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The Importance of CRM Systems in Effective Organization of The Communication Process (On the Example of Higher Education Institutions)

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Abstract: This article discusses what CRM is, how it is used in the communication process, the types of CRM systems available, and the key factors to consider when selecting such systems.

Keywords: CRM systems, communication process, higher education institutions, customer relationship management, communication technologies, information management, CRM types, CRM selection criteria.

Introduction: In today's environment of intense global competition, issues such as attracting, retaining, and increasing the loyalty of customers have become key factors in ensuring the efficiency and sustainability of organizational activities. Unlike in the past, the transformation of these issues into the virtual environment has significantly increased the interest of many scholars and organizational leaders in IT assets. Naturally, organizations select their digital "tools" based on their goals and needs. However, organizations that have realized the paramount importance of customers and their preferences have demonstrated a significantly higher demand for CRM systems within the IT technology landscape.

Currently, organizations are not only required to operate using traditional principles like the 4P and 7P models, but they must also be equipped with technologies that enable the management of customer relationships through various strategies. This is due to

the fact that IT has become a decisive force, penetrating the foundations of every sector. For example, in the activities of government bodies and organizations, a significant part of communication processes is now conducted virtually: document circulation, customer relationship management, and more. Today, virtual communication serves as a crucial tool for organizations adapting to this environment, helping to prevent excessive bureaucracy, time loss, and resource wastage.

In Uzbekistan, the issue of communication between the public and government bodies and organizations began to gain momentum with the election of the current president, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Prior to that, there was not even a proper one-way communication system established within state bodies, let alone two-way communication. The public had little to no understanding of who managed government organizations or what activities they were engaged in. Citizens did not know whom to approach or how to submit inquiries. Even when they did know, they often had to wait for days or even months at the doors of these institutions without resolution. Such conditions fostered feelings of neglect and indifference toward citizens' appeals, leading to a decline in public trust toward state organizations. Although laws and regulations such as the 1994 "On Citizens' Appeals" (Law No. 1064) and the 2014 "On Appeals of Individuals and Legal Entities" (Law No. 378) existed earlier, there were no rigorous requirements or controls over their implementation as there are today. The current government, unwilling to ignore this issue, thoroughly reviewed the situation and implemented fundamental reforms by adopting the following legal documents:

- In 2017, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. DRUz445 "On Amendments and Additions to the Law 'On Appeals of Individuals and Legal Entities'";
- In 2019, the Presidential Decree No. PD-4366 "On Additional Measures to Ensure the Independence of Mass Media and to Develop the Activities of Information Services of State Bodies and Organizations";
- In 2021, the Presidential Decree No. PD-6247 "On Additional Measures to Ensure Transparency of the Activities of State Bodies and Organizations and to Effectively Implement Public Oversight";
- In 2022, the Presidential Decree No. PD-154 "On Measures to Improve and Implement a System for Increasing and Assessing the Level of Transparency of the Activities of State Bodies and Organizations.

For example, in Law No. 445, clear instructions were

given to ensure the full protection of the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of the population; to establish an effective system for handling citizens' appeals; to create conditions for the unconditional exercise of citizens' constitutional rights to submit appeals; to organize the full, impartial, and timely review of appeals; to systematically monitor and control the review of appeals sent to the relevant government bodies and organizations; and to ensure the implementation of the establishment of the President's People's Reception Offices and Virtual Reception Offices.

Moreover, due to the unsatisfactory performance of government agencies and organizations in the field of cooperation with the media and informing the public, Presidential Decree No. 4366 was adopted. It mandates that information about the activities of organizations must be regularly, fully, and promptly delivered to the population via mass media, social networks, official websites, and other information resources with the assistance of journalists and bloggers. It also outlines measures to organize press conferences, briefings, media tours, to study public opinion, and to ensure broad public participation in discussing draft normative-legal documents by forming expert groups. Additionally, it requires that draft normative-legal documents falling within the competence of government bodies and organizations, as well as their approved versions, must be posted on their official websites according to the established procedures to ensure transparency.

In Presidential Decrees No. 6247 and No. 154, the tasks that state organizations must follow in implementing the Policy of Openness were also outlined.

