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Social Customer Relationship Management: State of the Art and Learnings from Current Projects

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Abstract

The Social Web is transforming the relationship between companies and customers. It offers the means to redesign the fundamental structure of customer service systems and to refocus on the relationship aspect of customer relationship management (CRM). Although various examples illustrate how companies may use Social Media in the field of CRM, the necessary IT systems are still open for research. This paper investigates the use of Social Media in CRM processes and their functional requirements using a collection of case studies from the literature. The findings show that firms may use Social Media in several forms to enhance their CRM processes, but also that Social Media-specific processes arise that require dedicated functionalities in the field of Social Media monitoring, management and interaction.

Keywords: Social Media, Social CRM, Social CRM Systems

1   Introduction

Since 2010 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in the Social Web evolved into a major topic for managers in marketing, sales and service departments (Band & Petouhoff, 2010). Analysts consider this so-called Social CRM (SCRM) as a new opportunity to strengthen customer relationships, to reduce costs and to unveil new customer segments (Baird & Parasnis, 2011b; Sarner, 2009; Wagner & Hughes, 2010; Woodcock, Green, & Starkey, 2011). Early on they started to discuss opportunities and promising examples where the combination of Social Media, Internet, users and CRM improved existing or created new business models. Their work shed some light on the different Social Media and the business scenarios they can be used in, the various ways Social Web users and employees may be incorporated and the obstacles firms need to consider when using Social Media. This high interest and intensive discussion in the business environment produced an extensive but also incoherent pool of suggestions and management advice in the field of SCRM.

Contrary to the popularity of SCRM in business environments, scientific publications about the topic are still rare. Compared to the rich literature base on traditional CRM and electronic CRM there is still little information about how Social Media affect CRM on the process and system level. The majority of related research focuses on effects and technical problems in specific use cases. Research that investigates the relation between Web-Users, Social Media and CRM from the perspective of CRM processes and integrated information systems which may help to understand the impact of 'Social' to existing CRM concepts is still scarce. This is challenging for firms, which can see promising opportunities in Social Media on the one hand, but obtain only fragmented information about how they can use them in their CRM processes on the other. The current situation is marked by a large uncertainty in firms. For them, the existing knowledge base is insufficient to take advantage of Social Media and they are forced to copy, test and learn for themselves. A better understanding of the possible SCRM use cases and how companies realize them in their specific business environment is required to identify basic elements of SCRM strategies and their requirements on the process and system level in CRM infrastructures.

In view of these challenges, the questions in this research paper are to investigate (1) for which purposes companies use Social Media in their CRM processes, (2) how SCRM activities are implemented and (3) what functionalities and resources they require. For answering these questions a case study research approach was applied. First, literature about SCRM processes and applications was reviewed and basic elements of SCRM were identified. Second, based on the identified elements several cases about the use of Social Media in CRM processes were examined. Third, the insights were used to identify implications for the design of SCRM systems. The results of each step were discussed and evaluated with representatives of three companies that use SCRM and two system developers. This research is a partial result of a two-year research project about analytical SCRM. The project aims for the development of integrated SCRM systems that support firms in generating new insights and in gaining a better understanding of their customers.

2   Dimensions for analysing SCRM

With the emergence of Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005) and the increasing usage of Web 2.0 applications, the way how companies and customers interact has significantly changed and new resources for CRM have become available (Li & Bernoff, 2008). SCRM is the corresponding concept that deals with the strategies, processes and technologies that firms can use to link the Social Web with their CRM strategy (Woodcock, Green, & Starkey, 2011). This poses challenges for firms with numerous employees, market offerings and offices, because they need to discover the relevant conversation threads, synchronise information flows, initiate the appropriate actions and communicate at an individual level within millions of Social Web conversations (Baird & Parasnis, 2011a; Sarner, 2009). These tasks call for an integrated system with high automation and sophisticated capabilities in Social Web analysis (Tuzhilin, 2012) that provide companies with the means to transform Social Web content and interactions into CRM relevant knowledge and activities (Winterberg, 2010). For a better understanding of SCRM implementations, the relationship to CRM processes, the role of Social Media, the necessary resources and the used infrastructure may prove helpful in identifying basic patterns and the technological requirements.

