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Con riferimento al lavoro che segue CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN SMALL BUSINESS: STATE OF THE ART AND NEW PERSPECTIVES, in Usai A., Porcheddu D., Morandi F., Cardinali S., Del Giudice M. (Eds) (2017), Entrepreneurship & SMEs in Emerging Markets: Competitiveness & Innovation in Knowledge Economy, proceedings of SGBED (The Society for Global Business & Economic Development), 6th Research Symposium, ISBN 9788890767852

DICHIARANO

sotto la loro personale responsabilità che, sebbene l'articolo sia frutto delle riflessioni congiunte di tutti gli autori, in fase di stesura le sezioni **A brief introduction, The Theoretical Background,** nello specifico il sottoparagrafo *Focus on Electronic Customer Relationship Management (eCRM)*, **How to compete in a complex market: investing in inimitable resources, A few thoughts toward new scenarios** sono da attribuire a Cinzia Dessì.

La sezione **The Theoretical Background,** nello specifico il sottoparagrafo *Customer Relationship Management: some relevant aspects for business strategies* e **Differences in managing customers in SMEs and large enterprises: opportunities with CRM and eCRM** sono da attribuire a Michela Floris.

Cinzia Dessì
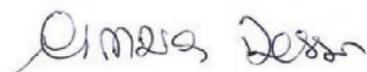
Michela Floris
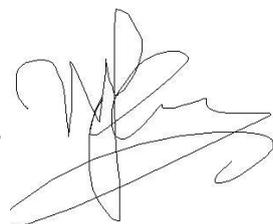
PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2017

11.30 – 16.00 Welcome desk on Department of Economics and Business, University of Sassari, Olbia Costa Smeralda Airport, first floor

16.30 **Opening Addresses**

Francesco Morandi, University of Sassari, Symposium Chairman

Jayachandran, School of Business, Montclair State University, President SGBED

Antonio Usai, University of Sassari, Symposium host coordinator

Silvio Cardinali, Politecnica delle Marche University, Vice-President SGBED

17.00 **Addresses by the Principal Sponsors**

Settimo Nizzi, Mayor of Olbia

Silvio Pippobello, CEO of GEASAR SpA

Alessandro Casella, President of AMP Tavolara Punta Coda Cavallo

17.30 **Lectio Magistralis – Lodovici Hall**

Entrepreneurship & SMEs in Emerging Markets: Competitiveness & innovation in Knowledge Economy
Shlomo Y. Tarba, Head of Department of Strategy & International Business, University of Birmingham, UK

19.00 **Welcome Cocktail with Sardinian wine and food in Costa Smeralda Airport**

20.30 **Transfer to the hotels – free time to visit Olbia**

Polo universitario di Olbia
Università degli Studi di Sassari

SoBED

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SASSARI

DiSea
Dipartimento di
Scienze economiche e aziendali
Università degli Studi di Sassari

📅 **October, 4th – 6th 2017** 📍 **Olbia, OT**

The 6th International Research Symposium (2017)

Theme: "Entrepreneurship & SMEs in Emerging Markets: Competitiveness and innovation in Knowledge Economy"

THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2017

8.30 **Transfer from hotels to University of Sassari, Olbia Costa Smeralda Airport**

9.00 **Session I (Einaudi Hall) –** *management, competitiveness and finance*

Introduction e chair by Piyush Sharma, Curtin University (Australia) and Hong Kong Polytechnic University

The effect of Population Ageing on Entrepreneurship, Gabriele Ruiu, Marco Breschi

A framework for analysis of strategy development in the franchising sector in emerging market, Frederigo Araujo Turolla, Vanessa Pilla Bretas, Thelma Valeria Rocha, Renata Fernandes Galhanone, Jefferson Galett

The SME in the Ceec need the same support and incentive as big multinational, Dusan Soltes

Social Capital and Economic Growth in Croatia, Radman-Funarić, Mirjana; Pisker, Barbara; Radman, Mateo Ivan

