

The Difference Between CCM and CRM

We are often asked what's the difference between Customer Communication Management (CCM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM). While both are key components of overall customer experience, there are distinctions to be made.

CRM is focused on managing customer interactions through data analysis with a keen eye on retention.

CCM, however, is focused on supporting the customer interactions themselves. It is all about developing strategies to improve the way you create, store, retrieve and deliver all types of inbound and outbound communications, using a variety of different tools and processes to increase the 'efficiency' of communication and find better ways to engage with the intended recipient.

Managing Multichannel Communications



The concept of CCM has been around for several years and appears, at first, to be a straightforward discipline. However, when you consider the many different types of communications we generate (general correspondence, invoices, statements, appointment reminders to name a few), and the channels available to deliver them (print, email, online, SMS, etc.), combined with the chosen language of the recipient, along with preferred formats, tone of voice and so on, effective communication quickly becomes a far more complex process.

Recipients' expectations for a relevant and timely response adds to the need for having well-honed processes and a unified view for remembering context from previous conversations and interactions. The ever present juggernaut of digital transformation makes it hard to coordinate the proliferation of communication channels — be it correspondence in an envelope, a chatbot, live chat, SMS, social or web portals with interactive documents and/or information — and often overlooked parts of the customer correspondence landscape. This highlights the difficulty of creating a consistent and engaging customer experience when communications and messages are driven by data from a variety of disparate systems.

Many of the documents we send out touch on various aspects of the day-to-day operations of our clients, and whilst many of the organisations we talk to are someway along the road to improving communications sent to their customers, it's still an ongoing journey. Having access to our suite of CCM tools, enabling consistent and engaging communications across a wide range of channels is a critical aid to navigating the journey.

The Benefits of Customer Communication Management



With a traditional focus on print and mail, IT and Operational stakeholders are often quick to recognise the benefits that CCM can contribute towards a coherent document strategy. A key benefit of a robust CCM offering is to provide an easier way to create, edit, and manage content without having to always rely on your own IT team to make the changes. It's also great news for compliance colleagues who are seeking to mitigate risk when multiple departments and teams often

collaborate, as it gives greater visibility, a centralised view and full reporting throughout the whole development process.

The wider benefits of a carefully executed plan for improving communications are not, however, purely operational and can bring positive benefits for the end recipient. Bringing consistency to communications, through design, tone of voice and increased personalisation through the use of relevant information helps reduce recipient confusion, regardless of delivery channel. Effective use of CCM delivers greater comprehension, reassurance, and trust, and enables more positive customer experiences and outcomes.

A fragmented communications landscape with multiple stakeholders is a common scenario that we face with our clients. The success of many initiatives is down to adopting a consultative approach; helping the client articulate the problems and issues at hand, having a firm understanding of the outcomes that can be achieved and identifying the profile of the team to take it forward. Combining disparate data sources, varied communication objectives and often coupled with very tight timeframes requires a safe pair of hands. It is important to achieve senior management buy-in to the CCM process, as their advocacy is a critical success factor to delivering a CCM project.

CCM may not at first appear to be the most exciting project to be involved in but the opportunities to make a real difference from both internal and external perspectives are boundless. Good CCM can transform the customer journey and add real and sustained value to a company's brand.