It is no secret that the most optimal solution for fulfilling all the communication-related tasks and instructions specified in the above legal documents today is provided by digital technologies. The CRM systems we are reviewing in this article are also an optimal tool for ensuring operational efficiency, transparency, and impartiality in communication. Let us now take a closer look at what this technology entails.

METHODOLOGY

The concept of CRM emerged in the early 1990s as part of the evolution of corporate thinking driven by initiatives related to Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) issues in the United States. While ERP is software that ensures all of a company's resources function within a single business system, CRM is a system that specifically regulates relationships with customers. More precisely, it is an all-in-one system that enables the collection of various types of information about customers, sales, marketing effectiveness, feedback quality, and the target audience. It is a combination of people,

processes, and technologies aimed at understanding the organization's or company's customers. This system is not just simple software for marketing, sales, or service; if fully and successfully implemented, it can be regarded as a cross-functional, customer-oriented, technology-integrated business process management strategy encompassing the entire organization.

For nearly 34 years now, CRM systems have proven effective in various sectors such as manufacturing and services, agriculture, mechanical engineering, telecommunications, working with "Big Data," the textile industry, and many others.

DISCUSSION

Currently, CRM systems are utilized by about 45% of

companies in retail, aviation manufacturing, and utility services in the United States; by 50–55% of companies in financial services, pharmaceuticals, and transportation; and by 70% of companies in credit services and telecommunications.

As shown in the diagram from Statista.com, a platform founded in Germany in 2007 that provides statistical information on over 80,000 topics across 170 industries, CRM software holds a significant share in the marketing technologies landscape. According to the data, CRM software has generated over \$55 million in revenue for the U.S. economy in 2024. This figure is projected to exceed \$58 million by 2026.

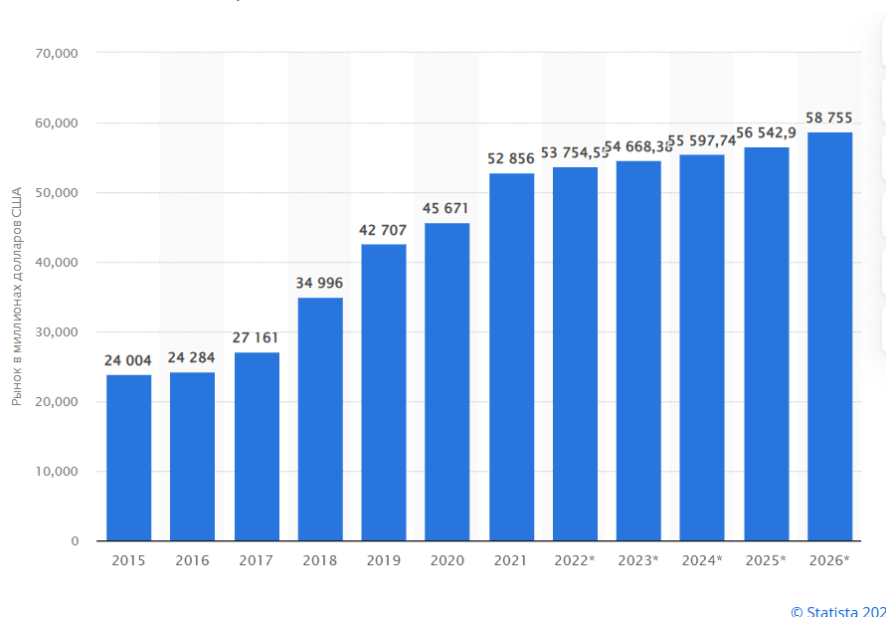


Figure 1. Global CRM Software Market Revenue (2015–2026)

According to the facts presented by Apps Research and Buyer Insight, a leading company specializing in software and technology market research, among

more than 1,500 CRM product providers worldwide, the following companies were the market leaders in 2023: Salesforce, Adobe, Oracle, HubSpot, Microsoft, SAP, Zendesk, Genesys, Nice Systems, and Intuit.