In Search for Signaling of Biotech Entrepreneurship in Financial Crisis: Applying Bayesian MCMC Analysis, Takao Fujiwara

Entrepreneurship and innovation in emerging markets: a system governance approach for enhancing SMEs viability, Francesco Polese Maria V. Ciasullo, Orlando Troisi , Mara Grimaldi

Customer relationship management in small business: state of the art and new perspectives, Cinzia Dessi, Michela Floris

11.00 **Coffee break**

Aeroporto
Olbia Costa Smeralda
GEASAR

Comune di Olbia

AREA MARINA PROTETTA
TAVOLARA
PUNTA CODA CAVALLO

11.30   **Session II (Einaudi Hall / Pareto Hall) – Tourism, national identity and culture**

Introduction and chair by Hannah *Shen (Hannah)*, Tourism Department, Fudan University, Shanghai, China

Tourism from water boardsports: evidences from the early stage destination Sardinia, Nicoletta Fadda

Pushing towards innovation in the Cultural and Creative industry of Sardinia, Balata Gavino, Francesco Morandi, Riccardo Porcu, Alessio Tola

Social innovation in tourism: unleashing the time-money constraint, Nina Walker, Yong Chen

Cruise Tourism: an opportunity to redefine and locate the brand of a destination, Ainhoa Amaro García

Perceiving the Tourism Image of Italy: A Study of the Destination Image Framework of Italy in Chinese Market, Han Shen, Ligang Peng, Antonio Usai, Jiayi Fan, Nan Xue

Evolution of Chinese tourism in Europe in the period 1996-2015: the determinants of the tourist competitiveness of the destinations, Antonio Usai, Francisco Montes, Daniele Porcheddu

13.30   **Light Lunch**
Kara Sardegna Food court
ground floor, Olbia Costa Smeralda Airport

14.45   **Session III - (Einaudi Hall) - Innovation & knowledge management**

Introduction and chair by Manlio del Giudice, Department of Management, Link Campus, Rome, Italy

Organizational resilience: spin-offs says that, Rocco Reina, Walter Vesperi, Anna Maria Melin

How to foster techno-entrepreneurship within a regional ecosystem: The Net Value case study, Moreno Frau, Ludovica Moi

Contribution of the local environment for the creation of specific advantages in brazilian subsidiaries of multinational enterprises, Rodrigues, Cristina Doritta; Guimaraes, Marcia Rujner; Sa, Adriano Costa; Borini, Felipe Mendes; Ogasavara, Mario Henrique

Management Competence: A Critical Dimension of Customer Perceived Value in B2B Context in Emerging Market, Sherriff T. K. LUK, Wei Dong CHEN, Esther L. Y. LI, Alison LLOYD

Local IPO Waves, Giulia Baschieri, Andrea Carosi, Stefano Mengoli

Identifying the key factors of success of micro family enterprises in the republic of Croatia, Štavlić, Katarina, Potnik Galić, Katarina, Radman Funarić, Mirjana

17.30	**Transfer to hotels**
19.15	**Meeting point in hotel Hilton and go to Costa Smeralda**
20.00	**Gala dinner in Costa Smeralda – Stazzo Gallurese (Tenuta Pilastru –Arzachena)**

Polo universitario di Olbia
Università degli Studi di Sassari

SGBED

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FRIDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2017

8.30   **Transfer from hotels to University of Sassari, Olbia Costa Smeralda Airport**

8.45   **Session IV - management capabilities and internationalization**

Introduction and chair by Sherriff Ting Kwong LUK, School of Marketing and Logistics Management, Nanjing University of Finance & Economics, Founder SGBED

The role of collective brand in internationalization strategies of italian agri food small-medium sized firm, Giovanna Galli, Marcello Tedeschi, Maria Cristiana Martini

From an emerging market to another: influencing factors in the internationalization decision of a brazilian state-owned bank for the argentine market, Aragão, Monique Fernandes dos Santos; Turolla, Frederico Araújo

Internalization of state-owned banks: a case study of Banco do Brasil, Banks of China and Westlb, Jorge Ferreira dos Santos Filho, Frederico Araujo Turolla

