

# Customer Care and Customer Relationship Maintenance in Novaland Aqua City Real Estate Project in Eastern Ho Chi Minh City

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**Abstract:** CRM is viewed as a strategic software used to learn more about customers needs and behaviors in order to develop stronger relationships with them. Good customer relationships are central to business success. One of the problems of CRM is implementing the CRM systems and solutions accordingly, combining it with existing information systems and, most importantly, accepting it by consumers and users. For Aqua City real estate project to be successful in business as it is today is a process and thanks to the Novaland's CRM system. Through the research data, collected articles we are able to find out factors that help Novaland's CRM system work towards success in their various real estate development projects, we can also find shortcomings as well in Novaland's CRM system to overcome and improve for the better future business performance.

**Keywords:** customer relationship, Novaland, Qua City

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Green and clean living is a trend that many people are interested in recently with the trends of using organic food, reducing plastic waste, meditating yoga and looking for a space to live close to nature every day. Everyone wants to live in green cities so that their family can have good mental and physical health, reduce the risk of diseases and death from the consequences of environmental pollution [2, 26, 27, 29, 30]. Currently, many studies around the world show that people who live near nature will feel happier, be prevented from diseases, such as: asthma, heart, obesity, memory loss, (Alzheimer), diabetes, hyperactivity disorder and autism in children.

However, the desire to live green in biggest cities like HCMC is not easy to realize. It can be said that the birth of Novaland Group's Aqua City urban area has partly solved the lack of green living space in biggest cities in modern times. With a large land bank of up to hundreds of hectares, located in the south of the city of Bien Hoa (Dong Nai province of Vietnam), Aqua City not only easily connects with Ho Chi Minh City and Southern provinces, but it also offers a valuable quality of life with its location stretching along the river and surrounded by key traffic routes of the region, satisfying 3 prosperity factors "First near-market, Second near-river, Third near-road". The project is designed with synchronous infrastructure, a variety of utilities to meet the living needs of the whole family such as amusement parks, riverside parks, commercial centers, 5-star marinas, school systems, etc. In particular, the tens of kilometers long riverside park are the place to develop the natural ecosystem, help balance the temperature, create a cool landscape and purify the air. In addition, residents can also experience romantic parties on the 5-star riverside marina. The project also devotes a lot of enthusiasm in using technology applications to protect the environment such as using solar energy for public utilities, environmentally friendly waste collection and waste classification system. Aqua City has many choices with reasonable investment to realize the green living dream of urban residents with long-term ownership commercial properties such as shophouses, townhouses, detached and

duplex villas. With less than 40 thousand USD initially, anyone can easily own a modern green nest for themselves.

Novaland Group has been a leading prestigious brand in the field of real estate investment and development in Vietnam for many years. In its sustainable development strategy, Novaland always considers investing in developing high-quality human resources and creating a working environment with the best conditions as a top priority. So, we need to do the research over this real estate company to learn the good points of the sustainable property development and customer relationship management capacity. In terms of internal customer relationship management (staff management) Novaland was also voted the best working environment in Asia in 2019 (according to Asian standards). So the urgency of this corporate research is very necessary and important for studying Customer Relationship Management.

### **Research objectives**

- Systematize the theoretical basis of real estate marketing activities.
- Assess and analyze the current situation of marketing activities in Novaland.
- Find out information about how to care and maintain relationships with customers.
- Clarifying the process of how customers are taken care of, maintaining relationships with them, related criteria and requirements.
- Propose solutions to improve customer service and maintain customer relationships

## **II. RATIONALE**

### **2.1. Overview of the CRM system**

CRM(Customer Relationship Management) is the strategy of companies to develop and foster strong relationships with customers through research, thorough understanding their needs and habits. Establishing good relationships with customers is especially important to the success of each company, so this is an issue of great importance. There are many technological factors involved in CRM but CRM is not purely a technological term. The best understanding for CRM is: marketing, sales, customer service and IT.CRM is the entire process of collecting, synthesizing and analyzing information about customers, sales, effectiveness of marketing activities, ability of the company to adapt to the market trends in order to improve the efficiency of business operations, bring about the highest profit for the company [1, 3, 8, 11, 14, 15].

