

2.4.3 Social CRM players

Throughout a detailed overview of the Social CRM panorama published by Gartner Group, one of the world’s leading information technology, research and advisory company, it is possible identify the major social CRM players in the market.

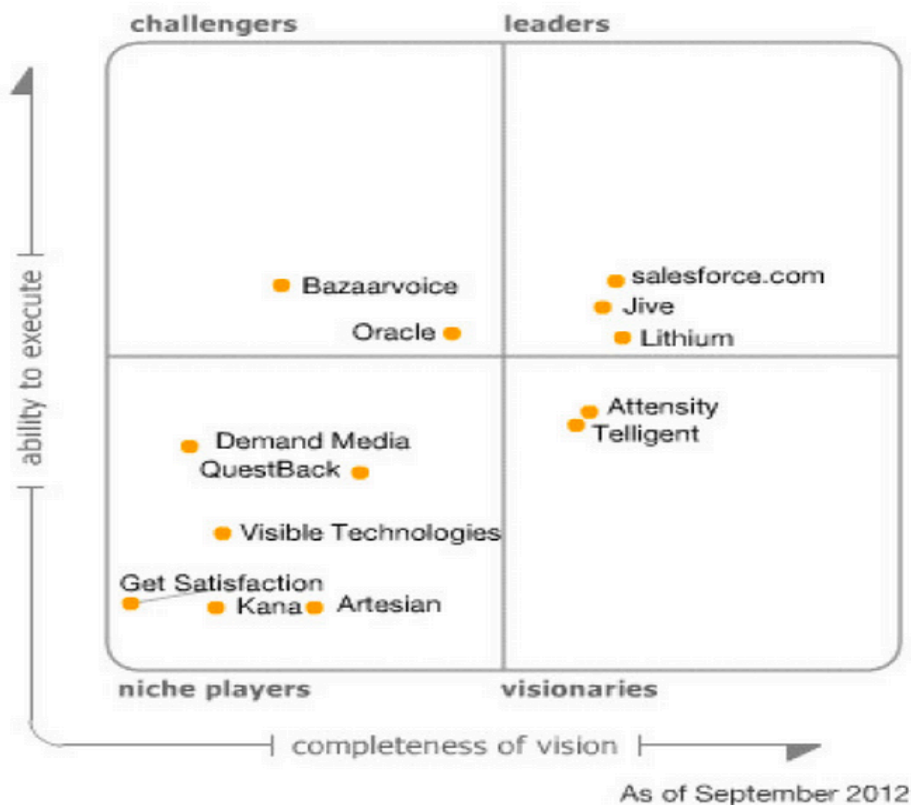


Figure 5: Gartner Group Magic Quadrant
Source: Gartner 2012

The figure 5 above represents the Gartner Magic Quadrants that provides a graphical positioning of the major key players of social CRM divided in relation to the type of technology support provided. In last year, according to Gartner, (2012) there was a strong increase in using social CRM software by the companies, this due to the increasing competitiveness between the business and the wide range of software solution offered by the IT market.

As illustrated in the (figure 5) the quadrant presents four main area (Leaders, Challengers, Visionaries and Niche players) of IT software behaviour valuated by the ability to execute operations and have a wide completeness of the vision on the social market.

As stated by Gartner Group (2012) in its report, the main differences between the four IT software quadrant attributions are related to their behaviour and performance in the actual social markets. The main differences between the four quadrant's areas are as follows:

- **Leaders:** The leaders are the social CRM software such as (Salesforce.com, Lithium and Jive), that provide benefits for both parties on the social media scenario, company and community. From the company point of view these software provide an excellent ROI and strong support on the key performance indicators (KPI's), from a community point of view these software convince the users to get something valuable joining the conversation on the community.
- **Challengers:** The challengers are the vendors such as Oracle and Bazaarvoice that have strong products but have not developed yet a successful marketing strategy and functional service for the company.
- **Visionaries:** This segment is represented by the software such as Telligent and Attensit that have strong innovation features especially in their architecture and lightweight integration but they have not developed yet strong benefits for the company and community on the social panorama.
- **Niche players:** The Niche Players are represented by a multitude of software like Kana, Artesian and so on. That provide useful service evolving their product capabilities. At the same time they have some lack on the product road maps, or lack of innovative growth strategy.

2.5 PRACTICE CASE COMPANY:

2.5.1 Introduction

In this chapter after, an accurate literature review on the CRM and social CRM concept and their strategies and implementation model, the researcher described some practices as social CRM strategy useful to improve the business performance and increase sales on the market. The two case studies that the researcher has analysed concern Procter and Gamble and Dell Company.

2.5.2 Procter and Gamble:

The company Procter and Gamble well known as P&G is an American multinational consumers goods company. In 2005, P&G launched inside their own business a new project called Social Media Lab. This program was set to develop new dynamics of customer relationship related to the new marketing tools represented by the social media platforms. The company's program got good result developing a high level of guidelines by which base the new Social CRM strategies of the company. In the (figure 6) below are represented the P&G social guidelines emerged from their company's program:

Objective	Example
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop a sounding board – private community- Monitor buzz for ongoing assessment of trends and perceptions [buzzmetrics]
Talking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enable fans to spread message [widgets, embeds]- Continually communicate directly with consumers and monitor feedback [blogs]
Energizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Designate fans to lead others – brand ambassadors- Enable reviews, ratings to harness fans as sales
Supporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enable customers to help each other [wikis, community]- Enable customers to build solutions together
Embracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enable customer ideas in public setting- Engage in co-creation of products and services

Figure 6: Basic social CRM framework of P&G

Source: Schulz 2008

As highlighted in figure number 6 listening represented the first start point to capture valuable conversation on the web and monitor trend and perception of the customers. This element represents a common point with the 5M's process described previously by the researcher. Based on the above guidelines, P&G has developed its social CRM strategy successfully. Its primary focus was understand the client's needs, collect data, create a relationship with, and throughout a final analysis forecast their sale anticipating their exigencies (Shultz 2008). In order to put in place these guidelines P&G implemented its social CRM strategies throughout concrete actions. In fact the company to understand the customer's needs stipulated a partnership with WebMD that is a website that provides valuable health information. The second step was modify the company messages from a holistic one to an interdependent message environment, spread its content throughout all its media channels. The following step for P&G was the use of an internal system to analyse the consumer reaction in relation to the comments posted for each brands. The different P&G's brands were focused on listening the client's needs engaging with them in different topic discussion area. For example Pantene was focused on listening consumer comments looking for "tips and tricks" on healthy hair. Finally, P&G started to encourage the conversation setting up a message refreshing process to develop more community engagements on its social media platforms. To reach this goal the company looks at conversation calendars such as World series in October and external events to know what topic their customer would be talking about. (Procter and Gamble, 2012). P&G throughout its new social CRM guidelines has combined accurate actions of communication social media channels with an innovative marketing strategies based on creating new and different touch points with its customer engaging with them and building a new company images.

2.5.3 Dell

Dell is a multinational IT company that develops and provides support and computers service. Dell is a B2B and B2C company as well, but from the B2B point of view, the company reached only in a second moment a successful social CRM strategy to target its business clients.

The aim of Dell in relation to its B2B relationship was to start building relationship and

providing in this way to the company new potential source of clients throughout the social media platforms. In relation to its goal, Dell set up two main objectives that would have guided its social CRM strategy. Firstly, the company had to choose the best social platform to monitor the activity of its clients, to collect information that Dell would have used for customer service, marketing and sales strategies. The second step was not only go over monitoring and analysis activities but also start discussions with their business partner engaging with them on the social media platforms. To achieve these objectives Dell started to monitor its client's activity on the social media platforms throughout the use of Radian6, a social media-monitoring tool to power the data collections process. The second step of Dell was set up a campaign "the Dell Trade Secrets" to facilitate the spread of suggestions and advices between the small business professionals. The first product introduced under this program was VostroV130 (Laptop for Businesses). Before the launch of this new product on the market, the company started to identify the most relevant influencers in IT and entrepreneurship area, around USA and United Kingdom. After the launch of the product the company encouraged the other businesses to share recommendations and encourage trial among others, furthermore Dell created different participations campaigns on Twitter and Facebook to increase the occasion to interact and engage with its clients. The outcome of the Dell strategy overtook the metrics objective established before the launch of the campaign by 547% for Facebook post, 8235% tweets and a total of digital impression by 250% (Zocalo, 2011).

Therefore, Dell throughout an excellent interaction between a good marketing strategies and a perfect use of the social media tools was able to bring success to the company and increase its small businesses portfolio in an innovative manner.

2.6 CONCLUSION:

After this literature review analysis it is possible underline the fundamental change happened into the relationship management fields due to the technological revolution involving the marketing scenario. The CRM model has to adapt itself into a new social CRM model linking with the new social media platforms present in the technological panorama. The use of the new link between brand and customer created throughout the social media platforms may be the key of success for the businesses to increase the client life time value. The two case study used by the researcher represent the practical adoption by the companies of a successful marketing strategy based on an effective social CRM strategy to increase the company's portfolio and consequently the brand's revenue.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 METHODOLOGY INTRODUCTION:

In the following chapter, the researcher will describe the structure of the research methodology that has been applied to research strategy, research design and data collection methods in order to build an accurate social CRM strategies to the case company. In detail the researcher, goes through the explanation and justification of the research philosophy chosen, the research approach used and the research strategy planned to produce at the end of the study. Furthermore, the researcher will describe the methods chosen to collect data and analyse them, and the ethical issues that he faced and the different solutions to handle them. Finally, at the end of this chapter will be presented a briefly explanation of the limitations of the methodology chosen for the research. The researcher in order to follow the most appropriate contest for his dissertation work has used the research onion of Saunders et al., (2009).

