

# Why CRM falls short with complaints, feedback management

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Many organisations rely on CRM software as the tool for solving customer problems. What these organisations do not realise, is that a dedicated customer feedback management solution is far preferable to a general CRM customer support module, because CRM systems aren't geared towards complaint and feedback management processes.

At the heart of the issue is the fact that customer feedback management (CFM) systems are case-based, while CRM is customer or contact-based. In a CFM system, contact information includes a complete historical record of a particular 'event', whereas CRM contact information only shows the latest customer data.

There are seven reasons why CRM often fails to deliver on complaints and feedback management needs.

## 1. The need for multi-stage escalation

Complaint handling requires multi-stage escalation - from front line staff, to management, and perhaps to an external regulator or consumer body.

CRM systems battle to deliver on this requirement and often separate tickets have to be created for each stage of the process, resulting in different reference numbers being allocated, and making it difficult to keep track of the complaint.

Feedback management systems are designed to support these processes and enable a case to be tracked at every stage with one unique case reference number. This reduces the unnecessary and frustrating duplication of complaints.

## 2. Complaints are multi-faceted

Most CRM systems are ticket- or incident-based, but customer complaints are multi-faceted. The customer may be dissatisfied with, for example, the time spent getting through to speak to someone in a contact centre, the quality of the product and the process of exchanging or returning it - all are different aspects of the same case or complaint.

A complaints and feedback solution will enable all aspects to be captured, addressed and analysed - but a CRM customer support module is unlikely to deliver against this important requirement.

## 3. Correspondence management

CRM solutions usually support phone and email interactions with customers. But escalated complaints and feedback often still require the sending of a letter (even if this is simply attaching a PDF letter to an email to the customer) because of the requirements of regulations and consumer laws.

Complaints and feedback software usually has integration with word processors so that standard templates can be used by customer care employees.

The correspondence can be pre-populated with case data such as a summary, customer contact details, escalation details, and expected resolution date. This helps employees to personalise responses and increase successful complaint resolution. CRM modules are not designed to do this, and the bespoke integration that would be required is expensive.

## **4. Corrective actions**

Complaints and feedback will often highlight areas that require improvement through corrective actions, such as training or reviewing an operational procedure.

A complaints and feedback module is able to easily guide a user through the process of selecting and assigning each corrective action and tracking completion of the action, which most CRM modules are incapable of doing.

## **5. Management information and reporting**

Complaints managers need to be able to gather and analyse the information that is causing customer dissatisfaction and use that data to address the issues and highlight the need for product or service improvement.

A sophisticated complaints and feedback system will support a wide range of reports that assess performance in handling customer feedback, and will also pinpoint issues that are emerging as trends, show resolution outcomes, and record corrective actions taken. Standard CRM is unlikely to be able to do this.

## **6. Ease of use**

CRM systems are simply not designed to handle complaints. A complaints and feedback system is focused on managing cases within specified time-frames, highlighting trending issues, allocating cases and examining escalation rates.

It also highlights and eases access to this information for users.

## **7. Cost**

The bespoke development of a CRM complaints handling module requires time and money. A complaints and feedback system is a far more affordable solution that can deliver all the features and functionality required, while also being simple to interface with the CRM system.

It can also integrate with other key operational systems to really enhance the user experience and provide the tools that users need to resolve complaints effectively and efficiently.

The bottom line is that CFM is not a replacement for CRM, just as CRM is no substitute for a dedicated customer feedback management system.

## **ABOUT COLYN DEE**

Cirrus TechVue has been in business since the early 1980s. It's an SME with an exemplary track record in introducing new technology to South Africa and implementing enterprise scale solutions in some of the country's largest organisations, such as Telkom, Absa, Sasol and Mutual & Federal, to name a few.

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