CRM originated from the idea of helping businesses use resources (human and technology) to thoroughly understand customer attitudes and habits, and evaluate the value of individual customer segments. With the help of an effective CRM system, businesses can [20, 21, 22]:

- Provide customers with better services
- Improve the efficiency of the customer support center
- Help sales staff to fulfill orders in the fastest way
- Simplify the marketing and sales process
- Discover new customers
- Increase revenue from customers

Implementing a CRM system is more than simply buying the right software and installing it into the current information system. For a CRM system to be effective, organizations first need to decide what types of customer information it should be interested in and for what purposes. For example, many financial institutions store customer lifetime information for the purpose of marketing insurance products at appropriate intervals, close to customer needs. Organizations then need to consider the different ways in which customer information is

recorded, how and where customer data is stored, and how this data is currently being used. A company can interact with customers in a variety of ways, such as by mail, website, physical store, call center, mobile sales force or marketing campaigns and advertisement. A strong CRM system must be able to link these “customer interfaces” together. Streams of data collected across functional systems (such as sales and warehouse management systems) are analyzed to find the most common patterns for individual customer groups. The company's analysts will carefully review the collected data and provide an overview of customer groups and service areas that need to improve service quality [16, 17, 18, 21, 22].

## **2.2. The role of CRM system in the corporate business strategy**

Finding new customers, maintaining and taking care of current customers after sales is considered a continuous link that any business organization must invest in order to keep customers on the business side more firmly. Customers are the most accurate critics of product credibility, service satisfaction and consumer safety. In addition, they are also the most effective marketing source for businesses. The roles of CRM for business activities of manufacturing and service enterprises. It is impossible not to mention the following role of CRM activities [14, 15]:

-CRM helps businesses to understand information about customer such as age preferences, feedback, etc. to help them with good business orientations when responding to customer needs.

-CRM helps businesses know the number of their current customers and potential future customers. From there, they can compare with competitors and understand competitors in the market.

- CRM help businesses know the ability to search, select, build and develop customer information systems over time. From there, businesses can assess the development level of the business in the market and have an improvement policy suitable for the next period.

- CRM also tells businesses how good are their after-sales services and how is it possible to resolve customer complaints, so that appropriate measures can be taken.

The biggest benefit of CRM is building better relationships with existing customers and through that [1, 3]:

-Increase sales by choosing the right time, by predicting customer needs on predetermined trends.

-Identify customer needs more effectively by understanding the requirements of each customer group.

-Customers can be persuaded to buy related products because the brand is known to them and businesses can offer many substitutes or improved products.

-Identify which customers and how much profit they can bring about.

CRM is an enterprise strategy for creating and maintaining beneficial long-term customer relationships. Successful CRM initiatives begin with the premise that businesses align their activities with the needs of their customers. Only then can CRM technology be a useful tool for the processes that are required to turn strategies into business results. By aggregating data such as purchase history, keyword patterns, customer demographics and other relevant information, businesses can earn great benefits in the following main ways [31]:

### *a. Continue to exploit unconverted customers*

Using data contained in the CRM system, the marketing department can determine which customers have been contacted by the sales department but have not yet purchased the product/service. Using the details captured from those interactions can help build personalized campaigns to continue tapping customers who haven't converted.

*b. Identify the source of revenue generated*

CRM allows businesses to track and report on marketing leads and revenue, providing leadership with detailed marketing metrics.

*c. Do not waste time on non-potential customers*

Another benefit of CRM is that it helps identify contacts who barely interact or whose needs really don't match the products offers. This gives businesses time to focus on potential customers to shorten sales closing time.

*d. Identify innovative marketing opportunities*

CRM contains valuable renewal marketing data such as subscription expiration dates and service call conversations, allowing the marketing team to build a list of existing customers that are in the non-renewal zone to target by new marketing campaigns.

*e. Identify gaps in the customer shopping and experience*

With each campaign planned and with specific reporting data, the sales department easily recognizes gaps and inefficiencies in the campaign. From there, businesses can improve and change actions to strengthen the customer's shopping and experience.