2.1   CRM processes

First of all, SCRM is not a stand-alone concept, but built around existing CRM concepts and technologies. CRM may be defined as a "process that utilises technology as an enabler to capture, analyse and disseminate current and prospective customer data to identify customer needs more precisely and to develop insightful relationships" (Paulissen et al., 2007). This requires extensive knowledge about the customer and

market needs as well as the appropriate positioning of a firm's product as well as the service portfolio in the customer life and buying cycle (Grönroos, 1996; Ives & Learmonth, 1984). The strategic goals of CRM are executed through CRM processes (Berger et al., 2009) and CRM systems (Chan, 2008). The latter provide dedicated functionalities (e.g. information aggregation, process specific presentation) in the areas of marketing, sales and service (Romano & Fjermestad, 2003; Wahlberg et al., 2009).

Depending on the industry sector, the importance of specific CRM processes varies, and some (e.g. campaign management) are more, others are less important for a firm to achieve their strategic goals. Basic CRM processes are differentiated into marketing, sales or service focused processes. They are sometimes further distinguished into analytical or operational CRM processes and functionalities (Peppers & Rogers, 2004). Standard CRM processes which are relevant for most industries are *campaign*, *lead*, *contact*, *offer*, *contract*, *retention*, *service,* and *complain and feedback management*. Data is key in each of these processes regarding the planning, execution and control phase, and requires the integration and transformation of internal and external data into a central CRM database (Grönroos, 1996).

2.2   SCRM activities

Due to the recent maturity of SCRM it already became obvious that SCRM activities are not new CRM processes, but that Social Media are new enabler in the interaction with customers. They combine one or more CRM processes with Social Media specific process activities and interactions through Social Media. Consequently, existing CRM processes may evolve into "Social" enabled CRM processes. The conversation prism (Solis, 2010) provides an comprehensive overview of CRM relevant Social Media and provides some examples how these media can be used to enhance traditional CRM processes.

Several authors, especially market analysts and system providers, started to frame out typical SCRM activities (Baird & Parasnis, 2011a, 2011b; Band & Petouhoff, 2010; Charron, Favier, & Li, 2006; Cisco Systems, 2010; Microsoft, 2009; Sarner et al., 2010; Wang & Owyang, 2010). Although these contributions deliver insights into examples how Social Media may be used in CRM processes, these SCRM activities lack comparable patterns and only yield little insight into data and other technological requirements. They are used primarily for motivating the SCRM concept and to highlight the potential benefits of SCRM. However, they already illustrate that SCRM activities focus on interaction types, such as coexistence (information between parties), communication (information exchange between parties) as well as cooperation (collective creation of new artefacts) and suggest four basic types for the usage of Social Media in SCRM activities:

Provision of context: Social Media are used to support CRM processes, for example as communication channel in marketing campaigns or to provide brand- or product-related information.

Analysis of content: Social Media are used to discover, expand or evaluate knowledge. They are integrated as information sources for analytical CRM and their users and content are analysed for new market insights.

Channel for transactions: Social Media are used as customer touch point in CRM processes, for example, as a service platform or a sales channel.

Platform for cooperation: Social Media are used for supporting collaborative work processes among Social Web users, for example, to develop products or to define marketing campaigns.

2.3 SCRM resources

SCRM activities are built upon data about the persons that use Social Media and the shared content. Both elements are controversial since they may be interpreted as an intrusion into a person's privacy on the one hand, but also as collegial value for CRM if they relate to a firm's business (Baird & Parasnis, 2011b; Greenberg, 2010; Tripp & Grégoire, 2011). Data about people may be used for market segmentation and personalisation of communication. Data about the content of conversations may be helpful in understanding certain customer segments and their opinions, expectations or relations, and as well in recognising relevant events and in automating information logistics and interactions. Social media offer an accurate source for both elements, because users are not specifically asked to provide such information, but rather this information is automatically generated by the usage. These characteristics are the basis for obtaining direct insights into the opinions, intentions and behaviour of the actors in a business ecosystem (Rappaport, 2010a).

