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Evaluating Customer Relationship Management Practices in Real Estate: A Study of Customer Communication, Follow-Up and Service

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ABSTRACT :

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is important in real estate because the relationship between a developer and a customer often continues beyond the first enquiry or property sale. Customers may need information, property-visit support, documentation guidance, possession-related assistance and post-sales service. This paper examines CRM practices in real estate with particular attention to customer communication, follow-up and service, drawing on a two-month On-the-Job Training (OJT) experience with the CRM team at K Raheja Corp from 1 July to 31 August 2026. The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach based on the internship activities and observations documented in the OJT report, supported by selected published literature. No customer survey dataset or confidential CRM records were available; therefore, the paper does not claim statistical results or generalise the observations to all customers or all company operations. The analysis highlights the importance of accurate customer records, clear and timely communication, ownership of open requests, cross-functional coordination and consistent updates. It also maps an illustrative query-resolution process and proposes practical improvements such as request categorisation, follow-up tracking, clear case ownership and feedback capture. The paper concludes that CRM is not only a software function; it is also a coordinated service process that can help maintain customer confidence throughout the real-estate customer lifecycle.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management; real estate; customer communication; follow-up; customer service; customer experience

1. Introduction

Real estate is a high-involvement sector. A customer may spend considerable time comparing locations, property layouts, prices, amenities, developer reputation and payment options before making a decision. The relationship with the developer may then continue through booking, documentation, construction updates, possession and post-sales service. Because the process can be lengthy and financially significant, customers usually expect accurate information, timely responses and clear guidance at each stage.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) helps an organisation manage its interactions with current and potential customers. It includes maintaining customer information, recording interactions, understanding requirements, responding to queries, coordinating with internal teams and tracking pending actions. CRM software can support these tasks, but effective CRM also depends on people following a clear process and taking responsibility for customer requests.

This paper is based on an OJT placement with the CRM team at K Raheja Corp, undertaken from 1 July to 31 August 2026. During the placement, the intern worked as a GRE/CRM intern and gained exposure to customer-record updates, communication support, query handling, follow-up activities, internal coordination and CRM-related record management. The exact designation should be confirmed against the company's official documentation before publication.

The purpose of the paper is not to assess the whole CRM system of K Raheja Corp or to make claims about all its customers. Instead, it uses the documented internship experience to discuss common CRM activities in a real-estate setting and to identify practical lessons about communication, follow-up and service. These themes are also considered in relation to existing research on CRM, customer satisfaction and service quality.

2. Review of Literature

CRM is commonly understood as a customer-focused business approach that combines information, processes and employee actions to build and maintain relationships. Das and Mishra (2019) explain that CRM requires organisations to remain focused on customers and to use knowledge of previous interactions to support future relationships. This is relevant to real estate because a customer may contact different employees or departments at different stages of the property journey. Proper records help maintain continuity and reduce the need for customers to repeat the same information.

Research has also examined the link between CRM practices, customer satisfaction and loyalty in real estate. Sao et al. (2022) studied responses from 222 customers in the Indian real-estate context and reported that employee behaviour, service quality and relationship development were associated with customer satisfaction and loyalty. Their study also identified customer satisfaction as an important link to client loyalty. These results provide a useful background for considering communication and follow-up, although the present OJT paper does not replicate their survey or test the same relationships.

Service quality is another useful concept. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) introduced SERVQUAL as a way to examine service quality

through dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. In a real-estate CRM context, reliability can involve giving correct information and keeping commitments; responsiveness can involve acknowledging requests and providing updates; assurance can involve communicating with confidence while staying within verified information; and empathy can involve listening to the customer's concern. The model provides a lens for organising observations, rather than a scorecard for this study.

Singh, Gupta, and Singh (2022) examined gaps between customer expectations and satisfaction in real-estate services in the Delhi-NCR region using the SERVQUAL model. Their work reinforces the importance of understanding service from the customer's point of view. A company may have established internal processes, but customers experience those processes through the clarity of replies, the reliability of information and the way a request is handled.

