

Customer Relationship Management Practices In Freight Forwarding in Sales

AJITH PRAKASH¹, DR.G. MADHUMITA²

II MBA, Department of Management Studies, School of Management Studies,

Vels Institute of Science Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Pallavaram, Chennai¹

Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, School of Management Studies,

Vels Institute of Science Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Pallavaram, Chennai²

Abstract: In today's fast-paced urban environments, the efficiency of public transportation plays a pivotal role in daily commuting and overall city planning. This project focuses on the development and implementation of a comprehensive **Bus Tracking and Management System** designed to improve the operational effectiveness of public bus services. The proposed system utilizes GPS technology, mobile communication networks, and a user-friendly mobile application interface to provide real-time tracking and route management for buses. Passengers benefit from up-to-date information on bus locations, estimated arrival times, and route details, thereby reducing uncertainty and improving travel planning.

Simultaneously, transport administrators gain access to data-driven tools for overseeing fleet operations, monitoring driver performance, and analyzing route efficiency. These features enable better resource allocation and enhanced service delivery. The system is built using Android-based mobile application development tools integrated with Firebase for real-time database and cloud functionality. The backend ensures secure, scalable, and synchronized communication between buses, servers, and mobile clients.

This abstract summarizes the scope, objectives, and implementation strategy of the bus tracking system, emphasizing its role in enhancing commuter convenience and supporting transportation agencies in making data-informed operational decisions. Through effective use of digital technologies, the system addresses common inefficiencies in public transit and contributes to smarter urban mobility solutions.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of global logistics, the role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has emerged as a strategic imperative, particularly within the freight forwarding sector. With increasing demands for transparency, timely communication, and tailored service, companies operating in this domain face the critical challenge of balancing operational efficiency with customer satisfaction. CRM serves as a vital bridge between organizational capabilities and customer expectations by enabling companies to manage interactions, streamline communication, and maintain long-term client relationships.

Bruhat Pvt Ltd, a prominent player in the South Indian freight forwarding industry, recognizes the importance of CRM in sustaining business growth amidst stiff regional and international competition. The company has adopted a modern CRM approach that goes beyond mere sales tracking, incorporating tools for lead generation, opportunity management, customer feedback, and post-sale service integration. The use of digital CRM platforms has enabled Bruhat Pvt Ltd to improve responsiveness, enhance data management, and personalize services based on customer behavior and preferences.

This article explores the CRM strategies employed by Bruhat Pvt Ltd, focusing on how these practices contribute to improved sales performance and customer retention. By analyzing the integration of CRM tools with sales operations, this study aims to identify best practices, highlight implementation challenges, and recommend improvements for greater customer-centricity. The findings are intended to serve as a reference for other logistics companies striving to build strong, technology-enabled customer relationships in a competitive market.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study is to evaluate and understand the implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices in the freight forwarding sales operations of Bruhat Pvt Ltd, a logistics company based in Chennai. As the freight forwarding industry becomes increasingly competitive and service-driven, effective CRM strategies are essential for enhancing client engagement, improving service delivery, and driving sustainable business growth.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. **To assess the current CRM practices adopted by Bruhat Pvt Ltd** and their integration into the company's sales processes, including lead generation, client communication, and post-sales service.
2. **To examine the impact of CRM tools** on sales performance, customer retention, and overall operational efficiency within the company.
3. **To explore the types of commodities, trading patterns, and logistics services** that contribute most significantly to sales volume and market opportunities for Bruhat Pvt Ltd.
4. **To identify key customer preferences** related to modes of transportation, types of logistics services, and value-added offerings such as customs clearance and container handling.
5. **To evaluate the challenges faced by the sales and CRM teams** in implementing CRM strategies effectively, including issues related to data management, follow-ups, and internal communication.
6. **To propose actionable recommendations** for optimizing CRM systems to improve customer satisfaction, streamline operations, and support the company's long-term strategic goals.

Through these objectives, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights into how CRM can be strategically leveraged in the freight forwarding sector, offering a roadmap for companies aiming to enhance their market competitiveness through improved customer relationship practices.

Industry Background :

The freight forwarding industry plays a critical role in the global supply chain by facilitating the movement of goods across international borders through a combination of transport modes such as sea, air, and land. As international trade continues to expand, the demand for efficient, reliable, and responsive logistics services has grown substantially. Freight forwarders serve as intermediaries between shippers and carriers, managing documentation, customs clearance, warehousing, and cargo movement while ensuring compliance with complex regulatory environments.

Globally, the industry has witnessed a significant transformation driven by digitalization. Leading logistics providers such as DHL Global Forwarding, Kuehne + Nagel, and DB Schenker have invested heavily in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems to enhance client service, improve operational visibility, and support strategic decision-making. Modern CRM tools now incorporate automation, artificial intelligence, and predictive analytics, enabling logistics firms to personalize services, anticipate client needs, and foster long-term business relationships.

