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**ASSESSING THE POSSIBLE POTENTIAL OF
IMPLEMENT A CRM SYSTEM INTO THE
UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER**

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MA Management
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September, 2007

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Abstract

Today technologies and computer based systems are helping managers to achieve their organisation goals. However, strategies and tactics which organisations have to adopt depend on the short or long- term plans and visions which change the concept of using models and technologies in information system areas in an organisation. Managers believe that the HI sector is changing. Students are becoming more demanding and looking for added value from their education. Also Universities are now having to become more competitive and responsive to the needs of students.

Nowadays, because of demand, there is a requirement for HEI's to be competitive and their future business success depends on developing beneficial relationships with student. One of the most useful systems for this reason is CRM. Today more than 80 Higher Educational Institutes (HEI) in the UK use all or some functions of the CRM system (Agresso newsletter, 2007). It seems that, in order to achieve their goals, senior managers in HEI's should integrate systems to collect, keep and use historic data and use students life cycle to be able to generate types of data which informs their marketing strategy. This strategy will also feed into a HEI's strategic plan.

The ability to develop successful customer relationships lies in an organisation's ability to understand its customers and their needs. Indeed, organisations need to identify "real customers and individual basis" and communicate with them appropriately (Mitussis, 2006). The collection, analysis and use of information to identify, understand and meet customer need is crucial to the successful implementation of a CRM system. As a result, technology, initially in data base format, is widely regarded as a core component of CRM as the data used aims to build a long-term connection between the company and customers. As such, CRM can be regarded as a "business strategy that uses information technology to provide an enterprise with a comprehensive, reliable and integrated view of its customer base" (Zikmund et al., 2002).

This documentary -based study uses qualitative method for data collection from utilising CRM for University of Chester as a case study. The researcher used empirical research and

exploratory study in order to discuss the possible potential of utilising the CRM system with regards to vision and strategy in the University of Chester. Indeed, to examine other HEI's experience implementing CRM systems, the researcher chose Roehampton University because it had similar characteristics, demographics and background to the case study.

In order to avoid the problems and decrease the risk of the implementation CRM system in the University of Chester with regards to plans and activities which an organisation has to do, the following are the recommended key steps to a successful CRM strategy:

- Strategic context. The organisation should understand how CRM fits into the context of the company's overall business strategy.
- Capabilities assessment. The assessment is to be done to confirm the company's current CRM capabilities.
- Business case development. The organisation needs a good reason to implement CRM other than simply following new technology trends.
- Implementation plan creation. Create and execute a plan which clearly defines how to achieve the goal and execute it. (Nguyen, 2007)

Competitive advantages that organisations could gain from CRM systems include the following: increase in customer loyalty, superior service, superior information gathering and knowledge sharing and organisational learning.

This study highlights potential benefits, limitations and general features about a CRM system at strategic level that might be taken into consideration in case CRM system is be implemented in University of Chester.

Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously for any academic purpose. All secondary sources are acknowledged.

Signed: _____

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

It is widely recognised that in the dynamic educational environment, “the future success of business depends on building meaningful and beneficial relationship with all points of contact that business has” (Agresso newsletter 2005). Today in the business world, management recognise that customers are the core of the business and that the success of the company depends on effectively managing relationships with them (Sherif et al 2007). The University of Chester which has over 12000 students and is expanding rapidly seems to have a possible potential for utilising a CRM system. However, before deciding to use this technique, it would be beneficial to prepare the organisation for the adoption of a new information system strategy. Although there are some universities in the UK which have successfully implemented the CRM system, such as Manchester Metropolitan University and Roehampton University, there are difficulties involved.

Steenstrup (2006) suggests that there are eight blocks (Figure -1) of a CRM system for management who want to implement it in an organisation. Yet prior to adopting CRM managers need to review the vision and change strategies such as reviewing the move from product- centre to customer-centre strategy.

Strategy Direction journal (2002) highlights what an organisation gains after implementation CRM:

- Increased Revenue by identification of new business opportunities, reduction of lost opportunities, and decreased client defections.
- Client loyalty through improved client service and enhanced firm image or brand.
- Reduced costs through preserving institutional knowledge and reducing intellectual re-work.

Indeed Strategy Direction journal (2002) also mentions that, in general, organisations cite four key reasons to implement a CRM system:

- To attract new customers.
- To increase sales per customer
- To reduce costs through improvements in business process
- Improve the relationship with the customer and thus increase and retain customer loyalty.

Steenstrup (2006), states that CRM is the key strategy that will determine successful enterprises in the 21st century. Although CRM is a difficult strategy to implement, resulting in many firms wasting resources, over spending, making customers unhappy and employee sceptical.

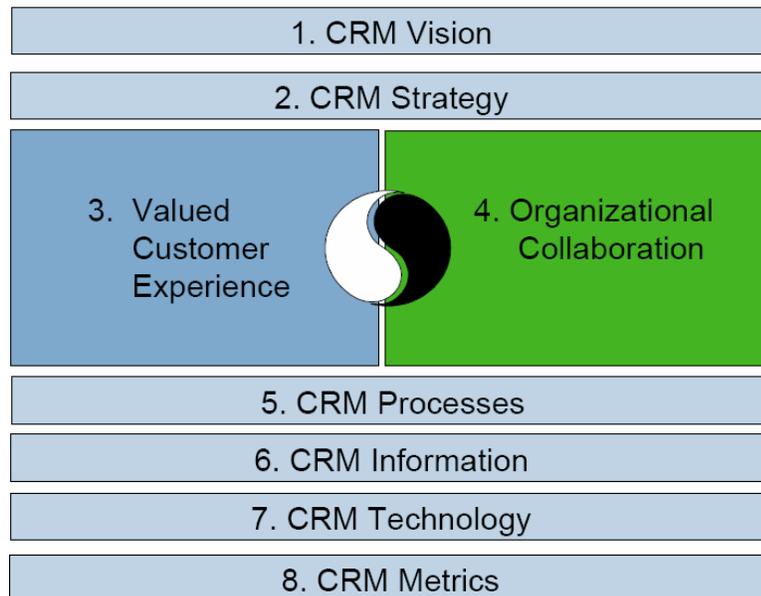


Figure -1, **The Eight building blocks of CRM**, Source: Steenstrup, (2006)

In the following literature review the researcher will illustrate different theories and arguments and those will be analyse and critically evaluated.

1.2 Research question

The study explores how the CRM can be use of differentiated depending on the organisation which implements it. It also explores the advantages as well as the disadvantages of such a system. It will be based on Steenstrup's (2006) building block for CRM, which is focus on CRM vision and strategy. As it will be explained in next chapters, the researcher's case study (University of Chester)is used to conduct empirical research which compare those factors which is describe in theories and models of HEI's to illustrate any possible similarity in alignment to utilising of CRM.

The first step in this study requires a very detailed literature review where several points mentioned above are to be evaluated. Critical evaluation of prior findings and data about CRM helps to provide a frame work for study of CRM advantages in the University of Chester. After the literature review, the methodological concept identifies the exploratory character of this case study in relation to its uniqueness. In this methodological part a justification for the methodology in terms of research findings substantiates the appropriateness of chosen epistemological orientation and ontological stance. Progressing on from this, the procedure of the study is described. Ethical issues are examined as well, together with the method of data analysis. Data collected is analysed and interpreted in relation to the research question and potential limitations are addressed. The concluding step is to adopt an out come of data collection which enable recommendations to be made for further research into this area of study.

As such, the research question would be as below:

“Assessing the possible potential of implement a CRM system into the University of Chester”.

1.3 Justification for the research

According to Dr. Lemayem (2006), “A CRM is a comprehensive set of processes and technologies for managing the relationships with potential and current customers and business partners across marketing, sales, and service regardless of the communication channel”. Seeman and O’Hara (2006) indicate that implementing CRM in an academic setting can improve customer data and process management, student loyalty, retention and satisfaction. The attraction of conducting a research in CRM is grounded in its ability which given to an organisation. Based on the effectiveness of the CRM system in the Roehampton University, a research could be conducted to examine any possible similarities and effectiveness of the system regarding vision and strategies at the University of Chester. The CRM system was considered to have been a practical solution for University of Chester to gain its aims and goals which researcher will be demonstrated in chapter four. However there are many aspects of having a fit CRM system should be revealed by other researchers, such as ability to use an integrate and powerful database, or compatibility of computer system (Hardware and Software) in front and back office.

1.4 Outline methodology

This documentary -based study uses one main methodology for data collection from utilising CRM in the HE sector. It highlights some problems which the researcher faced and how those were overcome. Furthermore, this study will recommend, the need to conduct more research, both qualitative and quantitative nature for the assessment of student and employee satisfaction and even the necessity of new software or hardware in the University of Chester. The explorative character of this study is proved by an interpretive focus on meaning. Within this epistemological orientation an analysis of the social actor’s understanding and behaviour is necessary in order to clarify the experience of CRM implementation the HE sector. An ontological stance is held following the constructionism, because the social actor plays a significant role in the construction of social reality. The way in which the research question was developed also emphasises the need for a

qualitative type of research. The researcher started with a general research idea that he was interested in. therefore, in the process of research area was narrowed down into a tighter focus out of which the research question was developed.

1.5 Outline of the chapters

A literature review follows after the introduction, this illustrates the past researcher theories and results and analyses and summarises the literature. The third chapter is all about methodology and how the researcher conducts the study with methods and approaches and why the method is appropriate for this study. All information and data gathered is demonstrated in chapter four and the researcher will analysis it in order to answer the research question. Next chapter or fifth chapter is the conclusion which outlines all the results of the study and the last chapter put forwards the recommendations of the researcher.

1.6 Definitions

Customer Relation Management (CRM)

“The process of managing relationship with existing customers to maximize their loyalty, increase revenues from them while selectively attraction new customers” (Tiwana, 2001). Indeed, according to Limayem, (2006) “Attracting, developing and maintaining successful customer relationships over time. A strategy for identifying, satisfying, retaining and maximizing the value of a company’s best customers. All processes and technologies that organizations use to identify, select, acquire, develop, retain, and better serve customers”.

Interchangeable Terms for CRM

- Customer Relationship Management
- Customer Relationship Marketing
- Database Marketing
- Micro-marketing
- One to one Marketing
- Information Driven Marketing
- Technology Enabled Marketing

Knowledge Management (KM)

“Management of business, customer, and process knowledge and its application for adding value and competitively differentiating products and service offering” (Tiwana, 2001).

Relationship Marketing (RM)

According to Porter (1985) “Relationship marketing is the process whereby –the buyer and provider- establish an effective, efficient, enjoyable, enthusiastic and ethical relationship: one that is personally, professionally and profitably rewarding to both parties”. Indeed, Ballantyne (2002) described relationship marketing as “An emergent disciplinary framework for creating, developing and sustaining exchanges of value, between the parties involved, whereby exchange relationships evolve to provide continuous and stable links in the supply chain.”

Abbreviations:

HE: High Education

HEI: High Educational Institutes

IT: Information technology

IS: Information System

1.7 Summary

This chapter introduces the research problem of the study and clearly states its research questions. Justification for the research section indicates that in order to utilise CRM system, further research should be conducted by other researchers. The next chapter describes the conceptual and methodological considerations of research. As such, the explicit objectives of this investigation can be summarized:

- To identify contemporary thinking of the CRM system
- To examine the University of Chester's vision and strategy (core value, customer experience and differentiating brand value)
- To examine the experience for utilising the CRM in HEI's (University of Roehampton)

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Customer relationship management (CRM) has been widely regarded as a company activity related to developing and retaining customers through increased satisfaction and loyalty. IT- based CRM systems have been applied in many industry sectors, and research on advancing these systems is continuing (Sweet, 2004). One approach to address future CRM systems development is to link knowledge management (KM) and CRM in order to maximise not only operational but strategic efficiency of CRM through gaining and sharing knowledge about customers (Xu, 2005). Rowley (2004) argues that there is a need to develop an understanding of the interaction and interface between KM and relationship marketing (RM), and to operationalise this in the parallel context of systems, people and processes. The key KM processes include knowledge creation, sharing, dissemination and exploitation, and the RM processes include communication, creation of loyalty and stable customer base, customer service, trust cultivation and relationship maintenance.

In this study the researcher has explored secondary literature to demonstrate the conceptual model and what past researchers have found in order to use and implement CRM. First of all the researcher will attempt to illustrate the relationship between different models. It will start with RM. Secondly the researcher will explain the relationship between KM in an organisation and CRM system. Thirdly the CRM system and detail about different aspect of CRM will be discussed. Moreover the add value of CRM and the strategies which organisations adopt to maximise the beneficial advantage will be considered. Finally arguments will be analysed and criticised, prior to conclusion.

2.2 Relationship marketing (RM)

“Relationship marketing aims at building long-term, mutually satisfying relations with customers, suppliers and distributors, with objective to earn and retain their long-term preference and businesses” (Kolter, 2000).

By the end of 1980s RM was being proposed as a solution to some of the problems faced by mass marketers (Dwyer et al, 1987). In the 1990s academics and practitioners have paid attention to it. Indeed it might be argued that mass marketers attempted to obtain ownership of RM from their colleagues in service, industrial and channel contexts through the formulation and propagation of customer relationship management as a mass marketing strategy or tactics (Mitussis et al, 2006). He also mentions that, CRM is influenced by the richness of RM, almost and exclusively focuses on managing relationships with the end customer. However, the management of supposed relationship outcomes, rather than relationship processes, must make it difficult to achieve those outcomes.

Another researcher, Light (2003), argues that CRM evolved from business processes such as relationship marketing and the increased emphasis on improved customer retention through the effective management of customer relationships. Light’s idea is supported by Payne et al, (1999) and Bull (2003) who say that relationship marketing emphasises that customer retention affects company profitability. This implies that in that it is more efficient to maintain an existing relationship with a customer that creates a new one.