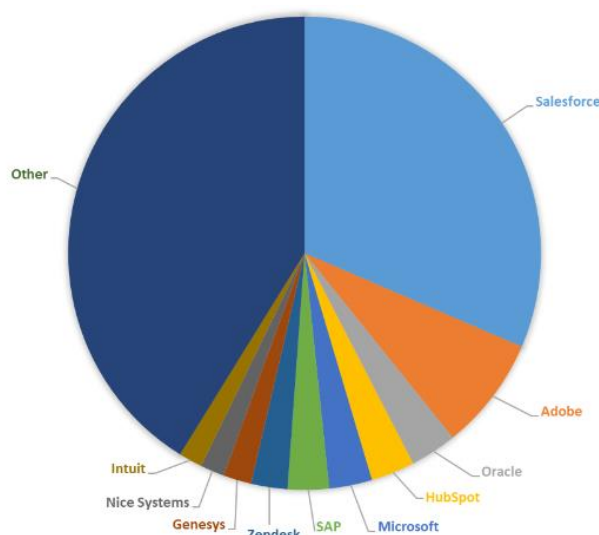


Figure 2. "Market share value of leading CRM software in 2023 (in %)"

It is not difficult to understand from the statistics provided by Tadviser, a mass media organization registered under the Federal Service for Supervision of

Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media of Russia and engaged in analysis, that the demand for CRM software in Russia has been steadily increasing year by year.

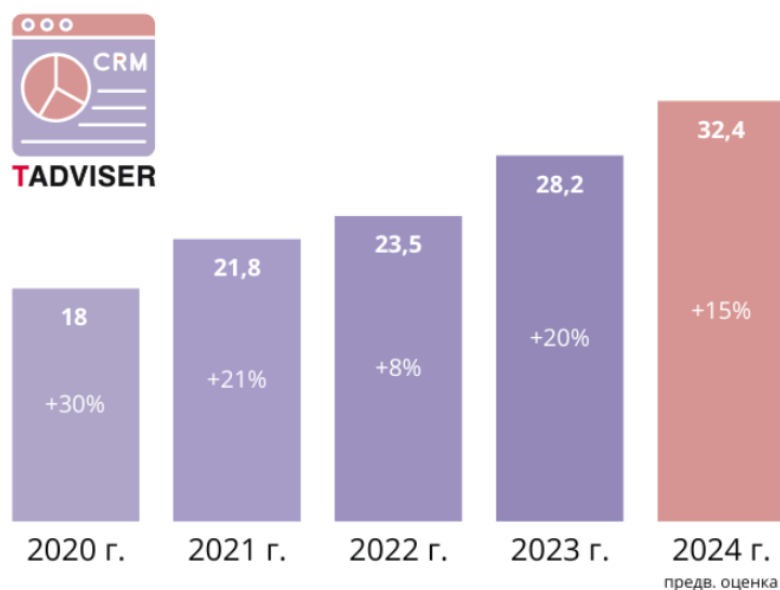


Figure 3. Value of the CRM software market in Russia (2020–2023)

The initial years were stressful for the CRM market in Russia. The reason was that they urgently needed to find alternative options to Western CRM products.

However, although it was not easy, the Russian IT

industry managed to find a solution and by 2023 increased the volume of the CRM software market in Russia to over 28 billion rubles (4.2 trillion Uzbek soums).

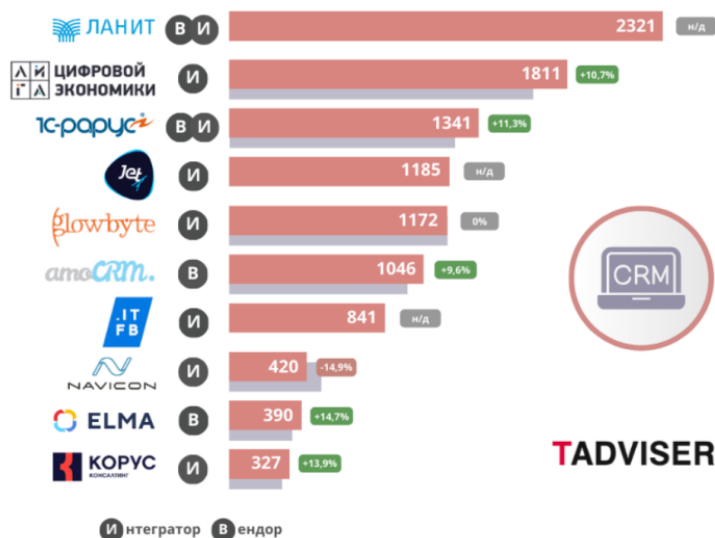


Figure 4. Leading CRM software providers in Russia

Currently, among CRM software providers in the Russian market, Lanit leads the competition with its Right Way platform. Speaking of the advantages of these programs, they offer solutions for optimizing, standardizing, automating, coordinating, organizing, and virtualizing the relationships between a company's leadership, employees, and clients.