In the Indian context, the freight forwarding sector is rapidly evolving, supported by government initiatives such as "Make in India" and the "PM Gati Shakti" program, which aim to improve infrastructure and enhance trade connectivity. Despite significant growth, the market remains fragmented with a mix of large multinational firms and numerous small and medium enterprises. Many Indian freight forwarders are in the process of transitioning from traditional relationship-based sales to structured, technology-driven CRM models that allow for better client management and operational efficiency.

Regionally, in South India, ports such as Chennai, Kochi, and Krishnapatnam have seen increased activity due to industrial development and international trade. Freight forwarding companies in this region, including Bruhat Pvt Ltd, are increasingly adopting CRM platforms to meet rising customer expectations, differentiate their services, and streamline internal workflows. The adoption of CRM practices is no longer optional but essential for logistics firms seeking to sustain growth and remain competitive in a dynamic, customer-focused industry landscape.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study employs a descriptive research methodology to investigate the Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

practices in the freight forwarding sector, with a particular focus on Bruhat Pvt Ltd. The purpose of the methodology is to provide a structured and systematic approach to understanding how CRM tools and strategies are integrated into sales operations, and how they influence customer engagement, retention, and business performance.

A **descriptive research design** was chosen to capture detailed information on CRM applications, customer preferences, and logistics operations. This approach is well-suited to studies that seek to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied, rather than to test hypotheses or determine causal relationships.

The study is based on both **primary and secondary data** sources. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 123 clients who regularly utilize logistics services in Chennai. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative and qualitative insights into trading practices, service preferences, commodity types, and CRM-related experiences. The survey included closed-ended questions and Likert scale items, ensuring both consistency in responses and depth of information.

Sampling Method: A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure a representative distribution of participants across various categories such as commodity type, logistics service type, and trading frequency. The stratification enabled the researcher to capture insights from diverse client segments while reducing sampling bias.

Data Analysis: The collected data was analyzed using a combination of statistical tools, including frequency analysis, chi-square tests, regression analysis, and Pareto analysis. These tools were applied to identify key trends, measure relationships between variables, and determine critical areas of improvement in CRM practices. Graphical representations such as bar charts and pie charts were used to support interpretation and presentation of findings.

Limitations: The study is limited to clients based in Chennai and reflects their experiences with Bruhat Pvt Ltd. As such, the findings may not be generalizable to all regions or logistics firms. Additionally, responses are based on client perceptions, which may vary due to external factors such as market fluctuations or service-specific interactions.

Research Methodology :

The present study is structured to investigate the role and effectiveness of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices in the freight forwarding sector, with specific reference to Bruhat Pvt Ltd. A rigorous research methodology has been adopted to ensure the reliability, validity, and relevance of the findings. The methodological framework comprises the research design, sampling procedure, data collection methods, and analytical tools employed in the study.

Research Design:

This study utilizes a **descriptive research design**, which is appropriate for gaining detailed insights into existing CRM practices, client preferences, and operational processes. Descriptive research aims to systematically describe a phenomenon, allowing the researcher to examine the current status of CRM implementation and its perceived outcomes among clients of Bruhat Pvt Ltd. This design facilitates the identification of patterns, relationships, and areas for improvement without altering the research environment.

Sampling Design and Technique:

A **stratified random sampling** technique was employed to ensure that the sample accurately represents the population under study. The target population included clients of Bruhat Pvt Ltd in Chennai. The sample was stratified based on factors such as type of commodity handled, frequency of trading, and preferred logistics services. From this stratified population, a total of **123 respondents** were randomly selected, enabling a balanced representation of diverse logistics users.

Data Collection Methods:

The study relied on **primary data**, collected through a structured questionnaire administered directly to the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and Likert scale questions designed to capture both qualitative and quantitative data related to client experiences, preferences, and perceptions regarding CRM services. Secondary data sources, including company records, industry reports, and academic literature, were also consulted to provide contextual support and validation.

Statistical Tools Used:

To analyze the data effectively, various statistical techniques were applied:

- **Frequency Analysis** to describe distributions and summarize key client characteristics.
- **Chi-Square Test** to examine relationships between categorical variables, such as commodity type and logistics preferences.
- **Regression Analysis** to assess the impact of independent factors (e.g., service type, trading volume) on CRM performance metrics.
- **Pareto Analysis** to identify the most significant factors influencing client satisfaction and operational outcomes, based on the 80/20 principle.

Limitations of the Study:

The research is geographically limited to clients in Chennai, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Furthermore, the study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to respondent bias or situational variability. Despite these limitations, the methodology is robust and provides a reliable foundation for analyzing CRM practices within the selected organization.

In summary, the research methodology combines qualitative and quantitative techniques within a descriptive framework, offering a comprehensive view of how CRM practices influence logistics performance and client satisfaction at Bruhat Pvt Ltd.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the plan or blueprint for conducting a study. It outlines how to collect, measure, and analyze data. A solid research design ensures that the study has valid and reliable results.