According to Stefanou et al. (2003)” Empirical founding suggests that customer satisfaction, which is the underlying notion of relationship marketing, is a critical point in achieving and retaining competitive advantage.” Organisations have discovered and research studies have shown that retaining current customers is much less expensive than attempting to attract new ones (Massy et al., 2001). In fact a number of studies have shown that customer satisfaction can lead to brand loyalty, repurchase intention and repeat sales (Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000). Relationship management, however, emphasises the organisation of marketing activities around cross-functional process as opposed to

organisational functions or departments. This results in strong links between the internal process and the needs of customers, and results in higher level satisfaction (Zineldin, 2006).

Zineldin (2006) also highlights that CRM evolves from business concepts and processes such as relationship marketing and an increased emphasis on improved customer retention through the effective management of customer relationships. Both RM and CRM emphasise that customer retention can affect company profitability in that it is more efficient to maintain an existing relationship with a customer than create a new one. Moreover, once a relationship is established customers are less likely to defect, provided they continue to receive quality service. Both RM and CRM should be used to identify potential loyal customer groups and to seriously consider the response required.

2.3 CRM and Knowledge management (KM)

According to the knowledge-base view of the firm, the primary rationale for a firm's existence is the creation, transfer, and application of knowledge. From a CRM perspective, knowledge can be understood as either what has been learnt from experience or the empirical study of consumer data. Key facets of KM include knowledge learning and generation, knowledge dissemination and sharing and knowledge responsiveness (Sin, 2005). Knowledge has been recognised as one of the main assets of an organisation (Drucker, 1993). KM, in particular, has been defined as the process of capturing the collective expertise and intelligence in an organisation and using them to foster innovation through continued organisational learning (Quinn et al, 1996). Since a major part of that expertise and intelligence refers to customers, it is concluded that CRM is strongly related to KM and especially to customer KM (Massy et al., 2001). The significance of customer knowledge is emphasised by a number of studies on KM. For example, Skyrme and Amidon, (1997) conducted a survey of KM practice of European and North American companies, and found that 96 percent of participants evaluated customer knowledge as the most important asset in maintaining competitiveness (Bennet & Gabriel, 1999). Indeed another survey has been conducted by the Journal of knowledge management, with the assistance of Best Practice Club and the Bench Marking Exchange, in a sample of

companies engaged in KM philosophy and practices which highlights that customer-focus knowledge was the most preferred type of KM activity (Chase, 1997).

2.4 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Today in the business world, management recognise that customers are the core of a business and that a company's success depends on effectively managing relationships with customers. In an organisation all the objectives are focused to one ultimate goal: to make customers happy because they are the ones who keeps businesses running (Nguyen, 2007). He also states that technology provides businesses with systems that can help organisations track customer interactions with the firm and allow the firms' employees to quickly retrieve all information about the customers. This concept is called a customer relationship management (CRM) system. Customer relationship management itself is not a new concept but is now practical due to recent advances in enterprise software technology. An outgrowth of CRM: sale force automation (SFA) tools, are often referred to in literature as one-to-one marketing (Peppers, 1999). In table -1, Limayem (2006) demonstrates different academic definitions of CRM.

A Methodology	Growing business by effectively managing the relationship with future, past, and present customers.
A Strategy	Achieving business goals by defining objectives, implementing a plan, and measuring results via a system
A Concept	The infrastructure that enable the delineation of and increase in customer value, and the correct means by which to motivate valuable customers to remain loyal
A System	Software, hardware, process, and workflow
Automation of business processes	Marketing, Sales, Support, etc.

Table -1, Source: Limayem (2006)

Limayem (2006) also mentions that if CRM is used properly, it could enhance an organisation's ability to achieve the ultimate goal of retaining customers and also enable an organisation to gain a strategic advantage over its competitors. Originally CRM focuses on building long term and sustainable customer relationships that add value for both the customer and the company. Daft (2003), points out competitive advantages which could be gained from the CRM system. Those are summarised in Table -2.

Competitive advantage	Example
increase in customer loyalty	Full information about customer profile and previous requests or preferences is instantly available to sell and service representatives when a customer call
Superior service	Customer representatives can provide personalised service, offer new products and services and services based on customer's purchasing history.
Superior information gathering and knowledge sharing	The system is updated each time a customer contacts the organisation, whether the contact is in person, by telephone, or via the web. Sales marketing service and technical support have access to shared database.

Table -2 , Source (Nguyen ,2007)

Many organisations today are keen to re-establish their connection to new as well as existing customers to achieve long term customer loyalty. Some organisations are competing effectively by implementation relation marketing principles using strategic CRM applications (Chen and Popovich, 2003).

According to Sin(2005),”Based on past related literature and in-depth interview with CRM managers, it could be argue that CRM is multi- dimensional construct consisting of four

broad behavioural components such as key customer focus, CRM organisation, knowledge management and technological- based CRM” (Figure- 2).

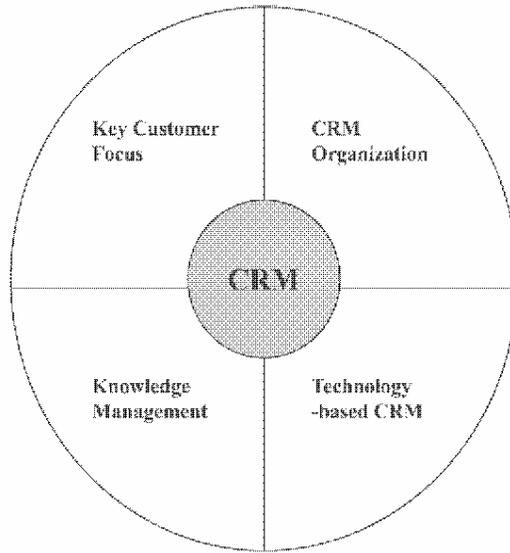


Figure -2, **CRM components**, Source: Sin (2005).

In terms of technology, CRM technology applications link front office (e.g. sale, marketing, customer service) and back office (e.g. Financial, operations, logistic and human resources) functions with company’s customer “touch point” (Fickel, 1999). An organisation’s touch points can include the internet, e-mail, sale, direct mail, telemarketing operations, call centres, advertising, fax and pagers. Often these touch points are controlled by separate information systems. CRM integrates touch points around a common view of the customers (Eckerson et al. 2000). Figure -3, demonstrates the relationship between customer touch points with front and back office operations.

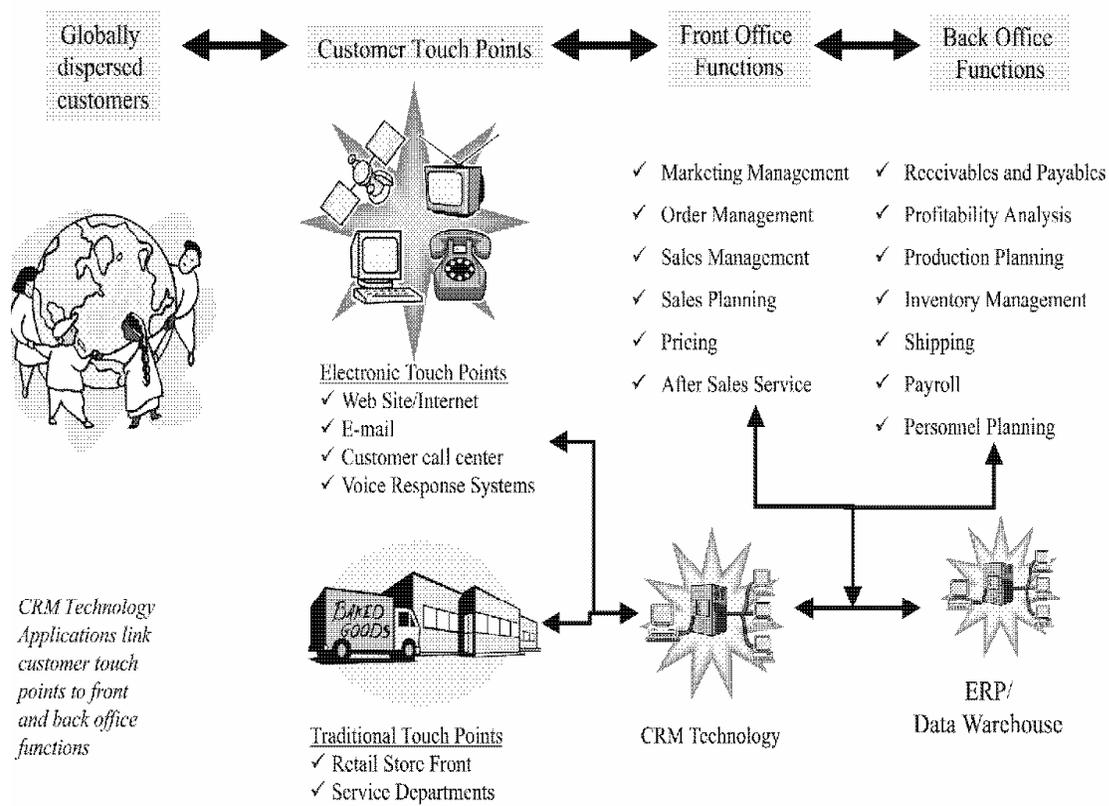


Figure -3, **Technology applications link...**, Source: Chen and Popovich (2003)

Similarly, an important requirement for the implementation of CRM is clarity regarding CRM terminology. From the many approaches available, distinction between the following three areas has become generally accepted (Figure -4):

- Operational CRM supports front office processes, e.g. the staff in a call centre (Greenberg, 2001)
- Analytical CRM supports back office process and builds on operational and establishes information on customer segments, behaviour and value using statistical methods (Peppard, 2001)
- Collaborative or communicational CRM concentrates on customer integration using a coordinated mix of interaction channels (multi- channels management, e.g. online order and call centres (Keen et al. ,2000)

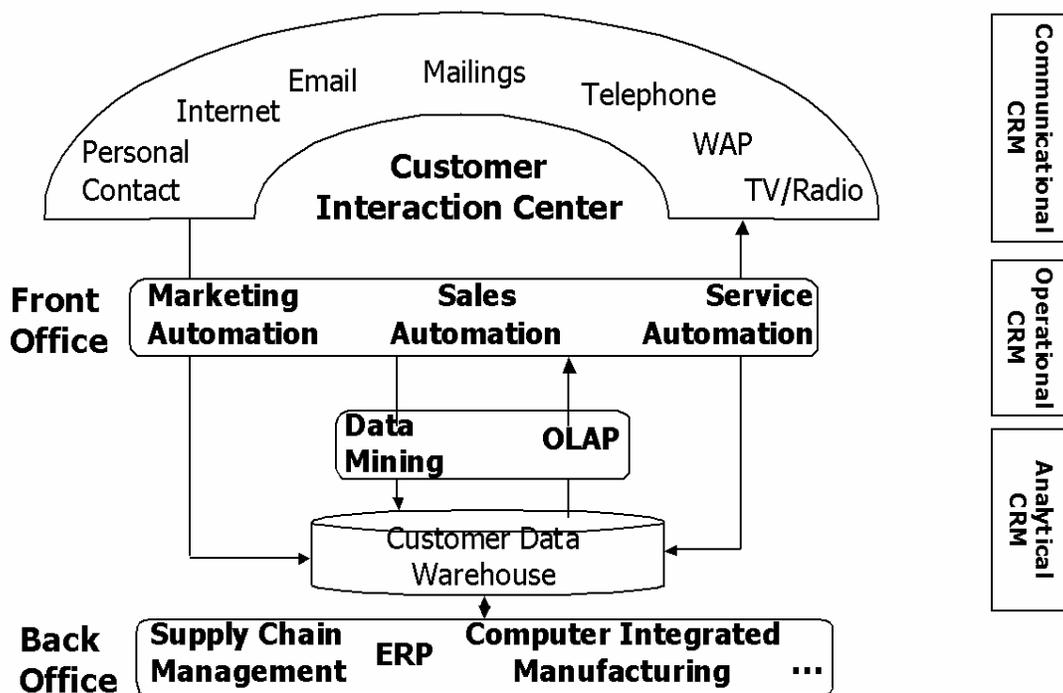


Figure-4, CRM solution structure, Source: Dr. Limayem (2006)

Indeed, Alt and Puschmann (2004) state that CRM is therefore understood as a customer-oriented management approach where information systems provide information to support operational, analytical and collaborative CRM process and thus contribute to customer profitability and retention.

Another view of CRM in technology is data mining and database oriented (Sandoe et al, 2001). The increasing use of digital technologies by customers, particularly the internet, is changing what is possible and what is expected in terms of customer management (Peppard, 2000). Peppard mentions that in reality CRM are a complex combination of business and technological factors, and thus strategies should be formulated accordingly.

In addition Strategy Direction highlight that, merely collecting more and more customer data will not mean all the aims are achieved and organisations need to use an appropriate strategy with regards to adopt a CRM system. According to Paterson (2005),” true customer relationship management in its original meaning is not about software or system; it is about the way an organisation interacts with its customers through its people and its culture”.

2.5 Design concepts for CRM system

CRM is a process designed to grasp features of customers and apply those features to marketing activities. Before 1990, the main concern of many companies was focusing on performing business transactions with the customers. As such companies had strategies of sale promotion to address those basic concerns effectively. After 1990, however, many companies began focusing their concerns on how to maintain positive relationships with customers, how to raise customers’ loyalty, and how to enlarge customer life value (Wayland, 1997). Therefore, recent company strategies are changing towards customer-oriented strategy. In particular, developing and understanding of the needs of customers and offering added service are recognised as factors that decide success or failure (Jeong, 2003).

Indeed Paterson (2005) argues that, the correct design should reflect the objectives of CRM strategy. Design may consist of: helping sales departments manage and close opportunities, giving sales management a complete view of process and automating sales forecasting, ensuring the management that they have a full picture of every sales process, providing a complete picture of every customer to those that need it within an organisation, running and

tracking the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, providing better service for current customers.

