



## Customer Relationship Management in Agile Healthcare Organizations

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### ABSTRACT

Today, several studies in the field to identify key factors in the success and agility of health care organizations to improve their performance in the face of changes have taken place in the context of customer relationship management (CRM) among them. The purpose of this study was to explore the concept of CRM, goals and benefits by considering its relationship with value creation for clients and treatment. Results showed concern for organizations today, creating customer satisfaction at the highest customer loyalty, which requires involvement in the value chain activities and decisions of the organization.

**Keywords:** Management, Customer Relationship, Customer Orientation, Value, Healthcare Service

**JEL Classifications:** C32, O13, O47

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the most important principle of change in organizations is customer orientation and preserving the value and dignity of people and being accountable to them as a duty. Today, numerous studies have been conducted in the field of identification and dissemination of critical success factors of health care organizations to improve their performance which attention to customer relationship management (CRM) is among them. Paying attention toward CRM and value creation for him is a beginning to create the infrastructure needed to achieve results with patient care quality and consequently promoting healthcare organizations. The lack of an appropriate and effective system to customers according to the needs of the audience, leading to inadequate and poor services, lack of effectiveness and efficiency and poor quality of service, patient satisfaction, and ultimately the disintegration of community health (Stevenson, 2009).

In this regard, despite numerous discussions and publications in the field of CRM, many managers of meaning associated with patient management, performance and benefits are unaware, because CRM in each organization is unique and it is not

considered as a common approach between organizations even if these organizations have a same product, service or size. The main purpose of patient relationship management is identifying patient needs and strategic professional knowledge to overcome them and thus increasing patient satisfaction. In this study we discuss the expression of CRM programs, objectives and its advantages and its relationship with value creation for customers and customer-oriented in healthcare organizations. It should be noted that CRM is not a substitute for quality systems but also through the development of organizational characteristics in mind helps to achieve goals and assist organizations (Hodder, 2010).

### 2. METHODOLOGY

This study was a descriptive - survey that by doing library study and search for reputable domestic and foreign Internet sites and comprehensive and scientific databases including, CINAHL Science direct, Iran-doc, PubMed and ISI as well as related journals and management research using relevant keywords to identify articles focused on CRM was conducted in health care organizations in 2016.

### 3. FINDINGS

The study findings show that CRM systems are a strategic system to collect customer needs and behaviors to lead to strong relationship with them. Finally, a strong relationship with customers is the key to business success. CRM is composed of three main parts: Management, customer and relationship.

The customer is the final consumer in the value creator relations, had the supporting role. The purpose of relationships is creating loyal customers and beneficial learning through communication and the management is the creativity and leading a customer-oriented business processes. Today, in organizations the strategic importance is given to CRM. In difficult conditions of competition, when and organized communication with customers, the best way to increase customer satisfaction, is reducing costs and improving service delivery. Due to these issues, CRM in organizations is a business strategy (Gronroos, 2000).

The following are various definitions of CRM which is provided by the various authors:

- An organizational approach to understand and influence customer behavior to communicate with meaningful, attract and retain customers, improve customer loyalty and profitability.
- The strategic use of information, processes, technology and people to manage customer relationships with organizations throughout the customer life cycle.
- CRM, is an e-commerce application.
- CRM is a term for methods, techniques and capabilities of e-commerce which by organizations of all sizes is used to manage their relationships with customers.
- CRM is a corporate initiative that includes all organizations.
- CRM is decision-making based on data.

According to the proposed definitions a general definition can be provided below:

CRM is an organizational strategy that by using information, technology and people is trying to influence knowledge management processes of customers and for managing customer interaction and by making meaningful communication with target customers, attract, maintain, increase their loyalty (Huber et al., 2001).

In healthcare organizations, because patients are the only customers, CRM principle is called the principle of patient relationship management. CRM is a process for targeting, attracting, trading, servicing, maintenance and building long-term relationships with customers. And patient relationship management is an attitude with strategic changes, is an organizational and technical process by which a health care organization strives to conduct its business around patient satisfaction and manage it better. Patient relationship management is an approach that promotes the health and patient satisfaction. In these organizations, the important role of health workers in clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction is crucial. Structure and process are required to move the organization toward excellence and a beginning to create the infrastructure needed to achieve quality results in patient care.