Here's a typical breakdown of the components involved in research design:

1. **Objective:** Clearly define the problem or question the research is aiming to solve. This could be a hypothesis or research question.
2. **Population and Sample:**
 - **Population:** The larger group the research aims to understand.
 - **Sample:** The subset of the population that will actually be studied. Sampling techniques (like random sampling or stratified sampling) are used to select participants or data points.
3. **Data Collection Methods:**
 - **Qualitative Methods:** These include interviews, focus groups, and case studies.
 - **Quantitative Methods:** These involve surveys, experiments, and statistical data collection.
4. **Variables:**
 - **Independent Variable:** The factor being manipulated or categorized.
 - **Dependent Variable:** The outcome that is measured in response to the independent variable.
 - **Control Variables:** Factors that are kept constant to ensure that the results are due to the independent variable.
5. **Data Analysis Plan:** This section outlines how the collected data will be analyzed. It may include statistical tests or qualitative analysis methods, depending on the nature of the study.
6. **Ethical Considerations:** Any study must respect the rights of participants, ensuring confidentiality, consent, and transparency. Ethical guidelines must be adhered to throughout the research process.
7. **Limitations:** Every study has its limitations, whether in sample size, methodology, or scope. These need to be discussed to contextualize the finding

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In this study on CRM practices at Bruhat Pvt Ltd, both **primary** and **secondary** data collection methods were used.

Primary Data was gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed to 123 clients in Chennai. The questionnaire included closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to assess customer preferences, trading behavior, and service satisfaction. Direct meetings and follow-up calls ensured accurate data collection.

Secondary Data was obtained from internal company records, industry reports, academic journals, and online sources. These helped provide context and support for the primary findings.

By using both methods, the study ensured reliable and comprehensive insights into CRM effectiveness and customer engagement at Bruhat Pvt Ltd.

TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

1. Frequency Analysis

This descriptive tool was used to identify how often responses occurred, helping to understand patterns in customer preferences, such as trading cycles, logistics modes, and container types.

2. Chi-Square Test

Applied to explore relationships between categorical variables (e.g., type of commodity vs. mode of freight), this test helped identify significant associations in client behavior.

3. Regression Analysis

Used to examine the relationship between dependent and independent variables, regression analysis helped assess how certain factors (like service type) influence outcomes like customer satisfaction.

4. Pareto Analysis

Based on the 80/20 rule, this tool was used to identify key areas—such as customs clearance and CIF services—that significantly impact performance, allowing focused improvement efforts

Suggestions for Improvement :

. Strengthen Customs Clearance Support

With 68% of clients requiring customs services, forming dedicated CHA (Customs House Agent) teams can streamline processes and reduce delays.

2. Enhance CIF-Based Services

Since 44% of clients prefer CIF (Cost, Insurance, Freight), improving pricing models and service quality under this scope can increase customer trust and competitiveness.

3. Expand Container Service Options

A large share of clients prefer Open Top (OT) and Flat Rack (FR) containers. Increasing fleet capacity or forming partnerships to support these needs is recommended.

4. Focus on MLO Operations

With 41% of clients using Main Line Operators, optimizing services in this area can improve service reliability and customer retention.

5. Improve Digital Engagement

Incorporating digital communication tools like emails, WhatsApp, and CRM dashboards can enhance client interaction and responsiveness.

CONCLUSION

The study on CRM practices at Bruhat Pvt Ltd highlights the critical role of effective customer relationship management in the freight forwarding industry. By analyzing client data and operational patterns, the research revealed key areas for improvement such as customs clearance, CIF service efficiency, and container preferences. The use of statistical tools provided valuable insights into client behavior and service gaps. Implementing targeted enhancements based on these findings will enable Bruhat Pvt Ltd to strengthen customer satisfaction, improve sales performance, and maintain a competitive edge in the logistics sector.

**REFERENCES AND EXPLANATION**

The research on CRM practices at Bruhat Pvt Ltd draws upon both primary data collected through structured questionnaires and secondary sources including books, journals, and online materials. These references provided theoretical grounding, industry context, and methodological support for the study.

Book References included authoritative texts such as *Marketing Management* by Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller, and *Business Research Methods* by Donald R. Cooper et al., which offered insights into CRM strategies and research design frameworks.

Journal Articles contributed case studies and empirical findings on logistics, supply chain performance, and CRM implementation across various industries. For example, studies from the *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications* and the *Journal of Consumer Research* informed the analysis of customer satisfaction and market trends.

Web Resources like Infosurv, Scholarship Fellow, and Bruhat's official website were used to understand modern CRM tools, sampling methods, and company-specific logistics services.

These references collectively supported the formulation of research objectives, design of the survey tool, and interpretation of results. By integrating theoretical models with practical data, the study ensured relevance, accuracy, and actionable insights.