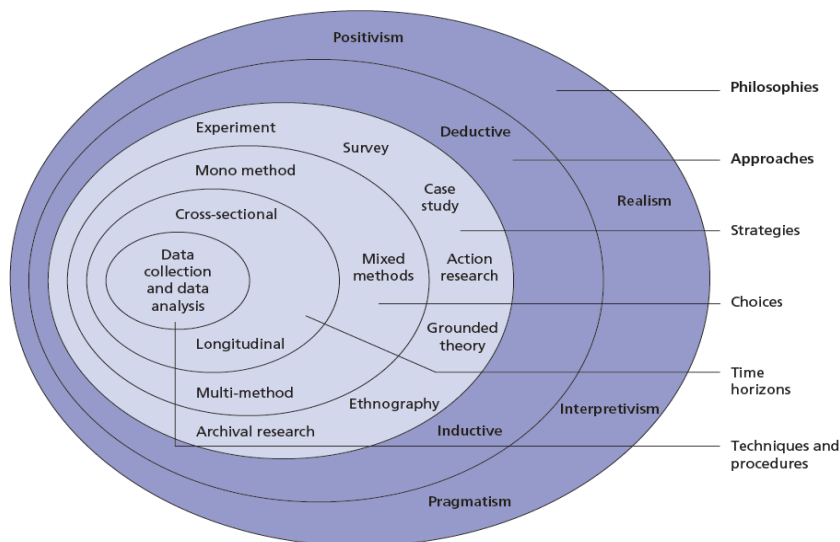


Fig 7: Research Onion

Source: Saunders et al, 2009, p.138.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN:

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

Looking at the first layer of the research onion (Fig. 7), there are four different philosophies categories: realism, positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism. In relation to this dissertation work the researcher has chosen a combination between realism and interpretivism. He has selected the realistic philosophy category because this type of research philosophy adopts a scientific approach to the knowledge, and the core of the realistic philosophy is based on concept that reality is considered the truth (Sanders et al., 2009, p. 114).

The interpretivism research philosophy has been chosen by the author, because the study is based on the analysis and observation of the CRM and social media panorama. According to the interpretivism research philosophy the social aspect is one of its core value, in fact, as stated by Saunders et al. (2009, p.116) “Interpretivism advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors”.

3.2.2 Research Approach

The second onion’s layer (Fig. 7) identifies two different types of research approach, one deductive and the other one inductive. An inductive research approach is suitable for this research, because the researcher is going to develop at the end of this research clear guidelines for the case company using specific observations. As highlighted by Saunder et al. (2009), the purpose of using an inductive research approach is the possibility to condense extensive and varied raw text data into a summary format, to establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings.

3.2.3 Research Strategies

As it is possible observe from the above figure 7, Saunders et al. (2009 p. 136) have identified various research strategies that can be selected: action research, grounded theory, surveys, case study, experiments, ethnography and archival research. The choice of the appropriate research strategy is essential for the researcher to address properly his research questions and objectives.

For the purpose of this thesis, a case study methodology was chosen. Given the choice of the research questions, the qualitative methodology is the most appropriate approach for my case study. In fact according to Creswell (2013), a qualitative methodology is more suitable for a case study than surveys or experiments when the research questions are asked with 'how' or 'why' in relation to a contemporary set of events over which the researcher has only a little control. The nature of the case study approach is to collect different data and sources and use them in a triangulation fashion (Yin, 2008) explaining in a clear way what happened. In this study, after analysing the theory through literature review, case selections are made along with the data collection protocol. The case company represents the focus of the study, but the researcher will analyse other two companies to collect benchmark case studies for this research. Furthermore, different sources of data will be used to ensure the validity of the thesis.

3.2.4 Case Selection

The company case study (Well Clever) is a business-to-business organization focused on the advertising technology industry. The researcher has chosen Well Clever as case company for his study throughout an accurate evaluation correlated to the main reason to find an ad-tech Company based in Dublin that was willing to undertake this work.

After the researcher has ensured the validity of the company for his work, evaluating the current CRM and social CRM, than the second step was to assess the availability of the company and the willingness to improve its current strategies going through a new marketing proposal in the near future.

3.2.5 Research choices

As highlighted by Saunders et al., (2009) there are three different kind of research methods that can be utilized: mono method, mixed methods, multi methods.

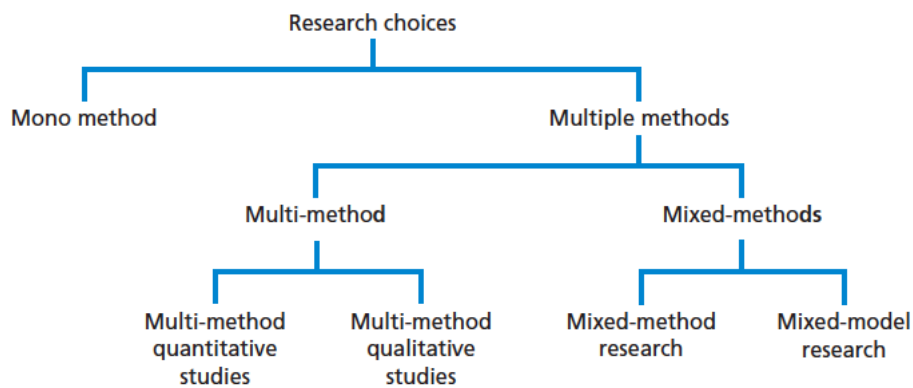


Figure 8: Research Choice

Source: Saunders et al., 2009, p.152.

For this dissertation the researcher has chosen to use a semi structured interview with a qualitative data research. At this proposal the multi method qualitative study is the most suited choice because the data collected can enhance the validity of the findings.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS:

The research aims to analyse the advances in the Social Customer Relationship Management area, and selectively applies the practices to the case company. The analysis will be based on two types of research methods. The primary method for this study was a self-administered questionnaire, with extra data collected by using archival research and observations, instead the secondary research will be based on the direct observation of the case company and analysis of other two other case company that implemented successful their strategy applying an effective social CRM approach to their companies.

3.3.1 Interviews

The interviews are one of the most important source of information, through which it is possible gain a deeper understanding of the subjected held (Yin, 2008). I will use the interview method as my primary resource of information for my data collection. The interviews used were semi-structured and hold face-to-face. Three stakeholders of the case company were selected as the main data source for recommendation model building.

The researcher has chosen this interview model to gain a broad vision of the CRM model and at the same time to collect different opinions of the CRM process used by the company. Thus, for this purpose, three different shareholders of the company were interviewed: the CEO, the Sales Manager and the Business Development executive of Well Clever. Here below there is the list of the interviewers along with time and mode of the interviews.

Interviewers	Position	Length	Themes	Collection Data
John O'Connor	Chief Executive Organisation	30-40min.	CRM process and tools in the company and Social media usage	Face to Face
Nênci Obregon	Sales and Business Development Coordinator	30-40 min.	CRM process and tools in the company and Social media usage	Face to Face
Verónica Sáez	Business Development	30-40 min.	CRM process and tools in the company and Social media usage	Face to Face

Figure 9: List of interviewers.

The themes that the researcher has proposed during each interview are the same for all the shareholders of the company, because the aim of these interviews was gain different prospective angles of the CRM and social media tools used within the organisation.

3.3.2 Observation

The researcher to fulfil his research questions and present a valid social CRM proposal for the case company, had to conduct an observation of the company website and social media usage. In fact, as stated by Saunders et al (2009), the observation involves different actions that have to be undertaken by which it is possible collect relevant and useful data: the systematic observation, recording, description, analysis, and interpretation of people's behaviour.

The researcher has adopted an observation method to have a broad overview of the case company. In fact, in order to have a detailed panorama of the Well Clever social presence on the social media platforms cited above, the researcher has investigated personally on the company's social pages, analysing the content posted by the company and the interaction put in place with the company's network.

3.3.3 Secondary research

The secondary research is based on solid critical literature review, chosen from the researcher and collected in way to give to the lecture the best overview possible on the dissertation topic. The literature review has been a solid point to build the final social CRM proposal for the case company. In fact as stated by Saunders et al., (2009), the secondary research is extremely useful to formulate a correct answer to the research questions. The researcher has built his secondary research throughout the use of academic journals, academic literature, online newspapers, and companies' websites; in fact, the major part of the data collected was gathered from the Dublin Business School library and online databases.

The secondary research was collected to create a solid background of the CRM concept, analysing its strengths and weaknesses and its strategies and implementation model. After that, the researcher focused the attention on the new link between brand and customer created throughout the social media platforms. This passage was necessary to fully understand the development of the classical CRM model in a new a modern social CRM. Finally, the

researcher examined two case study, which have adopted for their businesses social CRM strategies, to collect benchmark to use for the dissertation case company Well Clever.

3.4 SAMPLING:

According to Saunders et al., (2009), is impractical collecting data from the entire population, it is important reduce the sample size during a research to the budget and time constraints. I made use of non-probability samples, because I had not to address particular research questions or specific objectives that required the use of statistical inferences about the characteristic of the population selected (Saunders, et al., 2009). Following the selecting non-probability sampling techniques, I focused on the importance of case study using typical case sampling.

