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FRONT END CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)
FOR UTM ALUMNI

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TO MY BELOVED
FATHER, MOTHER, BROTHER AND SISTER
TO MY RESPECTED SUPERVISOR
DR. ROLIANA BINTI IBRAHIM
FAMILY MEMBERS
BEST FRIENDS

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ABSTRACT

Many strategies have been formulated to help a company in achieving its objectives. One of the most popular strategy that has been adopted among researchers and business sponsor nowadays is Customer Relationship Management (CRM). The purpose of using CRM in an organization is to improve marketing productivity, win the customer, provide good quality of service and offer good product to the customer. Realizing this, Higher education take the opportunities move from traditional turned to automation of internal business and organizational processes. From internal business process, higher education is moving to external business process to focus more on their customers. The customers of the higher education organizations are the students, alumni, donors, faculty members and staff members. The nature of relationships between alumni and organization can be considered as temporal. In fact, this study proposes that CRM approach will help alumni to reach their objectives. The application front end system is considered appropriate to be used as a problem solver of the Alumni Liaison Unit in higher education institution.

ABSTRAK

Strategi telah banyak dibangunkan untuk membantu organisasi dalam mencapai objektifnya. Salah satu strategi yang paling popular yang telah digunakan dikalangan penyelidik dan ahli perniagaan adalah Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Tujuan utama CRM digunakan dalam organisasi adalah untuk meningkatkan produktiviti pemasaran, menarik minat pelanggan, memberikan dan menawarkan kualiti perkhidmatan dan produk yang baik kepada pelanggan. Menyedari hakikat ini, pendidikan tinggi mengambil peluang untuk beralih daripada cara tradisional kepada otomasi dalam proses perniagaan sesebuah organisasi. Daripada pengurusan dalaman organisasi, pendidikan tinggi beralih kepada pengurusan luaran organisasi untuk lebih fokus kepada pelanggan mereka. Pelanggan bagi pendidikan tinggi adalah mahasiswa, alumni, dan kakitangan universiti. Hubungan antara alumni dan organisasi boleh dianggap sebagai temporal. Justeru itu, kajian ini mencadangkan pendekatan CRM digunakan untuk membantu UTM dalam mengaktifkan semula hubungan yang ada. Aplikasi “Front end system” dikaji dan dicadangkan mengikut kesesuaian masalah yang dihadapi oleh Alumni Liaison Unit di institusi pendidikan tinggi.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CRM	Customer Relationship Management
ICT	Information Communication Technology
UTM	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
UPA	Alumni Liaison Unit
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threat
SPS	School of Graduate Studies
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia

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CHAPTER 1

PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Many strategies have been formulated to help a company in achieving its objectives. One of the most popular strategy that has been adopted among researchers and business sponsor nowadays is Customer Relationship Management (CRM). The purpose of using CRM in an organization is to improve marketing productivity, win the customer, provide good quality of service and offer good product to the customer. Realizing this, Higher education take the opportunities move from traditional turned to automation of internal business and organizational processes. From internal business process, higher education education is moving to external business process to focus more on their customers. The customers of the higher education organizations are the students, alumni, donors, faculty members and staff members. The nature of relationships between alumni and organization can be considered as temporal. In fact, this study proposes that CRM approach will help alumni to reach their objectives. The requirement of CRM is considered appropriate to be used as a problem solver of the Alumni Liaison Unit in higher education institution.

1.2 Problem Background

It can no longer be denied that Information Communication Technology (ICT) have given success in a particular organization. By intention of using it, higher institutions are not left behind. Many colleges and universities began restructuring and reengineering their operating processes. Furthermore, ICT helped them to automate and optimize their internal business processes such as finance, grants management, student information, enrollment, inventory management, and human resources.

