

CHALLENGES OF ELECTRONIC CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (e-CRM) IN RENT-A-CAR SECTOR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Customer relationship management (CRM) in both B2C and B2B relationships is of crucial importance for success of modern companies. It is one of the main tools for improvement of relationship with customers, especially in the demanding world of services. Therefore, the electronic customer relationship management system (e-CRM) as upgraded version of CRM represents today not an option but an obligation for efficient and profitable customer relationship management. The use of e-CRM leads to increased profitability through attraction of new and retention of old customers. Thus, understanding the impact CRM and e-CRM have on efficiency of service industry; in particular tourism industry is of crucial importance for companies and managers.

The aim of this paper is to provide the theoretical background and present discussions on implementation of CRM and e-CRM system particularly in tourism industry relating it to rent-a-car sector as part of the tourism industry. Furthermore, the paper explores the implementation and impact of e-CRM system in rent-a-car agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This paper provides insight into the level of incorporation of e-CRM in rent-a-car agencies and their everyday business activities. Additionally, it proves that e-CRM leads to increase of profitability through the higher level of customer retention and attraction particularly in those rent-a-car agencies that have recognized the significance of e-CRM and have incorporated it into their business strategies. The paper is backed up with field research through structured personal interviews conducted with major rent-a-car agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The research findings indicate that those rent-a-car agencies that have implemented (e)CRM in their everyday business have benefited from it through increased level of customer retention and attraction.

Keywords:

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I. INTRODUCTION

Customer relationship management is companies' precondition for success in modern age. Technology and Internet development has lead to shift in companies to electronic and online business. Greater use of Internet has lead to development of new models in business management, especially in customer relationship management. With Internet and online business, CRM is raised to higher level enabling companies to provide their customers and suppliers web-based access. Electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) represents an upgrade of CRM technology and usage of online resources and Internet based technologies. Chaffey and Smith (Chaffey and Smith, 2008, p. 347) point out that CRM and e-CRM are not just about technology but the entire culture of customer relationship. According to Jelassi and Enders (Jelassi and Enders, 2008, p. 216), e-CRM also leads to creation of long-term relationships with customers, increase of customer's profitability and focuses on high value customers.

Tourism, including services like accommodation (hotels, pensions), airlines and „on-spot“ services such as tour agencies or rent-a-car agencies, depends a lot on use of information-technologies and is more dependent on proper use of Internet-based technologies in establishment of relations with customers. According to Kincaid (Kincaid, 2003, p. 59-60), the significance of e-CRM is that it's providing customers the opportunity to fully enjoy the benefits of Internet and possession of greater control and better access to information. At the same time, for the company – service provider, the Internet is a cost-effective tool for establishing customer interactions. For Parekh (as cited in Kennedy, 2006, p. 59-60), since online world and e-technologies have become integral part of everyday life and encompass entire customer universe, e-CRM has become from „good to have“ a „must have“ methodology of approach to customers. Buhalis (Buhalis, 2003, p. 76-83) cites the greater impact information-communication technologies (ICT) have on tourism industry (and rent-a-car agencies) in maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of companies. ICT takes greater role in CRM of rent-a-car agencies since it enables continuous interaction with customers as well as adjusts the product/service to fulfil and exceed the customer's expectations. With increased competition, rent-a-car agencies are facing the challenge of retaining the customers in online environment of e-Tourism by creating effective strategies for customer relationship management and developing cost-effective „self-service“ products (Stockdale, 2007, p. 216).

With online technologies, former CRM strategy of company is being realized through e-CRM and use of Internet for maintaining long-term profitable customer relationships. E-CRM upgrades traditional CRM techniques by integrating technologies such as web, wireless and voice technologies making them essential part of entire company's strategy for maintaining and managing relationships with customers (Pan and Lee, 2003, p. 96). Possibility of search, online forums, loyalty programmes, payment conditions (online payments), questions and answers, possibilities of adjusting services to individual online customers and many other features of e-CRM contribute to its significance for creation and retention of profitable and loyal customers in long-term.