The interviewees that I selected are relevant for the role in the case company and their knowledge on CRM process. I interviewed a total amount of three people that have a strict relation with the sales department and with the CRM process. The interviews were conducted by face-to-face meetings. The data collected were recorded by audio and by paper through notes.

3.5 TIME HORIZON:

The time horizon depending on the research undertaken can be divided in two different type cross-sectional or longitudinal (Saunders et al., 2009). According to Malhotra and Birks et al., (2006) the cross-sectional designs is the most suited when the research is based on a study of a particular phenomenon in a particular time.

The researcher has chosen for this study a cross-sectional time horizon, in fact the researcher focused his attention on a specific phenomenon in a particular time with a changing context in the businesses to business organisations scenario. Due to the fact that the study targets the company case study only in specific period of time without investigating through the time, the selected time horizon is the most suited one.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES:

Every study should have a general framework for how data is analysed (Yin, 2008). The data collected was examined, categorized and reorganized for the purpose of the case study. The analysis was based on the relevant framework developed from the analysis of the theory on CRM and Social CRM system. The analysis is based on feedback from qualitative interviews of three different stakeholders of the case company. Therefore, the research was reinforced throughout the benchmark of other companies that have an efficient social CRM system proving in this way the usefulness of social CRM in terms of competitiveness. Practise guidelines with the entire step necessary to build a social CRM strategy; were included as final proposal of this research.

3.7 RESEARCH ETHICS:

According to Saunders, et al. (2009), research ethics concern about how we clarify our research topic, how we want collect and preserve our data, evaluate and write our research in a moral a responsible way. During and after the planned interviews, with the three stakeholders of the company different ethical issues were considered, such as:

- Violation of the privacy of possible and actual participants;
- Consent and possible deception of participants;
- Maintenance of the confidentiality of data provided by individuals or identifiable participants and their anonymity;
- Reactions of participants to the way in which you seek to collect data, including embarrassment, stress, discomfort, pain and harm;

To avoid any form of ethical issues, and ensure the moral validity of my research, I designed interviews not intrusive, leaving space and freedom to the participants to talk, for this reason I have chosen to use a semi-structured interview model. Furthermore, I ensured the protection and the discretion of the data collected and the conservation of them in a safe place.

3.8 LIMITATIONS OF METHODOLOGY:

The researcher has faced different methodology limitations due to the nature of the research methods chosen and the instruments to collect data:

- **Sample size:** Firstly, this study is restricted to the definition of the phenomenon to be investigated, so was impossible for the researcher draw general and global guideline for all the organisation that are willing to apply a social CRM system.
- **Limitation of the literature review:** the CRM and the Social CRM are nowadays arguments still open and in discussion, with different opinions in relation to their usefulness.
- **Interview issue:** The risk for the researcher to cope with different violation of the privacy was expected during the interview process, for this reason the researcher has formulated more than five time his questionnaires structure ensuring that all the question were carefully elaborated, and always with the possibility for the interviewer to pass the answer of any question.

The researcher has committed himself to overcome all of these limitations, planning the way to reduce at minimum every problem of methodology to ensure the validity and reliability of the thesis.

4 DATA ANALAYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION:

The Data Analysis of this thesis is an evaluation of the existing customer relationship management system of the case study company, Well Clever. It includes the design of a suitable proposal to introduce social customer relationship management activities inside the company to gain competitive advantage towards its competitors. The primary research question that will guide the data analysis process is the following:

- *How concepts of Social Customer Relationship Management can be applied to Well Clever to improve its customer relationship approach?*

In order to answer fully the primary research question, the researcher selected further research objectives to be achieved through the primary research:

1. *Analyze the Customer relationship tools used by Well Clever;*
2. *Collect the feedback from users of the current customer relationship tools used by the company;*
3. *Research how Well Clever is managing its social media channels and how the company is engaging with its potential client;*
4. *Evaluate how Well Clever can improve its customer relationship strategies throughout a proper Social Customer Relationship Management approach;*

The researcher has used semi-structured interviews as main method to collect data for this study. Three shareholders of the case company were selected as the main data source and all the interviews were hold face to face.

The researcher has chosen to gain a broad vision of the CRM model and at the same time to

collect different opinions of the CRM process used by the company. Thus, for this purpose, three different shareholders of the company were interviewed: the CEO, the Sales Manager and the Business Development executive of Well Clever. Here below there is the list of the interviewers along with time and mode of the interviews.

Interviewers	Position	Length	Themes	Collection Data
John O'Connor	Chief Executive Organisation	30-40min.	CRM process and tools in the company and Social media usage	Face to Face
Nênci Obregon	Sales and Business Development Coordinator	30-40 min.	CRM process and tools in the company and Social media usage	Face to Face
Verónica Sáez	Business Development	30-40 min.	CRM process and tools in the company and Social media usage	Face to Face

Figure 9: List of interviewers.

The themes that the researcher has proposed during each interview are the same for all the shareholders of the company, because the aim of these interviews was gain different prospective angles of the CRM and social media tools used within the organisation.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CASE COMPANY:

Well Clever was founded in 2011 with the express goal of assisting Media Groups (e.g. Independent News and Media,) in responding to the commercial challenges that they face, particularly in the context of the overall transition from Offline to Online by allowing them to generate additional advertising revenue. Based on the Promoter's over 20 years cross-media experience(ranging from News Content provision to Media Sales), Well Clever has developed a business-to-business offering consisting of a suite of advertising solutions that deliver incremental, high-value, premium revenue for Online content publishers.

The company provides the software and services that enable the media groups to offer their advertising clients a range of contextually relevant advertising formats including:

- Video
- Display
- SuperDisplay
- Social
- Catalogue
- Mobile
- eComm
- Brand Engager

Well Clever offers a range of highly effective and engaging Contextual online advertising platforms, which are deployed on the sites of online publishers and content owners (for example newspapers and magazines). This service offering responds directly to the overwhelming need of major publishers and content owners to identify and leverage new revenues as traditional revenue streams continue to decline.

The company has successfully developed commercial relationships with Media Groups, Advertising Agencies and Brands across the world, from Brazil to UAE.

The “shift to digital” has created a new and business critical challenge for Media companies and brands. For Media companies is it how to monetise their online content. For brands it is to engage with their consumers when the consumer is ready, not when it is convenient for the brand.

The solution is to deliver the right ad to the right person at the right time. This is what Well Clever does.

Through the company Right-time Advertising products they address these challenges directly – by enabling Media Companies to deliver brands’ messages when relevant and when the consumer chooses. They create new premium priced Advertising products for the Media Groups to sell and a better return on investment (ROI) for the brands on their Advertising expenditure.

4.3 OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT CRM PROCESS:

In order to have a wide overview of the customer relationship management processes used by the case company and understand which tools are mainly adopted to build a relationship with the customers it is essential to analyse the company's CRM strategy.

1 Research objective: Analyse the customer relationship tools used by Well Clever

Well Clever has a wide customer relationship management process put in place that is flexible to the business customer needs.



Figure 10: Sales Process

The figure shows the usual company sales process, starting with a generation of a lead that creates immediately a sales case. Touched the second stage, the company aims to create a value proposition for each single sales case. Afterwards, the value is added based on the customer needs. Finally, there is the preparation of the final proposal and then the negotiation of the contract with the business customers before signing the final contract and delivering of the company's service. Throughout three separate interviews to three key shareholders of the

company Well Clever, the researcher has investigated in depth the CRM process of the company and the tools adopted to maintain and create a relationship with its clients.

From all the three interviews done to the CEO, Sales Manager and the Business Development Executive of the organisation it emerged that Well Clever uses two main tools to maintain and create linkages with clients. Specifically, the company is using different customer management tools that are Evernote and MailChimp. The researcher asked all the three interviewees to explain what the main function of the tools used to contact or keep record of their clients is and why they are important for the company.

Evernote is an offline software cloud based with the main function of storing notes and keeping them synchronized in real time with all the devices owned in which is installed the program. Evernote is an easy software to use with an excellent tags system to find in every moment all the information or file stored that the user needs. The real power of Evernote is the share option in fact through it every document or file created is automatically shared with the different installation of the software unless the user specifies otherwise. With the use of this software, the Well Clever employees have always updated their files with the last change, creating in this way a cloud based storage information that can be utilised for all the employees of the company. Finally, Evernote can help to maintain cordial relationships with clients and potential business partners. In fact, the extensions of the basic application of Evernote, called Evernote Hello, help to maintain a client database through the creation or exchange of professional business cards. The software in fact allows the user to scan the business card of the clients trying to recognize it, finding out also the respective contact on LinkedIn, filling in this way automatically all the contact details.

MailChimp is a web mail marketing service that designs email allowing the users to send out email campaigns and update their social networks profile with their latest information. One of the key strengths of this software is the exceptional connection with the social media networking of the company to share rapidly the latest email marketing campaign. Furthermore, MailChimp allows the user to collect and analyse the company data by graphs that represent the customer interaction with the company's newsletters. Through this data analysis, it is possible to monitor the subscribed activity such as social status, click performance,

the time that client usually spend to read emails. This allows businesses creating the right newsletters or mail campaign that fit the needs of every business client.

For Well Clever, MailChimp, represents one of the main marketing tools to reach its business customers. In fact, the monitoring tools, enables Well Clever to check the activities of its subscribers analysing the total number of mail opened by the client. In addition, it is possible to see the number of views of its social media profile such as on Twitter and Facebook, and the number of re-tweets or likes that the company received after forwarding newsletters. Finally, it is possible showing the company's revenue campaign and the return on investment.