2.6 Customer- centric strategy

Customer-centric Strategy is the endeavour to understand and satisfy the needs, wants and resources of selected individual customers. CRM stress the deliberate selection of key customers who are of strategic significance, as not all customers are equally desirable (Rayls & Knox, 2001) and profitable (Thomas et al., 2004). This can be illustrated by the Pareto 80/20 rule: 80 percent of a firm's profit comes from 20 percent of its customers (Hoffman and Kashmeri, 2000; Rayls & Knox, 2001). Having meticulously selected key customers, a CRM-oriented organisation should make every effort to understand their needs and wants, which is crucial to developing strong relationship with them (Sin, 2005).

According to Lindgreen (2004) in order to CRM strategy formulation, CRM strategy has two levels:

1- Determination of quantitative CRM goals

The CRM goals related to following areas:

- Positive development in life time value of the total customer capital.
- Positive development in revenue, profit, and loyalty on an aggregated level and, often, on individual customer level.
- Priority of customer segments in relation to both retention and new sales.
- Creation of a system for ongoing customer loyalty measurements, a so-called customer feedback system.

2- Determination of initiatives.

The CRM initiatives, among others, cover the following areas:

- Priority of customer- related development projects.
- Priority of internal development projects.
- Adjustment of various sub strategies such as sales, marketing and IT
- Adjustment of competencies development plan.

- Adjustment of salary and bonus programmes.

2.7 Relationship and added value

Today marketing is not a function; it is a way of doing business. Marketing is not a new ad campaign or aggressive promotion. It has to be all-pervasive, part of everyone's job description, from receptionist to the board of directors. It is also about how to integrate the customer into the design of product/service and to design a systematic process for interaction that will create substantial in relationships. In a competitive world, companies have to work hard to have any added value. They have to work with customers and to discover the way to run the business more efficiently for themselves and more effectively for the customers (Zineldin, 2006).

He also argues that, an organisation has to develop customer relationships that deliver value beyond that provided by the core product. This involves added tangible and intangible elements to the core products thus creating and enhancing the "product surround". Many organisations do their best at figuring out how to provide high quality at low cost, as do competitors. Indeed that is the nature of competition. If there are many others who can do what you do, then you do not have much added value. This dynamic erodes your added value. To protect its added value, an organisation needs to create and enhance long-term relationships (Zineldin, 2006). Indeed, a key question asked is how an organisation can develop an effective process for establishing and maintaining the added value and relationship with key consumers. The answer is organisations have to renew and improve CRM and RM strategies by producing and delivering high quality core products and supporting services in a more systematic manner. Those organisations with the strongest customer relationships will stand the best opportunities to retain the customer transactions. Many organisations are selecting a few key market targets and concentrating on trying to serve them better than competitors (Zineldin, 2006).

CRM is an effective way to maintain a customer data base which allows an organisation to understand more fully a customer's needs, particularly their relationship needs, better than

competitors. Market environment can quickly alter price and technologies, but close relationships with loyal customers can last a life time. Close relationships provide a boost to added value. The added value creates customer loyalty (Zineldin, 2005).

2.8 Analytical and critical perspective of CRM

As Nguyen (2007) mentioned CRM is not “another information tool”. Potentially, CRM programmes can contribute exceptional economic value to the organisation as well as competitive advantage. Implementing a CRM system can enhance an organisation’s ability to improve customer service, which in turn can generate revenue. However, not all organisations who implement CRM have been successful. Indeed according to MacSweeny (2000), 60 percent of in- house CRM systems fail. The Giga survey in 2001 revealed that companies generally underestimate the complexities of CRM, lack clear business objectives and tend to invest inadequately in the provision of CRM software.

Chen and Popovich (2003) suggest that, for those successful companies, software vendor such as Oracle, SAP, Peoplesoft, Microsoft and Sieble are racing to bring off –the –shelf CRM application to organisations. Many of these are the vendors responsible for developing enterprise planning resource (EPR) systems. While there are many compelling reasons to consider a CRM strategy, caution and careful analysis is prudent. Hackney (2000) warns that although CRM software vendors may entice organisations with promise of powerful applications, to date there is no guarantee for 100 percent solution. Possible risks such as project failure, inadequate return on investment, unplanned project budget revisions, unhappy customers, loss of employee confidence and diversion of key management time and resources must be well thought out (Schweigert, 2000).

A research undertaken by Buehrer and Mueller (2002) has shown that in four categories CRM implementation has several problems. In terms of solutions offered by vendors, many companies do not want to buy complete CRM suits but rather a CRM tools that fits into the company’s current information technology (IT) application landscape. A CRM system therefore is still considered to be merely an add-on to existing IT systems. In terms of the

business scope of CRM solution, the focus was clearly set on the business to business rather than the business to customer and the business to employee relationship. It would appear that, this result reflected the traditional view of business perspective among the participants. Another problem they highlight is that considering the different needs of companies of their sizes, different solutions have to be offered as well. Indeed when evaluating CRM for implementation the size of the company and thus its organisation and structure play an important role. In addition they conclude that a further problem is that with regarding to business sectors targeted by CRM vendor, more than 30 percent of CRM users are IT companies, automotive industry, transport, travel, media and utilising which are expected to drop. However, the health care, the chemical industry, the pharmaceutical industry and the metal industry are the least common customers which are expected to increase. It would seem the CRM system which has been designed and proved to be successful in one industry will be suitable for other industries as well. Although this might not be the case at all, different industries inherit specific characteristics regarding, structure, organisation, customer and process.

As CRM reaches into many parts of the business it has been suggested that organisations should adopt a holistic approach (Girishankar, 2000). This holistic approach places CRM at the heart of an organisation with customer oriented business process and the integration of CRM systems. Indeed, Bull (2003) states that, holistic approaches to CRM help organisations co-ordinate and effectively maintain the growth of disparate customer contact point or channels of communication. However, problems of channel conflict have been identified whereby customer experiences differ depending on the sales channel (Peppard, 2000).

According to Parvatiar & Seth (2001), "At theoretical level, CRM may mean an emerging research paradigm in marketing. Thus, a clarification and conceptualisation of this construct is needed to ensure that knowledge of CRM grows in a cumulative way. Moreover, while we observe that there has been an increase in the attention paid to CRM by practitioner and academic, to date no systematic attempt has been made to develop a valid measure of it or to assess its influence on business performance".

“In order to have a successful implementation of CRM, organisation should evaluate how CRM fits into their overall business strategy, evaluate its current CRM capabilities, and have a business reason for implementing CRM. Organisations should then create a plan and execute it” (Nguyen, 2007).

Organisation today must focus on delivering the highest value to customers through better communication, faster delivery, and personalised products and services. Since a large percentage of customer interactions will occur on the internet rather than with employees (Bultema, 2000), technology must adapt to the changing and unpredictable market. Organisations that implement CRM and e-business applications will have the greatest gain (Lange, 1999). The future of CRM is e-relationship management or e-RM that will synchronise cross channel relationships (Saunders, 1999).

Alt (2004) notes that, there is no “unique” CRM project and that successful implementations are rarely technical projects. CRM is still at an early stage regarding the adoption in practice as well as regarding the understanding of the success factor on a detail level. Further research is needed to derive empirically testable hypotheses and to embed the success factors in a methodology which guides companies in successful CRM implementation. In essence it seems quite simple: look after your customers and they will look after your business. But as with all such management theories, CRM is hard to implement properly. One recent survey found that 70 percent of organisations that had implemented CRM have found it to be only a minor success or even a failure (Strategy direction journal, 2002).

2.9 Customer relationship management in ‘HE’ sector

“In this dynamic, competitive environment the future success of educational establishments rests on their ability to differentiate themselves and builds meaningful relationships not only with existing students but with potential students as well. To achieve this, internal systems need to be maximized to their full potential through the integration and use of internal CRM which can pull together disseminated pieces of information from all types of databases and sources” (King, 2005).

The education sector has undergone many changes in recent years, particularly where student finance, overseas students relationships with private businesses and funding bodies are concerned. These pressures are compounded by an increasingly competitive environment. Using an effective customer relationship management system seems vital for education establishments to deal more efficiently with the complex multi-level relationships they have to manage (Distinction Company, 2006).

Cleary (2001) states that in higher education students are customers; some areas that touch the students are the registration process, transcript service, career counselling and academic support service. Indeed Seeman and O’Hara (2006) encapsulate that CRM can play a significant role in collaboration with the college’s programme and service. Indeed, information about a course prerequisite or a schedule listing is an integral part of the college experience. They also mention that most students view administrative activities as a necessary evil; thus, an information system with an enhanced CRM initiative that provides an individualised fast-track to completing these activities can be a strong incentive for selecting a particular institution.

A total of 75 percent of incoming traditional-age undergraduates have significant experience with information technology (Milliron, 2001). This experience translates into higher student expectations regarding available technology resources. Students expect technology to be an integral part of their entire educational process and anticipate a higher level of access to information. According to Grant and Anderson (2002), from the student-as-customer perspective, an educational CRM system would provide interaction with all the

traditional student touch points such as admissions, registration and financial aid through a single system that would facilitate a complete understanding of each student's unique situation.

According to Agresso Company (2006), there are objectives which should be adapted with a view to utilising CRM system in a HE:

- To education establishments to adopted an entire CRM philosophy concerning the way that business is run.
- To allow them to optimise and integrate routine management processes resulting in dynamic and interactive relationships covering all areas of their organisation.

And the requirements for achieving those objectives are:

- A consistent and customisable solution empowering organisations to gain higher levels of visibility and customer service.
- To achieve efficiencies in administration process and enhance relationships, developing a culture of trust, reassurance and commitment.

2.10 Summary

This chapter illustrates the theories and models and results of past researchers which consider factors necessary to successful implementation of CRM. The result of adopting CRM system in organisations in different industries and sectors have shown that, although there are difficulties for implementation, if it is implemented properly, it will have a highly beneficial competitor advantage for an organisation. It could happen when the CRM system objectives are primarily aligned with an organisation objectives and strategy.

“More than anything else, CRM requires a customer-centric attitude. Unless you are selling a cheap commodity to a nameless customer (a consumer), the quality of your relationship with the customer will do more to improve or destroy your business than anything else you can do” (Lipka, 2006).

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodological stand point of this research will be highlighted in this chapter. it will provide readers with enough information to understand the research design. In addition it will explain the rationale that underpins the methodology. The main focus of this study is firstly to address the issue of the viability of a CRM system in the University of Chester and secondly the advantages of qualitative research. The research procedures describe the way in which the study was conducted, and what kind of instruments and tools were applied. The data analysis section illustrates the theory of data collection and analysis. In all research it is important to consider ethic and ethical considerations. these will be addressed in a separate section. In the summary section, the limitations of the research will be outlined and suggestions for further study will be provided.

3.2 Methodological considerations

To answer the research question, the researcher has chosen secondary data to show the implementation of CRM across different levels in organisations and industries and the HE sector. In this exploratory study, as a research strategy, a single case study is employed. In order to measure the qualitative data, Roehampton University has been chosen to ensure the reliability of analysis data and the validity of collection. Also, in order to collect and gather information about Roehampton University's vision and strategies and what facilities and benefit were gained with CRM and in order to compare it with the University of Chester, appropriate secondary data was chosen. Information and data was gathered and analysed from past researchers who investigated the implementation of CRM in HE as well as both University of Chester and Roehampton University websites and various companies. Moreover, in terms of validity and reliability a video recording with three interviewees about the changes in Roehampton University before and after implementation of CRM was used and the transcript is in the Appendix(1).

This research evaluates the CRM system in the HE at a strategic level. As such, the people from whom the information and data is collected regarding long-term strategy and visions should be an organisation board and senior management; in this study this is the University of Chester and Roehampton University. According to Fletcher and Wright (1996) “successful CRM implementation can only be achieved with the full commitment and support of an organisations broad and senior management”. One of the ways to access this kind of information is through written materials which are accessible on an organisation’s website. Information such as future strategies, visions and annual reports are the type of data which are used by the researcher in this study. They provide the researcher with required written documentary data. Saunders (2007) cited that Johnson (2004) defines analytic induction as ‘the intensive examination of a strategically selected numbers of cases so as to empirically establish the causes of specific phenomenon’.

3.3 Justification for the selected paradigm and methodology

“A paradigm ... serves to define what should be studied, what question should be asked, and what rules should be followed in interpreting the answers obtained. The paradigm is the broadest unit of consensus within a science and serve to differentiate one scientific community (or sub community) from another” (Ritzer, 1975).

As mentioned above, the method for gathering data and information is documentary- based research and most of the written or non written document reviews are gained from data published on the Internet. Utilising of the Internet in document-based research Oates (2006) illustrates that the Internet is ideally suited to document-based research, since so much of it is in the form of electronic documents such as personal and company WebPages, emails, archived discussion list, bulletin boards and so on.

The topic of this research is customer relationship management and it is an integrated system which covers the areas based on the information system concept in relation to other aspects of an organisation such as sales and resources. To understand the philosophical

point of view and methodology of CRM systems it is necessary to look at the nature and characteristics of an information system.

According to Galliers (1992) ontological philosophical aspects regarding the nature of information systems (IS) is defined as follows: IS exists in a real world which consists of objects such as *machines*; some abstract such as budget, account and sales; *people* such as customers and suppliers; *rules* such as established procedures; *norms* and *command* such as computer programs and standing order. He also mentions that “it is my contention that information systems epistemology draws heavily from the social science because information systems are fundamentally, social rather than technical systems”.

There are many information system researchers who may only feel comfortable with scientific or positivism paradigm (Oates, 2006). However, he mentions, in the empirical examination of an information system, that to gain a complete picture and understanding, the researcher should use interpretive paradigm. Also an ontological stance is held following the constructionism, because the social actor plays a significant role in the construction of social reality. Oates (2006), in order to analysis the qualitative data suggest that analysis is more subjective, and relies heavily on the researcher’s knowledge and experience to identify patterns, extract themes and make generalisations.”

This study is based on interpretive epistemology philosophy. Because interpretive research offers a way of understanding the information system model as a practice constructed and developed by social actors.