These CRM systems facilitate the work processes of key participants in sales — executives, clients, and managers — by increasing the demand for products or

services, coordinating organizational activities, ensuring high-quality contract management, enhancing client communication efficiency, automating sales processes, improving advertising campaign quality, and enabling the automatic generation of reports.

Through CRM systems, leaders can perform virtual real-time monitoring of how work with their target audience is progressing and at what stage. Even if their most experienced personnel leave the organization, they can maintain work efficiency, precisely control the KPIs of

employees working with the target audience, check their attendance, ensure that the system attracting and retaining customers is operating effectively, monitor sales analytics, and maintain secure corporate communication channels for internal online communication.

Employees, on the other hand, find it easier to work with "Big Data", freeing them from repetitive, monotonous tasks, and allowing them to work within a clearly systematized sales funnel instead of operating randomly or intuitively. Finally, target audience inquiries are addressed promptly and effectively without any barriers. However, just like a rose is not without thorns, there are also critical issues to be considered during the implementation of these systems. For example, if an organization selects a CRM platform without considering its specific goals, tasks, and future plans, investments into the platform may be wasted.

Some platforms, like AmoCRM, offer simpler Operational modules intended for businesses with smaller teams, whereas others provide Analytical and Collaborative types designed for larger, more complex organizations involved in logistics, production, and similar fields. Operational CRM systems are the simplest ones, offering only minimal functionality aimed at managing the sales department. They lack features for warehouse management, logistics, HR, or legal department communications.

Thus, they are suitable for small businesses that do not require large teams (around 10–50 employees), such as barbershops, fast-food outlets, print service providers, or seasonal beverage and sweets businesses. These systems mainly focus on creating a database of client information and contacts, and logging inquiries received via social media, websites, and phone calls. One of their main advantages is the presence of an automated chatbot that can respond to customer inquiries 24/7, allowing customers to queue up, receive automatic answers to frequently asked questions, and perform similar actions online.

Analytical CRM platforms, on the other hand, are designed for analysts and marketers. In addition to the features of operational CRM, they provide tools for analyzing sales processes. Real-time analytical CRM systems help organizations identify the most effective marketing platforms, segment their audiences, determine sales volumes and contract profitability, and evaluate sales performance. Simply put, they allow organizations to determine on which platforms clients make more purchases, why and when contracts are not concluded, and whether it is possible to generate a certain revenue over a specified period.

Collaborative CRM platforms are necessary for organizing effective interaction between different departments within an organization, such as sales, technical support, marketing, and HR. In this case, any update or change made in one department automatically reflects in all others, eliminating the need for each department to update documents separately and saving valuable time. Information about new customers becomes instantly accessible across all departments, and there are no problems in document exchanges. Moreover, communication through emails, call tracking, social media, messengers, and websites becomes faster and more efficient. This helps prevent the currently common problem of client and partner dissatisfaction with organizational communication delays.

Based on the above, it is recommended that CRM modules should be selected considering the organizational departments, the type of existing business, and the specific tasks required to achieve the business goals. Since CRM systems operate based on a systematically structured sales funnel, each organization using these programs must develop a sales funnel specifically tailored to its product or service. For example, a sales funnel designed for the construction industry cannot be effectively used for the education sector.

In the history of CRM development, there have been cases where organizations, without fully understanding the intended purpose of the CRM system, implemented it blindly, leading to disappointment among their leadership. Thus, for CRM systems to function effectively and correctly within an organization, those responsible for their implementation must thoroughly explain even the most subtle aspects of the organization's goals.

There are also other important aspects to consider when choosing a CRM system.

For instance, factors such as the price of the software tariffs, whether a trial mode is available, whether the program needs to be installed on a PC (personal computer) or if it can be used via a cloud-based solution, what services it can be integrated with, whether "seamless" integration is supported, the presence of call tracking or IP telephony, the availability of a document exchange service, how employee performance reporting is organized, the possibility of setting up corporate chats, the level of security measures, and whether technical support ("tech support") is available within the system — all of these elements play a critical role in determining the return on investment an organization can expect from the CRM system.