Each interviewer agreed on the importance of these two different customer management tools in the business life of the company. However, they had different views about the main pros of using this software. Therefore, to analyse the usefulness of these tools within the organisation, it is important now for the researcher identifying what the key strengths and weaknesses are in relation to the three different points of view represented by the three selected stakeholders of the company.

4.4 FEEDBACK FROM USERS OF THE CURRENT CRM TOOLS:

In order to have a different point of view of the customer relationship software used by Well Clever, and understand what the key strengths and weaknesses are of the software used, the researcher has formulated the second research objective as follows:

2 *Collect the feedback from users of the current customer relationship tools used by the company;*

The aim of this research objective is understand the different point of view of three Well Clever shareholders and have in this way a broad overview of the customer relationship approach used by the case company. Below is represented a table in which are summed up the main strengths and weaknesses of the actual CRM process:

Interviewers	Strenght MealChimp	Weakness MealChimp	Strenght Evernote	Weakness Evernote
John O'Connor	Sort By Relevance all the Client	No great integratio with are customer software	Keep Update all the employees	/
Nênci Obregon	Accurate Data Analysis of all the clients	/	Keep Update all the documents and users everywhere	Not strong relation with the Social Media
Verónica Sáez	Beautiful design and template for the newsletter	Not intuitive Interface at the beginning	Great place to store every document and share it with your colleagues	Expensive Upgrade

Figure 11: Feedback on the current CRM tools

As emerged from the (figure 11) above, the CEO of Well Clever has underlined the importance of these tools in order to have all the materials of the company's organized. One of the most relevant advantages of Evernote, is that it keeps always informed the employees of every company's updates, while MailChimp is important to maintain contact with relevant clients. The Sales and Business development coordinator instead has underlined the importance of Evernote in staying update about all the details of the company, and in relation to MailChimp has underlined the importance to have always available data analysis of the company's client. At the end, the Business development has highlighted the importance of Evernote to stay always update and store the document in a simple way, and in relation to MailChimp has underlined its easy design to create newsletters and contact the potential clients.

Finally, to conclude the overview about the customer relationship management tools used by the case company, the researcher during the interviews with the three stakeholders has collected information about the main users of these tools, the time and the daily duration of this software. Then, the author investigated whether the entire staff is trained to use these tools and what are the key objectives that the company aims to reach with the use of the tools. From the answer given to these questions it can be highlighted that all the employees of Well Clever are using the tools few hours per day and all the staff is trained to use them. So it is possible to conclude that these tools are part of the everyday life of the company and no one is excluded in using them.

In relation of the principal goals that are related to the use of the software inside the customer relationship management process of the company, the researcher has collected different scale of value in relation to the stakeholder's point of view. The CEO considers the use of MailChimp an opportunity to profiling the Customer and Identifying the potential opportunities and threats. The Business Development Manager and the Business Development Executive have identified as the most important goal to reach with the software, the forecasting of the future sales.

As emerged from this first part of overview, Well Clever does not hold a mature CRM process that is supported by professional CRM software. However, as showed from the first part of the interview the company's approach to the customers is based on traditional CRM practices throughout the use of particular customer management software such as MailChimp

that is an email-marketing program dedicated to the management of the newsletters and email clients. Instead, Evernote is used by the company to update and manage all the clients' information and contacts. Every interviewer has agreed on the importance that these software play inside and outside the company to create and maintain a point of contact with their clients and at the same time have a clear vision of the potential opportunities and threats that the company could face in the future. One of the interesting thing that could be underlined after this first part of the interview is the lack of connection that the company showed between these tools and the social media platforms. During in fact this first part of the interview process the interviewers have underlined the possibility to use these tools in combination with the social media platforms, but no one of them went strictly in depth to this specific topic. Therefore, it is important for the researcher starting the analysis of the social media use inside the company in order to figure out how social media could be implemented in coordination with the tools used by Well Clever. The aim is to improve the company's clients networking and build long-term relationships with them to generate at the end of the sales process an excellent return on investment.

4.5 ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

In order to draw a clear overview of the social media network built from Well Clever, the researcher has dedicated the second part of the interview to it. The aim in this chapter is figure out what the current social media platforms used by the case company are and how they are using them. This investigation around the social media reality in the company is finalized to answer the third research objective:

3 Research how Well Clever is managing its social media channels and how the company is engaging with its potential client;

The aim of this objective is to discover which the social media platforms used by the case company are, and how the company is engaging with its potential clients. As described in the previous chapters the company does not hold a mature CRM process put in place that is supported by professional CRM software. However as shown from the first part of the interview the company's approach to the customer is based on traditional CRM practices throughout the use of particular customer management software such as MailChimp that is an email marketing program dedicated to the management of the newsletters and email clients. Instead, from a Social Media point of view, it is important research the level of the participation of Well Clever in social networks, evaluating the presence on the social media channels and in which way they are promoting the business.

From the interviews done by the researcher to the three stakeholders' company, it has been possible to design the current attitude of Well Clever towards social media. The results have been summarized as follows:

Social Media Platforms Used By Well Clever			
	Twitter	Facebook	Linkedin
Time per day	1-2 h	-	< 1
People in charge	All the team	All the team	All the team
How many content per day?	Min. 2 per person	-	-
Is the Social Media integrated in your sales operation?	Yes	No	Yes
Which content the company post?	Industry Content	Industry Content	Industry Content

Figure 12: Social Media Platform Usage

As highlighted from the table above, Well Clever has a social media presence in one of the three most popular social media platforms. All the team of the company is in charge of posting and publishing social content on these platforms and the time spent per day around the social media world is about one hour per person. Other important information that can be underlined from this second part of the interviews are in relation to the content posted by the company, in the majority of the cases the employees of Well Clever post on the social media platforms content regarding the industry area.

In order to have a detailed overview of the Well Clever social presence on the social media platforms cited above, the researcher has investigated personally on the company's social pages, analysing the content posted by the company and the interaction put in place with the company's network.



Figure 13a: Well Clever Facebook Page



Figure 13b: Well Clever Facebook Page

Well Clever has its own official Facebook page, but as can be clearly seen from the figures above there is any presence of conversation on the company’s Facebook page. However, the CEO of the company explained the reason behind their lack of absence on the Facebook platform, during the interview. He does not believe that Facebook can be an effective social media platform by which promoting the company. The choice to not be an active user of

Facebook is mainly due to the belief that for a company as Well Clever that is a B2B organization, the use of Facebook cannot provide an actual return on investment. The CEO argued that Facebook may be a better solution within B2C organisations.

Well Clever has set up a Twitter account as shown in the picture below:



Figure 14: Well Clever Twitter Page

The official account of Well Clever on Twitter is organised differently from their Facebook page. Currently, the company has about 2.119 tweets, 56 followings and 96 followers. These are clearly only passive indicators of the company's activity on the Twitter social media platforms. The only thing that is clearly understandable from these passive indicators is the effort of all the members of the team to work on the platform with a total of 2.119 tweets. It is possible to say that the company is an active user of Twitter social media platforms with an average of 10 tweets per day. It is important now that the researcher after classifying the company as an active user of this social media, identifies the level of engagement with other twitter users and potential clients. Even though Well Clever can be defined an active user of Twitter, the content shared on this social media platform is not easily retweeted from other users.

As highlighted in the (figure 14) Well Clever has built on Twitter one way communications. The company is acting on the social platform but is not engaging and creating discussion around news.

Similar consideration can be confirmed also for the company's LinkedIn profile.

