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Problems of CRM Systems Implementing in Small and Medium-Sized Businesses

Abstract. Introduction. In the context of globalization and constant changes, small and medium-sized businesses play an increasingly important role in shaping the economy. They not only provide jobs and stimulate competition but are also an important element of the social stability of local communities. However, to success fully compete in the global market, SMEs need modern management tools, particularly CRM systems. Implementing such systems allows the company to improve customer relationships, improve the quality of service, and, as a result, increase the profit of the enterprise. However, there are certain obstacles to implementing CRM systems in small businesses.

Purpose. This study aims to systematize problems in implementing CRM systems and highlight those specific to small and medium businesses. The objectives of the article are to identify modern problems of enterprises in implementing CRM systems, systematize and classify them, and isolate the characteristics of small and medium-sized businesses.

Results. Therefore, the systematization of the main problems that arise when implementing CRM systems in enterprises becomes relevant. The work systematized the problems of CRM implementation by groups regarding personnel (resistance to change, insufficient qualifications, lack of motivation), resources (financial costs, time costs, technical resources), business processes (non-optimized processes and insufficient thoughtfulness of integration), enterprise structure (distributed structure, weak coordination between departments), management (lack of leadership, insufficient communication), strategy (undefined goals, lack of strategic plan), technologies (technical problems, compatibility with other systems).

Conclusions. Small businesses are characterized by some related to resources, business processes, personnel, and enterprise structure, in particular, resource limitations, simpler business processes, and an insufficient number of personnel; and for medium-sized businesses - competition for resources, more complex business processes, distributed structures. The results of this study may be useful for company owners and scientists who study CRM systems and their impact on the enterprise's economic activity.

Keywords: decentralization; united territorial communities; financial capacity; own revenues; subsidies.

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Проблеми впровадження CRM-систем у малому та середньому бізнесі

Анотація. В умовах глобалізації та постійних змін малий і середній бізнес відіграє все більш важливу роль у формуванні економіки. Він не лише забезпечує робочими місцями та стимулює конкуренцію, але й є важливим елементом соціальної стабільності місцевих громад. Однак для того, щоб успішно конкурувати на глобальному ринку, МСБ потребує сучасних інструментів управління, зокрема CRM-систем. На шляху впровадження CRM-систем у малий бізнес існують певні перешкоди. Метою даного дослідження є систематизація проблем при впровадженні CRM-систем та виділення специфічних для малого та середнього бізнесу. У роботі було систематизовано проблеми при впровадженні CRM за групами щодо персоналу (опір змінам, недостатня кваліфікація, відсутність мотивації), ресурсів (фінансові витрати, часові витрати, технічні ресурси), бізнес-процесів (неоптимізовані процеси та недостатня продуманість інтеграції), структури підприємства (розподілена структура, слабка координація між підрозділами), управління (відсутність лідерства, недостатня комунікація), стратегії (невизначені цілі, відсутність стратегічного плану), технологій (технічні проблеми, сумісність з іншими системами). Для малого бізнесу характерні деякі з них, пов'язані з ресурсами, бізнес-процесами, персоналом та структурою підприємства, зокрема обмеження ресурсів, простіші бізнес-процеси та недостатня кількість персоналу; а для середнього – конкуренція за ресурси, складніші бізнес-процеси, розподілені структури. Спільними для обох видів бізнесу є ресурсні (фінансові обмеження та обмежені ресурси), щодо персоналу (недостатня мотивація, опір змінам), технологій (технічні складнощі). Результати даного дослідження можуть бути корисними власникам компаній, а також науковцям, що досліджують CRM-системи та їх вплив на економічну діяльність підприємства.

Ключові слова: управління відносинами з клієнтами; CRM; комунікації; підприємство; малий та середній бізнес.

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Formulation of the problem. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are an important driving force of economic development in any country, including Ukraine [1–2]. Their role is significantly growing in the context of globalization and constant change [3–4]. SMEs are the main source of new jobs, especially for young and middle-aged people, stimulating competition in the market, contributing to a decrease in prices and an increase in the quality of goods and services, and contributing to the growth of the country's gross domestic product [5]. SMEs are often integral to local communities, supporting their development and ensuring social stability [6-7].

Various factors, including the level of business informatization, influence the dynamics of small and medium-sized businesses. CRM systems can significantly increase the efficiency of small and medium-sized enterprises. Implementing a CRM system in small businesses can significantly improve customer relationship management but often faces several obstacles [8].

However, a large number of problems arise during implementation. It can lead to slower workflows, lost time, increased errors, and decreased motivation. Incomplete or inaccurate information about customers, delays in responding to requests, loss of important information—all of these negatively affect customer satisfaction, lead to additional costs for setup, employee training, and error correction, and can result in lost revenue [9-10].