Tourism and natural attractors: Conservation as a new source of competitive advantage. The Case History of the Protected Marine Area of Tavolara Punta Coda Cavallo, Federico Niccolini, Augusto Navone, Antonio Usai

Is there an institutional void in risk mitigation in the brazilian electricity sector? The case of surety bond, Tulio Marqs, Frederico Araujo Turolla

The impact of experiential knowledge and cross-national distances on ownership level of foreign susidiaries operating in european emerging markets, Ogasavara, Mario Henrique; Cassio-de-Souza, Fabio; Guimaraes, Marcia Rujner

Financing for water and sanitation sector in Brazil: an analysis under private equity funds perspective, Dâmaso, Ligianne; Turolla, Frederico; Teixeira, Lucas

10.00   **Best paper Award**

10.30   Leisure Program. **Excursions (chosen by participants)**
Visit to the Archaeological Museum of Olbia (free) or Tavolara Island with lunch at the seaside (activities for a fee - € 30,00 pp) - back to Olbia Costa Smeralda Airport – In time for afternoon flights (Rome and Milan)

Aeropor
Olbia Costa S
GEASA

AREA MARINA PROTETTA
TAVOLARA
PUNTA CODA CAVALLO

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN SMALL BUSINESS: STATE OF THE ART AND NEW PERSPECTIVES

Abstract

The aim of this paper is an in-depth analysis of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Electronic Customer Relationship Management (eCRM) systems among SMEs. The literature review shows that SMEs undervalue the relevance of CRM and eCRM tools as relational resources and that CRM and eCRM architectures are often only planned for large firms. The results and implications of these findings are twofold. For academics, potential new fields of CRM and eCRM research are explained, and for practitioners, new perspectives on CRM and eCRM applications are hypothesized.

A brief introduction

Many scholars (Dessì C., and Floris M., 2010; Cabras et al., 2009; Cooper et al., 2005) argue that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have a unique position in the creation of long-lasting customer relationships that generate inimitable competitive advantages. However, in contrast to the research on large enterprises, few studies have examined Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Electronic Customer Relationship Management (eCRM) issues and practices in SMEs.

This study adopts the resource-based view to argue that for firms to compete and guarantee their survival in the market, they must identify and isolate resources that differentiate them from other firms. In this process, SMEs have a unique competitive advantage: their relationship with their customers.

The aim of this theoretical paper is threefold:

1) to show that even though SMEs have an intuitively better knowledge of relationship marketing and CRM principles than other firms, they lack in-depth knowledge of the technological opportunities to foster customer relations (Zontanos, and Anderson, 2004);

2) to examine the benefits derived from CRM and eCRM for SMEs;

3) to determine why SMEs do not use advanced CRM and eCRM tools and to identify new research trends in response to emerging questions. We base our analysis on the understanding of CRM as a system of methodologies, software, and Internet capabilities that help firms manage customer relationships. In this large and complex context, eCRM, a specific aspect of CRM, may represent an innovative way to manage customer relationships through information technology. In this sense, eCRM is "the marketing activities, tools and techniques delivered over the Internet (using technologies such as web sites, email, data capture, warehousing, and mining) with a specific aim to locate, build and improve long-term customer relationships to enhance their individual potential" (Lee-Kelley et al., 2003: 241).

The theoretical framework

Customer Relationship Management: some relevant aspects for business strategies

Defining Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is difficult. CRM originated in Information Technology (IT) fields in the mid-1990s. The term has often been used to describe technology-based customer solutions.

CRM relates to the fields of marketing (e.g., relationship marketing, consumer behavior, etc.), information systems (e.g., e-commerce, human-computer interaction, etc.), management, etc. Because of the multidisciplinary nature of the topic, the literature offers many definitions of CRM.

Studies have focused on specific aspects of CRM strategies, such as the links between satisfaction and business performance (Kamakura et al. 2002), customer loyalty and profitability (Reinartz, Kumar 2000), customer profitability and heterogeneity (Niraj, Gupta, and Narasimhan 2001), and customer loyalty programs (Verhoef, 2003).