3.4 Research design

Research design is the general plan of how a researcher can answer the research question (Saunders, 2006). To answer the research objectives, an exploratory study has been chosen to conduct a literature search in order to understand and identify data and information with regards the topics that will need to be covered in a subsequent research project.

In this study, to collect data and information in order to answer the research questions, the empirical research method is used by the researcher. Empirical research normally starts with some a priori theory, which the researcher develops to try to predict what happens in the real world (Moody, 2002). The purpose of the research is to test the theory and possibly refine it. To analysis the data in empirical research a relationship between variables and their measurement will be based on the literature. Hypothesis in this empirical research is the expected relationship with variables which are independent of CRM and dependent upon the University of Chester. These are then are empirically tested. This study is based upon the use of a qualitative method to collect qualitative data using documentary and video. This method tends to be more appropriate for exploratory research because it builds a theory and tests a hypothesis. However, there are some issues which require the employment of quantitative methods in CRM and the University of Chester. Indeed “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003).

This study presents a single case study of a UK University, to gain an understanding and to explore the recent experience of implementing a CRM system in the HE sector and introducing it in the University of Chester. The Case study method was considered the most suitable research strategy for this study for the following reasons: Firstly, it enables the researcher to investigate characteristics such as size, background and long-term strategies of the two earlier specified universities. Secondly, it can provide an empirical understanding of the issues around the implementation of a CRM system. Indeed, it is particularly useful when the finding needs to be referred to in order to implement changes,

plans and programmes (Wang, 2007). Finally, it enables a researcher to pose questions relating to what happened, how things happened and why (Yin, 1994).

3.5 Research methods / procedures

The main focus of the study is to identify CRM implementation in different organisations. In this section the most appropriate research method to access the secondary data will be outlined and the reasons for choosing such a procedure will be given. One of the best instruments for access to powerful databases which provide e-journals, e-books and e-magazines such as Emerald, JSTOR and Netlibrary is the computers and the Internet. For instance, in the Emerald website there are many academic journals and articles which are appropriate for the researcher in the management and business fields. In order to access these databases which are mentioned above, the University of Chester has an internal database server and email server for students who can see and check all the information about themselves and their email. It is named IBIS. In the IBIS system, all students with a user name and password can have access to academic databases and websites. This represents a contract between University of Chester and its students. This method was used by the researcher, to gain most of the material and statistics for this study. The remaining information was found in the University of Chester's library in order to collect information about e-business and information systems. In order to collect information about Roehampton University and University of Chester and the CRM system the researcher can choose a suitable search engine such as Google, Dogpile and Academicindex. The result of utilising the search engine is to find websites from which the researcher can collect the required data from them. In terms of collecting information concerning the Universities' strategies and vision, the researcher needed to look at the annual report or in the website's pages. To collect information from Roehampton University about the implementation of the CRM system, the researcher used websites of companies which contributed to such implementation, such as "Agresso" and "Distinction".

3.6 Ethical considerations

Regarding the use of the Internet documentary research by the researcher, one of the important ethical issues for study should be the consideration of the ethics of using Internet documents. A researcher would have to be aware of the ethical issues during the research process of designing and gaining access to information and data, collecting data, processing and storing data and analysing and reporting data (Saunders et al., 2007). For instance, the researcher, in order to collect the data ensured that all of the information from journals and websites was checked for permission from the owners or contributors with regard to usage. Indeed, in circumstances which the researcher could not find the name of the authors, he put the complete source of information in the form of (APA) references. In many cases there are issues regarding the use of sensitive or confidential information which is not normally available in public and official websites and which the researcher has used. However, in this study this not a consideration because all of the information which the researcher has used is widely available to the general public.

3.7 Summary

Although benefits of qualitative research are outlined in this study, Byrne (2002) mentions a couple of critique components associated with qualitative research. The researcher attempts to resolve one of them: generalisation. This can be linked with a question: how can just Roehampton University be a representative of all HEI's. The answer is that it cannot be, but it needs to be taken in consideration that in terms of implementation of a CRM system this is because, as it states in literature review, there are not two HEI's exactly alike. The study simply seeks to find those characteristic factors which can be extracted from Roehampton University to find any similarities.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) "the qualitative methods tend to be applied more easily in real world settings, but lack internal validity (alternative explanations of results; lack of control) and external validity (usually concerned with a single case: limits

generalisability to other settings). Also, interpretation of data is by nature much more subjective than quantitative methods, it is easy to read what you want into the data.” Moreover, there are some issues which can most effectively be investigated by using a quantitative method. For instance marketing research and customer satisfaction is an issue which is not within the scope of this study.

4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss secondary data such as the University of Chester's corporate plan and a video-recorded interview with regards to Roehampton University. This chapter provides in-depth information gained by means of a qualitative research approach. By undertaking the analysis of the strategies and vision in University of Chester the researcher enables the reader to understand the meaning of underlying the data more than through utilisation of data through a quantitative approach. As such, it provides an investigation through direct questions and description of objectives.

The content of this chapter comprises of three main sections which reflect the three dissertation objectives. This helps the reader to understand the consistency between the objectives and related information. Quotations are used to highlight the interviewees' experience describing particular areas and their opinions and also to illustrate data from the corporate plan of the case study (University of Chester) with regards to literature.

In terms of the first objective, identifying contemporary thinking of the CRM system, the researcher attempted to discover whether implementation of CRM has the potential to benefit an organisation. Indeed, the researcher needed to review the literature and gathered information and analysed it. In relation to the second objective, the researcher, by checking through of the University of Chester's corporate plans will examine the several potential management strategic benefits which will be compatible with objectives and strategy of a CRM system. The third and last objective of this study relates to the results after implementation of a CRM system in HEI's such as Roehampton University. A video-recorded interview about the results and benefits of this system will be discussed. The researcher's intention was to add some information which that could emerge in Chapter Five. In summary section, the results of the investigation will summarise into a short-sentence overview. The outcomes are categorised by the dissertation objectives.

4.2 Contemporary thinking of the CRM system

In literature review, in Chapter two the researcher discusses various models. Also he uses past research about utilising and implementing the CRM system. In addition to this study, in order to enhance the administrative system, establish the vision for the financial, student and business systems architecture, establish the scope, priorities and character of the project and provide an evaluation process for the projects outcomes in a HEI's and based of information gathered from three focus group meetings, the steering committee developed a vision statement for the implementation an information system, Seeman & O'Hara (2006) state that:

“The comprehensive, fully integrated administrative system of the twenty- first century will support student-centred learning, management decisions, accountability to external constituencies, and business operation for all community colleges through a flexible, seamless electronic network that is accessible to all,”

Indeed, researchers argue that the change management initiative is a critical prerequisite for successful CRM implementation (Peppers & Rogers, 1999). Organisations need to engage in risk management planning since a CRM initiative is a complex and uncertain process, relying on a detailed understanding of ever changing customer needs and wants (O'Reily & Dunne, 2004). According to Xu and Walton (2005):

“Despite all the talk of customer focus, there is a little evidence that senior executives have their finger on the pulse. Three quarter of senior management do not have regular, direct contact with their customers.”

Indeed, reasons for implementation CRM in organisations, they illustrate that major considerations for companies in using CRM primarily to improve customer satisfaction level, and secondly to retain existing customers and then improve customer life time value. This shows that most managers accept the view that gaining a new customer is more costly than retaining an existing customer.

In terms of life-cycle- concept and relationship, Heinrich (2005) notes that “Life-cycle- concept” act as base to derive and design new relationship process, apart from relationship specific activities within sale process. A relationship is not a date oriented but a period oriented construct, which customers establish, maintain for a time and terminate. Figure-5 shows such a life cycle as ideal type. The life-cycle-concept differentiates between phases like meet, start, penetration and maturity, and crisis and distance.

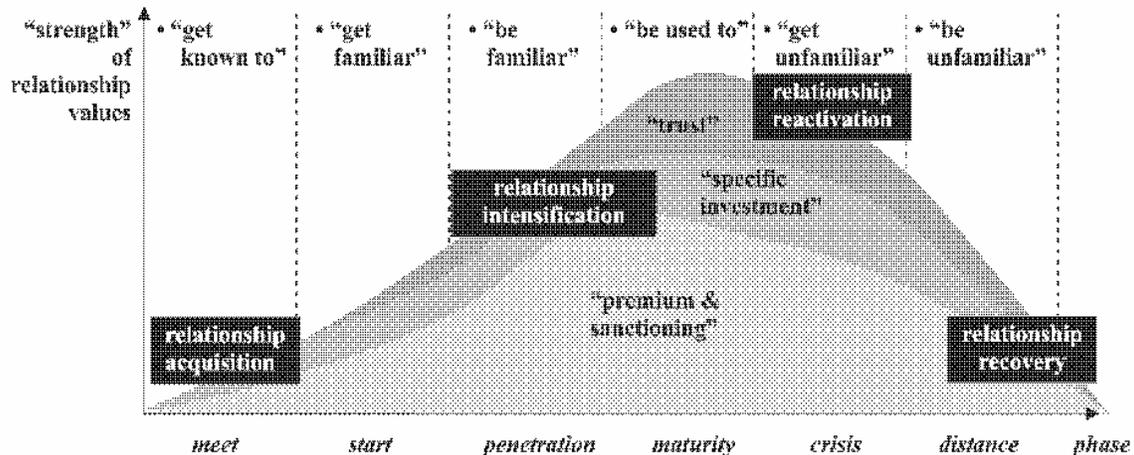


Figure -5, Relationship life cycle and creation of relationship values (ideal type), Source: Heinrich (2005).

4.3 Examine the University of Chester’s vision and strategy

Based on the University of Chester’s corporate plan which consists of visions and core value, the researcher has attempted to compare those with a CRM system vision and strategy. In order to identify similarities, the researcher has highlighted the senior management of University of Chester’s future point of view with regards to CRM strategy and objectives. The most important part of the university of Chester corporate plan is in Appendix (2).

4.3.1 Overview

“In the various stages of its development since it was established by the Church of England in 1839, the University of Chester has been mindful of constant change in the nature of higher education and the demands of society, and of the expanding knowledge base of the modern era. However, at Chester, being able to respond to change is just as important as recognising our traditions and Christian heritage. Through adapting our courses to meet the needs of today’s world, we have retained our position as one of the most popular higher education institutions in the country.” (Corporate plan, 2006).

4.3.2 Vision

“At the heart of the University’s vision is our commitment to: ensuring a rewarding student learning experience; developing the expertise of our staff; teaching excellence; and our growing research and scholarly profile. Fundamental to these ideals and aspirations is the positive impact that the University has on the lives of our students, our staff, and our community, all of which underpin the institution’s significant and developing contribution to the region and beyond. In valuing and celebrating our long history and traditions, the University is modern, dynamic and enterprising in its approach to developing new opportunities. In particular, we are committed to engendering a sense of pride and shared ownership in all those associated with us and with what we do.” (Corporate plan, 2006).

Steenstrup (2006) mentions that the CRM vision is a picture of what the enterprise aspires to be; to target customers. Also he describes three elements of a CRM vision (Figure-6) as: customer experience, differentiating brand values and core value proposition.

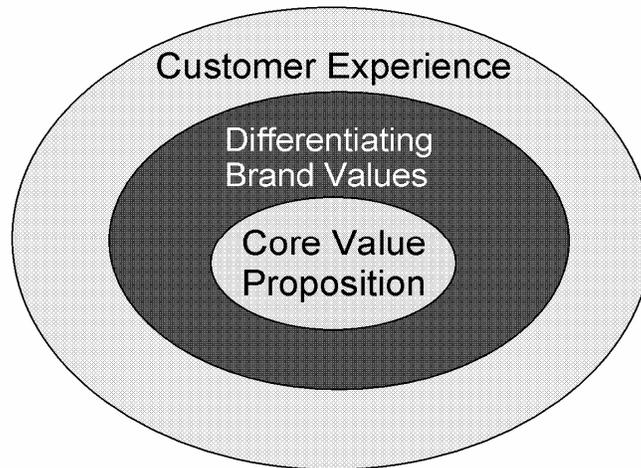


Figure -6, **What is the CRM vision**, source: Steenstrup(2006)

The follow quotations are based on the Steenstrup definition which the researcher has identified.

- Core value proposition:

- The pursuit of excellence and innovation
- A distinctive student experience

“We are committed to providing all our students with a high quality, caring and supportive learning experience, including work-related learning, that equips them with the necessary personal and academic skills to engage confidently with the wider world.”

- Partnership and community

“Through our staff, students and alumni, we seek to play a leading role in the intellectual, cultural, social, spiritual and economic life of the local, regional and wider communities we serve, and with which we interact.”

- Inclusiveness and responsibility

“We espouse actively the principles of equality of opportunity and diversity, and continually apply them in the conduct of our relationships and business. We are, in

particular, committed to widening access to higher education. Within an ethically aware and professional environment, we acknowledge our responsibilities to promote freedom of inquiry and scholarly expression.”

- A supportive culture and environment
- A caring foundation

As it can be seen in core values, management mentions to improve its relationship with students and also student life cycle.

- Differentiating Brand value:

With Regards to differentiating brand value Nguyen (2007) states that products or services should be better and different on a dimension that customers care about than those of other competitors. Indeed the researcher could refer to a new course such as MBA which illustrates differentiating thought in University of Chester. Although management does not mention this directly, it can be encapsulated from the corporate plan, as:

“Since it is important that the University clearly defines its mission and strategic goals, this corporate plan, realising our potential - an agenda for excellence has been developed. The plan is ambitious, as any plan for the University of Chester should be.”

“The great strength of the University lies in its broad base and its unity: we start with a fundamental commitment to plan our future as one university. This is diversity in its most productive sense, a safe place for alternative, and sometimes competing, views and ideas.”

In terms of competitive advantage, it mentions in core values that:

“It will be implemented at a time when the rate of growth of traditional resources is under pressure, and the Plan will accordingly require the University to be particularly creative and responsive to changes in the sector and the market.”

- Customer experience:

In order to identify the customer (student in this case) experience, the researcher will outline the following in the corporate plan:

“To provide our students with the best possible integrated learning experiences that enhance their intellectual, professional and personal growth, both inside and outside the University.”