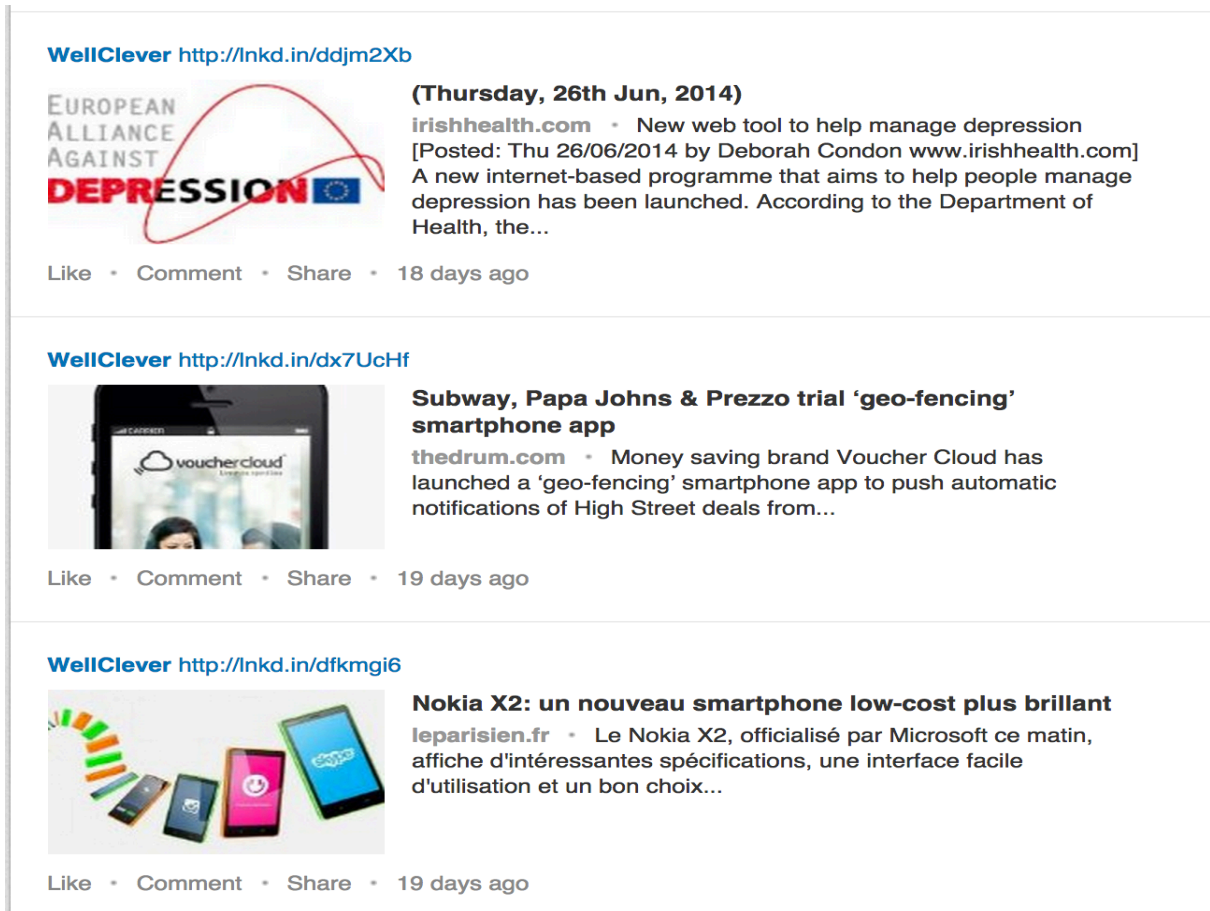


Figure 15: Well Clever LinkedIn Page

The figure above shows how the official LinkedIn page of Well Clever looks like. Currently (as of 12 July 2014), the company has 51 followers on LinkedIn. Also in this case this is only a passive indicator of the company's activity on the social media platforms. It is important as done previously for Twitter, evaluating the company activity on this social media platform and then, the level of engagement with LinkedIn users. As shown in the figure 15 the company is feeding its web profile on LinkedIn with industry content showing in this way its presence on this social media platforms but Well Clever is not creating also in this case an engagement with its followers and with other potential client.

The researcher in this part of the chapter has analysed the social media landscape inside and outside well clever. Inside the company throughout a semi structured interview done to three shareholders of the company, and outside the company looking its social media profiles from an external point of view, collecting all the information with the analysis of the company's social media pages.

After this internal and external overview done by the researcher it is important now with the results collected understand what are the real needs for an ad-tech company as Well Clever on the social market. Then the researcher will provide an accurate proposal as solution to improve its social media usage. Finally, the author will provide suggestions finalized to implement the company's customer software inside CRM operations.

4.6 SOCIAL CRM NEEDS IN A B2B COMPANY:

In order to evaluate how Well Clever can improve its customer relationship strategy, it is important analyse what the social CRM needs for a B2B organization as the case company are. This sub chapter aims to answer to the fourth research objective set up by the researcher:

4 Evaluate how Well Clever can improve its customer relationship strategies throughout a proper Social Customer Relationship Management approach;

A B2B organisation differs for different aspects from a B2C organisation. As highlighted by De Pelsmacker et al (2007, p. 533) there are two main differences between B2B and B2C organisations: first of all the main subjects of an organisation (customer and product) are different, second the purchase decision making in a B2B company is more complex due to the fact that includes more subjects that can influence the purchase decision. When setting up a marketing strategy for a B2B organisation all the decisions or purchase units have to be taken into consideration. The communication tools need to be targeted for every person of the unit considering their personal requirements and exigencies (De Pelsmacker et al., 2007, p.549). Usually in a B2B organisation the most used communication tools are personal selling, customer relationship marketing and public relations (De Pelsmacker et al., 2007, p.551). With the introduction of new technologies such as the social media platforms, the B2B companies can implement their marketing performance reducing the cost by using the new digital channels in efficient way (Merisavo 2008, p.6).

The CRM usage in a B2B organisation presents different advantages. In fact, by using customer information, the efforts of the company can be directed to the right client. Has stated in the previous chapters, the CRM tools help the company not only to communicate the right message to the right target audience but also to fit their needs (Dychè 2002, p.24). With the introduction of this massive social platforms the classical B2B organisations based on face-to-face interactions, have to change in relation to the new revolutionary technologies. In fact, through the digital channels the previous B2B interaction with their potential client is becoming easier. The only duty of the company in this new digital age is figure out which channel is preferred by the client to interact. (De Pelsmacker et al 2007, pp. 535-548).

Usually in a B2B environment company, the person that interacts most with the customers is the sales person. This figure in the company has been traditionally responsible to generate and manage leads (De Pelsmacker et al 2007, p.537). Today with the introduction of the social media, the sales roles had to reinvent itself to interact better with potential customers. Nowadays, sales can be generated by joining blogs, social communities where these figures can make value contact through their experience providing content in which they are the expert (Greenberg 2010a, pp.295-297). Bring in the company social CRM activities means researching new influencers throughout the web, social media platforms and other forms of online media communication linking them with the listening data (Evans & MCKee 2010, p. 235). This new data mixed with the data from CRM that the company can use to track and monitor new potential customers, find new potential opportunities for the business, generating leads from different channels. With the introducing of the social media activities inside the company there has been an improvement of time and cost efficiency for the businesses that throughout these new social strategies can track profitable customer generating a high revenue with low cost (Raman, Wittmann, Rauseo, 2006). As it is possible observe from figure 16, the previous customer management approach has been integrated inside the new Social Customer relationship management activities that could lead a B2B organisation to take a competitive advantage in its field market.

Business function	CRM activities	additional social CRM activities
Sales	Lead generation	Responding: Listening Understanding Responding Asking questions Acting
	Sales force automation	Connecting: Identify specific influencers Link more information about them to listening and business data
	Knowledge management	Collaborating: Tap the ideas of influencers and suggestions of customers Manage conversations

Figure 16: CRM and social CRM activities of sales

Source: (adapted from Dyché 2002, 24-37; Evans & McKee 2010, 235)

As emerged from this CRM and social CRM activities table, leads can be generated linking the three main CRM activities (Lead generation, Sales force automation, Knowledge management) with the new social CRM activities. The activity correlated to the CRM area of generating leads are strictly correlated to the activity of responding listening and understanding the customers, to understand the customer need and anticipate their future requests forecasting the sales. In relation to the Sales force automation is mainly correlated to the social CRM activities of connecting, identifying specific influencers generating data about new or actual customers; finally the activity of knowledge management is correlated to the social CRM activities of collaborating, tapping the ideas of influencers and managing conversations. This is another important branch of the work of a sales person because knowledge management forecasts and manages the purchase decisions of potential customers providing them important information needed. (Dyché 2002, 87-88.)

Social CRM can definitely implement the marketing and sales activities of a B2B organisation. In the specific case of Well Clever this advantage, can be gained integrating the sales model with social CRM activities. In fact, as stated by Mulhern (2009) the benefits coming from the use of social CRM data can be immediate when the marketing efforts are in digital form as the case of an Ad-tech company as Well Clever.

5 BUILDING A SOCIAL CRM PROPOSAL FOR THE CASE COMPANY

5.1 PROPOSAL INTRODUCTION:

This section aims to build and discuss an improvement proposal based on the introduction of social CRM activities in Well Clever that is developed by the researcher on theoretical and practical search with the current state analysis done in the previous chapters on the case company.

5.2 SOCIAL CRM STRATEGY:

The Social CRM strategy will be built around two main elements: the first is represented by a flexible framework based on what are the activities of the customers; the second one will be represented by the online feedback gained from potential and actual customers. To put in actions and satisfy these main elements of the proposal, the researcher has delineated some main points that will constitute the implantation strategy:

- *Profile the Customer:* It is essential for the company start profiling its clients, in this case its social clients. In order to improve the chance to have success, the Social CRM strategy, should be based on defined clients' profiles in terms of convenience (geographic, language); firmographics (size of the company, products made); behaviour (price sensitive, delivery sensitive, quality sensitive); needs (security, power, esteem).

- *Create a Vision and Mission:* It is important for the business to have success in its future marketing plan starting with a mission and vision to accomplish. The main idea is to set a customer centric corporate strategy based on the aim to drive traffic towards the company's website throughout the social media platform and then start engaging with source of potential clients.
- *Setting Budget a ROI:* Set an adequate budget with an appropriate return on investment suitable for the exigencies of the company, avoiding risky or expensive marketing strategy that can bring the company to a failure. It is important in this stage of the planning the coordination of the objectives that the company aims to achieve with a good social CRM strategy throughout a precise ROI measurement.
- *Select Social Media Channels and Vehicles:* Once that the business has defined the target market, the mission and vision to accomplish, the economic possibility, it is important select the right channels to reach the selected clients. Nowadays, there are a multitude of different social media channels to use and discover, in relation to the targeted client profiled by the company as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Google +, Pininterest, Instagram and so on..
- *Know the Customer:* is a key to get success in its own market. Today with the emerging of the social media platforms, a multitude of customers can visit the website of the company every day, for this reason it is important for the business analyse the web traffic around its website and social page to select the proper customers and start a discussion with them. For a B2B company, as it is the case company, the potential customers are senior manager, sales consultant of other companies. Therefore, the identification of the paying and indirect customers, who will influence the sales decision, is the key of success to generate new leads.
- *Assess the risk:* The risk assessment is necessary for the company to monitor and contain inspected backside of the strategy adopted. It is vital for the

businesses prevent and mitigate every negative sentiment around the company. An example could be represented by negative feedback or comments on social media platforms from previous clients that could generate bad publicity for the company.