The knowledge management perspective on CRM describes it as an approach that focuses on maintaining positive relationships with customers, increasing customer loyalty, and expanding customer lifetime value (Ahn, Kim, and Han, 2003).

The goals of CRM should include discovering and identifying relevant factors for customers, promoting a consumer-oriented philosophy, using customer-based measures, developing end-

to-end customer management processes to serve customers, providing customer support and tracking all aspects of sales. In other words, CRM can help firms create customer-centric organizations with a holistic view of customers' sales and service information. When analyzing this information, firms focus on acquiring new customers, retaining their current customers by building long-term relationships, enhancing these relationships through activities such as customized communications, and distinguishing new segments of customers based on their value to the firm (Payne and Frow 2005). A main reason that firms implement CRM architectures is to track customer behavior and gain insight into customers' tastes and evolving needs. By organizing and using this information, firms can design and develop better products and services (Davenport, Harris, and Kohli 2001). Hogan, Lemon, and Rust (2002) argue that the ability to acquire, manage, and model customer information is a key to sustaining competitive advantages.

A fundamental aspect of CRM is its close relationship with technology. This is important because CRM technology is often incorrectly equated with CRM (Reinartz, Krafft, Hoyer 2004), and one cause of CRM failure is viewing CRM as a technology initiative. At the same time, the implementation of CRM solutions requires firms to develop a customer relations orientation (Jayachandran et al. 2005; Srinivasan, Moorman 2005) and to collect, analyze, and apply the customer information they acquire (Jayachandran et al. 2005).

Focus on Electronic Customer Relationship Management (eCRM)

The literature review provides several definitions of Electronic Customer Relationship Management (eCRM). Forrester Research (2001) defines eCRM as the process of transferring CRM to the Internet and the means to synchronize customer relations across channels, functions and audiences. Swift (2001) describes analytical eCRM as four-step iterative process consisting of (1) collecting and integrating online customer data, (2) analyzing these data, (3) building interactions with customers based on this analysis, and (4) measuring the effectiveness of these interactions in terms of performance metrics. Another definition suggests that eCRM is an approach for identifying, attracting, developing, and maintaining successful customer relationships over time to increase the retention of profitable customers (Bradshaw and Brash, 2001). In a broad sense, eCRM describes the technologies used to support CRM strategies for firms (Forrester Reseach 2001).

Although a common definition of eCRM does not exist, scholars generally agree that the focus of eCRM is to develop and retain relationships with profitable customers through value-creation processes (Sigala, 2006a, Chen and Popovich, 2003, Webster, 1992). This consensus

is related to the ongoing use of eCRM by organizations to build or extend customer relationships (Coltman, 2007).

How to compete in a complex market: investing in inimitable resources

Creating and maintaining positive relationships with customers is fundamental for all firms that want to survive in the market. As mentioned, CRM and eCRM play an important role in facilitating and stimulating the creation and improvement of lasting customer relationships. A synergic link exists among CRM, eCRM and firms that constitutes an important organizational resource. According to the RBV (Barney 1991), organizational resources are tangible or intangible factors of production that organizations own, control, or have access to on a semi-permanent basis.

The strategic potential of an organizational resource reflects its ability to "enable a firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness" (Barney 1991, p. 102) and depends upon four properties: *value*, *rarity*, *inimitability*, and *non-substitutability*. Value refers to the ability of supporting strategies to capitalize on market opportunities or fend off threats. Rarity is a measure of the relative unavailability of an organizational resource to current and potential rivals. Inimitability is a reflection of the costs and difficulties associated with attempts to duplicate an organizational resource. Non-substitutability is a property that evaluates the nonexistence of strategically equivalent organizational resources (Barney 1991). To effectively manage complex customer relationships, firms must develop the ability to combine and coordinate technological dimensions and their competence in managing customer relationships through other kinds of contacts. In other words, if firms aim to innovate new ways of structuring customer relationships, relational capability emerges as a strategic asset that brings flexibility in combining and coordinating resources. In this way, firms can develop a valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable organizational resource. Small and medium-sized firms are in a favorable position compared with large firms because their skills are characterized by a natural customer orientation.