*f. CRM helps drive purchases*

Digital marketing campaigns are often designed to drive e-commerce sales. Customer shopping habits involve researching products, comparing prices, and taking several similar steps before making a purchase decision. With CRM, businesses can identify when a customer searches one of their products, allowing targeted advertising campaigns to be placed on social media and other platforms to maintain interest.

*g. Correct strategy tuning*

Different customers are exposed to different forms of marketing. For example, some customers are most likely to encounter content marketing via social media. Others may subscribe to a business email list, while others are more likely to find marketing content when they do relevant searches online. CRM allows business to understand how each individual customer encounters a marketing campaign. This allows each potential customer to be targeted with marketing content designed to reach them. By using these data, businesses can personalize a marketing strategy, which tends to lead to higher sales and increased brand loyalty [4, 6, 7].

*h. Cut the cost*

An effective marketing campaign offers a strong return on investment. Businesses may want to achieve certain goals, like increasing sales or increasing brand awareness, but they also want to be sure that the revenue the campaign generates exceeds its costs [9, 33]. CRM reduces marketing costs by offloading much of the work other employees will have to do. With tools specifically designed to manage and analyze customer data, the marketing team can focus on other tasks. This leads to a more efficient use of time, and can even reduce the need to hire more staff.

### **2.3. Features of CRM system in real estate development companies**

***With the help of CRM, real estate businesses can*** [8, 14, 15]:

- Bring customers the best products, services and experiences
- Search and bring about in many new and potential customers
- Simplify the marketing and sales process
- Help the sales department work and close the sale quickly and effectively
- Customer care department can limit negative feedback, increase positive feedback.
- Help departments of marketing, sales and customer support work together effectively.
- Help increase business revenue from loyal customer groups

- Deepen the brand image through texting activities to send wishes on special occasions such as birthdays, holidays...

### ***The benefits of CRM for the real estate industry***

In a playground like today's real estate market, businesses can't miss the opportunity to work with clients to increase profits and build brands [4, 6, 7, 9, 33]. To cope with today's challenges, real estate companies rely on CRM for its useful features. While the majority of real estate transactions come from referrals or word of mouth, it's not the only source of leads. In order to find more customers, real estate companies use many advertising communication channels such as websites, social networks, email marketing, events. These activities will bring about a large amount of customer information from many different sources. To exploit effectively, it is necessary to reorganize into a single database, accessible from many platforms and locations, with which information can be retrieved quickly and easily. And this is where CRM shines as effective support for real estate brokers who often have to travel everywhere. Due to the nature of their work, they often have to go out to meet customers or survey the market. Real estate brokers cannot always sit in front of a computer screen. CRM is designed to be used when logged in with smart devices, accessed via cloud computing, helping them to update customer information anytime, anywhere.

CRM helps real estate agents respond to customers quickly. In the real estate industry, customers will have to spend a large amount of money to buy land or property, so they need a response to their problems and questions as quickly as possible. Survey shows that 80% of customers expect a response within 1 hour. The ability to respond quickly is a necessity, it helps businesses create trust and sympathy in customers. In this case, CRM assists businesses in sending direct messages to customers when they are trying to contact, as well as reminding of customer problems. No matter how many customers you have, how busy you are, you still have to treat each customer as if they are only important persons in need of help at that moment.

In real estate business it is possible to increase the source of new potential customers from old customers. According to statistics, 74% of customers are willing to refer their relationships to a real estate broker who has worked with them, if that agent continues to keep in touch after the transaction is completed. There are 88% of real estate transactions come from referrals or old customers back to their old broker [32]. That's why CRM is more and more interested in real estate professionals and companies. In a fiercely competitive real estate market, the more relationships a company builds, the more successful deals it has.

## **III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **3.1. History of CRM system formation at Novaland Group**

Laying the foundation of the group's long-term development plan and strategy, Novaland has constantly invested, applied strong deployment to keep up with the rapid change of technology, and improved the competitive capacity in the modern times. The IT system has been gradually consolidated and developed to support all activities and development process of the Novaland Group. 2016 marked an important milestone in IT with the decision to invest in implementing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Human Resources Information System (HRIS) on the most advanced technology platform of SAP. The implementation of planning projects such as upgrading backbone network infrastructure, datacenter, security of terminal devices on internal cloud computing infrastructure, office wireless network, especially projects of effective system deployments in order to raise information security awareness of users, the risk assessment and development information security policies according to ISO27000 standards.