In their study Lee-Kelley, Gilbert and Mannicom (Lee-Kelley, Gilbert and Mannicom, 2003, p. 247) found that establishment of e-CRM strategy is crucial for better understanding of customers' needs and desires and it enables creation of two-way connection between customer and service supplier. This results in customer's loyalty and increased profitability. One of the greatest challenges for rent-a-car agencies is retention of customers. Information technologies and e-CRM in rent-a-car agencies become imperativ to ensure long-term presence at the market and higher profitability.

Buhalis and O'Connor (Buhalis and O'Connor, 2005, p. 11) consider that use of ICT should be in context of developing strategies in tourist organizations/companies (including rent-a-car agencies) oriented towards customers, lead by profitability and enabling partnership.

For the purposes of this particular paper, we will focus on the customer oriented approach, having in mind that the essence of e-CRM in rent-a-car agencies is exactly being focused on the customer. Each customer in online community is special, different and lead by his/her own wishes, experiences and motives while interacting online with rent-a-car agency as service provider. Therefore, rent-a-car agencies should develop e-CRM strategies that will enable them to approach each customer on individual basis and personalise, i.e. adjust their offer to each specific customer. According to Buhalis and O'Connor (Buhalis and O'Connor, 2005, p. 11), CRM systems are those that should keep records/remember customers' preferences and requests in present and for future use of services. Customer's satisfaction depends largely on possibility of companies (in our case, rent-a-car agencies) to adjust and provide means/tools for personalization of services (Buhalis and O'Connor, 2005, p. 12).

E-CRM in rent-a-car agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina is topic still unaddressed in recent literature. The existence of e-CRM strategies in rent-a-car agencies in BiH is key issue for one of the most important development industries in BiH – tourism. This paper aims at contributing to better understanding of current state in rent-a-car agencies in BiH when it comes to use of e-CRM in establishing the long-term and profitable customer relationships, as well as providing recommendation for development and application of these systems in practice.

II. THE THEORY BEHIND

A. CRM and e-CRM

Customer relationship management (CRM) is precondition to success of modern age companies. CRM is in tight relation with so called „relationship marketing“ (RM). According to Gay, Charlesworth and Esen (Gay, Charlesworth and Esen, 2007, p. 232), the relationship marketing is actually marketing philosophy aiming to develop added value experience of customers and business partners through effective integration of business functions. While the customer relationship management is business strategy applied on company level and focuses on creation and retention of loyal and profitable relationships with customers in long term by using the technology. CRM considers customers as long term assets that should be taken care of and developed in order to achieve the long term profitability (J. Botha, 2004, p. 135). Turban et al. (as cited in Botha, 2004, p. 292) consider CRM as special approach to customer services where the main focus is at building the long term and sustainable relationships with customers adding value both to customers and business. Buttle (Buttle, 2009, p. 4) perceives CRM as core business strategy integrating internal processes and functions with external networks for profitable creation of value for targeted customers.

According to Kim, Suh and Hwang (Kim, Suh and Hwang, 2003, p. 7), the significance of CRM in companies and the value it brings is in the following:

- Larger number of retained customers,
- More loyal customers,
- Higher customer profitability,
- Creation of customer value,
- Adjustment of products and services to individual customer,
- Higher quality of products and services.

CRM contributes to development and strengthening the company's competitiveness and market position through better understanding of clients and their behaviour with the aim of attracting new and retaining existing clients leading towards higher profitability (Vujović, 2005, p. 403). Ljubojević (Ljubojević, 2001, p. 107) points out the significance of CRM to companies through four segments:

- In financial sense, CRM leads to increase of average revenue per client and increased productivity,
- In organisational sense, CRM advances and increases corporate processes through connection of post-purchase and additional services with sales and marketing therefore contributing to better and more efficient marketing and sales actions,
- Regarding the product-service offer, CRM enables companies to have improved and client customized offers
- Regarding the positioning of the company, CRM represents significant differential factor for companies nad their competitive advantage.

Electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) represents advanced CRM technology and its use of online resources and Internet based technologies. E-CRM represents use of technology for providing support to customer interactions with little or no human intervention on supply side (Botha, 2004, p. 293). Although there are different definitions for e-CRM in literature, majority introduces the necessity of online approach, web based interactions and intensified customer relationships. Therefore, according to Chaffey and Smith (Chaffey and Smith, 2008, p. 347), e-CRM and CRM cannot be separated from each other for they are integrated.

E-CRM advances traditional CRM techniques by integrating technologies such as web, wireless and voice technologies making them fundamental part of company's overall strategy for maintaining and managing customer relationships (Pan and Lee, 2003, p. 96). Possibilities of search, online forums, loyalty programmes, payment conditions (online credit card payments), questions and answers, possibilities of adjusting services to individual online customers and many other features of e-CRM contribute to its significance for creation and retention of loyal customers in long term.

B. E-CRM in tourism

Tourism industry including services like accommodation (hotels, pensions), airplane transportation and on spot services such as tour agencies or rent-a-car agencies, is highly dependent on use of information technologies and adequate use of Internet technologies in establishing customer relationships. According to Kincaid (Kincaid, 2003, p.59-60), the significance of e-CRM is that it's providing customers with possibility to fully enjoy the benefits of Internet for they have greater control and better access to information. At the same time, for company – service provider, Internet is extremely cost-effective mean for establishing customer interactions.

In its essence, tourism industry is service industry. Therefore, it is most dependant on establishing good customer relationships. In their study, Lee-Kelley, Gilbert and Mannicom (Lee-Kelley, Gilbert and Mannicom, 2003, p. 247), found that the establishment of e-CRM strategy is crucial for better understanding of customers' needs and desires and it enables creation of two-way connection between customer and service provider resulting in customer's loyalty and increased profitability. In tourism, retention of customers is one of the greatest challenges. Information

technologies and use of e-CRM in tourism industry are becoming imperative to ensure the long-term survival at the market and higher profitability.

The advantage and benefits ICT brings to tourism is also seen in its contribution to creation of competitive advantage in time management. In this context, online and Internet based technologies enable users/customers to maximize their own efficiency in buying with possibility of doing online transactions 24-hours, 365-day-in-a-year no matter the location (Buhalis, 2003, p. 80). Creation of competitive advantage in time management is not simple. At the same time, companies face the challenge of retaining customers in online environment of e-Tourism through creation of effective CRM strategies and development of cost-effective „self-service“ products, while having in mind the increased competition (Stockdale, 2007, p. 216).

Research have shown that customers use possibilities of online search and tourist services reservations in large scale but also have great trust in online environment. Houghton J.W. (in Pease, Rowe and Cooper (ed.),2007, p. 12) cites example of European Commission research from 2004 according to which customers in Europe have the most trust when buying services via Internet: from hotel accommodation reservations (46%), airplane tickets (45%) to rent-a-car services (35%). Here we can see that there is a space for rent-a-car agencies to use the trust of potential customers for advancement of their customer relationship in online environment. Supporting evidence for such claim is also the research cited in „Progress in Tourism Marketing“ (Kozak and Andreu (ed.), 2006, p. 61) where 47,8% of respondents have cited that they buy rent-a-car services through online agencies. More and more rent-a-car agencies and other tourism service providers are using CRM elements in online environment to enhance their relationship with customers and ensure direct contact with end users through loyalty programmes and other similar features.

III. (e)CRM IN RENT-A-CAR SECTOR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

A. Brief overview of rent-a-car sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Rent-a-car agencies market in B&H is still in its growth phase and mainly characterised with lower share of domestic rent-a-car agencies comparing to franchised ones. In context of globalisation and inflow of foreign agencies to B&H market it is expected to have the larger number of so called „foreign“ agencies to actively work on the market than domestic. In 2008, the research of rent-a-car market for Canton Sarajevo has shown that the largest market share in Canton Sarajevo has Europcar ASA-Rent (24%), followed by National Car Rental (21%), Budget rent-a-car (18%) and Champion AC (17%).