Therefore, the systematization of the main problems that arise when implementing CRM systems in enterprises becomes relevant.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Research on the challenges and features of CRM system implementation is presented in the works of foreign and domestic scientists. Lendel V. [9] and Khomenko L. [7] identified groups of problems and factors.

Katkov Yu. [10] and Hordieieva-Herasymova I. [5] considered the features of CRM system implementation in enterprises.

Yanchuk T. and Boyenko O. [6], S. Vasundhara et al. [11] analyzed how the implementation of CRM systems affects the effectiveness of marketing activities, and Gunawan A. et al. [12] – on sales, Prajapat S. B. [13] – on Customer Satisfaction and Retention.

The features of CRM system implementation in small businesses are discussed in the works of Sharma S. [14], Hail C. E. & Koraichi M. E. [15].

Despite significant progress in the study of CRM system implementation in enterprises, aspects still require additional attention. Thus, the problems of implementing CRM systems for small and medium-sized businesses are poorly studied. Also poorly studied are the challenges of implementing CRM systems, the impact of CRM systems on customer satisfaction, and the integration of CRM systems with other marketing tools (email marketing, SMM, marketing personalization).

Therefore, this study aims to systematize the problems of implementing CRM systems for small and medium-sized businesses.

Formulation of research goals. The main goal of this study is to systematize problems in the implementation of CRM systems and to identify those specific to small and medium-sized businesses. The objectives of the article are to identify modern problems of enterprises in implementing CRM systems, systematize and classify them, and identify the characteristics of small and medium-sized businesses.

Outline of the main research material. The implementation of a CRM system allows to significantly improve customer relationship management, but it often faces several obstacles. Let us consider them in more detail, dividing them into the main groups of problems: personnel, resources, business processes, corporate structure, management, strategies and technologies [7-9].

Personnel. CRM system implementation is a complex transformation of business processes that requires active participation of all employees. Each employee plays an important role in the successful implementation and continued use of the system. Most problems occur when it comes to dealing with employees [5-15]:

Resistance to change – employees may be resistant to change, especially when new processes require additional effort or changes in familiar ways of working;

Insufficient skills – not all employees may have the necessary skills to work with the new system;

Lack of motivation – employees may feel disengaged if they do not see a direct benefit from the CRM implementation.

Resources. CRM system implementation requires significant resources. The effectiveness of this process directly depends on how adequately all the necessary resources will be assessed and used. Problems that arise when implementing CRM systems most often relate to the following aspects [5-15]:

- financial costs – the implementation of a CRM system requires significant financial investments related to the purchase of licenses, payment for consultant services, staff training, etc.;

- time costs – the implementation process can take a long time, which can negatively affect the current work of the enterprise;

- technical resources – insufficient technical resources (computing power, network infrastructure) can complicate the system's operation.

Business processes are the foundation for the successful implementation of a CRM system. They determine how the company operates, interacts with customers, and uses the new system. Without a clear understanding and optimization of business processes, CRM implementation can be ineffective or even a failure. The most common difficulties are caused by [5-15]:

Unoptimized processes – if business processes are not optimized before CRM implementation, the system may not have the expected effect;

Inadequate integration considerations – if the CRM system is not integrated with other enterprise systems, data exchange problems may occur.

The structure of the enterprise plays a key role in the process of implementing a CRM system. It determines how information will be transferred between departments, who will be responsible for different stages of interaction with customers, and how the system will be integrated into the overall business process. The main challenges associated with the structure of the enterprise are [5-15]:

- distributed structure – in large enterprises with a distributed structure, it may be challenging to ensure a unified approach to using the CRM system;

- weak coordination between departments – a lack of coordination between departments can complicate the exchange of information in the system.

Management plays a critical role in the successful implementation of a CRM system. It is not just a technology project, but a complex transformation of business processes that requires clear leadership and coordination. The success of the entire project depends on how well this process is organized. Problems that can arise during the implementation of a CRM system [5-15] include:

Lack of leadership – if management does not support the implementation of the CRM system, employees may become demotivated;

Poor communication – lack of clear communication about the goals and benefits of the implementation can lead to misunderstandings and problems.

The strategy is the foundation of a successful implementation of a CRM system. It determines the direction of movement, goals, resources, and approaches that will be used to achieve the desired results. Without a clear implementation strategy, the implementation risks turning into a chaotic process that will not bring the expected return. The main challenges in this [5-16]:

- unclear goals – if the goals of the CRM system implementation are not clearly defined, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of its use;

- lack of a strategic plan – without a clear implementation plan, the system may be used ineffectively.