Differences in managing customers in SMEs and large enterprises: opportunities with CRM and eCRM

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are vital components of the economy. They are a major source of entrepreneurial skills, innovation and employment. In the enlarged Europe,

for example, there are 23 million SMEs (99% of all firms), which provide approximately 75 million jobs (European Commission, 2015). SMEs have many difficulties in the market, such as obtaining capital and credit, and they have restricted resources that may reduce access to new technologies or innovation.

SMEs are often considered small versions of large organizations, but this is not accurate. The European Commission defines SMEs as enterprises that employ fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed 10 million euros (European Commission, 2015). By this definition, SMEs differ from large and micro enterprises in their number of employees and affairs. However, there are additional differences.

First, as the RBV posits, firms differ according to the resources they possess. Resource equipment is heterogeneous among business firms and generates performance differences. Firms with scarce and valuable resources perform better than firms without such assets do. It is necessary to isolate and identify these scarce resources to better understand performance results. Isolation mechanisms that create and defend these resources are carried out through barriers and by making it impossible for rival firms to imitate the products or to keep them from the market. In this scenario, firms must identify the resources that are inimitable, non-transferable and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991) to create durable competitive advantages.

In line with this statement and in accordance with the European Commission's recommendation, SMEs are analyzed in this study as specific firms that have peculiar characteristics and must identify and acquire resources to guarantee long-term success in the troubled market. Customer relationships are a definite resource that possesses these characteristics (i.e., these relationships are inimitable, non-transferable and non-substitutable). By creating lasting customer relationships, SMEs can act as role models for large firms. However, because of their limited resources and expertise, SMEs cannot take marketing theories and practices into account as larger organizations can.

In practice, marketing is performed by SMEs through an intrinsic customer orientation that exhibits striking resemblances to CRM theory, with or without the use of CRM tools. Creating and maintaining positive and constructive customer relationships is fundamental for all organizations but is especially important for SMEs. Responding to customers with flexibility and adaptability is one of the key ways for SMEs to compete with their larger counterparts (Tagliavini et al., 2001).

Many scholars (Dessì C., and Floris M., 2010; Cabras et al., 2009; Cooper et al., 2005; Carson et al., 1995; Zontanos and Anderson, 2004) argue that, compared to other firms, SMEs are in

a unique position to create long-lasting customer relationships, and their close relationships with customers often provide SMEs with a unique competitive advantage. In other words, SMEs intuitively follow relationship marketing and CRM principles, but at the same time, they do not use technological support to improve their natural capabilities to manage customer relations. Several studies (Cheng and Ching, 2007; Ortega et al., 2008; Gummenson, 1994) underline the correlation between technology, relationship marketing, and consumer management. Pan and Lee's (2003) analysis of large organizations asserts that traditional CRM can be considered a part of e-CRM. SMEs tend to create and maintain closer customer relationships than larger organizations; the terminology of CRM is unfamiliar to the majority of managers, although the practice is familiar (Zontanos and Anderson, 2004). SMEs generally do not utilize complex tools to improve CRM activities, but they make use of basic aspects of these tools, such as websites, e-mail, and data mining (Marcus, 1998). In addition, SMEs are often uncertain of the advantages offered by CRM and eCRM (Cooper et al., 2005). It is interesting that SMEs are very familiar with CRM and use it intuitively, but they do not see CRM tools as important business supports. However, CRM and eCRM can help SMEs to compete with their larger competitors (Daniel and McInerney, 2005; Harrigan et al., 2008) in international markets (Ritchie and Brindley, 2005), improving customer loyalty, relationship personalization, sales and profitability (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Morgan, 2007; Letaifa and Perrien, 2007). In particular, an important area of management that could be improved is customer information management (Ritchie and Brindley, 2005), which contributes to segmenting the market and identifying the personal details, preferences, requirements, and perspectives of customers (Keh et al., 2007), thereby creating a coherent and complete customer database (Padmanabhan and Tuzhilin, 2003).