Rent-a-car agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are mainly stationed in Sarajevo and have their branch offices in other B&H cities. Only in Canton Sarajevo there are 17 registered rent-a-car agencies. Even by having a slight look at internet presentation of rent-a-car agencies in the country, it is visible that most of them are mainly using one-way communication in line agency-customer, while those agencies that are part of the international and European rent-a-car agencies (such as Budget and Europcar) are using two-way approach to customers via web site. Having in mind that e-CRM is based on two-way communication between service provider and customer, the necessity of two-way approach is obvious.

B. Research definition

Research conducted in the period December 2010 – January 2011 focused on issues of existence of electronic customer relationship management system in rent-a-car agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its efficiency. The aim of the research was to identify:

- Existing practices in rent-a-car agencies towards customers.
- Existence of customer data bases in any form.
- Existence of separate e-CRM system in rent-a-car agencies.
- Ways of monitoring the successfulness of e-CRM system in rent-a-car agencies.

The main hypothesis of the research was that **the use of CRM in rent-a-car agencies that have recognized the significance of information and communication technologies leads to increase of their business results in long term.**

Five sub-hypotheses have been used for proving the main hypothesis:

H1: Use of CRM leads to retaining old and attracting new customers.

H2: Rent-a-car agencies are increasingly using information and communication technologies.

H3: Rent-a-car agencies increasingly recognize the significance of customer relationship management system.

H4: CRM increases profitability through retention of old customers.

H5: CRM leads to better profiling and better segmentation of customers.

C. Research methodology

Research conducted is explorative considering the fact that this field has not been subject of research in Bosnia and Herzegovina and it is necessary to provide better insight and understanding of use of e-CRM systems in rent-a-car agencies in B&H.

During the research, telephone interviews have been conducted with representatives of rent-a-car agencies (directors, marketing managers, sales managers) acting in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The research involved 30 rent-a-car agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, selected by the following criteria: existence of web site, user tools for online reservations. Out of 30 selected rent-a-car agencies, total of 17 agencies has provided answers (which is around 56% response rate). Due to low response and inability of direct collection of data via telephone interview with all targeted agencies, additional method of content analysis of web sites of those agencies who have not provided data via telephone interviews has been used.

D. Results and discussion

Key research findings resulted from answers to following groups of questions set in the questionnaire and are a model of interconnected areas:

- Existence of strategy:
 - Does rent-a-car agency have business strategy developed?
 - How is (electronic) customer relationship management included in company's business strategy?
- Existence of data bases:
 - Does rent-a-car agency has customer data base?
 - In which form is that data base?
- Existence of e-CRM system:
 - Is there separate system for (electronic) customer relationship management?
 - How would you describe (electronic) customer relationship management in your company?
 - What are the reasons for using/not using the e-CRM system?
- Measuring effects of e-CRM:
 - Do you already have specific indicators of impact of e-CRM system to company's business and relationship with customers?
 - How do you measure/estimate the successfulness of (e)CRM in your company?

The research results have shown that the large percentage of rent-a-car agencies have customer data bases in some form (Figure 1.). The existing customer data bases are mainly in simple forms such as data bases created in Excel or Outlook programme. Most of the rent-a-car agencies avoid using the complex software solutions for e-CRM, often citing the reason for avoiding it because of the high prices of such softwares, as well as low possibility for maximum usage of those programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