Over the years, various organizations have learned that the use of CRM system will help them to have a longer relationship with their customers and audiences. With such a system in addition to the service providers will be able to communicate effectively with service recipients, they provide a deeper focus on preventive measures and means to promote health and satisfaction in the service they offer. In turn customers have more reliability and loyalty to an organization that acts to identify and satisfy their needs (Kim et al., 2004). In agile healthcare organizations, strategies are forming a comprehensive plan which shows how these organizations reach their vision and goals. A leading strategy is not a random aggregation of individual building blocks but it consists of a carefully constructed system of interdependent components. In a perfect strategy, all elements are aligned and in a same direction and this alignment are caused by the nature of the organization, including assets, skills and capabilities. Therefore it is necessary that each agile organization determine its position relative to the three strategic objectives as follows:

- Who is a customer?
- What products or services can be offered to customers?
- How can we present these products or services effectively and efficiently to customers?

Thus in an organization according to available resources, career strategies and customer requirements, we propose offer value to be provided to the customer (Golparvar, 2007).

#### 3.1. Agile Healthcare Organizations and Patient-centered Organizations

Patient-centered organizations have the following properties:

- Care providers have increasing communication with their patients that mainly focus on education, prevention and increased recovery.
- Patient care in these organizations is properly synchronized which reduce the gap in care and thus helps to increase the patient satisfaction.
- The process of care and treatment according are constantly available to patient's needs and are implemented for them.
- Care providers can securely publish their information and resources which would help patients to control their disease becomes chronic (Christopher, 2005).

There are several factors that require health care organizations to adopt a management approach to solve problems that are associated with patient, some of them are.

##### 3.1.1. Increasing the awareness and patients' saturation of information

Despite abundant information about a variety of diseases, cures and new surveillance practices on the internet, television and publications, the individual awareness has increased. They tend to play an active role in their care. Patients have done individual research on the symptoms and alternative treatment and are willing to speak on this issue with their care providers.

##### 3.1.2. Patients' expectations

Since a few years ago, the satisfaction of patients and their safety has been at the forefront of patient care programs. Reducing errors

and the ongoing process are among the key issues to increase patient satisfaction. In addition, many healthcare organizations consider the patient as the center of their activities and act as patient-oriented and thereby improve the quality of their services.

### 3.1.3. Disease prevention

Due to the absence or weakness of pay systems that encourage health care organizations, today, these organizations have focused on prevention principle and the benefits that may have for the patients. The World Health Organization reports about the prevention of diseases, several ways and methods have been pointed out about the prevention and clinical practice to reduce the risk of chronic disease mortality and improve the quality of life. Since these methods include: Supporting people to change risky behaviors and use of drugs and surgery. It is shown that the drug combination therapy, in 5% of patients who are at risk for heart disease, is cost-effective (Woodruff and Jones, 1997).

## 4. CONCLUSION

In general, the health system has become more difficult to attract and retain patients than in the past, since an increase in the awareness of society to the problems of health care and quality of care on the one hand and increased health service providers on the other hand has made the selected applicants of these services with a broader range of medical services to their demands and in the arena of competition an organization will be successful to have more efforts to satisfy their customers.

Despite that customer-oriented and CRM is really important for their organizations and institutions but this importance is more significant in organizational services. Hoffman and Ingram are of the opinion that a service organization, customer-oriented organization of production is equivalent to the concept of marketing. On the other hand there is considerable evidence that it has been shown that the customers' perception of quality of provided services, and direct their behavior with employees of services' systems and certainly this behavior has a significant effect on the employees. The most striking effect is their satisfaction and willingness to desirable behaviors and effectively with clients and customers to provide quality services and therefore they are getting satisfied (Khalifa, 2004).

On this basis we can say that in today's organizations, competition is an understandable concept and the core of managers' activities. Organizations are now competing in two markets; one is for the

services they offer and the other for required talents for production or use of these services with the aim of satisfying the service recipients (Hoffman and Ingram, 2006).

Accordingly, the concerns of today's agile organizations and institutions are creating customer satisfaction with the highest loyalty which requires customer involvement in the value chain and in all processes and activities and decisions of the organization. In this way tools such as CRM are applied to provide continuous feedback from all stages of the customer values and make sustainable competitive advantages and excellent organization. In recent years instead of focusing on the economic interests, managers and researchers have been inclined to establish and maintain valuable relationships with clients (Rositter, 2008). Agile organizations that reinforce a culture based on presenting value to the customer in all its processes and practices have better performance compared to other organizations.

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