- *Develop Metrics:* Evaluating the on-going state of the campaign and at the end of it the results, represent the final steps that the company has to follow. The selection of key performance indicators (KPI) is the metric to evaluate the success of the social CRM strategy. Social CRM metrics could be represented by the evaluation of revenue per sales person or agency, customer lifetime value, queue time reduction, response rate percentage of increase for marketing campaigns increased up-selling and cross-selling opportunities.

The research believes that all these steps are necessary to accomplish a successful and careful social CRM strategy that could lead the company to generate new leads and at the same time implement its own client's portfolio.

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FOR SOCIAL CRM STRATEGY:

After the general overview on the proposal for a social CRM strategy scheme for the case company, it is important now give to Well Clever the right suggestions to develop this strategy. The social CRM strategy can be divided in two main parts, the first that is finalized to delineate a business process and the second one that describes what the tools to apply to this strategy are.

In relation to the Well Clever general overview made, the tools proposed by the researcher are the following:

- **Blogs:** In relation to Well Clever business profile, the blog can be considered one of the most useful tool to implement. The company has not yet developed its own website an adequate blog section.

Well Clever should implement its blog section as core point between the business and the client. The blogs in fact can provide valuable information and create important discussions between the company and the client. The aim to develop a proper blog section is not only correlated to the creation of revenue for the company acquiring new customers but it is also important to increase the level of trust of the company with potential and actual clients.

In order to set a proper blog, the following actions can be undertaken:

1. Creating a blogger figure: Choose a blogger figure in the team is important to have always a trusted person that creates and implements content in a personable and passionate way, with the aim to create an own portfolio of readers.
2. Focusing on the right subject: Post and write blog articles on adequate subjects that can underline the value proposition of the company, which has to appear in front of the eyes of the reader as the expert in that field of industry.
3. Ensuring the authenticity: The authenticity of the content is important to build trust in the mind of the reader, the blogger has to create an own way to post content and attract new bloggers.

4. Avoid censorship: Avoid deleting comments or post of others bloggers, finding a way to reply always in a professional manner.
- **Podcast:** For the Well Clever case, the podcast can be considered as a power social CRM tool that can be built with the proper attention, a strong customer engagement around the company. Below the researcher has proposed guidelines that the company could follow to use successful this tool:
 1. Be Visible: After choosing carefully its target audience, the company has to start getting visible and relevant to it, adding content and differentiating itself from its competitors.
 2. Engage with the community: It is necessary for the company promote solid content, avoiding the creation of one-way communications, focusing on the interest and needs of its potential clients to attract them. The aim throughout this tool is to be liked by the listeners and start creating a relationship with them.
 3. Avoid sales talk and heavy advertisement: Keep free the audience from advertisement or subscription and at the same time it is important avoid sales talk that could get bored the client.
 4. Do not waste time: Generally, the podcast should not to exceed the 20 or 40 minutes of duration. It is important for the company knows its customers. Exceed with the creation of long content could lead the company to lose its target audience.
 5. Integrate the podcast with the blog tool: Create an integration between the two tools, can implement the company's client portfolio, driving more traffic towards the company website.
 - **Wikis:** This tool is ideal in the case of Well Clever to create a participatory knowledge around the company. At this purpose, software like Same Page, Base Camp, Trello could facilitate the procedure of knowledge sharing between the company and other businesses. In a specific way, these tools can be used to start a multitude of collaborative initiatives such as: engagement with potential clients by

soliciting ideas on service direction; creation of easy edit contents; rating pages and contents; supporting of plugins as You tube video and RSS feeds.

- **Social Media Platforms:** The new modern social media platforms have to be used by the company with the aim to spread and differentiate the brand message towards other businesses while creating new communication link with potential client, actual client and influencers. As mentioned previously the company has a wide range of social media platforms to use for its purposes, the important goals using these different platforms is to increase the business focus vision and gain valuable information about the clients. The researcher has identified what are the main pro and cons of the most famous social media platforms:
 1. **Facebook:** This social media in a B2B prospective serves to deliver client services, promotions and get public events and important announcements. The B2B organizations that aim to build relationship from this social media channel have to engage heavily within target organisational pages or groups.
 2. **Twitter:** Twitter represents in this modern social media panorama, one of the easiest platform for the businesses to deliver their message quickly and concisely. Twitter presents itself as a microblogging tool that enables rapid spread of information and conversations.
Twitter is an exceptional tool if the company aims to build around itself a strong online reputation, image and leadership.
 3. **Google +:** The strength of this social media platform is represented by its search engine optimisation. In fact, when the user posts a content on this platform there are high chances to rank in the content result higher than usual, because the content is fed into the personal search results of Google + circle. Furthermore, as other online social platforms there is the possibility to set up a business page and this means that your potential client can follow you and engage with your company directly. Finally, one of the new tools introduced on this social media channel is the Hangout real time video applications that allow the company to launch video conference within the tool or update video directly on You Tube platform.

4. **LinkedIn:** Among all the listed social media, LinkedIn is the first one born to create and develop business relationships. One of the key elements in using LinkedIn in a B2B organisation is the possibility to build personal branding for executives, business development and other professional figure, to provide support and suggestions at the name of the company in different professional pages and groups. Furthermore, LinkedIn offers for a company the opportunity to build one to one relations and as well as one to many relations. With the activation of a premium account there is also the chance to use its tools as CRM software throughout Lead Builder and Profile Organizer.

Every social media platforms analysed above, could be the perfect match for a B2B company, therefore, it is now a Well Clever duty find the one that is suitable for its exigencies.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION:

In this chapter the researcher will go through his data analysis and his implementing proposal for Well Clever reviewing his findings and the implications of the result obtained. This section allows considering and evaluating the answer given by the researcher as his primary research question and his research objectives, outlining how the following study has contributed to the area.

6.2 EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS:

The findings of this research are linked to the primary research question:

- *How concepts of Social Customer Relationship Management can be applied to Well Clever to improve its customer relationship approach??*

Answering to the above primary question, implies the formulation and the solution of different and correlated research objectives that allowed the researcher formulating a comprehensive explanation to the main research question:

1. *Analyse the Customer Relationship tools used by Well Clever;*
2. *Collect the feedback from users of the current CRM tools;*
3. *Research how Well Clever is managing its social media channels and how the company is engaging with its potential client;*

4. Evaluate how Well Clever can improve its customer relationship strategies throughout a proper Social Customer Relationship Management approach;

Resolving and developing all these research objectives enabled me to formulate a correct and suitable proposal for the company, with the aim to provide clear guideline to build a solid and proper social customer relationship management approach.

6.2.1 Research objectives

1. Analyse the customer relationship tools used by Well Clever;

The research has chosen this research objective in order to have a wide overview of the customer relationship management strategy used by the case company and understand which tools are mainly adopted to build a relationship with the customers. Therefore, it is essential to analyse the company's CRM strategy.

The researcher has drawn a brief overview of the company sales strategy as shown in figure 10. The sales strategy starts with a generation of the lead that creates in the immediate a sales case. The aim of Wellclever is add a value proposition for each single sales case, trying to engage with its customer in a different way for every case with the goal to create a special feeling of unique relationship between them and the client, and afterwards negotiate the contract with its business customers and then deliver the service. To investigate in deep in the company's sales process the researcher has put in place a first round of interviews with three stakeholders of the company, focusing on the CRM process of the company and the tools adopted to maintain and create a relationship with its clients. From all the three interviews done to the CEO, Sales and Business Development Coordinator and the Business Development of the organisation, it is emerged that Well Clever uses two main tools to maintain and create linkages with clients. Specifically, the company is using different customer management tools that are Evernote and MailChimp. From the interviews is emerged that, Evernote is an offline software cloud based with the main function of storing

notes and keeping them synchronized in real time with all the devices owned in which is installed the program. The real power of Evernote is the share option, in fact through it every document or file created is automatically shared with the different installation of the software unless the user specify otherwise. With the use of this software, the Well Clever employees have always updated their files with the last change, creating in this way a cloud based storage information that can be utilised for all the employees of the company. Finally, Evernote can help to maintain cordial relationships with clients and potential business partners. The second software used by the case company is MailChimp. MailChimp is a web mail marketing service that designs email allowing the users to send out email campaign and update their social networks profile with their latest information. One of the key strength of this software is the exceptional connection with the social media networking of the company to share rapidly the latest email marketing campaign. Furthermore, MailChimp allows the user to collect and analyse the company data by graphs that represent the customer interaction with the company's newsletters. For Well Clever, MailChimp, represents one of the main marketing tools to reach its business customers. In fact, the monitoring tools, enables Well Clever to check the activities of its subscribers analysing the total number of mail opened by the client. But to analyse in depth what are the additional values that these software bring to the company and which are instead their weaknesses the researcher has set up a second focal research objective:

2. Collect the feedback from users of the current customer relationship tools used by the company;

As emerged from the feedback collected from the three stakeholders of the company there are different strengths and few weaknesses related to the use of these tools. As highlighted in the data analysis chapter, Well Clever does not hold a mature CRM process that is supported by professional CRM software. However, as showed from the first part of the interviews, the company's approach to the customers is based on traditional CRM practices throughout the use of particular customer management software such as MailChimp that is an email-marketing program dedicated to the management of the newsletters and email clients. Instead, Evernote is used by the company to update and manage all the clients' information and contacts. Every interviewer has agreed on the importance that these software play inside and

outside the company to create and maintain a point of contact with their clients and at the same time have a clear vision of the potential opportunities and threats that the company could face in the future. After the collection of this feedback was important for the researcher understand the social media status of the company to have all the details necessary to set a social CRM proposal for the case company. In relation to this goal, the proper research objective set from the researcher was:

3. Research how Well Clever is managing its social media channels and how the company is engaging with its potential client;

As described in detail in the data analysis chapter the company does not hold a mature CRM process put in place that is supported by professional CRM software. However as showed from the first part of the interview the company's approach to the customer is based on traditional CRM practices throughout the use of particular customer management software such as MailChimp that is an email marketing program dedicated to the management of the newsletters and email clients. Instead, from a Social Media point of view, it is important research the level of the participation of Well Clever in social networks, evaluating the presence on the social media channels and in which way they are promoting the business.