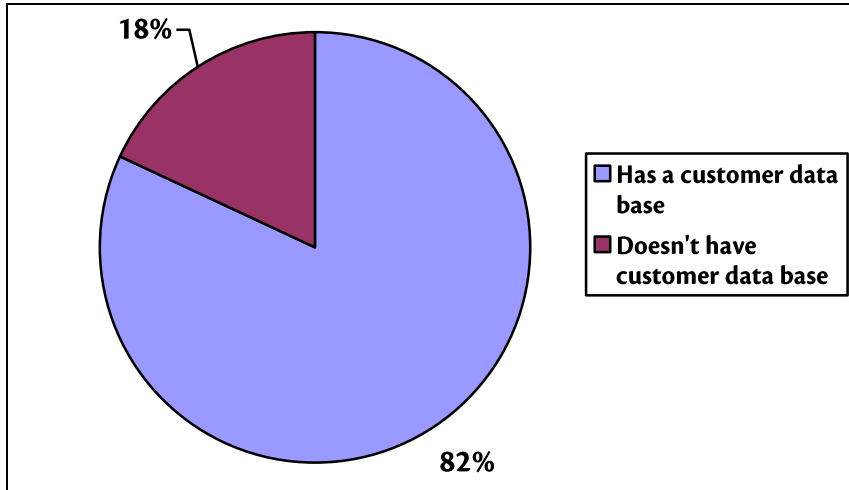


FIGURE 1. STRUCTURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DATA BASES

Source: Author's calculation

Figure 2. shows the structure by data base for those rent-a-car agencies that are using customer data bases in any form (82% of respondents).

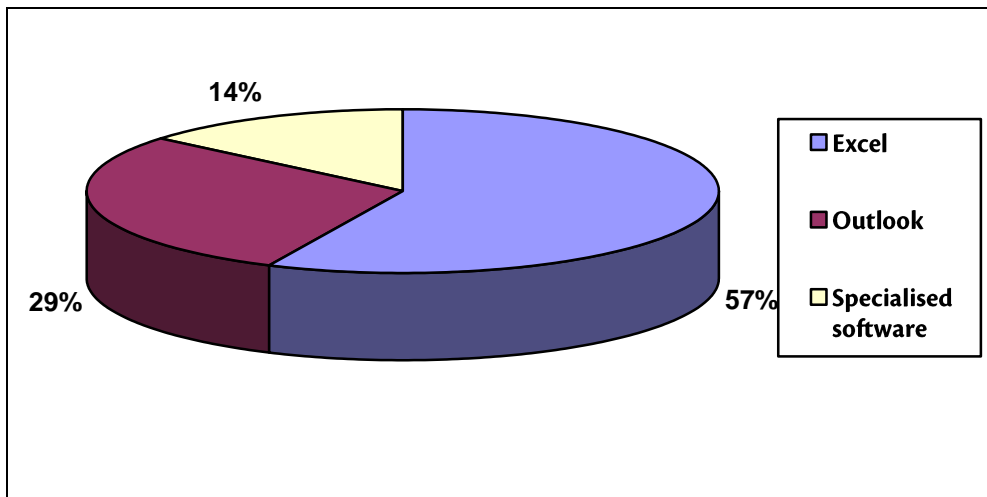


FIGURE 2. STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO THE FORM OF DATA BASE IN USE

Source: Author's calculation

Considering that the sample was done on the basis of criteria of existence of web site of rent-a-car agency, all rent-a-car agencies involved in the research have their web site. Most of the web-sites are static. Rent-a-car agencies are using their web sites for promotion, establishing contacts, enabling online reservations to customers, as well as communication with customers.