In general, Social Media offer five different resources for SCRM: (1) the content of a posting *(Posting Body)* can be analysed for key words, opinions, topics, etc., (2) the meta data of postings *(Posting Envelope)* can provide details about authors, topics, sources, etc., (3) provided data in profiles *(Profile Body)* contains information about e-mails, phone numbers, hobbies, interests, etc., (4) meta data of profiles *(Profile Envelope)* contains information about friends, activities, other profiles, etc., and (5) interconnections between postings and profiles *(Links)* can provide insight into a person role, influence or relations. Profile body and envelope, Posting envelope and Links are often available as structured data that may be integrated with CRM data by existing functionalities of CRM systems (e.g. ETL-Tools). Posting bodies and implicit links are unstructured data that needs to be transformed by data or text-mining (TM) (Weiss et al., 2005) before they can be integrated with CRM systems.

2.4 Components in SCRM infrastructures

Implementing the previously identified activities and resources necessitates a system infrastructure that enables firms to monitor the Social Web, to manage their SCRM activities along various channels, to integrate data, and to enable employees and market actors to communicate via Social Media (Rappaport, 2010b; Winterberg, 2010). SCRM tools or systems are the building blocks of such an infrastructure.

Sarner et al. (2010) defines them as applications that "encourage many-to-many participation among internal users, as well as customers, partners, affiliates, fans, constituents, donors, members and other external parties, to support sales, customer service and marketing processes". Their primary task is to bridge the gap between Social Media and the customer-oriented service systems of a firm. However, previous research reveals that existing tools often focus on specific tasks (Reinhold & Alt, 2011; Sarner et al., 2011) and force companies to use several tools when implementing a SCRM activity. Despite the market is consolidating and major providers in the field of SCRM become visible, integrated tools seem still missing (Sarner et al., 2011). Seven major components that are used in SCRM may be identified (Rappaport, 2010b; Reinhold & Alt, 2011; Sterne, 2010): *Search Engines* help in the real-time identification of new sources and content, *Social Media Monitoring* tools support analysis, reporting and monitoring, *Business Intelligence Tools* consolidate and analyse structured CRM and unstructured Social Web data, *CRM systems* manage and organise SCRM activities in conjunction with other CRM processes, *Social Media Management* tools support the coordinated use of and communication with several Social Media, *Community* tools help to create and interact with Social Web users, and *Social Network Analysis* tools identify communication flows and interconnections between Social Web users. Each of these tools contributes functionalities to an overall SCRM concept.

3 Case studies of SCRM implementations

3.1 Analysis design and overview

Based on the identified dimensions an analysis framework was developed for assessing current implementations of SCRM activities and for deriving requirements on integrated SCRM infrastructures. Elements of this framework are the affected CRM processes, usage types and used resources of Social Media, as well as the required functionalities of SCRM components. For the analysis a database of 54 case studies was created. Among the sources were case studies of SCRM tool providers about their customers, SCRM cases in management and scientific journals, press releases from companies and case studies described in blogs. This step was carried out between July 2011 and January 2012. Each of the identified case studies was further analysed by additional data on the web, the website of the company and various Social Media platforms. From the initial list of 54 case studies 21 (see Appendix A) were included in this research based on the amount of data available and the coverage of cases in the field of marketing, sales and service. As summarized in Table 1, this step delivered insights into (1) the use of Social Media in CRM and basic SCRM processes, (2) the components and functionalities required in SCRM and (3) basic approaches in SCRM implementations.

