THE INFORMATICS SYSTEMS USED IN SALES

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Informational technology is the series of technology meant to process and communicate information, such as the electronic base data, spatial telecommunications, CD -ROMs and Internet. The coming out of this technologies led to the creation of some new and powerful means to reach the client, means which change the way the firms interact. It's certain that the use of the base data for marketing, telemarketing and Internet has already an important impact on the way in which the commercial activities are manage, and this impact will continue to be felt in future too.

The existence of the informatics systems is aiming to offer to all managers positioned on different levels of the organization the relevant and exact information in due time in order to allow them to take the current decisions regarding the planning and control of their responsibility field. It is important to emphasize that the stress is laid on taking decisions and not on producing information. Traditionally the 60's informatics systems were dominated by the demands of compatibility and finances due to the fact that the bookkeepers and the computers had a common element - the numbers. Considering certain aspects the development of the informatics systems reflected the general evolution of industry and calculation technique. Initially the world of the calculation machines was dominated by large sizes computers – that was the so called era of 'the administrator machines 'of which main utilization was that of processing a large volume of figures data and automatics of the routine procedures. Afterwards in the 70's there was the era of 'the operator machines' that performed applications mainly designed to assist the operations and improve efficiency. Most of the companies of those years commonly used the same computers renting calculation time in the specialized offices. In the 80's as the personal computers appeared the industry of the calculations technique stepped in the era of the information management; now there were created the first applications capable to generate competitive advantages to the companies .More recently the development of the applications that are easily used and involved low performance costs accelerated the utilization of the information in order to obtain the mentioned competitive advantages. As a consequence of this fact besides numbers the computers have started to process in a more substantial manner alphanumerical and graphical data, too this allowing to the companies to increase more and more the competitive degree (Donaldson and Domegan, 1992).

In our days this tendency seems to continue due to the following reasons:

1. The costs of the apparatus are continuously decreasing meanwhile the calculation power of the computerized systems (number of functions, working speed and stocking capacity) are continuously increasing.

2. Integration of the computers and telecommunications systems in the digital era allows the achievement of the internal and external communication by the local area or global networks.
3. The development of the software applications lead to the creation of a large number of packages of applications easily to be used dedicated both for certain functions and general utilization using as working backgrounds those similar to Windows operating system.
4. The apparition of some stocking environments capable to memorize large volumes of data on cheap supports easily accessed (CD ROM) that can store the content of 1840 disks belonging to the first generations.
5. The number of the final users interested in using this environment is higher and higher and most of them are the young employees with studies and a superior training level.

As a consequence of this thing each subsystem started to contain software applications specific to that field that can be used in distinct activities and decision processes .Though this will not create problems due to the imperfection of the subsystems integration it is important to understand that sales belong to marketing informatics sales system that is belonging to a larger one –that of the management More authors noticed that most of the benefits of the informatics revolutions are lost due to the lack of a strategic vision or the deficiency of the integration of different departments and divisions of the organizations (Jobbber,1975; Fletcher; 1995; Piercy,1997). The management principle that has to be applied when a specialized system as SIMV is developed will consider the necessity of combining the thorough analysis and good design with a superior organizational culture that will sustain this subsystem considering all benefits and traps. The most important principles that have to be followed are as follows:

1. Be sure that you have the management support and that aimed benefits are clearly and well understood by everyone.
2. Establish reasonable objectives for the subsystem that will have impact on the users and not on the administrators of the system.
3. Build up the system in time and not over night .This aspect is very important when the manual procedures will be abandoned and the computerized systems will be used thus the users and the customers to be able to use them easily.
4. Involve the users too in the design and elaboration of the system.
5. You have to take care the system to include totally and correctly all internal and external data. In this respect a suggestive example is that although 95% of the companies mentioned in Top 500 of The Times Newspaper are stocking in computers all data regarding the customers statements almost 1/3 of these had no possibility to obtain reports of their external markets from their systems (Fletcher, 1995).
6. Communicate all benefits that can be obtained by the utilization of the system and implementation calendar to all those involved in its design, introduction and use.
7. Use the new system in parallel with the existent procedures.

The manner in which the sales subsystem is functioning as part of MkIS that at his turn is a component of a more general SMI was previously presented in draw 6.3.

Kotler (1997) is describing the marketing informatics system as follows: this system is compounded of people, equipments and procedures aimed to collect, sort, analyze, evaluate

and distribute the useful, exact and opportune information to the decision makers in the field of marketing.

This means that such systems are not compounded only of computers but they include too written information, commercial reports taken in the area as well as other internal and external data.

The achieved progresses within the information technology field allow collection, storage and analysis of a large volume of information capable to increase the efficiency of the managers. The presence of such technologies offered to the customers – especially the industrial companies, brokers and consumers - the possibility of purchasing commodities by the means of their own informatics systems. The sales done towards a machine or system have not replaced the personal contact but they can be used and they are more and more used as a completion of this interpersonal contact.

There are more elements that are suggesting a persistent tendency .Professionalism and efficiency in purchases, globalization of commodities' sources, the order processes in real time and high turning over speed of stocks contribute to maintain such tendency. The sales managers have to administrate not only their systems but the employees too and SMIS allow them to do this.

SMIS may help The Sales Manager to administrate the information by three ways:
1. *Reports and analysis regarding the sales* by the help of which there can be obtained improved speed and precision in comparison with the manual processing of the information previously used .Therefore the new technology helps to collect, classify, store and analyze the data. The data to be considered are containing:

- reports regarding contacts with customers;
- achieved sales compared with the sales plan;
- sales classification according to commodities, customers and market segments;
- analysis of commercial performance considering the profit and the expenses.

The diversity of the information that can be electronically processed is huge thus the managers being able to shorten the time allotted to the data analysis using the calculation technique and improve the feedback. The reporting systems can be modified too till an optimum working form is reached .Please keep in mind that data collect is not the only and main goal but due to this longer time can be allotted to sales and direct contacts with customers. The system has to be adequate to the task it has to fulfill and not vice versa. The systems have to be easily used by sales agents and useful to them. Due to this reason it is necessary the sales agents to participate in the systems establishment. The goal of the systems use is that of releasing the sales agents and their managers of informing activities, the routine reports and analysis and do not generate additional problems in this respect .In the same time the sales managers have possibility to make different comparisons between the data regarding their sales agents and analyze them considering the levels settled in the plans this allowing them to react rapidly and more adequate.

2. *Sales planning* .The informatics systems are more and more used in three major fields .The first one is the identification of the tracks and potential customers classification –for example - according to the geographical location, the industrial field to which they belong, their market segment, the turnover and economic potential. The second field is referring to

the establishment of customers' profiles on the basis of a variety of criteria such as the organization to which they belong, the purchases procedures or the manner they spend the money. The third one resides in the issuance of alternation schemes of the contacts with the customers or territory planning. The sales managers have to take care and not expect an immediate success in this new era of informational technology. Conner (1975) states that three stages are necessary:

- evaluation that is necessary in order to establish the complexity level of the needs of the company for settling the complexity of the current products and of those designed for the future or of the market ,the available technical and financial resources as well as the current and forecasted activity of the competitors;
- the design by which there are identified the existent needs, available options and common control procedures;
- implementation that is based on employees involvement and their training

Development options and projections in future.

The informatics computerized systems help the sales manager to answer to questions as "what would happen if….."?, to evaluate the existent options and forecast different future scenarios. It does not mean that these offer the correct answer to these questions but they can help him to guide better his efforts, to obtain a higher productivity and take decisions that later on will prove to be properly. All these increase the capacity of the manager to control and evaluate the subordinated agents.

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