Given that CRM and eCRM could improve SMEs, why do they fail to appreciate these tools or to understand their benefits? First, a common difficulty for SMEs in implementing CRM is a reduction in face-to-face contact with customers. In fact, customer relationships in SMEs are generally managed in traditional ways, through costly face-to-face contact and handshakes and without highly sophisticated software support (Ritchie and Brindley, 2005).

Second, as mentioned, SMEs possess limited resources and expertise. Finally, as Halligan (2006) notes, there are factors that lead to the failure of CRM and eCRM in SMEs:

1. CRM and eCRM systems are useful for large companies that need to "count" their customers. SMEs may maintain their previous customers and have difficulties in finding new ones, but they do not have difficulty counting and identifying existing customers.

2. CRM and eCRM tools are essential for capturing and organizing structured information, but these tools are not able to perceive and define unstructured information. In contrast, SMEs need to understand unstructured information, so they implement face-to-face customer relationships.

3. CRM and eCRM utilization is complex. Only dedicated operations people find most CRM tools easy to use, and SMEs cannot invest resources to educate employees to use CRM.

4. CRM and eCRM tend to standardize customer relationships. This is appropriate for large firms that are oriented to transactional systems (for instance, call centers). Small businesses have client relations that are more solution-oriented than transaction-oriented. In this sense, structured fields are useful for large companies that need to create repeatable actions, but they are not helpful for small businesses. Standardized tools, practices and processes can inhibit creativity and innovation and can complicate relationships with stakeholders.

Even if SMEs are interested in improving and implementing CRM and eCRM, these barriers hinder the potential success of a relationship management approach that differs from face-to-face liaisons.

A few thoughts toward new scenarios.

The difficulties and barriers that prevent SMEs from using CRM and eCRM tools to improve their natural ability to manage customer relations should be removed. Customer relationships are the most relevant resources to guarantee success for SMEs in a hypercompetitive and dynamic market. These relationships are the main factor that distinguishes SMEs from large firms. As mentioned, firms must identify resources that are unique, not transferable and not substitutable and invest in these resources to create and maintain competitive advantages. SMEs that hope to compete in globalised economies cannot ignore CRM principles and the potential benefits of CRM and eCRM applications, in particular Social eCRM, the new frontiers for managing relationships (Ahani et al., 2017; Berger and Thomas, 2016; Samuel and Ioe, 2016). However, many small businesses do not consider CRM the cornerstone of their present and future business success (Cooper et al., 2005).

CRM and eCRM can play a significant role in the competitive advantages of SMEs. The literature review shows that few studies have examined why many CRM tools fail in SME applications. CRM and eCRM solutions are planned for large enterprises rather than for

SMEs. SMEs need particular approaches, and CRM architecture must be designed to respond to and meet the specific requirements of SMEs. CRM and eCRM systems usually do not meet small business needs.

This paper highlights the need for future research focused on CRM and eCRM for SMEs. Very little attention has been paid to the relevance of these tools for small businesses, but attention to this area is important to stimulate SMEs to improve their natural skills in creating lasting customer relationships. Greater focus should be placed on the CRM needs of small businesses by defining the small-business needs that distinguish SMEs from large enterprises. The use of large firms' CRM tools in small business is certainly inappropriate.

Finally, it is important to note the difference between SMEs' perceptions and customers' perceptions. Chang et al. (2005) argue that firms and customers often have different points of view. Entrepreneurs often are only aware of their personal viewpoints and undervalue consumers' ideas. CRM and eCRM could become more important by helping SMEs to understand customers' perceptions. The consumer viewpoint may provide a fertile and unexplored breeding ground for CRM research. Developments in the practice of CRM may help practitioners to create new and better consumer relationships characterized by an intrinsic complicity that can produce an ideal relationship between SMEs and their customers and can provide the basis for lasting success in the market.

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