Technologies are increasingly important in implementing CRM systems, significantly affecting their functionality, efficiency, and capabilities. Problems that arise when implementing CRM systems most often relate to the following aspects [5-15]:

Compatibility with other systems – not all CRM systems can be easily integrated with other software products used in the enterprise;

Technical problems – technical problems may arise related to the configuration and operation of the system.

Problems in implementing CRM systems are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Problems of implementing CRM systems in enterprises

Problem groups	Personnel	Resources	Business processes	The structure of the enterprise	Management	The strategy	Technologies
Main problems	resistance to change	financial costs	unoptimized processes	distributed structure	lack of leadership	unclear goals	technical problems
	insufficient qualifications	time costs	insufficient integration thoughtfulness	weak coordination between departments	insufficient communication	lack of a strategic plan	compatibility with other systems
	lack of motivation	technical resources					
Risk minimization	Involving employees in the implementation process so that they feel involved and understand the goals	Training employees on the system so that they can use it effectively	Gradual implementation, starting with small departments or functions		Regularly evaluating the results of using the system and making necessary adjustments		Providing technical support for users
Specificity for SMEs	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no

Source: compiled by the author based on [5-16]

CRM implementation is a technology project and a cultural change. With careful planning, employee involvement, and modern technologies, significant

progress can be made in increasing business efficiency. Below are some of the issues specific to small and medium enterprises (Table 2).

Table 2 Problems in implementing CRM systems specific to SMEs

Problem groups	Problems specific to small enterprises	Problems specific to medium enterprises
Resources	Limited resources: Small companies often have limited financial resources, which makes it difficult to choose and implement a full-featured CRM system	Competition for resources: The IT department may be overloaded with other projects, which can slow down the CRM implementation process
Business processes	Simpler business processes: Small companies often have less complex and formalized business processes, which may reduce the need for a full-featured CRM system	More complex business processes: Medium-sized businesses have more complex business processes, which requires a more flexible and customizable CRM system
Personnel	Insufficient staff: Lack of a specialist responsible for implementing and supporting the system	-
The structure of the enterprise	-	Distributed structures: Companies may have multiple branches or representative offices, which makes it difficult to consolidate customer data into a single system

Source: compiled by the author based on [5-16]

As a result, small and midsize enterprises (SMEs) face unique challenges in implementing CRM systems that are different from those faced by large enterprises. Implementing a CRM system is not just a technical task,

but a complex process involving financial, resource, human, and technological aspects. There are also common issues for small and medium-sized businesses (Table 3).

Table 3 **Problems when implementing CRM systems common to SMEs**

Problem groups	Problems specific to small enterprises	Problems specific to medium enterprises
Resources	Limited resources: Small companies often have limited financial resources, which makes it difficult to choose and implement a full-featured CRM system	Competition for resources: The IT department may be overloaded with other projects, which can slow down the CRM implementation process
Business processes	Simpler business processes: Small companies often have less complex and formalized business processes, which may reduce the need for a full-featured CRM system	More complex business processes: Medium-sized businesses have more complex business processes, which requires a more flexible and customizable CRM system
Personnel	Insufficient staff: Lack of a specialist responsible for implementing and supporting the system	-
The structure of the enterprise	-	Distributed structures: Companies may have multiple branches or representative offices, which makes it difficult to consolidate customer data into a single system

Source: compiled by the author based on [5-16]

Implementing CRM systems in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is an important step towards increasing business efficiency and improving customer relationships.

Conclusions. CRM is a powerful tool that helps businesses to effectively manage customer relationships. It can improve customer understanding, customer service, sales processes, marketing efficiency, and profits.

The implementation of CRM systems is hindered by a number of problems related to personnel (resistance to change, insufficient qualifications, lack of motivation), resources (financial costs, time costs, technical resources), business processes (non-optimized processes and insufficiently thought-out integration), company structure (distributed structure, weak coordination between departments), management (lack of leadership, insufficient communication), strategy (undefined goals,

lack of strategic plan), technologies (technical problems, compatibility with other systems).

At the same time, some of them are characteristic for small enterprises, related to resources, business processes, personnel and the structure of the enterprise, in particular, resource limitations, simpler business processes and insufficient number of personnel, and for medium enterprises - competition for resources, more complex business processes, distributed structures. At the same time, resources (financial constraints and limited resources), personnel (lack of motivation, resistance to change) and technology (technical difficulties) are common to both small and medium-sized enterprises.

The results of this study may be useful to company owners and scientists who study CRM systems and their impact on the enterprise's economic activity.

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