Also in “indicator of success”, corporate plan in terms of student experience states:

“We will seek to ensure that:

- outcomes of student satisfaction surveys, both internal and external, reflect a tangible improvement in the facilities, services and overall experience of students studying at the University;
- internal and external completion and employability benchmarks for the University are satisfied or exceeded;
- student academic performance levels continue to be maintained or improved;
- Take-up rates from well qualified prospective students continue to be strong.”

Indeed, with regard to the CRM system and University of Chester vision, it can be concluded that, there is enough evidence to demonstrate the similarities.

4.3.3 Strategy

Steenstrup(2006) notes that, any enterprise having a corporate plan or long-term strategy could be part of CRM strategy. This implies that the University of Chester has made steps its first move towards having a CRM strategy. According to Professor T J Wheeler (2006), he describes key strategic objectives to 2011 as follows:

- To ensure that the University's Christian foundation, underpinning ethos and supportive *people-centred* culture continue to play an appropriately prominent and facilitative role in the development and strengthening of the institution
- To develop creatively new and successful niche markets
- To seek modest growth and consolidation in student numbers to some 11 ,000 full-time equivalent students, with an emphasis upon: maintaining a broadly based curriculum grounded in the University's current portfolio of disciplines; further development of taught postgraduate and research degree provision; further development of part-time student numbers and foundation degree programmes; and exploring appropriate international development opportunities
- To continue to be an efficient and prudently managed University with an increasingly varied range of income sources
- To continue to ensure that the University's forward vision and strategy is actively shared and promoted amongst staff, students and all interested external stakeholders

Although there is no direct statement about brand value strategy, the researcher found brand value in different shapes and forms in corporate plan. Indeed, the brand value strategy contributes to the companies' ultimate goal, which is to understand and recognise its customer's behaviour. Brand is more just a name, icon, or slogan. It is not simply something to grab the customers' imagination (Eechambadi, 2006). He also argues that "it is all about encapsulation all the customers' interactions with the company and its products and service." The statements as follows could be part of brand value strategy in University of Chester:

“Through sustained commitment and innovation, the University has progressively secured a richly deserved national and international reputation for the quality and standards of our higher education programmes.”

“We want to strengthen recognition of the University across the region and also at national and international levels...”

“Within Cheshire, we want to foster a stronger affinity with the University and understanding of the many contributions it makes to the quality of life and economic development. To achieve this, we need to strengthen relationships, based on consistent and credible communications.”

“The University’s estate and facilities are able to attract conferences of national and, where appropriate, international standing.”

In terms of customer (student) - centred, and customer focused strategy which is fundamental for A CRM system, the researcher found these statements:

“The University accordingly seeks to provide a caring, student-centred environment ...”

“...Student administration will be student focused, efficient and supportive.”

Also this one from the key strategic objectives which are also mentioned above:

“...and supportive *people-centred* culture....”

Corporate planning in the University of Chester consists of other elements which are similar to a CRM system strategy such as learning and teaching; research, scholarship and knowledge enterprise; partnership; diversity and inclusion; the university environment; management and financial strategy and risk management.

4.4 Examine the experience for utilising the CRM in HEI's (University of Roehampton)

The video-recorded interview helped the researcher reveal additional information in terms of “after implementation” to examine the area which interviewees cover in order to answer the last objective. The transcript of video-recorded interview is shown in appendix (1).

4.4.1 Overview

“Roehampton University was granted University title in August 2004. It nevertheless has a long and proud tradition, having roots in its four colleges, all founded between 1841 and 1892, which were pioneers in teacher training and in providing wide access to students” (corporate strategy, 2006).

4.4.2 Participants point of view

First of all with regards to add value, Mrs. Subi Blakumar, Deputy Director of Marketing Recruitment and Admission in Roehampton University, states that:

“...Now, in particular, the education sector is changing. Students are becoming more demanding and looking for value for money from their education.”

“...So, University is now, have to become more competitive and responsive to the needs of students. They are now starting to look at technology and software that have already been used in private sector for number of years such the CRM.”

Indeed, she mentions that business in Roehampton University can be categorised into three different areas:

“Firstly, a lot of our recruitment strategies are based on relationship marketing to encourage applicants... and the software and technology that we wanted to develop is important, so we can run much more sophisticated highly targeted, creative CRM campaigns.

“..Secondly, the workload within our centralised inquiries unit has shut up and increased by over 150 % in past three years. So we needed another software that would enable us to manage this workload and ...”

And the most important one is:

“Finally, we wanted to investigate and analyse the life cycle of a student in order to track from first point of contact right through graduation and alumni..... “

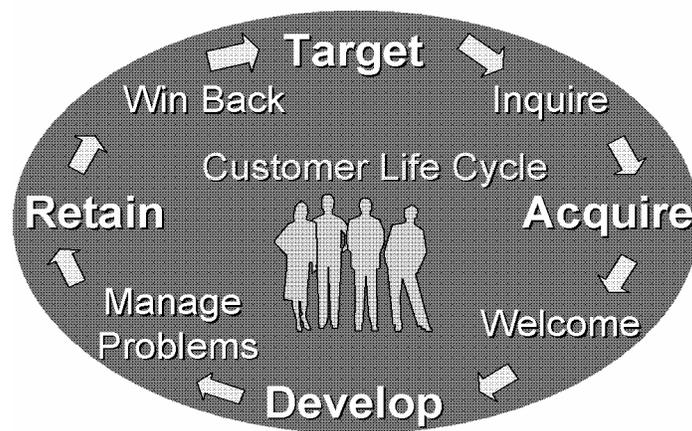


Figure -7, **Customer Life Cycle**, Source: Steenstrup (2006), Gartner Ltd.

Steenstrup(2006) highlights that there are four main questions in terms of developing the customer asset base (Figure -7). These are as follows:

Acquire: How do we acquire valuable customers who will value us?

Develop: How do we develop customers' loyalty and value to us by developing our value to the customer?

Retain: How can we retain or win back customers of value?

Target: How do we create awareness of what we offer to potential customers of value?

After implementation the CRM system and by linking to the student records system with “in-house access database system” Roehampton University have the ability to monitor the life cycle of its students. In the following Mrs. Blakumar notes that how the process of the student life cycle can impact on the marketing strategy and University’s Strategic plan:

“I think for the organisation what will be able to provide for them is historic data. Historic tracking from cradle to grave. We are going to be able to give that sort of really hard tangible and data of how many students are enquired, and how many students applied and eventually how many students were went onto enrol at Roehampton; and to be able to use that sort of data to inform our marketing strategy and then that will again feed into university’s strategic plan.”

Also she mentions a technical problem which refers to the back office and analytical CRM

“..The old system was pretty much a standalone access database. We couldn’t do anything more with that...”

With regards to the problem with the database which Mrs. Blakumar mentioned and the facilities a CRM system could give them, Sara Hart (enquiries team leader) explain:

“..If the phone call came in, the system wasn’t responsive enough that you could enter data straight on the system; which we had to hand write the phone call day to day down and then re enter it. The University was asking the enquiries unit to provide much more complicated reports; we couldn’t do that because we couldn’t tie the data in to the student data record system. The new system is very easy to provide, it has a lot of functionality already built in with it, their needed.”

Indeed, John Drew Business Development Director in Distinction Ltd. describes how long Roehampton University had been working on an integrated system and which areas in the University need to have a new and integrated system:

“We’ve been working with the Roehampton University for.... probably about six, seven years now....”

“... We at that time we were looking to further develop the functionality within our recruitment marketing area of our main student management system. However we realise that we need to have a system which is far more functionally rich than just an enquiry management system.”

Also he discusses the reason why the software and its vendor which is used in the front office in a CRM system were chosen.

“We looked at number of solutions have primarily we need to find a system which would integrate into dot net frame work which we were currently working with, but also into operability with Microsoft office pretty paramount as well.”

“Also we needed something which was cost effective because UK education public sector in general has rigid budgets. Microsoft CRM certainly fitted that well. Some of the functionality aspects of interoperability with products like exchange and the office environment have been a huge benefit to not only our developers but also to end application users.”

Sara Hart as a user of the CRM system in the University, explains that:

“One of the most positive things is that system fully integrates with the student records system and it means that we are talked to callers or enquires, We really do know exactly who they are and what contact it had with University before and as the University becomes much more demanding; and schools and academics are asking for much more complicated data... being able just joint data tables together. To pull out exactly what they need, very very quickly and with minimum training, is a real asset.”

According to Subi Blakumar (Roehampton University case study, 2006), “CRM solutions now provide us with a cutting edge, 21st century tools that allow us to reinvent what student focus means today. We have already achieved a significant increase in both enquiries and applications over the past year...”

4.5 Summary of results

This last section of the fourth chapter summarises the information which has been gathered in the previous objectives-related sections. The review is divided into three parts related to the objectives so that a reader can understand the outcomes gained from previous sections. The first objective outcome relates to contemporary CRM. In terms of advantage and disadvantage identified through the literature review process, the researcher has come up to following:

- It has a powerful access database
- There are difficulties to install a customer-centre strategic
- CRM must be planned carefully
- Use the experience of other organisations provided to maximise the chances of success
- CRM is a difficult strategy to implement
- Competitive advantage through customer loyalty
- Link between knowledge management and technology
- Add value

Secondly, the researcher highlighted some additional information about CRM in the HE

- Information system plays a significant role in Universities
- There is potential for CRM at the Universities which is becoming much more competitive
- CRM is the key business strategy in the 21st century

The second objective outcomes are associated with the case study's vision and strategic level in order to find potential for implementing a CRM system such as:

- Similarities in vision and strategy
- Lack of customer loyalty
- CRM strategy is part of corporate strategy
- Needs a brand proposition

The third objective outcomes are linked to demonstrate the changes and needs in successful HEI's. The outcomes are:

- Use of historic data and monitor the life cycle of their student from initial enquiry to admissions to registration to alumni, through recording every contact /correspondent they had with their student
- Integrated system which is work with other current and base on dot net
- Linkage between front and back ,to have ability for historical analysis and tracking

5 Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In this empirical, explorative investigation a qualitative method has been employed to assess the possible potential benefits with regards to implementation of a CRM system in the University of Chester which addresses its vision and strategies. This chapter evaluates the methodology adopted and explains how successful it was at addressing the research problems. On the other hand, the areas where the selected research method emerged to be appropriate are identified. After the critical assessment of methodology, findings for each research object are briefly summarised by the research objectives and are discussed in chapter four. After summarising the findings, the chapter discusses other limitations that became apparent during the progress of research and recommends further research with regards to CRM in University of Chester.

5.2 Critical evaluation of adopted methodology

An inductive approach has been used during the study at strategic level in the University of Chester. This is to clarify the inevitability of qualitative methods in the research which was outlined in chapter three. Apart from this approach, qualitative data also had a key position in relation to the testing of a theory which is typical in a quantitative research. This relates the objectives where the visions and strategies of the case study (University of Chester) with CRM objectives in literature review examined by means of qualitative research method. A video-recorded interview with a manager staff in Roehampton University and a manager from Distinct Company proved to be successful to identify the problems they had and their final solution. The qualitative method enables the researcher to collect data required for this case study of research from written material and a video recording.

The real methodological limitations of this study are that the method used for data analysis uses languages rather than statistics. According to Oates (2006), “interpretation of data is

more closely tied to the researchers (their identity, background, assumption and beliefs) than in quantitative data analysis". Although, another limitation could be the utilisation of secondary data instead of primary data, as it seems reasonable that the researcher could not access both Universities' senior management for conducting an interview. Critics might say a single case study is not sufficient, multiple case studies should have been used or other research method should have been undertaken. Indeed the researcher recommends conducting further research for implementing CRM system in other areas which are not covered by this study.

5.3 Conclusions about each research objective

The following objectives have been achieved after more in-depth research with regards to possible potentialities for CRM systems to be integrated in HEI's:

1- To identify contemporary thinking of the CRM system

In the present competitive environment, organisations need to retain existing high-value customers to remain competitive. One technique that can be used to achieve greater loyalty from customers is to personalise service provided. CRM is now making it possible to recreate an old-fashioned customer service experience in every sector of the economy (Jeong, 2003). Xu et al. (2002) states that CRM solutions not only improve customer loyalty, but also internalise processes which in turn increase efficiency. They help manage marketing campaigns with clear goals and quantifiable objectives. It also creates and manages solid sales leads for field and telesales representatives. Such tight and accurate targeting and one-to-one marketing increases returns on marketing investments. A CRM system also adds valuable knowledge gained directly from customer interaction. This knowledge improves product development process.

He also mentions that one key point that managers should understand is that, although CRM depends on and is driven by cutting-edge technology, it only works when supported by the corporate culture which embraces customer-focused aims. Without a comprehensive

understanding of customer-focused objectives, organisations will find it very difficult to leverage this cutting-edge technology. A CRM system depends on “systems” to support continuous interactions, fast feedback, adaptation and proactivity. Technology alone can not do this. Therefore, organisations need to understand how they are going to fill these gaps.

The failure of CRM implementations is a problem of incompleteness. Collaboration of sales, marketing and customer service activities is the first stage in CRM implementation. This is necessary but not sufficient. It also requires exploitation of human and organisational resources. Any organisation committed to CRM must continuously invest in its relationship with its customers because this is the only competitive advantage remaining to an organisation (Xu, 2002).

All things considered, in order to have successful implementation of CRM, organisations should evaluate how CRM fits into their overall business strategy, evaluate its current CRM capabilities, and have a business reason for requiring it (Nguyen, 2006).

2- To examine the University of Chester's vision and strategy

With regards to the University of Chester's corporate plans, the researcher found evidence which addresses similarities within a CRM system in terms of vision and strategy. Indeed, management is tending to apply a customer-centred approach. To clarify the differences between customer-centred and product-centred strategies Chen and Popovich (2003) argue that in a product-focused approach, the goal is to find customers for the products using mass marketing efforts. However a customer-centric approach, the goal becomes developing products and services to fit customers' needs. According to Seybold (1998), there are five steps in designing a customer-centric organisation, one of which is that an organisation has to redesign the front office and examine information flow between the front and back office. Indeed this process would probably be difficult to develop and implement.