As a higher learning institution, the organization must be aware with the development of technology and the customers' needs. Consciously, higher education currently moves from improving internal operations to concentrating more on customers. Customers are the external assets in a particular organization in which they can give profit to the organization. In this case, customers are students regardless whether they are still studying or not. Whether we realize or not, students have the capability to give out profits for a particular university. One of the factor selections institutions there are alumni satisfaction with their college experience, and the percentage of graduates who find employment (Elaine and Margaret, 2006). Without doubt, Alumni Liaison Unit is build to trace their former students.

UTM is one of the higher education centers in Malaysia that launched an Alumni Liaison Unit. However, due to some technical problems and lack of support from the alumni, the association was declared defunct by the Registrar of Society in 1993. The Alumni Liaison Unit opens a huge opportunity to all graduates to contribute to the UTM Alumni, perhaps, making it one of the greatest assets is our global network of alumni. The purpose of The Alumni Liaison Unit's website is to celebrate their graduates' achievements and provide access to it's alumni community. Moreover, it provides a way for graduates to discover how to get connected, opportunities for social interaction and networking and get entirely involved with the University and its supporters including gaining information about events being held by the university.

Several problems identified from document analysis include the fact that the existing website is still static and failed to gain graduates' interest thus provide, surprisingly, unaided improvement in terms of the relationship between UTM and its alumni. This website which focuses on only giving latest information to the alumni does not proved interactivity and communication from both parties.

According to data gathered from interviews, one of the challenges faced by the Alumni Liaison Unit is to obtain and collect student data who has graduated. These graduates are unconscious of the benefits they will gain when they join the UTM Alumni Unit.

As such, This study proposes an appropriate requirement to build connection between UTM and its alumni (UTM graduates). CRM approach was adopted in investigating and suggesting possible improvement for a newly improved Alumni Liaison Unit website.

CRM was chosen because it is the concept that manages customer relationships, improve and sustain the relationships with its customers and also ensuring the customers loyalty, long-term relationships with customers and other key stakeholders. CRM provides enhanced opportunities to use data and information to both understand customers and co create value with them.

This study aims to help the alumni to reach its goal of gaining the graduates' interest in the Unit as well as provide better communication with the graduates.

1.3 Problem Statement

This research was conducted from the identified problem, undertaken by investigation and observation to existing Alumni UTM website.

In this research, there are many aspects that should be considered in ensuring that the proposed front-end requirement for CRM in improving the relationship between UTM and Alumni. The main aspects that should consider are:

“What are the critical requirements needed for CRM to assist in creating a better relationship between UTM and the UTM Alumni?”

From the main aspects above, there are other several aspects to be considered such as:-

- 1) Are there any Customer Relationship Management (CRM) elements at Alumni UTM website?
- 2) What are the front-end requirements needed for CRM to assist in creating a better relationship between UTM and the UTM Alumni?

1.4 Project objectives

This research is done with the following objectives:

- 1) Investigate existing CRM approach and it's implementation in higher education.
- 2) To investigate and analyze the current business process and implementation of Alumni UTM website.
- 3) Identify and propose solution to the most critical component of CRM in alumni that is needed to be improved.
- 4) To develop a prototype based on the requirements identified in (3).

1.5 Project Scope

The study focused on UTM's Alumni Liaison Unit. This project covers two main scopes as highlighted below:

- 1) The subject domain is restricted to Alumni Liaison Unit.
- 2) The customers are undergraduates and post graduate students.

1.6 Significance of the project

The research will significantly come up with:

- 1) In terms of marketing, it is useful to attract the potential UTM student to further their studies in this university because they are using former UTM students as medium to promote UTM.
- 2) Help to increase UTM ranking among University. This is because success former students in which institutions are the contributor in raising the universities ranking.
- 3) Proposes requirement of front-end system, followed by recommendation for ICT solution to the Alumni based on the requirement that will be developed.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has identified the introduction of the research. Furthermore, it also describes the background problem, problem statement as well the project objectives, project scope and significance of the project. This chapter is aimed to give a general description for the whole of the project.