

## SMS versus the dinner time call - getting CRM right

In any business intelligence implementation for CRM, organisational culture is the hardest aspect to manage. While all companies would claim to be customer-focused, this is seldom true.

"Changing the culture of an organisation into one that is customer-focused is what chief marketing officers (CMOs), find hardest," says Phil Winters, Vice President Customer Intelligence of SAS Institute, leader in business intelligence (BI).

"There are conflicts between being customer-focused, and trying to sell products. Or being customer-focused and worrying about profitability.

"Getting people to think more about what the customer wants, rather than trying to sell products, remains difficult," he says. "Many firms choose to work with leading BI vendors to help change the culture."

The aim of CRM should be to surprise and delight customers by really understanding them, and thus in a position to make appropriate offerings to them at relevant times throughout their life span.

Winters gives an example of good CRM: "My daughter turns 18 soon," he says. "If it were truly customer centric, my bank will know this and SMS my daughter on her birthday to offer her a credit card of her own if she calls in. The channel would be just right - 18-year-old girls only respond to SMSs - as would the offerer

"From the bank's point of view, the targeting is spot-on," he says. "One can only offer credit cards to 18-year-old girls. Boys that age never pay the bills! And my daughter is a potential high value customer because her father is."

SAS Marketing Automation is used by organisations worldwide to perform this kind of highly targeted, and therefore successful, marketing.

Some may argue that this kind of CRM is intrusive. "I would disagree," says Winters. "Firms that do not use proper customer intelligence to dictate their marketing become intrusive, as they target the wrong people at irrelevant times about inappropriate products or services. Customers then receive those irritating telephone calls during dinner, for example."