As mentioned in the literature review, senior management plays a significant role in implementing a CRM system. If CRM is used it must be with the backing of those at the highest level in an organisation and it must be planned carefully. Indeed, a process must be undertaken which would take note of CRM theory and use the experiences of others to maximise the chances of success.

With regards to brand value strategy, although the researcher could not find any direct statement in University of Chester's corporate plans, it is evident that brand value strategy as mentioned in chapter four is indirectly applied by the management. However, Dull (2003) illustrates that a successful brand in an organisation should be customer-focused: based on loyal customers, who are emotionally and financially committed to repeat purchasing.

3- To examine the experience for utilising the CRM in HEI's (University of Roehampton)

Roehampton University's management believes that the HI sector is changing. Students are becoming more demanding and looking for added value from their education. Also Universities are now, having to become more competitive and responsive to the needs of students. John King, one of the managers in Roehampton University in terms of CRM database development, highlights that as a part of marketing strategy they use the CRM system to provide prospective students with up-to-date information on all programmes of study. As such, management can track enquires to assist recruitment.

Management in Roehampton University by linking the in- house database system with student record system, as an integrated system, can use the data for monitoring the students life cycle and access the historic data. These enable them to feed into the marketing strategy and strategic plan.

Another issue which was important for implementing a CRM system was choosing an appropriate vendor in terms of using software or also Hardware, as the ideal solution is to use software which is cost effective and compatible with the current system.

5.4 Conclusions about the research question

The battle for customers has never been more intense. Diversification and globalisation have stimulated a dramatic rise in competition and the result is forcing organisations to switch from product-centric to customer-centric approach such as the CRM system (Xu, 2002). Changes in the market that have driven interest in CRM also apply to HEI's. Today more than 80 HEI's in the UK use all or some function of the CRM system (Agresso newsletter, 2007). Although, research in the Universities which used CRM system suggest that there is little evidence of true CRM activity in large UK higher education institute. Indeed, some smaller ones are beginning to use the technique successfully such as Roehampton University. Also, in order to use CRM system, some business schools are using databases to identify and pursue good prospects, such as Henley. Indeed, the lack of good CRM practice in education may present an opportunity for the University of Chester with regards to competitive advantages. The potential for CRM at Universities is provide to become much more competitive (Manchester Business School, 2004).

5.5 Limitations of the study

In chapter three, a limitation with qualitative approach was discussed in relation to this research. It was associated with generalisation where a question can be raised whether it is sufficient to use just a single case study to be representative of all HEI's in the UK which are using a CRM system. Indeed, an analysis of more case studies could bring more valuable outcomes in case of similar research, especially in identifying limitations of implementing a CRM system than having specified in this case. However, it was also indicated in chapter three that every single University which implemented a CRM system

has different characteristics or even demographics. Therefore formation of a model that goes beyond general characteristic can be difficult.

5.6 Opportunities for further research

This research has already underlined the importance of conducting further studies before implementation of a CRM system. Seeman & O'Hara (2006) note that marketing at most HEI's is rudimentary and they need more develop and research. This study highlights potential benefits, limitations and general features about a CRM system at strategic level that might be taken into consideration in case CRM system is to be implemented in University of Chester. At this point the researcher recommends quantitative research or combines to research with charts and statistics to display not potential but real benefits and limitations.

6 Recommendations

The research showed there are opportunities to use CRM in the University of Chester. However, it is a long way from being able to exploit those opportunities. Moreover, in order to avoid problems and decrease the risk of implementation of a CRM system in University of Chester, the following are the recommended key steps to a successful CRM strategy:

- *Strategic context.* The organisation should understand how CRM fits into the context of the company's overall business strategy.
- *Capabilities assessment.* The assessment is to be done to confirm the company's current CRM capabilities.
- *Business case development.* The organisation needs a good reason to implement CRM other than simply following new technology trends.
- *Implementation plan creation.* Create and execute a plan which clearly defines how to achieve the goal and execute it (Nguyen, 2007).

However, there are some activities to not do when implementing a CRM system. Firstly, without adopting customer-centric and branding strategies, CRM system does not work probably. Secondly, the University should not use CRM without integrating coherent strategy. Thirdly before running the CRM project research should be conducted especially in marketing strategy such as product-centred analysis, marketing segmentation, customer-centric profit and loss or student satisfaction and students life cycle. Such research should be undertaken in priority of needs. Fourthly, even though CRM system change in the University is obligatory, it should not be avoided. Fifthly, with buying a software or reengineering work process does not implementation is started. Finally, the university should not rely on consultants or software vendors who limit the scope of the University's implementation to their capability.

A CRM system can provide a powerful competitive advantage for organisations to enable them to survive in today's market. It helps management track customers' interactions with the organisation and allow the organisation's employee to pull up all past information about the customers. Competitive advantages that organisations could gain from CRM systems

include the following: increase in customer loyalty, superior service, superior information gathering and knowledge sharing and organisational learning. All these areas in the University of Chester need more research and the researcher recommends the research to be based on Steenstrup eight blocks.

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8 Appendices

Appendix (1)

Roehampton University Case study: Video record's Transcription

Interviewees:

Mrs. Subi Blakumar

(Deputy Director of Marketing Recruitment and Admission)

Sarah Hart

(Enquiries team leader)

John Drew

(Distinction Limited, Business Development Director)

Subi Blakumar:

-Roehampton University is based in south west London. We have four constitutions colleges; all dating is back to the 19 century.

Today we offer education to over 8000 students and studying under graduate, postgraduate and doctor level degrees. ... coming to us from over 88 different countries.

Now, in particular, the education sector is changing. Students are becoming more demanding and looking for value for money from their education.

-So, University is now, have to become more competitive and responsive to the needs of students. They are now starting to look at technology and software that have already been used in private sector for number of years such the CRM.

-Roehampton business needs can be categorised into three different areas:

-Firstly, a lot of our recruitment strategies are based on relationship marketing to encourage applicants... and the software and technology that we wanted to develop is important, so we can run much more sophisticated highly targeted, creative CRM campaigns.

-Secondly, the workload within our centralised inquiries unit has shot up and increased by over 150 % in past three years. So we needed another software that would enable us to manage this workload and ..

-Finally, we wanted to investigate and analyse the life cycle of a student in order to track from first point of contact right through graduation and alumni.....

-The old system was pretty much a standalone access database. We couldn't do anything more with that...

Sarah Hart:

-If the phone call came in, the system wasn't responsive enough that you could enter data straight on the system; which we had to hand write the phone call day to day down and then re enter it. The University was asking the enquiries unit to provide much more complicated reports; we couldn't do that because we couldn't tie the data in to the student data record system. The new system is very easy to provide, it has a lot of functionality already built in with it, their needed.

-But working with Distinction meant we had great working partnership. They really came down and sat with us so they could actually understand what our business was and what our needs were.

John Drew:

-We've been working with the Roehampton University for.... probably about six, seven years now, initially from a tender that we responded for the student management system, we at that time we were looking to further develop the functionality within our recruitment marketing area of our main student management system. However we realise that we need to have a system which is far more functionally rich than just an enquiry management system.

-We looked at market place at what CRM could offer. We looked at number of solutions have primarily we need to find a system which would integrate into dot net frame work which we were currently working with, but also into operability with Microsoft office pretty paramount as well.

-Also we needed something which was cost effective because UK education public sector in general has rigid budgets. Microsoft CRM certainly fitted that well. Some of the

functionality aspects of interoperability with products like exchange and the office environment have been a huge benefit to not only our developers but also to end application users.

Sarah Hart:

-The new CRM system is incredibly powerful and provides us with some functionality that we never had on our old database but also provides us with very simple solutions to some of the easiest problems we had before.

-We were able to integrate the web request form straight in to system. There is no double entering of data, it doesn't need to be actioned, we just literally had to run a report, run the letters and send it out straight away. That literally represents probably about a days worth of work that we are saving.

-One of the most positive things is that system fully integrates with the student records system and it means that we are talked to callers or enquires, We really do know exactly who they are and what contact it had with University before and as the University becomes much more demanding; and schools and academics are asking for much more complicated data.. being able just joint data tables together. To pull out exactly what they need, very very quickly and with minimum training, is a real asset.

Subi Blakumar:

-I think for the organisation what will be able to provide for them is historic data. Historic tracking from cradle to grave. We are going to be able to give that sort of really hard tangible and data of how many students are enquired, and how many students applied and eventually how many students were went onto enrol at Roehampton; and to be able to use that sort of data to inform our marketing strategy and then that will again feed into university's strategic plan.

Appendix (2)

University of Chester's Corporate Plan

In the various stages of its development since it was established by the Church of England in 1839, the University of Chester has been mindful of constant change in the nature of higher education and the demands of society, and of the expanding knowledge base of the modern era. However, at Chester, being able to respond to change is just as important as recognising our traditions and Christian heritage. Through adapting our courses to meet the needs of today's world, we have retained our position as one of the most popular higher education institutions in the country.

Chester's success has been built on the talent and commitment of staff, and a supportive ethos and culture which has enabled the University to respond positively to change. Continued success for the University will depend on being able to continue to draw on these core strengths.

The climate facing higher education in the United Kingdom is currently one of increasing uncertainty and competition, both at home and abroad. The economic and social well-being of our region is closely tied to the health and vigour of the University. For the University to ensure that its stature as a distinctive, high quality and secure 21st century new university is maintained, we must continue to project a clear and powerful institutional identity. We must also deploy our resources strategically, to strive to achieve excellence in all our various activities.

Since it is important that the University clearly defines its mission and strategic goals, this Corporate Plan, *Realising Our Potential - An Agenda for Excellence*, has been developed. The Plan is ambitious, as any plan for the University of Chester should be. It will be implemented at a time when the rate of growth of traditional resources is under pressure, and the Plan will accordingly require the University to be particularly creative and responsive to changes in the sector and the market.

Like universities throughout the world, the University of Chester seeks to add to the store of human knowledge and, within a caring and supportive learning community, to inspire

future generations to continue the quest for truth, wisdom and shared friendship. The great strength of the University lies in its broad base and its unity: we start with a fundamental commitment to plan our future as one university. This is diversity in its most productive sense, a safe place for alternative, and sometimes competing, views and ideas. At the heart of our creative culture is the ability to thrive in a complex and ever changing environment, where vitality is born of the interactions between people. We are a University that not only seeks to develop a better understanding of the world around us, but also one that, importantly, provides our students and staff with the challenges, training and motivation needed to develop and improve that world. By seeking to encourage both reflection and action, the University meets the needs of the students it educates and the society it serves.

A commitment to achieving high academic standards within a caring and supportive learning environment is a value we, as a university community, hold most central. Through promoting high academic standards; by emphasising the importance of our teaching, research and professional activities; by supporting and celebrating the diversity of our internal and external community; and by encouraging a shared sense of responsibility, we will thus be able to realise our collective obligation to use our resources wisely and creatively in accomplishing our mission.

Foreword by: Professor T J Wheeler:

Necessarily, strategic planning is a continuous process. Published plans can only provide a snapshot of that process in action and this Plan is no different. This Corporate Plan, *Realising Our Potential - An Agenda for Excellence*, is the latest chapter in strategic planning at the University of Chester, and a number of this Plan's initiatives are well informed by earlier plans. The Plan will continue to evolve as a living document, subject to continuous refinement and improvement.

Nevertheless, this Corporate Plan to 2011 provides the University with a clear agenda for action to meet many of the challenges that lie ahead, by building on our strengths and encouraging an ever vigilant approach in pursuing new opportunities.

We draw strength from a history considerably longer than that of most British universities and have an extremely solid basis for development. Our joint efforts will bring us to a future we have planned for ourselves. We look forward to sharing this journey with you.

Professor T J Wheeler DL

Vice-Chancellor

Key strategic objectives to 2011

- To ensure that the University's Christian foundation, underpinning ethos and supportive people-centred culture continue to play an appropriately prominent and facilitative role in the development and strengthening of the institution
- To continue to be a highly successful teaching-led and research-informed University
- To continue to deliver high quality, actively supported and highly regarded teaching within a curriculum framework which is responsive to emerging developments and improvements in programme design and delivery, including work-based learning and technology-enhanced learning
- To ensure that teaching activities continue to be informed by relevant and up-to-date research and advanced scholarship
- To promote an environment within which staff are able to translate the research undertaken by themselves or others into effective technology and knowledge transfer and exchange services to business and industry
- To develop creatively new and successful niche markets
- To seek modest growth and consolidation in student numbers to some 11 ,000 full-time equivalent students, with an emphasis upon: maintaining a broadly based curriculum grounded in the University's current portfolio of disciplines; further development of taught postgraduate and research degree provision; further development of part-time student numbers and foundation degree programmes; and exploring appropriate international development opportunities
- To continue to act as a regional University committed to employer and community engagement which is successful in attracting into study individuals with a range of backgrounds and experiences

- To continue to be an efficient and prudently managed University with an increasingly varied range of income sources
- To continue to ensure that the University's forward vision and strategy is actively shared and promoted amongst staff, students and all interested external stakeholders.

Mission, Vision and Core Values

The University was established by the Church of England in 1839 and, within an open and inclusive environment guided by Christian values, we seek to provide our students and staff with the education, training, skills and motivation to enable them to develop as individuals and serve and improve the communities within which they live and work. This mission, which has helped shape our development and diversification, continues to inform our future planning and strengthening as a University institution.

Vision

At the heart of the University's vision is our commitment to: ensuring a rewarding student learning experience; developing the expertise of our staff; teaching excellence; and our growing research and scholarly profile. Fundamental to these ideals and aspirations is the positive impact that the University has on the lives of our students, our staff, and our community, all of which underpin the institution's significant and developing contribution to the region and beyond. In valuing and celebrating our long history and traditions, the University is modern, dynamic and enterprising in its approach to developing new opportunities. In particular, we are committed to engendering a sense of pride and shared ownership in all those associated with us and with what we do.