Case	Campaign Management	Lead Management	Contact Management	Offer Management	Contract Management	Retention Management	Service Management	Complain/Feedback Mgmt.	Provision of context	Analysis of content	Channel for transaction	Platform for cooperation	Posting Body	Posting Envelope	Profile Body	Profile Envelope	Links	Search Machines	Social Media Monitoring	Business Intelligence	CRM System	Social Media Management	Community	Social Network Analysis	Monitoring	Management	Interaction
	Affected CRM process								**Identified Social Media — Usage type**				**Relevant data**					**Observed functionalities of a SCRM component**							**Affected SCRM process**		
Air Canada	○	○	○	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	○	●	◐	○	◐	○	◐	○	◐	○	◐	○	◐	◐	◐	○	◐	◐	●
Bauer	○	○	○	◐	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	◐	◐	○	○	○	◐	○	○	○	○	○	◐	○	○	◐	○
Best Buy	◐	◐	○	○	○	◐	●	●	◐	◐	●	●	◐	○	◐	○	◐	◐	●	○	◐	◐	●	○	●	◐	●
Bosch	◐	◐	○	○	○	○	●	◐	○	●	◐	◐	◐	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	○	○	●	○	◐	○	◐
Cadbury	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	●	●	○	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	○	◐	◐	◐	○	●	○	●	◐	○
Canon EOS	◐	◐	◐	○	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	○	◐	○	◐	○	◐	○	○	○	○	◐	●	○	○	○	◐
Chordiant	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	●	○	○	○	◐	●	◐	○	◐	◐	●	○	○	○	○	◐	●	○	○	◐	●
Dell	●	●	●	●	◐	●	●	●	◐	●	●	◐	●	●	●	○	◐	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	○	●	●	●
Fidor	◐	●	◐	●	●	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	◐	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	○	◐	◐	●
Fiskars	●	●	◐	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	○	○	◐	○	◐	○	●	●	●	◐	○	○	●	◐	●	◐	●
Giffgaff	●	●	●	◐	◐	●	●	●	◐	◐	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	○	○	○	○	◐	◐	●	○	◐	◐	●
Goldbach	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	◐	○	●	◐	○	●	●	◐	○	○	●	●	◐	○	○	○	◐	●	○	○
Hyundai	●	◐	○	○	○	○	○	◐	●	○	○	◐	○	◐	○	●	●	○	●	◐	○	○	◐	◐	●	○	◐
JetBlue	○	○	○	○	◐	◐	◐	●	○	●	◐	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	○	○	○	●	◐	◐
JP Cycles	◐	●	○	◐	○	◐	●	○	○	◐	◐	○	●	●	○	◐	○	◐	●	○	○	○	◐	○	●	◐	●
Luxury Link	●	●	○	○	○	◐	◐	◐	●	●	◐	○	○	◐	◐	○	○	◐	◐	○	○	○	●	◐	◐	○	◐
Mammuth	●	◐	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	●	◐	◐	○	◐	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	◐	○	◐
Messe München	◐	◐	○	○	○	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	◐	○	◐	○	◐	○	○	○	◐	○	○	◐	◐	○	◐	○	◐
Organic	●	◐	○	○	○	○	○	◐	◐	●	○	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	○	◐	●	○	○	○	◐	●	◐	○
Otto	●	◐	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	●	◐	○	◐	○	○	◐	◐	○	◐	◐	○	◐	●	○	◐	○	◐
Vodafon Eplace	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	○	◐	○	○	○	◐	●	◐	○	◐	○	●	○	○	○	◐	○	◐	○	○	○	◐

Legend: ○ no use/Information   ◐ limited use   ● strong use

Table 1: Overview of case studies and criteria

3.2 Findings

In general, the analysis illustrates that SCRM offers the opportunity to increase interaction and communication between firms and customers, and yields insights regarding the cooperation in CRM processes. This implies, that SCRM has the potential to strengthen customer orientation and to refocus CRM on the relationship aspect in CRM (Mitussis, O'Malley, & Patterson, 2006). Firms concentrate their SCRM activities on marketing and service, and use multiple tools to implement them. Although many firms focus on major Social Media, they also provide own Social Media to keep some control of discussions and content that can be easily lost over the major platforms. Besides external platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or Youtube new e-commerce portals for offering products and services are used as multipliers and sources for new contacts. Firms primarily utilise profile envelope and body to identify customers and customer segments. Postings are used in interactions and to analyse the impact of SCRM activities or to measure relevant trends. In general, the degree of automation and information integration is still low. This is supported by the fact that many SCRM activities seem to start as small projects within an organisation and involve only a small number of organizational members. Centralized coordination and deep organizational integration of SCRM activities as shown in the case of Dell are still rare. The analysis also illustrates, that raising budgets and more complex SCRM activities requires the synchronisation between Social Web and CRM activities, since more people are involved, CRM strategies are affected and inefficiencies arise through double and conflicting structures.