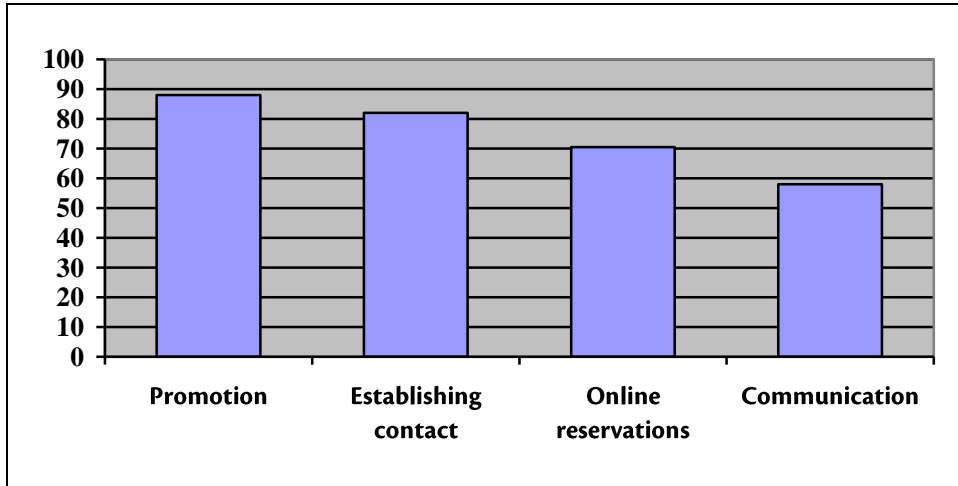


FIGURE 3. PURPOSE OF WEB SITES

Source: Author's calculation

As can be seen in Figure 3., promotion has the most significant role when it comes to the reason for using web site, while online reservations are only on 3rd place by significance which has great impact to e-CRM system in rent-a-car agencies (having in mind that through online reservations company can reach important customer data to be used in future for purpose of better segmentation and adjustment of services to specific customer).

Most of the rent-a-car agencies (82%) collect data on their customers and archives them in data base. Customer data variate from basic data like personal data to type of vehicle rented, period in which the customer most often rents a car, that is history of service use. The manner of collecting data variates from one agency to another: through direct contact (90%), online reservations (65%), phone books (23%), internet data bases (30%) etc. Figure 4. shows the ways of collection of data in rent-a-car agencies that have online reservations on their web sites and those that don't.

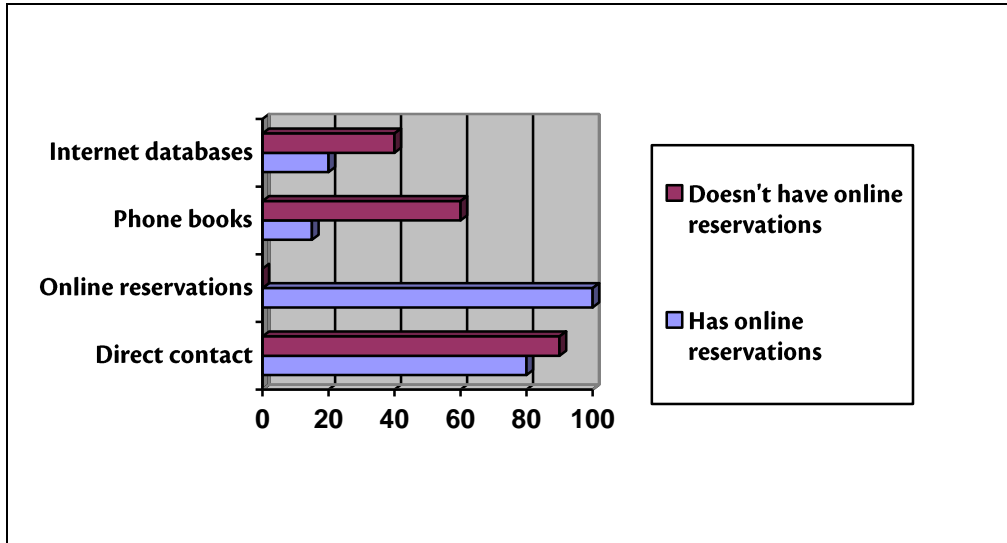


FIGURE 4. MANNER OF COLLECTION OF DATA IN RELATION TO ONLINE RESERVATION

Source: Author's calculation

As provided by the research results, rent-a-car agencies that don't have online reservations on their web site mostly collect customer data through direct contact and telephone books (which is surprising since this method provides only minimum of data that might be useful in creation of future offers). Interesting is the fact that rent-a-car agencies that have online reservations on their web sites are also using direct contact as way for collecting data on their customers in large percentage.