Core values

In continuing the expression of the University's Christian foundation and the discussion of moral and spiritual values, the institution's various activities are underpinned by a series of core values that help to define our identity:

- The pursuit of excellence and innovation
We seek continuous innovation and improvement, and constantly aim to secure the highest standards and quality in our learning and teaching, and the creation and application of new knowledge.
- A distinctive student experience
We are committed to providing all our students with a high quality, caring and supportive learning experience, including work-related learning, that equips them with the necessary personal and academic skills to engage confidently with the wider world.
- Partnership and community
Through our staff, students and alumni, we seek to play a leading role in the intellectual, cultural, social, spiritual and economic life of the local, regional and wider communities we serve, and with which we interact.
- Inclusiveness and responsibility
We espouse actively the principles of equality of opportunity and diversity, and continually apply them in the conduct of our relationships and business. We are, in particular, committed to widening access to higher education. Within an ethically aware and professional environment, we acknowledge our responsibilities to promote freedom of inquiry and scholarly expression.
- A supportive culture and environment
Based on teamwork and appropriately devolved authority and responsibility, we seek to promote a dynamic and cost-effective organisational culture within which all our staff and students feel empowered and actively supported to respond creatively and efficiently to the challenges of a changing environment.
- A caring foundation
Valuing openness and inclusiveness, we seek to promote an environment within which all our students and staff are provided with opportunities to reflect on moral and spiritual issues affecting individuals and society.

The Student Experience

Aim

To provide our students with the best possible integrated learning experiences that enhance their intellectual, professional and personal growth, both inside and outside the University.

Context

Since its foundation in 1839, the University has placed the student experience at the core of what it does. This Plan reinforces our commitment to equip students with the skills they need to meet the challenges of the future, and to make them aware of knowledge, values and understanding gained from the past. In welcoming UK and international students from diverse backgrounds, the University recognises the individuality of students and the fact that they may be seeking different things from their university experience. The University is also mindful that some students may need additional support to enable them to make the most of the opportunities that university level education can provide.

The University accordingly seeks to provide a caring, student-centred environment, with suitable physical facilities, support services and learning resources, which accommodates a variety of learning styles to enable effective and enjoyable learning. Academic curricula will be coherent and robust, and reviewed and refreshed regularly to ensure appropriate content and process. Student administration will be student focused, efficient and supportive.

All the University's graduates are encouraged to acquire in-depth knowledge of their chosen area of study, and to develop the capacity to communicate effectively, work both collaboratively and independently, think critically and creatively, and understand ethical and social justice issues.

The notion of continual quality improvement will infuse our processes and culture with quality audit and benchmarking, helping inform our self-reflection. Improved outcomes will be achieved through regular review and implementation of necessary changes.

Strategic objectives

We are committed to:

- continuing to offer a broadly-based curriculum catering for the needs and aspirations of learners at all levels of higher education;
- being recognised nationally as providing a high quality, flexible and responsive environment, supportive of learning and teaching excellence;
- being responsive to the needs of business, commerce and the professions, especially those in Cheshire, Warrington, the Wirral Peninsula, the Deeside Hub and the North West;
- working with the community to provide a focus for social, cultural and voluntary activities;
- addressing the academic and personal development of our students in an holistic way;
- developing in our students values that include accountability, responsibility, freedom of expression, inclusiveness, diversity, innovation, integrity, mutual respect, opportunity and community;
- strengthening the links between the education we provide to our students and their future careers;
- continuing to develop the University estate to provide high quality accommodation and facilities;
- maintaining and further developing our close working relationships with the Students' Union to improve our services and the overall student experience whilst at the University.

Indicators of success

We will seek to ensure that:

- outcomes of student satisfaction surveys, both internal and external, reflect a tangible improvement in the facilities, services and overall experience of students studying at the University;

- internal and external completion and employability benchmarks for the University are satisfied or exceeded;
- student academic performance levels continue to be maintained or improved;
- take-up rates from well qualified prospective students continue to be strong.

Risks

The main risks likely to affect the achievement of our strategic objectives in this area are:

- unsatisfactory student experiences, loss of strong reputation in this area, and reduced student recruitment and other business opportunities for the University;
- inadequate resources or supporting infrastructure to deliver continuing high levels of student support and satisfaction;
- available resources not being utilised efficiently or effectively

Learning and Teaching

Aim

To provide programmes of study, delivery methods and academic support arrangements that are of high quality and responsive to learner needs and employer expectations.

Context

Ensuring the continued high quality of the University's learning and teaching environment is critical to the successful recruitment, retention, development and achievements of all our students. We pride ourselves on the support and care given to each student, the quality of our teaching, our flexible study programmes and the employability of our graduates.

Study at the University of Chester has always been, and will continue to be, a journey of exploration and discovery. It is an opportunity for learners of all ages and backgrounds to explore a wide range of issues and to experience the interdependent nature of all knowledge. This integrated and high quality academic experience offers multiple and

diverse opportunities for students to learn, not only for their careers, but also for their life success and fulfilment.

The University recognises that if we are to continue to be a successful higher education institution, we need to be able to offer both an innovative curriculum and a distinctive educational experience. While securing a university qualification is an important achievement that merits celebration, much of what our students gain from their experiences at Chester derives from the culture of the University and the underpinning values that characterise it.

The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy is informed by the institution's vision of establishing itself as a recognisably strong regional, teaching-led and research-informed university in which, consistent with the institution's mission, the nurturing and encouragement of excellence in learning and teaching is central. The University will continue to make appropriate use of e-learning and blended learning and promote student information and communications technology (ICT) competence.

The University will continue to place particular emphasis on sustaining an environment that values high quality learning and teaching and best practice in assessment. Integrated support will be provided for students to enable them to be successful independent learners and the employability of students will be enhanced through high quality careers service support. There will be a continuing emphasis on flexibility in curriculum design and delivery format and structure to facilitate lifelong learning, and also the embedding of assessment as an integral part of student learning. The means whereby this will be achieved will include: the extension of opportunities for part-time study, including the development of appropriate Foundation Degrees; continuing to embed work-based learning; further development of distance, flexible and distributed learning; and the enhancement of learning facilities. Specific emphasis will be placed upon securing assessment formats and tasks that are appropriate both to the content of individual study programmes and a diverse student body, together with assessment feedback practices that meet the specific needs of students.

Particular emphasis will be placed on ensuring that research and scholarship continue actively to support high quality learning. Further development of the mechanisms for sharing and adopting innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment will be

pursued, and opportunities will be extended for continuing professional development and recognising and rewarding teaching excellence. In encouraging innovative pedagogy, the University will continue to ensure that its staff satisfy or exceed emerging national professional standards in higher education teaching practice.

Strategic objectives

We are committed to:

- developing successful learners who are enabled to learn for their careers and also for life success and fulfilment;
- designing innovative and inclusive curricula which are actively informed by the latest developments in research and scholarship;
- promoting, as appropriate, innovation in pedagogy and excellence in teaching practice, and to achieve recognition for this;
- as appropriate, developing and utilising new learning technologies and delivery methods;
- seeking external funding to support our learning and teaching activities;
- ensuring that the University continues to be flexible and responsive to changes in a rapidly changing and challenging market for higher education providers.

Indicators of success

We will seek to ensure that:

- the University's portfolio of programmes continues to be sufficiently attractive to appropriately qualified students to fill available places in a cost-efficient manner;
- an average annual student retention rate exceeding 85% is achieved;
- outcomes of student satisfaction surveys, both internal and external, reflect an overall improvement in the learning experience of students studying at the University;
- within a year of having completed their study programmes, more than 95% of the University's graduates will have found employment or be engaged in research or other study;

- graduate productivity rates will increase throughout the period covered by this Plan.

Risks

The main risks likely to affect the achievement of our strategic objectives in this area are:

- an inability to attract and retain appropriately qualified students;
- an unacceptable deterioration in student performance and achievement;
- poor performance in external reviews undertaken by statutory and/or professional bodies;
- a failure of internal reviews to identify weaknesses in learning and teaching;
- uncertainties regarding the introduction of tuition fees and the development of a more competitive marketplace.

- Research, Scholarship and Knowledge Enterprise

Aim

To foster excellence in research, scholarship and knowledge transfer/enterprise.

Context

It is almost impossible in today's modern world to overstate the importance of research and scholarly enterprise to economic prosperity and the quality of life.

By virtue of the range, depth and credibility of the research and scholarship which we can deploy for the benefit of doctoral students, other research students and undergraduates, the University has established a strong and credible research culture and environment. The University's Research Strategy recognises that a truly inclusive research culture, far from cleaving research from teaching, must actively foster the link between the two, so that those staff who pursue advanced scholarship for the purpose of enriching their teaching, and publish scholarly material intended for use by students, are valued and encouraged across the academic community. The Strategy, while upholding the principle that staff should aspire to undertaking research of the highest calibre, clearly and carefully distinguishes

between levels of research and scholarship, and the outcomes expected of each. In order to ensure that staff remain abreast of their subjects and are motivated to sustain their research and scholarship, the University has adopted a range of creative policies which support them in their external professional activities, particularly where these are peer-related. As part of this strategy, we shall continue to make targeted submissions to external national evaluations of research status and capability.

The University will continue to seek funding for our research and scholarly activity from government, industry, foundations and individuals in the United Kingdom and beyond, and to explore possible innovative strategic partnerships. We are committed to supporting new research and scholarly initiatives, to encourage synergy and collaboration across the University, and to provide systems that support the responsible conduct of research and scholarship. We shall use the outcomes of our research and scholarly activity actively, to inform the further development of our portfolio of taught postgraduate programmes.

The University's confidence that our external research and scholarly income will grow rests on our belief in the capabilities of our staff, for they have already proved, by their exertions, that they are equal to the twin challenges of teaching and conducting research in a context of institutional growth and change. It is axiomatic for our staff that research and advanced scholarship go hand-in-hand with teaching. The University is keen to increase the capacity of academic staff to engage in research and scholarship by shifting the balance between teaching and facilitating independent student learning.

Economic growth is driven by knowledge, skills, innovation and entrepreneurship. The University's developing research and scholarly pedigree, together with a sharper focus on knowledge transfer, will ensure that we are better connected to non-academic partners and able to develop and share new concepts and their applications for the betterment of society, whether economically, socially or culturally. Our knowledge transfer activities will both shape and shadow the University's research and teaching priorities, and be informed by active social and economic engagement.

Strategic objectives

The University is committed to:

- increasing the quantity and quality of our research and advanced scholarship activity and, in so doing, enhancing our research reputation at regional, national and international levels;
- promoting technology and knowledge transfer, particularly for the economic, social and cultural well-being of the region, resulting in the further development of partnership arrangements and the publication of findings of national/international quality;
- increasing the level of externally funded research and the income received from our enterprise activities;
- promoting technology transfer and the commercialisation of intellectual properties created by our research activities;
- seeking external funding to support our knowledge transfer activities;
- developing pedagogical research;
- increasing the number and throughput of students studying for taught postgraduate and research degrees.

Indicators of success

We will seek to ensure that:

- performance in external evaluations of research status and capability show continued improvement in those areas selected for scrutiny;
- there is demonstrable capacity-building in the University's academic staff as indicated, by way of example, by the Professional Standards in Teaching Framework;
- strong and commercially effective links are maintained and developed with a wide range of commercial, industrial and health-related organisations in the region and beyond;
- our income from enterprise activities increases by at least 0% per annum throughout the period covered by this Plan;
- the overall number of research and scholarly publications produced by academic staff increases by some 2.5% by the end of the Plan;

- research and knowledge enterprise income increases by some 30% by the end of the period covered by this Plan;
- by the end of the period covered by this Plan, the number of new doctoral registrations reaches 40 per annum and research students complete their studies within a time frame that is % better than the national average;
- the number of students studying on taught postgraduate programmes will increase by 0% by the end of the Plan;
- 10 additional knowledge transfer partnerships have been established by the end of the Plan.

Risks

The main risks likely to affect the achievement of our strategic objectives in this area are:

- ineffective cross-institutional collaborative usage of available resources;
- insufficient resources being available to allow the University to develop research and knowledge enterprise activities on the planned basis, leading to a shortfall in the net contribution to the University's total income derived from such activities;
- competing pressures upon staff time inhibiting their ability to develop fully their research, scholarly and knowledge enterprise interests;
- inappropriate costing and pricing systems for commercial activities, leading to a loss of net income;
- an inability to attract sufficient or appropriately qualified students to study for research degrees.

-Partnership

Aim

The University is committed to applying our intellectual and academic resources to social, economic and community development in the region, the nation and, where appropriate, the world.

Context

True to our long heritage, our religious foundation and our values of civic responsibility, customer focus and access, the University recognises the mutual or reciprocal benefits that links with business and the community can bring. Through the exchange of ideas and best practice, we are, therefore, committed to continue working in partnership to promote educational opportunities and cultural and economic growth.

The University will expand the range of our relationships prudently and cost-effectively with businesses, the public sector, and the community in the Cheshire region, nationally and internationally. These relationships will make an important contribution to the delivery of the University's academic programmes, widening access, and the expansion of research, consultancy, professional practice and skills development. Relationships must, however, bring benefit to the University, either directly through financial returns or indirectly through enhancing our reputation and academic standing, or by building relationships with key stakeholders.

We recognise that, by working with employer and other organisations, and sharing services and expertise, the University can increase participation in higher education successfully. Through delivering a wider and more diverse range of high quality learning opportunities, we aspire to develop further our existing constructive relationships between the worlds of education and work.

We recognise that, where there is demonstrable added value and mutual benefit, the University may be able to pursue its mission more effectively by combining its own efforts with education institutions which share our aims, especially sister further education colleges and the broad network of the Cheshire and Warrington Lifelong Learning Network. The University has already successfully established strong and supportive working relationships with other higher education institutions and a range of further education colleges to develop exciting and innovative provision, which meets the needs of potential young and mature students and the requirements of employers across the region. The University has also developed a number of links with voluntary organisations and community partnerships, and provides advice and guidance actively throughout the community through a wide range of events and activities. This work will continue. Where

there are acknowledged benefits in delivering the University's mission, we shall expand our network of associate colleges.

