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# **A Comparative Study of Customer Relationship Management (CRM)**

*How Strategies and Applications Vary Across Industries*

**A Research Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master's in Logistics and Supply Chain Management, at Massey  
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## **Abstract**

Over the past decade, there has been an explosion of interest in customer relationship management (CRM) by both academics and executives. However, despite an increasing amount of published material, most of which is practitioner oriented, there remains a lack of agreement about what CRM is, what CRM means to different industries and companies and how CRM strategy should be developed. The purpose of this article is to develop a process-oriented conceptual framework that positions CRM at a strategic level by identifying the key cross-functional processes involved in the development of CRM strategy in retail, manufacturing and service industries.

CRM is increasingly important to firms as they seek to improve their profits through longer-term relationships with customers. In recent years, many have invested heavily in information technology (IT) assets to better manage their interactions with customers before, during and after purchase (Bohling, Bowman, LaValle, Mittal, Narayandas, Ramani, & Varadarajan, R 2006). Yet, measurable returns from IT investment programs rarely arise from a narrow concentration on IT alone, with the most successful programs combining technology with the effective organisation of people and their skills (Bharadwaj, 2000; Piccoli & Ives, 2005). It follows that the greater the knowledge about how firms successfully build and combine their technological and organisational capabilities, the greater will be our understanding of how CRM influences performance.

We have found through the study that CRM is best performed if it is designed to meet the specific needs of each company. And we have also found that for any CRM strategy to be successful it needs the support from the management team, from the top to the bottom, a customer-centric culture has to be incorporated into one's daily operation.

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