Amongst them, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is being also invested to upgrade in order to manage customer database system, classify customers due to their potential, financial capacity and purchasing power to help effectively deploy marketing programs, sales policy and customer care. Table 1 presents us several advantages and disadvantages of CRM system at Novaland,

**Table 1.** Advantages and disadvantages of CRM in Novaland

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
- Meeting the needs of automating the real estate business management process and the group's system of affiliated brokerage floors. -Help NovaLand accelerate sales, reduce product inventory risks and build more favorable sales policies for customers. Fracture professional image through every contact with customers care.	Limited qualifications and experience of the team of programmers.

**Source:** Own development

### 3.2. Promoting and exploiting the strengths of the Aqua City project CRM system

In the Novaland's Aqua City project, it is important to meet the needs of automating the real estate business management process and the system of affiliated brokerage trading floor. The process and the importance of automating the management process is indisputable. This is a reasonable answer to the question, why is the business effective or inefficient.

CRM Novaland Aqua City project operates based on the activities of many individuals combined. Each individual has different abilities, skills and working styles, leading to different ways of working. This sometimes leads to conflicts and inconsistencies at work. Implement a work process management helps people know the essence of their job, the procedure to follow to carry out the tasks assigned, the results that should be achieved. This is especially important for jobs that require the combination of members of different departments to work as a team. The work process management helps members coordinate smoothly and maximize efficiency. Moreover, this also help properly manage the Aqua City project in terms of assessing the employee's sales capacity and overall business performance of the enterprise. Today, the development of technology brings great features, specifically to help automate the sales management process, gradually affirming the importance of automating the sales management process in business. Specifically:

#### *Increase the sense of responsibility at work*

To promote transparency, what is the work management process that clearly defines the work each employee needs to do? Collaborate with whom? Who will be responsible? This makes each individual aware of work, to achieve high performance requires exploration and creativity.

#### *Instant storage in the process of work*

All work and management operations of CRM Novaland's Aqua City project are stored accurately and fully immediately during the implementation process. This helps managers control and monitor easily, saving time and effort.

#### *Minimize risk*

The automation of tasks on the software makes the implementation and management much simpler and more accurate. The dynamic memory and storage on the enterprise system will not need to worry about information being stolen or lost.

#### *Convenient, manage anytime, anywhere*

Automating the management process allows Novaland and its project management to easily access and control anywhere, just a smartphone with an Internet connection. In this way,

long-distance business trips or not being present at the office are no longer a problem that Novaland has to worry about.

*Accelerate sales, reduce inventory risks and build more favorable sales policies.*

Building a business policy must first rely on the internal resources of the enterprise. On the basis of the developed strategy to adjust the increase and decrease of the discounts to suit customer retention, system development, promote and motivate employees to work. For large or small-sized enterprises, the development of business policies includes expenses such as trade discounts, discounts, promotions, depending on each field of activity, which enterprises adjust accordingly taking into account the competitors' moves and as well as the desired profit of the business.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1. Conclusion**

With the development of the market economy, supply is greater than demand, in order to achieve profits, NovaLand must take many measures to care about customers, understand their tastes and always be ready to change and improve products to be maximally suitable. The forms of customer satisfaction by product and service quality during and after the release are increasingly focused on. If NovaLand is able to meet that demand, it will be supported by interested customers and will stand firm in today's volatile business market.

The application of CRM is becoming more and more necessary for NovaLand. Now, in understanding customers and providing the best service to them, in-sales and after-sales services, product quality remains the same. It is really appreciated and necessary to focus on paying attention to customers, listening to their voices.

The application of the CRM system in Vietnam today has been studied and applied by businesses. However, the application of CRM is still young and facing many difficulties. Therefore, NovaLand needs to learn and allocate reasonable resources for the of CRM because of the many benefits it brings.