The University believes that our alumni can be powerful ambassadors for the institution in communities and in recruiting students and staff. We accordingly wish to establish and maintain lasting and productive relationships with alumni that are mutually beneficial and that enhance the value of a University of Chester degree.

Strategic objectives

The University is committed to:

- continuing to develop partnerships with relevant regional agencies such as: the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) and NHS North West; business and public sector organisations, especially Chester City Council, Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire County Council and Wirral Borough Council; cultural institutions; voluntary organisations; schools and colleges, to promote cultural and economic growth through the exchange of ideas and best practice;
- continuing to develop partnerships with relevant national bodies such as The Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE), the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA);
- supporting beneficial research and consultancy that assists the needs of the regional economy and local communities actively;
- encouraging a wider range of students to benefit from higher education through our links with schools, community groups, Aim Higher, sister Further Education Colleges and the Cheshire and Warrington Lifelong Learning Network;
- working in collaboration with other higher education and further education institutions in the North West and adjacent regions to create partnerships that enhance the nation's academic reputation;
- engaging alumni in meaningful ways with the University in order to build loyalty and support;

- investing in our staff by providing opportunities for training and development, to enable them to respond positively to the emerging opportunities and the changing needs of students, society and employers.

Indicators of success

We will seek to ensure that:

- we secure a significantly enhanced regional and national visibility and appreciation of the University's academic and commercial products and services;
- as measured through the HEFCE's Higher Education Business Interaction Survey, the University's engagement with the region improves year-on-year throughout the planning period;
- we achieve an increase of some 30% by the end of the Plan in third stream income from sub-regional, regional and national agencies, businesses and public sector organisations;
- we embed a more entrepreneurial and business-orientated culture across the University that enhances the capacity of the institution to collaborate successfully with businesses and not-for-profit organisations;
- we recruit additional full- and part-time funded student numbers to enable existing and new study programmes to be made available across the region.

Risks

The main risks likely to affect the achievement of our strategic objectives in this area are:

- increased competition from other higher education providers for students, knowledge enterprise income and other activities in which the University is able to use its expertise;
- the possibility that partnership activities may absorb significant resources for marginal tangible benefit;
- increased political or financial volatility accompanying economic decline and reduced public expenditure in the region and nationally;

- an inability to sustain the University's reputation as a source of expertise for developing businesses and enhancing skills within the region, as a result of inappropriate levels of underpinning research/advanced scholarship and/or damaging publicity;
- adverse publicity and damaged relationships caused by problematic or failing academic partnerships.

- Diversity and Inclusion

Aim

To create an intellectual community and workplace that respects, welcomes and promotes diversity and equality through learning and teaching; research and scholarship; outreach; and other University activities and practices.

Context

The University is committed to the promotion of diversity in all its forms: through age, different ideas and perspectives, disability, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious and spiritual beliefs, gender identity, sexual orientation, and the socioeconomic and geographic composition of its staff and students.

The University offers opportunities and support to students from traditionally under-represented groups in higher education, particularly those in the local region. This is achieved through seeking to: raise the aspirations of people in the region; increase the number of admissions from groups that are under-represented in higher education; support students in their chosen progression route both on exit and on future re-entry; and have clear systems, policies and procedures for tracking, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating all the University's widening participation activities.

In developing our academic portfolio, the University seeks to devise learning programmes that have a demonstrable relevance to potential participants, with accompanying learning and assessment strategies that are designed to accommodate a range of learning styles. We seek to provide flexibility in terms of time, place and pace for learning and assessment. In

pursuing the opportunities for building capacity for individuals and communities, we are particularly keen to encourage and support opportunities for progression to improved employment or further higher education study.

Strategic objectives

The University is committed to:

- supporting institutional activities that contribute to the further development of a welcoming and supportive environment, and which enhance cultural awareness and diversity;
- building continuing relations with public and private bodies in the regional community, to develop an environment that supports our commitment to diversity;
- encouraging the inclusion of a range of cultural perspectives within the curriculum of academic programmes;
- continuing to provide financial and other forms of support aimed at attracting and retaining members of under-represented groups, and increasing overall access.

Indicators of success

We will seek to ensure that:

- the HEFCE's access and retention benchmarks are met or exceeded;
- our admissions and learning strategies continue to be designed to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population;
- we continue to have strong links with regional education providers across the region to promote educational diversity and inclusion.

Risks

The main risks likely to affect the achievement of our strategic objectives in this area are:

- the University is unable to develop and modify its academic programmes and supporting services to attract and retain a broader constituency of student;

- the University's culture and operational systems are inappropriately aligned to meet the differing learning needs and expectations of widening participation students.

- The University Environment

Aim

To provide a modern learning and working environment that meets the diverse needs of our staff, students and other users in a flexible, cost effective and efficient manner.

Context

To achieve the objectives set out in earlier parts of this Plan, it is essential that we seek to provide our students and staff with an environment that meets the needs of a flourishing academic community. This will be achieved in ways that complement the aesthetic character and environmental commitments of the University, whilst at the same time creating an estate which is financially sustainable.

The quality of the University's estate is particularly important in promoting the image of the institution. This, in turn, impacts upon recruitment, income generation and institutional growth capabilities. Recent years have seen considerable investment in the University's estate, with several significant capital development projects. These additions, combined with changes to the nature of the student learning experience and new learning and teaching methodologies, demand creativity and prudence in the management of our physical resource. In particular, we recognise the need to be increasingly flexible and innovative in the way in which our learning and teaching facilities are developed and utilised. Our recently revised Estates Strategy has specifically addressed these key priorities.

In support of the physical estate, we have made significant investment in our learning resource, information technology, and student support services. This investment will continue, reflecting the University's continuing firm commitment to provide all our students with every opportunity and encouragement to support them in their individual journeys from a state of dependency to one of mutual and/or self-dependency. Our commitment ensures that students are given the fullest possible support as they develop the

self-sustaining study skills and physical, psychological, social, financial and spiritual strengths which will underpin their ability to make the most of the academic, learning and development opportunities available to them whilst at the University. The University's pledge extends beyond its students to include its staff, ensuring that they are provided with the appropriate facilities and resources to pursue their teaching, research and scholarly interests. The University is conscious of its obligations under health and safety legislation and will at all times ensure that it provides a safe working environment for all our staff and students.

The University is committed to promoting greater awareness of sustainability through all of our educational activities, so as to improve the quality of life now and for future generations. Through the ways that the University manages its activities, we seek to encourage staff and students to embrace the opportunities they have to contribute to social progress, economic growth and environmental improvement. This is achieved through a number of activities, including a commitment to improve our environmental performance, minimising waste and promoting resource efficiency and, where practicable, favouring the purchasing of more sustainable goods and services.

Strategic objectives

We are committed to:

- providing an environment which supports effective teaching and learning;
- providing facilities and services that support and maintain a high quality learning environment, and which meet or exceed the changing requirements of our staff and students;
- continuing to improve the condition and appearance of the University's estate, including the development of residential accommodation where appropriate;
- pursuing best practice and securing value for money in all our estates activities;
- providing a safe working environment for all our staff and students;
- exploring carefully suitable opportunities for the expansion and future development of the University's estate within the framework of our Estates Strategy.

Indicators of success

We will seek to ensure that:

- the University is able to attract and retain high calibre students;
- outcomes of student satisfaction surveys, both internal and external, reflect an overall improvement in the University environment and residential accommodation;
- the University satisfies the HEFCE's Key Estate Ratios;
- the capacity-utilisation of teaching accommodation improves throughout the planning period;
- the environmental sustainability of the University's various activities, as assessed through audit, show year-on-year improvements throughout the planning period;
- the University's estate and facilities are able to attract conferences of national and, where appropriate, international standing;
- the University meets or exceeds relevant health and safety legislation;
- the University's management information systems, learning resources and student support systems meet or exceed sector benchmarks.

Risks

The main risks likely to affect the achievement of our strategic objectives in this area are:

- constrained resources preventing appropriate investment in the estate and University environment;
- inadequate accommodation impacting adversely on reputation;
- an inability to generate sufficient income from the estate to allow phased reinvestment;
- unplanned events delaying planned investments and improvements;
- rises in energy costs preventing investment in environmentally-friendly technologies and systems.

Management and Financial Strategy

Aim

To sustain and develop a financially secure University, within which management systems and structures actively empower staff and students to respond creatively, collaboratively and effectively to the many opportunities and challenges facing the institution.

Context

Through sustained commitment and innovation, the University has progressively secured a richly deserved national and international reputation for the quality and standards of our higher education programmes, our developing profile of research and scholarship, and the particularly caring and supportive community provided for our staff and students.

Acknowledgement of the significant progress made by the University has been the granting of powers to award our own taught degrees in 2 004 and, more recently, the award of the prestigious university title. This is, justifiably, an exciting and rewarding phase in the institution's history.

The University is determined not to be complacent, however. If it is to achieve the demanding targets it has set itself, the University recognises that we have to be a well-managed institution, utilising our available resources to achieve our strategic objectives as efficiently and effectively as possible. This will be achieved through embedding good practice in all of our policies and procedures, committing our resources to enhancing the recruitment, training, motivation and retention of high calibre staff, developing our management systems so that they are both flexible and transparent, and operating within a financial framework appropriate to a financially well-managed institution.

Over the period since our last Corporate Plan, finance has remained an important issue. We continue to face twin challenges: to make the best of the new investment opportunities; and to manage our activities as the real value of the unit of resource from public sources has fallen. Through innovative planning and careful financial management, we have been able to retain a financially stable position. With changes in our funding sources, it is imperative that we become increasingly entrepreneurial. The University's future success will depend in

large measure upon our ability to make good and informed decisions about institutional priorities, and to follow pragmatic financial planning strategies to help ensure continued value for money. Through our operational planning processes, we must also allocate funding and make strategic investments in activities that can generate revenue and sufficient return on investment. Where practicable, we shall pursue opportunities for providing shared services and joint procurement.

A skilled, committed, motivated and high calibre staff are critical to the continued success of the University. Their knowledge, skills and passion are essential to creating and maintaining the University's commitment to excellence. We recruit nationally and internationally for our staff and, in competing for such staff with other institutions and the private sector, recognise the importance of providing both financial and non-financial rewards for people. To recruit and retain the most talented people will require that we continue to have an enlightened approach to human resource development and succession planning, facilitative leadership, and a professional culture that values people.

We want to strengthen recognition of the University across the region and also at national and international levels, to support student and staff recruitment, influence public and commercial funding activities, and provide benefits for our alumni. Within Cheshire, we want to foster a stronger affinity with the University and understanding of the many contributions it makes to the quality of life and economic development. To achieve this, we need to strengthen relationships, based on consistent and credible communications.

Strategic objectives

We are committed to:

- attracting, retaining, developing and rewarding high calibre and committed staff to achieve high-class performance in all our areas of activity;
- responding flexibly and dynamically to changing opportunities;
- seeking to maximise efficiency in the delivery of our academic programmes and other income generating activities;
- promoting effective internal communication and collaborative sharing of best practice to enhance efficiency;

- seeking opportunities for secure and sustainable diversified sources of income;
- creating broader public awareness and greater appreciation of the University in the region and beyond;
- maximising returns on our physical and financial portfolio of assets.

Indicators of success

We will seek to ensure that:

- there is demonstrable commitment across the University to our vision, mission and goals;
- the University's mission and objectives set out in this Corporate Plan are met or exceeded;
- our surplus for reinvestment and development is increased to at least 4% of total turnover by the end of the period covered by this Plan;
- our year-on-year income from diversified private and commercial sources increases by some 30% by the end of the period covered by this Plan;
- we have secure and effective access to, and management of, information, both internally and with our external stakeholders;
- we continue to attract and retain high calibre and committed staff at all levels, with accompanying high staff satisfaction levels;
- we regularly secure positive ratings and an enhanced reputation through national level surveys and reviews;
- the outcomes of staff and student satisfaction surveys reflect an overall improvement in the effectiveness and timeliness of communications across the University.

Risks

The main risks likely to affect the achievement of our strategic objectives in this area are:

- an inability to generate sufficient income and improve cost-effectiveness to secure balanced annual budgets for all areas of operation and adequate resources for investment in the development of the University;
- an inability to provide an appropriately attractive, cost-effective and sustainable remuneration framework to attract and retain qualified and competent staff;
- staff capability and commitment are insufficient to deliver the strategic objectives set out in this Plan;
- difficulties in prioritising all the objectives in the Plan at the same time;
- an inability to generate positive publicity or mitigate less positive reporting of the University.

- Risk Management

The University has for some considerable time had a comprehensive risk management policy and register that seek to identify key corporate risks and remedial strategies to address these risks.

The Corporate Plan provides the opportunity to review our policy and approach to risk management and to ensure that it is fully aligned with the mission and priorities of the University. The review and updating of risks facing the University will continue to form a key element in the monitoring of our Corporate Plan.

- Conclusion

The University of Chester has a long and recognised history. Our success has been built on the talent and commitment of our staff and a supportive ethos and culture which is able to respond positively to change. This Corporate Plan outlines the University's continuing commitment to provide a high quality learning environment for our staff and students and to engage positively with, and contribute to, the activities of the region and beyond.

The concept of a caring community underpins the University. In furtherance of our mission, this Corporate Plan reaffirms the University's identity as a community with intellectual, spiritual and social dimensions. The intellectual life of the University is nurtured by

invigorating debate and the exchange of ideas and we will not waver in our commitment to achieving academic excellence accessible to a wide range of students and stakeholders.

Our Corporate Plan is underpinned by a series of comprehensive supporting strategies that provide more detailed substance to the developmental targets we have set for ourselves.

We have every confidence in the future and look forward to sharing our journey with you.