Social Media usage in CRM

Social Media are intensively used in the field of marketing, especially in campaign management combined with lead management. Cases from Cadbury or Luxury Link illustrate how companies may use them to inform about their products, to attract new customers and to stay in contact with customers after the buying process. Also, they are regularly used in the field of customer service. In particular, for service, complain and feedback management they offer the opportunity to identify customers with problems and for providing support. In addition, these interactions generate knowledge for product management. The field of sales seems to be more difficult for companies. Although cases like Dell or J&P Cycles show examples how to sell and support the sales process via Social Media, many companies seem still be reluctant with own implementations. This may be explained that straight selling via Social Media (e.g. Facebook shops, Twitter special offers) often misses the audience expectations and is only successful in combination with significant advantages in prices. Promising SCRM activities which target the selling process use instead the unique characteristics of Social Media to speed up, disseminate and support this process.

Regarding the usage types, Social Media are often used to support CRM processes and to provide additional context. Especially in the field of marketing they bargain the opportunity to initiate or stay in contact with customers (see the cases of Cadbury or Hyundai). The utilization of Social Media content for knowledge discovery was also observed in several cases where Social Media are used as data sources for market and customer analysis and to identify relevant events for CRM processes. The cases of Fiskars or Hyundai illustrate how such an analysis may provide new insights for online and offline activities. They can also offer real-time services that suggest products in the moment when customers are looking for them (e.g. J&P Cycles or Air Canada). Social Media are also used for CRM processes and for performing transactions, but only few companies like Giffgaff or Dell address all phases of a customer buying process via Social Media. Most companies support only some phases or use them in specific steps. For these firms a close integration with activities in other channels is important. Some firms also started to incorporate Social Media users in CRM processes by actively participating and cooperating with the firm or with other Social Media users. They can

provide new ideas and perform certain tasks in CRM processes (e.g. Giffgaff) or they can be encouraged to collaborate with other users (e.g. Canon). This strengthens the connections between a firm and its business ecosystem and frees resources for other CRM activities.

The analysis emphasises three SCRM specific processes that link activities in Social Media with tasks in CRM processes. First, a monitoring process includes sub-processes for analysis, mining, reporting and generation of business objects. The case of Goldbach provides an example of how this process can even be externalized. Second, an interaction process which includes sub-processes for content provision, direct communication, engaging in communication and provision of services and resources for Social Web users can be found. The cases of Fiskars or BestBuy illustrate how different platforms and channels can be combined to stimulate and perform interactions. Third, a management process is required that includes sub-processes for coordinating SCRM activities, managing and developing the SCRM infrastructure, and integration of SCRM specific tasks in CRM processes. The case of Dell provides an example for the management of SCRM within an entire organization. Each of these three processes requires specific functionalities that correspond to SCRM components or the used Social Media.

Required functionalities and resources in SCRM

In the analysed cases, companies usually combine some of the major Social Media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, and proprietary Social Media, such as a forum or a blog. For example, Luxury Link combines Facebook with an own platform. Such a combination of external Social Media and proprietary Social Media was found in most cases. It enables companies to easily access great numbers of Social Web users, to gain their attention and to communicate to the entire market, but also to keep some control over the communication by redirecting more interested Social Media users to their own platforms and to build up relationships in their own environment. Companies, such as J&P cycles, also use smaller forums and blogs across the web, especially to gain access into special interest groups or to improve monitoring. Few companies such as Dell or Chordiant integrated their internally used Social Media with external Social Media.