Digital tools also influence CRM. Ferreira et al. (2023) studied a user-centred design approach for real-estate CRM and highlighted the importance of usability and user experience, alongside process efficiency. This suggests that technology is most helpful when it supports the actual needs of employees and customers. A CRM platform that stores information but does not make open requests easy to identify may not, by itself, ensure consistent follow-up.

Taken together, the literature suggests that CRM should be viewed as a combination of customer information, service processes, employee behaviour and technology. The present paper adds a practice-based perspective by describing how communication, follow-up and coordination appear in routine CRM activities during an internship. Since the available OJT material contains no verified numerical customer dataset, the contribution is descriptive and exploratory rather than statistical.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study has five objectives:

- To understand CRM practices relevant to customer communication, follow-up and service in a real-estate setting.
- To examine how customer queries and requests can be recorded, checked, coordinated and followed through to an update or outcome.
- To understand the role of CRM in connecting customer-facing activities with internal departments.
- To relate practical OJT observations to concepts such as relationship marketing, service quality, customer experience and customer lifecycle management.
- To suggest practical improvements that may support more consistent CRM work, subject to review by the organisation and the industry mentor.

4. Research Methodology

The paper follows a descriptive qualitative approach. The primary basis is the internship experience and the activities documented in the student's OJT blackbook. Secondary material includes selected academic publications on CRM, service quality and real-estate customer relationships. The unit of analysis is the CRM task or customer-service touchpoint, rather than an individual customer. The paper focuses on activities described in the OJT report: maintaining and updating customer records, supporting communication, understanding customer queries, monitoring follow-up, coordinating with relevant internal teams and organising CRM-related records. An illustrative process flow is used to explain how a customer request may be handled. It is a general academic representation based on the described responsibilities and should not be read as an official K Raheja Corp standard operating procedure.

No questionnaire responses, sample size, customer satisfaction scores or internal CRM extracts were supplied for this paper. Accordingly, no statistical analysis was conducted and no numerical claims about customer satisfaction, response times or service performance are made. Published studies are used to establish context, not as if their results were collected during this internship. Confidentiality was treated as an important boundary. Customer names, contact details, account information and internal records are not reproduced. The examples discussed are illustrative process scenarios and should be checked by the author against actual OJT experience and company permissions before submission. The study is limited to a two-month placement and cannot represent every customer interaction or every CRM process in the organisation.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Customer information supports continuity

Customer records are useful because they help the next person understand the context of an interaction. When a customer contacts an organisation more than once, accurate notes can reduce repeated questions and help the team understand what has already been discussed. In a real-estate setting, this may include the nature of the enquiry, the information already shared, the open question and the next action. Records should be factual, relevant and updated through the organisation's approved process.

5.2 Communication is part of the service

Customer communication involves more than sending a reply. The employee needs to understand the request, check the available information and explain the answer in language the customer can follow. If an answer cannot be confirmed immediately, it is better to acknowledge the request and explain that verification is needed than to provide an uncertain answer. This practice connects with the service-quality dimensions of reliability, responsiveness and assurance (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

5.3 Follow-up helps prevent requests from being lost

Forwarding a customer request to another department does not necessarily mean that the request has been resolved from the customer's point of view. The request may still need acknowledgement, action, review or a further update. A simple tracking approach can record the date received, request category, responsible team, current status, next follow-up date and closure note. The aim is not to create unnecessary paperwork; it is to make the status visible and to reduce the risk of a pending request being overlooked.

5.4 Internal coordination shapes the customer experience

Some requests require input from departments such as sales, finance, legal, project, maintenance or handover teams. Customers generally experience the organisation as one entity, even when several teams are involved behind the scenes. CRM can help connect the customer's request to the right internal owner and communicate the verified update back to the customer. Clear responsibility and respectful follow-up are therefore important parts of customer service.