Usability and reasons for collecting the data that rent-a-car agencies collect on their customers and archive to data bases is perceived differently by representatives of rent-a-car agencies involved in the research:

- „Monitoring the statistics where customers come from and where to advertise, which structure of population here needs rent-a-car services“.
- „When we have campaigns from time to time where our clients have benefits for using our and our partners services, for communication.“
- „In order to do the sales afterwards, to adjust the offer to individual client.“
- „To approach them (customers) and present rent-a-car services.“

Rent-a-car agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still using the general approach to customers without focusing on individual customer and creating offer that encompasses wider segment of customers by making special discount nad benefits packages. Most of the rent-a-car agencies still don't use the full capacity of customer data bases they have in order to create a personalited offer and approach to individual customer. However, positive trend is their recognition of usefulness of data bases they have for creating the offer and positioning towards the clients.

Most of the interviewed rent-a-car agencies don't have separate system of (electronic) customer relationship management. While a number of rent-a-car agencies recognizes the need for e-CRM system and introduces it, or cite high prices of software solutions for e-CRM as reason not to

introduce it, certain number of rent-a-car agencies has no idea on what e-CRM is or how it could be used in their agency.

Rent-a-car agencies (82%) engaged in the research are using data bases to access the information on individual customers and adjust their services to specific customers. Data bases serve to rent-a-car agencies as tool for monitoring the statistics of use of rent-a-car services, dynamics of service use by individual customers, communication with concrete customers and personalization of offer on the basis of knowledge on customers buying characteristics for each individual customer archived in the data base.

Rent-a-car agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still not using the e-CRM system in its full capacity. However, certain number of agencies that uses e-CRM in either developed or beginners phase, are mostly franchised rent-a-car agencies. Interesting finding is that rent-a-car agencies that have foreign licence/franchise apply e-CRM system, while other rent-a-car agencies, although recognizing its significance don't use e-CRM system for they consider the price of software for e-CRM and its maintainance is high and does not provide return on investment enough for its everyday application.

Rent-a-car agencies that have a developed e-CRM system understand the significance of this system for everyday business and keeping relationships with loyal customers, as well as establishing connections with new and potential ones. For these agencies, the significance of e-CRM is that they can, in any moment, have information how many vehicles they have at their disposal, which type of vehicle and how often individual customers are using, statistical data related to each car rental. In that way, rent-a-car agencies have data on disposal with needs of individual customers – from type of vehicle preferred, rental period, specific services such as baby chair and other similar additional services requested by the customer. Having such information, rent-a-car agencies that use e-CRM system are establishing continuous contact with clients and improve customer relationships through personalization of offers.

Considering that the research has shown that those agencies that use e-CRM system are positioning e-CRM as essential part of entire business strategy and consider that using e-CRM contributed to promotion of customer relationships, quality and enhanced communication with customers, easier planning of services and offers, it can be concluded that e-CRM contributes to retaining old and attracting new customers. Thus, the H1 has been proven.

All 17 respondents from the sample have web site. Web sites of rent-a-car agencies mainly provide basic information on agency, contact detail, vehicles at disposal and prices. Most of the rent-a-car agencies (88%) use their web sites as means of promotion, as well as for establishing contact with customers (82%).

Only 65% of rent-a-car agencies are using online reservations at their web sites. Online reservations system is very important segment in e-CRM system of rent-a-car agencies since it is the entrance (or „doors“) for information on customers that will further on be archived in data base and used afterwards for personalization of services.

82% of respondents is using data bases. The most common forms of data bases are Excel and Outlook programmes, while smaller number is using specialized software solutions. Agencies that are using specialized software solutions for e-CRM that have also data base incorporated, are mainly agencies that are licenced/franchised.

Existence of web sites of rent-a-car agencies, as well as usage of data bases and in certain agencies usage of specialized software solutions for e-CRM mean exactly the use of information and communication technologies in everyday business and for establishing contact with customers. Thus, the H2 has been proven.