The cases show that SCRM activities often affect the functionalities of multiple SCRM components. Especially functionalities in the field of Social Media Monitoring and Communities are important for analysing Social Web content, identifying events and providing platforms for interaction with Social Media users. Dedicated tools for the support and management of interactions and functionalities of Social Media seem to be less important as long as the SCRM activities are limited. Only a few cases feature integrated infrastructures that combine the functionalities of several tools types. In more complex SCRM environments which affect several CRM processes, the amount of required functionalities and the necessity for their integration increases in general.

Regarding the used resources from Social Media, the profile body and envelope are important for interaction processes, and posting body, envelope as are links for monitoring processes. In interaction processes, companies require information about the person they are interacting with and their intention as well as about the relationship history. This information may be found in profiles, the posting content and provided by management functionalities that contribute information about previous interactions by using the profile as unique identifier. In the monitoring process more detailed information about the structure of the community, trends in relation with the brands or the market and about the type and attitude of a postings message is required. Finally, profile envelopes are used to obtain insights into the structure of fans, posting envelopes are used to tag and cluster postings, and the posting body may be used to extract patterns or sentiments. Links are relevant in several cases, but are seldom systematically mined. For management processes, profile and postings envelopes are also used to structure and integrate information into existing databases.

Basic patterns in SCRM implementations

Three basic approaches in the integration of Social Media and CRM processes are visible in the cases. First, partial approaches rely only on few Social Media and can be found in projects with a limited scope and estimated outcome. Functionalities that enable and support Social Web interactions are important and standard monitoring functionalities provide insights into current discussions and trends in the Social Web. Examples are the cases of Cadbury or Canon. Second, intermediate approaches, such as Air Canada or Luxury Link, introduced Social Media into several CRM processes and aim to improve and expand their touch points along the customer lifecycle. In addition to interaction functionalities, they require more advanced monitoring functionalities that enable them to analyse and aggregate data from different internal and external sources. Basic management functionalities are necessary in coordinating their activities. Third, advanced approaches (e.g. Dell or Giffgaff) incorporate Social Media in nearly all CRM processes. Beside sophisticated interaction and monitoring functionalities they feature advanced management functionalities that allow the coordination of activities and actors as well as seamless integration of CRM processes and communication channels. In sum, the degree of required functionalities in the field of monitoring, interaction and management as well as the need to integrate them, shows a growing maturity from the first to the third approach.

3.3   Implications on the design of SCRM systems

The findings show that the implementation of SCRM activities requires specific resources and functionalities, and the degree of integration with CRM has to be determined. The former calls for a utilization of different Social Web resources and functionalities of SCRM components. The latter requires an activity-specific need for integration and interconnection of the functional elements in SCRM infrastructures. For the design of SCRM systems this leads to two directions. For maximised flexibility and strong focus on Social Media in CRM, integrated systems are necessary. For single or specific SCRM activities specialised tools are sufficient, which are easier to integrate with other systems and processes, especially in the field of CRM.

The identified SCRM processes also confirm the need for five different functional elements in integrated SCRM systems as discussed in the literature (Rappaport, 2010b; Reinhold & Alt, 2011; Sarner et al., 2010). In the front-end, *Social Media* provide access to postings and profiles, the main resources of SCRM. Internal as well as external Social Media are required and should be interconnected via a SCRM system to enable companies to set up their own as well as existing Social Media. In the back-end a *CRM system* provides data about the market, the customers and the interactions, and offers CRM-specific process functionalities, integrates the customer touch points and yields a comprehensive view on customer data. Functionalities are required to provide CRM processes via Social Media and to ensure synchronised messages between all channels. For cooperative SCRM activities the systems should provide interfaces that customers may use via Social Media.