NovaLand needs to focus on building long-term, sustainable relationships with customers and clearly see that CRM is the bridge between businesses and customers, helping businesses understand the needs and capture information of customers quickly and precisely.

Novaland should put customers at the center, not be too focused on technology and strategy to forget the central position of customers. Besides, Novaland should not be in a hurry in the CRM implementation process, instead it should focus on training employees. If employees have the best understanding of the concept, the use and the deploy of CRM then it is a long-term strategy to help Novaland achieve its long-term goals.

### **4.2. Recommendations and suggestions**

#### ***For leaders of NovaLand group***

Leaders need to be pioneers and well-oriented in CRM implementation. Leaders also need to step in and orient the employees in the implementation process of the CRM system. The management board is not only responsible for signing contracts to buy CRM systems and software, spending money, attending monthly meetings, but they themselves have to take control and participate directly in all processes related to CRM system. This is what is really important and necessary. Thanks to the guidance of leaders at all levels, the implementation of the CRM system's activities will be carried out seriously and effectively, employees who understand the importance and determination to implement CRM system will work enthusiastically, improving the efficiency of the overall system.

***For Aqua City project management board***

The Aqua City project management board must aggregate data into a unified database, filter and arrange information by diverse (customer) categories. The most important thing is to make sure that this information is accurate, gives the right view of the customer, and that this information reaches each part of the business. Many businesses often only focus on technology factors and ignore the preparation of data which is a decisive factor for business success. Novaland should keep information and data about customers, business contracts and transactions information for a lengthy period of time. This important preparatory step should not be overlooked and should focus on storing much-needed information as businesses always need accurate and streamlined information anytime and anywhere. This makes it easier for businesses to apply the CRM system.

***For marketing, sales and customer service departments at Aqua City project***

Novaland needs to build a highly interactive working environment between departments, help employees exchange experiences, and promote democracy and empowerment among employees. Therefore, to make the information collected from customers through CRM become meaningful and effective. The opinions of employees, who have more opportunities to interact and deal directly with customers, need to be more appreciated, or the management style and working style of employees in the both Novaland group and Aqua City project need to be changed in order to adapt to the new working environment. For customers, no matter what model the business applies, the most important thing is that they do not have to face many obstacles in accessing information from the business and are provided with the best services.

***For customers of Aqua City project***

- Aqua City project management should offer more incentives and services to customers who have used Novaland's services and purchases its products.
- Building Novaland business eco-system to improve customer loyalty.
- Build more green and environmental projects to avoid pollution from city environment.

**4.3. Solutions for CRM system to face business challenges at large-scale real estate projects**

Internally, not only the CRM system but all strategies once deployed need to be unified from the top management to the ordinary employees. CRM software must be viewed as a common management orientation and a common job related tool for each individual in the Novaland Group. When Novaland applies the CRM business model, it is essential to organize a meeting between departments, departments and divisions in the corporation, so that they can speak up about their needs for the CRM system. From there, administrators can know what departments need from CRM, what they need to smoothly deploy the system software in each department. There may be many possibilities, but the needs and conditions of the departments and divisions set out to be very different. The administrator's role is to reconcile those conflicts, meet the basic conditions, which may be different at different departments and projects but still ensure the unified CRM system throughout the Novaland Group.

In order to cope with business challenges in large-scale real estate projects in the future, Novaland needs to control the customers brought in by marketing department and transfer them to the sales department to take care of and handle them thoroughly. Firstly, the current decentralized multi-layer customer care system must guarantee to avoid the case that the same customer is taken care by different salesmen, leading to confusion and unprofessionalism. Secondly, categorized campaigns sending customers in person or automatically business information about real estate projects corresponding to their needs are to increase sales closing rate. Grouping customers by projects, by products, by geographical

locations are to offer separate care strategies for each group. Sales and customers support teams should increase teamwork spirit, intensively exchange customer information and effectively work with each other. From there, all information about customers, transaction history, employee's working schedule is managed easily and accessed transparently on CRM system to shorten interaction and management time, improve productivity and work efficiency accurately through specific statistics on CRM.

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