Only 23% of rent-a-car agencies have included e-CRM as important part of their strategy, while 11% created specific e-CRM strategy. Large number of agencies is not using complex software solutions for e-CRM due to high price of software and maintainance, as well as complexity of software and inability to use all options offered by such software in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Rent-a-car agencies that use e-CRM system consider it as quite useful assistant in establishing long term relationships with customers, increase of quality of communication with customers, as well as support for planning development and personalization of services towards customers. Although there is a certain number of rent-a-car agencies that are not using e-CRM system, that doesn't mean that they don't recognize its significance. On the contrary, most of rent-a-car agencies is aware of e-CRM significance for enhancing the customer relationships but due to low level of knowledge of information and communication technologies, limited capacities, as well as financial constraints, they are not able to use it.

The rent-a-car agencies are partly using e-CRM system in its complete form, while a number of agencies is using some parts of e-CRM system in begginers phase (like data bases and online reservations through simple ICT structure) and recognize the significance of this system for establishing long term quality customer relationships. Thus, the H3 has been proven.

According to those rent-a-car agencies that are using e-CRM system, its use increases the possibility of maintaining long term relationships with customers and planning of service sales and approach to individual customer through personalization of services. Indicators of successful application of e-CRM system are statistical data on increased sales in specific time period after the introduction of e-CRM system, as well as active use of the system. E-CRM thus contributes to total sales, shortens the longevity of sales planning, contributes to development of new services and impacts the increase of profitability by enabling the retention of old customers through personalization of services based on gathered and archived data on customers in the system. Thus, the H4 has been proven.

Rent-a-car agencies that are using e-CRM system are percieving e-CRM as important segment ins business for usefullness of gathered data and easire way of collecting data via online reservations. The significance of e-CRM for those rent-a-car agencies using it is that the agencies have in any moment at disposal information on which vehicles, in what period, with what conditions and additional services were rented by individual customers. Based on this, rent-a-car agencies define segments of buyers to approach with special offers, personalized services on the basis of customer profile identified by e-CRM system. Thus, the H5 has been proven.

Hypotheses 1-5 as consistent part of main hypothesis have been proven by the research results thus accepting also the main hypothesis.

IV. CONCLUSION

The management of most of the rent-a-car agencies has recognized the significance of e-CRM system for business and creation of long-term relationships with customers. Forecasting and understanding customer's characteristics, demands and needs for personalized services by using e-CRM system can contribute to enhancement of business, and finally, increase of profitability. E-CRM system should be understood as help tool in everyday business considering that it enables/gathers all necessary information on customers, archives them and as needed organizes in logical data sets necessary for management in certain moment for planning new service packs based on customer's characteristics.

Rent-a-car agencies that have foreign licence/franchise are already using developed software solutions for e-CRM system which results in increased long term communication with clients. Therefore, through retention of old customers based on the personalized approach with help of

e-CRM system, these rent-a-car agencies are improving their sales and in the end the profitability of business. Although software solutions for e-CRM are expensive, their usage is justified for it can be considered as investment in long term customer relationships, retention of customers and increase of long term profitability. Therefore, rent-a-car agencies that have their long term vision and wanting to survive at Bosnia and Herzegovina market, should adjust to new trends in customer relationship management and increase the use of information and communication technologies for maintaining the quality customer relationships.

E-CRM has deserved a place in business strategy of rent-a-car agencies with foreing licence/franchise. The reason for such positioning of e-CRM is its contribution to business of these agencies and understanding the need to go along with trends in this field in order to survive at the market. Therefore, rent-a-car agencies in B&H should develop their own business strategy on 3-5 years (since most of the agencies only has a vision but not a systemically developed business strategy) and include e-CRM as important part.

This paper has only provided an insight to significance of customer relationship management in rent-a-car agencies in B&H. Further research would be interesting on detail insight into development of e-CRM in rent-a-car agencies (from decision on introducing e-CRM, establishing the system, to use or „return on investment“ of using this system) and also to check the customer's perception/ customer's satisfaction.

The research has been mainly focused on rent-a-car agencies as part of the tourism industry. Recommendation for future research goes in line with research on use of e-CRM (by using the similar methodology) in other parts of tourism industry: tour agencies, travel agencies, airlines, hotels, spas etc.

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