In addition, two elements support the monitoring, managing and interaction process: *Monitoring functionalities* enable to search, analyse and mine Social Web content. They strongly rely on analytical functionalities, such as attribute extraction, sentiment analysis or trend examination. These functionalities access, transform and interpret structured and unstructured data from the Social Web in conjunction with data from internal sources, such as the CRM database or other SCRM tools. *Management functionalities* help to integrate information and activities between CRM and Social Media as well as to coordinate activities and resources. Functionalities are necessary to coordinate activities and distribute information between the internal parties that are involved in SCRM activities as well as in other CRM processes. Especially when companies intensify their SCRM and allocate more resources to them, these

functionalities become important. *Interaction functionalities* allow communication, interaction and cooperation through Social Media. Their quality strongly depends on the degree to which existing knowledge can be utilised and on the identification of relevant discussions in the Social Web. Functionalities are required for communicating and interacting via Social Media, for handling direct and indirect requests as well as to provide content and stimulate communication.

4 Conclusions

The emergence of the Social Web established a new information source and interaction channel for both, companies and individuals. This research shed some light on the building blocks of SCRM and their implementation. The analysis illustrates that SCRM approaches are not separated from CRM processes, but extend them via Social Media. The Social Web represents an open hub that may connect every actor in a firm's ecosystem. Firms start SCRM activities to make use of this network for their CRM strategies. However, there remains some confusion about the different forms of SCRM activities, how they can be successfully implemented and what infrastructures they require. The analysis revealed that basic resources are postings and users profiles which firms need to acquire and to utilize for their SCRM activities and that there is a large set of tools that can be used for this task. Ultimately, the different activity types determine which components and functionalities will be applicable for a company in specific setting. For partial approaches they already find specialised SCRM tools, for advanced approaches with several SCRM activities, integrated systems are still missing.

This calls for a deeper integration of processes and systems in SCRM. Integrated SCRM and specialised systems reduce interfaces and media breaches, and enable companies to centralize their data, distribute insights from the Social Web across the organization and to further automate their processes. Cases, such as Dell and Giffgaff, illustrate that the integration of people and resources across and outside of an organization can lead to promising new business models. However, only few providers, such as Salesforce, started to acquire and integrate functionalities for SCRM processes. This research can be used to identify missing elements and to stimulate the development of SCRM systems that meet the requirements of different SCRM approaches. In the future, the technological advance of SCRM systems will increase the relevance of privacy aspects which still present much uncertainty. Currently, the tools offer a broad set of analysis and mining aspects that drive the development of SCRM tools and activities, but at the same time large data pools with information about people, interests, relations and opinions are created which may be misused.

In sum, the study provides insights into the current applications of SCRM in various companies and industry sectors, but due the nature of the case studies there are also some limitations. First, due to the case selection process and used resources, the results are based on "successful" scenarios and information about project management and risks were limited. Second, insights into the current use of SCRM tools and especially problems or required functionalities that are currently not available were not accessible. Both aspects require further research. The insights from this research will be used for the design of individual case studies with companies in the field of SCRM to further analyse challenges, cost, benefits and required infrastructures. This research is also used for prototyping an integrated SCRM system that helps to test and evaluated different SCRM activities and the functionalities in the future.