The social media presence of Well Clever is focused on three media social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. The entire team of the company is in charge of posting and publishing social content on these platforms and the time spent per day around the social media world is about one hour per person. The social media status for Well Clever strongly changes in relation to the social media platforms used:

- Facebook: The company is not using this platform as an effective social media by which promoting the business. The choice to not be an active user of Facebook is mainly due to the belief that for a company as Well Clever that is a B2B organization, the use of Facebook cannot provide an actual return on investment. The CEO argued that Facebook may be a better solution within B2C organisations.
- Twitter: It is possible to say that the company is an active user of Twitter social media platforms. But after a detailed review the researcher has stated that the level of

engagement with other twitter users and potential clients is low, because the content shared on this social media platform is not easily re tweeted from other users.

- LinkedIn: The company is feeding its web profile on LinkedIn with industry content showing in this way its presence on this social media platforms but Well Clever is not creating also in this case an engagement with its followers and with other potential client.

From the current state analysis of the social media platforms used by Well Clever, appears a lack of communication between the company and the social users. In fact the lack of Well Clever is not represented by the wrong choice in chose the platform but in the passive way in feeding the content. The company has created on its social media page profile a one-way communication between it and the client, lacking in stimulating them in engage in conversation. At this point the last step to complete the overall observation of the company was for the researcher understands the social media needs for a B2B organisation in order to suggest for the company the most suitable social CRM strategy. In relation to this point the researcher has set the following research objective:

4. Evaluate how Well Clever can improve its customer relationship strategies throughout a proper Social Customer Relationship Management approach;

What is emerged from the investigation did by the researcher was that the CRM usage in a B2B organisation presents different advantages. In fact, by using customer information, the efforts of the company can be directed to the right client. As stated in the previous chapters, the CRM tools help the company not only to communicate the right message to the right target audience but also to fit their needs (Dychè 2002, p.24). With the introduction of this massive social platforms the classical B2B organisations based on face-to-face interactions, have to change in relation to the new revolutionary technologies. In fact, through the digital channels, the previous B2B interaction with their potential client is becoming easier. The only duty of the company in this new digital age is figure out which channel is preferred by the client to interact. (De Pelsmacker et al 2007, pp. 535-548).

At this proposal the researcher has made a analysis of the most used social media platforms at the moment, underlining the main advantage and weaknesses of each of them in relation to a B2B relation needs:

5. **Facebook:** This social media in a B2B prospective serves to deliver client services, promotions and get public events and important announcements.
6. **Twitter:** Twitter presents itself as a micro-blogging tool that enables rapid spread of information and conversations. Twitter is an exceptional tool if the company aims to build around itself a strong online reputation, image and leadership.
7. **Google +:** The strength of this social media platform is represented by its search engine optimisation. In fact, when the user posts a content on this platform there are high chances to rank in the content result higher than usual, because the content is fed into the personal search results of Google + circle. Furthermore, as other online social platforms there is the possibility to set up a business page and this means that your potential client can follow you and engage with your company directly.
8. **LinkedIn:** Among all the listed social media, LinkedIn is the first one born to create and develop business relationships. One of the key elements in using LinkedIn in a B2B organisation is the possibility to build personal branding for executives, business development and other professional figure, to provide support and suggestions at the name of the company in different professional pages and groups.

Every social media platforms analysed above, could be the perfect match for a B2B company, therefore, it is now a Well Clever duty find the one that is suitable for its exigencies.

Furthermore, to provide workable social CRM strategies, the researcher has analysed other two case companies, that in order to increase their competitiveness on the market place have adopted and implemented their strategies with the social CRM model. The companies present different case problems but in both cases the solution is represented by the adoption of a correct social CRM strategy suitable for their needs:

- Procter and Gamble: In 2005, P&G launched inside their own business a new project called Social Media Lab. This program was set to develop new dynamics of customer relationship related to the new marketing tools represented by the social media platforms. The company's program got good results developing a high level of guidelines by which basing the new Social CRM strategies of the company. P&G throughout its new social CRM guidelines has combined accurate actions of communication social media channels with innovative marketing strategies based on creating new and different touch points with its customer engaging with them and building a new company images.
- Dell: The aim of Dell in relation to its B2B relationship was to start building relationship and providing in this way to the company new potential source of clients throughout the social media platforms. In relation to its goal, Dell set up two main objectives that would have guided its social CRM strategy: first, the company had to choose which was the best social platforms to monitor the activity of its clients, to collect information that Dell would have used for customer service, marketing and sales strategies. The second step was to go over the only monitoring and analysis activity but also start discussions with their business partner engaging with them on the social media platforms. The outcome of the Dell strategy overtook the metrics objective established before the launch of the campaign, the company throughout an excellent interaction between a good marketing strategies and a perfect use of the social media tools was able to bring success to the company and increase its small businesses portfolio in an innovative manner.

As emerged from the analysis of these case studies in both cases the successful element was represented by the complete and perfect interaction between an accurate marketing strategy and an appropriate social media usage targeting the clients company with the proper channel.

After the detailed analysis did on the current customer relationship situation on Well Clever, and the data collected from two different case study, the researcher was able to draw his own social CRM strategy in order to suggest a workable operation model. As discussed in the previous chapter the Social CRM strategy has been built around two main elements: the first

is represented by a flexible framework based on what are the activities of the customers; the second one will be represented by the online feedback gained from potential and actual customers. The implementation strategy is constituted by different main steps:

- *Profile the Customer:* It is essential for the company start profiling its clients, in this case its social clients.
- *Create a Vision and Mission:* It is important for the business to have success in its future marketing plan starting with a mission and vision to accomplish.
- *Setting Budget a ROI:* Set an adequate budget with an appropriate return on investment suitable for the exigencies of the company, avoiding risky or expensive marketing strategy that can bring the company to a failure.
- *Select Social Media Channels and Vehicles:* Once that the business have set what is the target market, what are the mission and vision to accomplish and what are the economic possibilities, it is important select the right channels to reach the selected clients.
- *Know the Customer:* It is a key to get success in its own market. Today with the emerging of the social media platforms, a multitude of customers can visit the website of the company every day, for this reason it is important for the business analyse the web traffic around its website and social page to select the proper customer and start a discussion with them.
- *Assess the risk:* The risk assessment is necessary for the company to monitor and contain inspected backside of the strategy adopted. It is vital for the businesses prevent and mitigate every negative sentiments around the company.
- *Develop Metrics:* Evaluating the on-going state of the campaign and at the end of it the results represent the final steps that the company has to follow. The selection of key performance indicators (KPI) is the metric to evaluate the success of the social CRM strategy.

The research believes that all these steps are necessary to accomplish a successful and careful social CRM strategy that could lead the company to generate new leads and at the same time implement its own client's portfolio. In order to accomplish these steps the company has to make use of the correct communication tools to engage with their customer and expand their

own portfolio. At this regard, the researcher has identified four main communication tools on which the company can focus its attention:

- **Blog:** In relation to Well Clever business profile, the blog can be considered one of the most useful tool to implement. The company has not yet developed on its own website an adequate blog section. Well Clever should implement its blog section as core point between the business and the client. The blogs in fact can provide valuable information and create important discussions between the company and the client.
- **Podcast:** For the Well Clever case, the podcast can be considered as a power social CRM tool that can be built with the proper attention, a strong customer engagement around the company.
- **Wikis:** This tool is ideal in the case of Well Clever to create a participatory knowledge around the company. Software like Same Page, Base Camp, Trello could facilitate the procedure of knowledge sharing between the company and other businesses.
- **Social Media Platform:** The new modern social media platforms have to be used by the company with the aim to spread and differentiate the brand message towards other businesses while creating new communication link with potential client, actual client and influencers.

It is possible state that only with the interaction of all these strategies elements, it would be possible obtain a workable model for the case company. The social CRM strategy proposed by the researcher is the result of the current state analysis of the case company, combined with theoretical and practical knowledge obtained from a detailed activity of literature review. The guidelines provided needs to be evaluated from Well Clever, and adapted to the company needs, in order to achieve the best results.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION:

The final chapter of the dissertation is focused on conclusions and recommendations about the study conducted. In fact the purpose of this section is draw a conclusion of the entire project, and evaluate if the researcher has been able to answer his primary research question. Finally, general recommendations for future work have been included in this final chapter.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

The researcher due to the nature of his research is able to draw some main recommendations for Well Clever in order to put in practice with success the social CRM guidelines defined during the course of this study:

- Adopt a new marketing strategy, identifying new guidelines for the sales department;
- Use a flexible framework, based on what are the activities of the customers;.
- Engage in a proactive way with their potential clients, pushing them in start focal discussion;
- Define the metrics, evaluating the on-going state of the campaign and at the end of it the results, represent the final steps that the company has to follow. The selection of key performance indicators (KPI) is the metric to evaluate the success of the social CRM strategy.
- Assess the risk, necessary for the company to monitor and contain inspected backside of the strategy adopted. It is vital for the businesses prevent and mitigate every negative sentiment around the company.