5.5 CRM continues across the customer lifecycle

CRM is relevant before and after a property transaction. Early-stage customers may need project information or assistance arranging a property visit. Customers further along in the process may require documentation or payment-related clarification, while possession and post-sales stages may involve inspection points or service requests. These interactions differ, but the basic discipline remains similar: understand the requirement, verify information, record the interaction, coordinate where necessary, follow up and communicate the outcome.

5.6 Illustrative customer-query process

A general query-resolution flow can be described in eight steps:
(1) receive the query
(2) clarify what the customer needs
(3) check the approved information available
(4) record the query in the appropriate CRM format
(5) refer it to the relevant team if additional input is required
(6) monitor progress and follow up
(7) share a verified response or realistic status update
(8) update the record with the outcome and any remaining action.
The process shows that good service depends on both the response given to the customer and the internal steps needed to produce that response.

5.7 Relationship with earlier research

The observations are consistent with the broader view of CRM as a customer-centred process rather than a database alone (Das & Mishra, 2019). They also align with real-estate research that has examined the relationship between service quality, CRM and customer satisfaction or loyalty (Sao et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2022). However, the current paper does not measure customer satisfaction or loyalty directly. Its findings are process-based and should be interpreted as practical learning from a limited internship, not proof of a causal relationship.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are practical options for discussion with the industry mentor. They are not claims that the organisation currently lacks these practices.

1. Use clear request categories. Common types of customer requests can be grouped into simple categories so that the team can identify the nature of a request and direct it to the appropriate owner.
2. Maintain visible ownership of open requests. Each open item should have a responsible team or person, a current status and a next action. Where the existing CRM system already supports these fields, the recommendation should be implemented through the current process rather than through a duplicate tracker.
3. Set a follow-up date when a request remains open. A follow-up date can help employees check progress and reduce the chance that a customer is left without an update. Any service-level target should be agreed by the organisation and should reflect the complexity of the request.
4. Communicate status honestly. If an answer depends on another department, the customer should receive a realistic update rather than a promise that has not been confirmed. The final response should be based on approved information.
5. Keep records concise and factual. Notes should explain the customer's requirement, action taken, pending step and outcome. Irrelevant personal information should not be recorded, and access should follow company confidentiality requirements.
6. Capture customer feedback where permitted. Short feedback questions after a completed interaction may help identify repeated sources of confusion. Any future survey should use an approved instrument, appropriate consent and a clearly defined sample.
7. Review recurring issues. Periodic review of anonymised request categories may help the team identify questions that arise frequently and

improve standard responses or internal coordination. This should be done only where permitted by company policy and with suitable data protection.

7. Conclusion

This paper examined CRM in real estate through the connected areas of customer communication, follow-up and service. The OJT experience at K Raheja Corp provided exposure to customer-record management, communication support, query handling, follow-up and coordination. The analysis suggests that these activities work together: communication helps establish and manage expectations, follow-up keeps a request moving, and service is reflected in the response or outcome the customer receives.

The main practical lesson is that CRM is not only a software system. It also depends on accurate records, careful listening, verified information, clear ownership and communication between teams. These practices are especially relevant in real estate, where customers may interact with the organisation over an extended period and across several stages of the property journey.

The study has important limits. It is based on a two-month internship and qualitative activity descriptions; it does not include customer survey data or confidential operational measures. Future research could collect approved responses from customers or CRM professionals and test the relationship between communication quality, follow-up, service quality, satisfaction and loyalty. Such a study would need a clear sampling method, an appropriate research instrument and ethical handling of customer information. Until then, the conclusions of this paper should be understood as descriptive insights and practical recommendations, not as statistically generalisable findings.

Declarations

Ethics and consent: No primary survey or customer-level dataset was collected for this paper. Customer-identifying information and confidential company records have not been included.

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Data availability: The paper is based on the described OJT activities and published sources. No customer-level dataset is available for sharing.

AI assistance disclosure: A generative AI tool was used to assist with language organisation and formatting. The author must review and verify all claims, citations and final wording and takes responsibility for the submitted manuscript.

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