Just like the history of any software, the development of

CRM systems includes not only numerous achievements but also significant shortcomings.

However, from the research conducted by scholars such as F. Newell, S. Godin, D. Rigby, Ph. Schefter, F. Reichheld, A. Payne, P. Frow, A. Mello, C. Beasty, I. Chen, F. Yim, R. Anderson, S. Swaminathan, D. Matamoros, G. Șoavă, A. Zehetner, T. Sudarevich, and L. Pupovach, it becomes clear that customer dissatisfaction with CRM systems often arises not due to the system itself, but because of external factors unrelated to the software.

For example, implementing a CRM system without first developing the organization's marketing, customer service, and sales strategies; using the system merely to "track" customers rather than to meet their needs; allowing employees to work in the system without clearly explaining the goals they should achieve; neglecting to train staff properly on how to use the CRM; the leadership's indifferent attitude toward the implementation process; and the organization's general lack of interest in adopting innovations and technologies — all these factors are unrelated to the CRM software itself.

Table 1

A table reflecting scholars' recommendations regarding problems arising in the implementation of CRM systems

Rigby et al. (2002)	<p>Implementing a CRM system without first developing a customer strategy;</p> <p>Implementing a CRM system without making the necessary organizational changes;</p> <p>Assuming that "the more CRM systems implemented in an organization, the better";</p> <p>Focusing on tracking the customer rather than meeting their needs.</p>
Goldenberg, B. (2003)	<p>Lack of customer service, marketing, and sales strategies;</p> <p>Absence of internal corporate policies and clear responsibilities;</p> <p>Failure to improve the knowledge and skills of employees who need to work with the system;</p> <p>Lack of know-how;</p> <p>Resistance from the users of the system.</p>
Kale, S. H. (2004)	<p>Treating the CRM initiative merely as a technological innovation;</p> <p>Lack of initiatives centered on customer value;</p> <p>Failure to recognize the need for lifelong service to the customer;</p> <p>Insufficient support from top management;</p> <p>Neglecting the necessity of change management;</p> <p>Inability to reorganize business processes;</p> <p>Failing to take data collection and integration problems seriously.</p>

Mello, A. (2002)	<p>Absence of a customer-oriented strategy;</p> <p>Lack of organized frontline personnel;</p> <p>Unpreparedness for organizational changes;</p> <p>Lack of well-founded, measurable goals.</p>
Beasty (2005)	<p>Lack of support from leadership;</p> <p>Failure to align departmental strategies toward a common goal;</p> <p>Not following the principle of "strategy first, then technology";</p> <p>Financial risks not being minimized;</p> <p>Migration paths not being developed;</p> <p>Employee training and development being treated as a final rather than a primary goal;</p> <p>No leader appointed to manage the changes;</p> <p>Lack of consultation with experts.</p>

.At this point, it is important to emphasize one aspect. It would be incorrect to view CRM systems as a kind of "golden wand" that has fallen into our hands. As can be seen from the table provided by A. Zehetner, T. Sudarevich, and L. Pupovach, there are essential tasks that must be carried out consciously, under human supervision, and with active human involvement — before, during, and even after the implementation of CRM systems. Technologies, especially those not integrated into SI (System Integration), still require human intellect, supervision, and management.

CONCLUSION

Today, although some organizations claim that their main goal is to meet customer needs and provide high-quality service, in practice we often witness the opposite. One of the pressing issues in our society is the superficial, "just for show" nature of communication between many government institutions and the public. This not only increases the level of public distrust but also contributes to the persistent stagnation of conditions within the institutions themselves.

Every organization striving to increase demand for its products or services in a competitive environment must prioritize the needs and desires of the public, audience, and customers.

Within a CRM system, it is possible to centralize and

monitor inquiries coming from various sources such as social networks, emails, phone calls, and others. This system not only requires managers to promptly and efficiently respond to every inquiry without neglecting any, but it also frees organizational leaders from the necessity of hiring separate personnel for managing each social media channel.

The implementation of these systems within the information services of government institutions will be discussed in greater detail in the second section of Chapter 3.

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