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Appendix A: Case Overview

Case	Short description
Air Canada (Radian6, 2011)	Air Canada is a Montreal-based airline. Social Media helped them to provide information and to support their customers during the complete lifecycle in a cost-efficient and fast way.
Baur (Baur, 2011)	Baur is a German mail-order and web retailing company. Social Media helped them to improve their sales processes and platforms with the help on customers which can their opinions and recommend products.
Best Buy (Lithium Technologies, 2011a)	Best Buy is a multinational retailer of technology and entertainment products and services. Social Media helped them to better interact with customers across various channels, to involve external actors in their CRM processes and to strengthen customer relationships.
Bosch (Lenz, 2011; questback, 2011)	Robert Bosch is an international engineering and electronics company from Germany. The interconnection between internal and external Social Media enabled Bosch to interact with customers, involve them in CRM processes, get better insights into their customer segments and better target their CRM processes.
Cadbury (telligent, 2011)	Cadbury is a confectionery company and subsidiary of Kraft Foods. Social Media Cadbury enabled to raise an online customer community through which they can communicate and strengthen brand loyalty with customers outside the traditional distribution channels and which provides also a unique resource for analysing customer preferences and buying behaviour.
Canon EOS (Burnett, 2011; McLeod, 2011)	Canon is one of the world's leading imaging organizations. The used Social Media to promote the Canon EOS DSLR in the photographic community based on platform (Photochains) where people where able to upload, share and discuss photographs.
Chordiant (Jive Software, 2011a)	Chordiant is a software company that offers a solution for blended multi-channel interaction management. With the use of Social Media integrated in one platform they were able to connect internal and external actors, and build up a platform for collaborative product development.
Dell (Menchaca, 2010)	Dell is an international IT company that incorporate Social Media deeply with their CRM processes. Social Media help them to identify customers and leads across the Social Web, to directly communicate with them and to involve them in CRM processes as well as to incorporate their employees in the improvement of the SCRM activities.
Fidor Social Banking (AheadofTime, 2009)	Fidor Bank is a German online financial service provider. Social Media enable them to incorporate the customers deeply into the bank and CRM processes, which strengthens their customer relationships and the identification of their customers with the Fidor Bank.
Fiskars (Ochman, 2008)	Fiskars is a global producer of high quality craft tools from Finland. Social Media allowed them to discover new customer segments, adjust their CRM processes to market needs and to strengthen customer relationships in a completive market.
Giffgaff (Lithium Technologies, 2011b)	Giffgaff is a mobile virtual network operator in the UK and part of Telefonica O2. Contrary to other mobile networks they operate only via the Web and strongly involve their customers in their CRM processes via Social Media.

Goldbach (Marketwire, 2011a)	Goldbach Interactive is part of Goldbach Group and is a digital communication agency that develops and manages Social Media strategies for brands. Social Media helped to better analyse the effects of their marketing campaigns and to adjust online and offline communication.
Hyundai: Foodies at Oscar's (Marketwire, 2011b)	Hyundai is a global car manufacturer from Korea. For the purpose of raising brand awareness and promotion of a new car type, they sponsored in 2010 the Academy Awards (Oscar) and developed an accompanying marketing campaign. Social Media helped them gain better insights into their customer segments, to develop a tailored marketing campaign and to include Social Web users actively in this campaign.
JetBlue (Attensity, 2010)	JetBlue is an American airline company. With use of Social Media and automated monitoring JetBlue was able to get direct and indirect feedback about their CRM services and was provided with real-time events through which they can start interactions with their customers.
JP Cycles (Beck, 2011)	J&P Cycles is an online mail-order company of aftermarket parts for motorcycles. Social Media enable them to identify and interact with key customer segments in a personal way, to motivate customers to speak about the company among their friend, to raise brand-awareness and to include customers in service and sales processes.
Luxury Link (Facebook Marketing Solutions, 2011)	Luxury Link is an online travel booking agency specialised on premium hotels and resorts. Social Media enable them to identify and directly communicate with potential customers, to learn about the interests of their customer base and to generate new leads from the Social Web.
Mammut (Scheidegger, 2008)	Mammut Sports Group Ag is a Swiss producer of hiking and trekking equipment. Social Media helped the company to quickly attract brand-aware consumers, to involve them in campaign planning and communication as well as to build up a brand-affine community.
Messe München International (Altvater et al., 2010)	Messe München International is one of the leading trade fair companies and is active in more than 80 countries around the world. With the use of Social Media for internal and external communication they improved knowledge sharing and learning within their organization and interactively communicate with trade fair visitors during their attendance.
Organic (Prantner, 2011; Schwartz, 2010)	Organic is a digital advertising agency. From Social Media they get deeper and better customers insights and are able to predict future developments and to optimize marketing activities.
Otto (Thunig, 2011)	Otto Group is a major online mail-order company in Germany. Social Media help Otto to offer an appealing sales and service channel, especially for young people, to reduce reaction times and to learn from the registered Facebook fans and their interactions via Social Media analysis.
Vodafon "EPlace" (Jive Software, 2011b)	Vodafone Enterprise is a German telecommunication provider for business clients and part of Vodafone Group Plc. Social Media enable them to integrate and capture more information about their customers through the discussions of their sales staff and to improve the quality and speed of their CRM processes.