- Implement the communication channel such as blog or social media, choosing the most appropriate for their marketing strategy;
- Integrate the use of the communication channels each other's in order to spread the same message throughout different communication tools a capture the right target audience.

Throughout these simple recommendations the company could follow the right path to apply a proper social CRM strategy that will increase their visibility and expand their own portfolio of clients, led them to a long-term relationship maximizing their lifetime value.

7.3 CONCLUSION:

The social network world has definitely changed our technological and social panorama, and has not left any business out. The CRM has substantially changed during the last decades due internal forces (customer behaviour) and external factors (technological revolution). This new marketing scenario, represented by the strong shift from mass consumption marketing to a targeted is a strong challenge for the marketers. The digital media introduction in the world of the communications was totally revolutionized. It has been changed the way in which the message is delivered, the social media words have introduced algorithms and automat system for managing connections, redesigning the entire communications scenario. This transformation represented a strong challenge for media companies and marketers, because the digitization of media constituted a new stage in the communication history. It is in this scenario that it is possible identify a new customer relationship management model based on the combination of the marketing strategies with the use of new technologies such as the social media platforms, it is in this contest that it is possible from a new CRM model called social CRM.

The research aimed to find the best guidelines for a suitable social CRM strategy for Well Clever. At this purpose the researcher has used benchmark from two different case studies (Procter and Gamble, Dell); he has collected data from three stakeholders of the company

about the customer relationship tools and social media platforms used, to draw an overview with key strengths and weaknesses of the company. All these information have been useful to evaluate the current state of Well Clever and draw a recommendation proposal for the company answering in this way the primary research question: *How concepts of Social Customer Relationship Management can be applied to Well Clever to improve its customer relationship approach?*. At this proposal after the analysis did on the case company, it has been determinant understand which were the social CRM needs for a B2B company as Well Clever. Nowadays, businesses use powerful CRM tools and marketing strategy to understand the markets needs and target the right audience. Well Clever does not make exception in this new challenging B2B panorama. To run in this new social market-place the company has to focus its attention on maximizing the life time value using the appropriate social CRM strategies.

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire is composed by twenty one questions and it will take about 30-45 minutes of your time. You are completely free to skip any question and move on the next one.

Please note that all the information you will provide will be strictly used for the purpose of my dissertation. Furthermore, you have the right to ask me to not include any specific or sensitive information you provided in my research study. This research is confidential and in case have any questions about the ethical process of the study, please feel free to contact me, or my supervisor, for further clarification.

1.1 First Round of Semi Structure Interview Questions:

Questions related to research objective 1 and 2 – Analyse the customer relationship tools used by Well Clever; Collect the feedback from users of the current customer relationship tools used.

List of questions:

1. What are the customer relationship tools that you are currently using in your company?
2. Evaluate the usefulness of the software giving a grade from 1-5?
(1 not useful, 2 not very useful, 3 neither or, 4 useful, 5 very useful)

<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Software Name					

3. Explain why you give this grade to the usefulness of the software?
4. What are the key points of strength and weakness of the customer relationship software used?
5. How often do you use this software?
 - Time per day:
 - 0
 - 1hr
 - 5hr
 - 8 hr
6. How many people in the organization have access to the customer relationship software?
7. Is the staffs trained to use it?
8. Which part the customer relationship tool is largely unused at the moment? Why?
9. Does the software include customer satisfaction metrics?
 - A. No
 - B. Yes, does it include one or more of this metrics evaluation:
 - I. Customer Loyalty
 - II. Customer Satisfaction
 - III. Customer Retention V
 - IV. Others
10. Would you view any of these objectives as important related to the use of the customer relationship software? Please give an evaluation from a range of 1-5. (1 not useful, 2 not

very useful, 3 neither or, 4 useful, 5 very useful)

<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Profiling the customers					
Identifying future opportunities and threats					
Forecasting future sales					
Increase efficiency to increase profits					
Others					

1.2 Second Round of Semi Structure Interview Questions:

Questions related to research objective 3 - Research how Well Clever is managing its social media channels and how the company is engaging with its potential clients.

1. What social media platforms are you currently using in your company?
2. Are these social media platforms integrated in your sales operations?
3. Do you promote special offer or discount of the company?
4. What promotional campaign has you found most successful? Why?
5. How often do you use social media platforms?
 - Time per day:
 - 0
 - 1hr
 - 5hr
 - 8 hr
6. Who is responsible to manage them?

7. How often would you post on the platforms?
8. How would you measure the success?
9. Which social media have you found most successful? Why?
10. What types of contents are you promoting on social media platforms?
11. How does your organization interact with its business customers?

APPENDIX 2: GANTT CHART

Task	MAY				JUNE				JULY				AUGUST		
	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3		
Read Literature															
Draft Literature Review															
Read Methodology Literature															
Draft Research Approach															
Develop and Revise Interview															
Finalise and Administer Interview															
Data Analysis															
Draft Findings															
Revise Dissertation Draft															
Prepare and Present Research Report															

APPENDIX 3: SELF REFLECTION

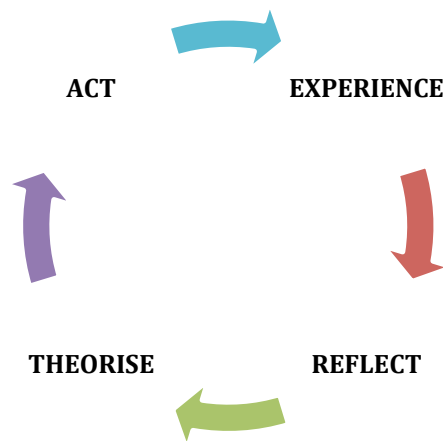
INTRODUCTION

This section aims to describe and explain the researcher's personal learning path during this dissertation work. The researcher will go through his own reflection on learning identifying his improvements and achievements.

LEARNING STYLE

In his learning path the researcher has followed four steps of competence provided by Dale (2001, p.5), in fact before the start of this dissertation project the researcher was unconscious of his incompetence. He entered in a state of conscious competence throughout the literature research on academic article book and journal.

According to Kolb's theory (Cameron, 2008), the experience of learning is a circular process. This process is constituted by four main points linked each other. The experience of learning is followed by a stage of reflection that gives a sense for the experience done. Afterwards, there is the conceptualisation of this reflection followed by the experimentation of the concepts so developed, whereby there is the creation of new experience, reflection and again all the steps of the learning circle as shown in fig.1:



The learning cycle (Adapted from Kolb)

Source: Sheila Cameron, 2008

The researcher has submitted a learning style questionnaire (LSQ) developed by Honey and Mumford. The final results of this questionnaire showed that the researcher is a reflector. Generally, the researcher during different situations takes a low profile to observe, collect information and develop reflection and analysis of the situation maintaining a big picture perspective. This learning style led the researcher to avoid mistakes and deliver a high quality of work.

SELF-ASSESSMENT FROM THE MBA COURSE AND THESIS

The researcher during his dissertation work made use of different personal and technical skills, improving them step-by-step, working in this dissertation area that I love at the most. Below are described by the researcher the main area of skills usage and the improvements that obtained during the construction process of this thesis:

- Time Management: Organization and schedule tasks are one of the main key of success to deliver the work on time. The Gantt Charts has helped the researcher to prioritize is

tasks, managing the time at disposition. Thanks to the time management skills the researcher was able to complete all the work in time balancing it with work and private life.

- **Research Capability:** Throughout this dissertation work and the entire MBA course did at DBS, the researcher was able to understand and learn a new educational and research system, applying to his work a rational approach, supporting his research with academic materials, learning how to gather information and use it in a proper way for his work.
- **Analytical Skills:** The researcher has improved his ability in managing a great amount of information, categorizing them and extracting the useful amount of data needed for his own work. At the same time the researcher has improved his critical thinking approach, figuring out how to find solutions and the right approach for the problems that he dealt with.
- **Marketing Knowledge:** The entire MBA course has helped the researcher to improve his knowledge in the Marketing field, shaping their previous practical knowledge gained from previous work experience, with theoretical one gained from this course of study.
- **Communication and language skills:** The whole experience has helped the researcher to improve his language and communication skills, communicating during the course with different colleagues in a multicultural environment that has stimulated the creativity and the friendly aptitude of the researcher.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

During the dissertation period the researcher has dealt with different problems, due to the nature of the research methods chosen and the instruments to collect data. At the beginning the researcher had to cope with the complexity in drawing clear guidelines, trying to find the proper path to follow in order to deliver the thesis in time and with high quality of content. Also, during the literature review process the researcher has encountered some limitations due to the nature of the topic. In fact CRM and the Social CRM are nowadays arguments still open and in discussion, with different opinions in relation to their usefulness. Furthermore over the interview stage the risk for the researcher to cope with different violations of the privacy was expected during the interview process, for this reason the researcher has

formulated more than five times the interview structure ensuring that all the questions were carefully elaborated, with the possibility for the interviewer to pass the answer of any question.

The researcher has committed himself to overcome all of these limitations, planning the way to reduce at minimum every problem of methodology to ensure the validity and reliability of the thesis.