



**Vital Business Process
Lessons - Courtesy Of
The Downturn**

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Protect Your Customers

A crisis makes it crystal clear that customers are our most treasured business assets. Losing a customer will cost you not only the current business but also all the time and money you invested to get the customer, along with all the future revenue that this customer would have produced for your company. In a crisis you need to do everything you can with the systems available to protect your customers. Then you need to take a hard look at your business processes to make sure they allowed you to do everything you possibly could have to avoid losing customers. Were they robust and flexible enough to detect and respond to customer needs quickly and comprehensively during the economic crisis? Or did you lose some customers because they felt your business was not in sync with them when they most needed a vendor who understood their needs?

Rebuild Business Processes

We can take these valuable, albeit painfully acquired, answers as starting points for reengineering our business processes to bolster customer retention while providing us with a more powerful engine for maintaining current customers and acquiring new business in the future.

Revisit Deployment Options

Once these and other issues have been thoroughly considered, you will be able to refine or totally reengineer your processes to be more timely and effective both in responding to customer emergencies and also moving forward to the new business opportunities. Before you implement your reengineered business processes, however, you need to look at how you are deploying your systems and making sure you are making optimal use of the technologies currently available.

Most CRM systems today are based on a client/server methodology deployed behind a firewall. Web-based deployments retain the firewall but allow for greater data security. New cloud technologies (SaaS) are outside the firewall allowing access from anywhere. They minimize hardware and software costs and shave months off the design and deployment schedule. These advantages may be important if you need to get up and running with a reinvigorated system quickly. So the downturn may have revealed some flaws in your business processes, particularly the ones that impact customer retention. You need to address those as fast as you can. Customer retention is essential. While proactively maintaining your existing customers you need to look at all the other things that can be done to improve your business processes. While you're at it, revisit your deployment options. Some changes here could significantly reduce business process costs while making you more competitive for the upturn in the economy that is on the horizon.

Here are some more questions indicating areas you may need to address:

Do I have an adequate process for collecting information on business prospects? Do I have an ongoing plan for collecting and updating information concerning the needs and objectives of existing customers? Can my plans for updating this information be implemented from within my CRM system?

Do all of the customer-facing individuals on service teams have access to the same information? Or are there islands of applications within our customer maintenance systems that isolate divisions, departments and individuals from one another, thus inhibiting timely and integrated responses to customer needs? Most importantly do my business process systems present a holistic view of the customer to everyone working to serve his needs?

Drop me a note at aijaz.ansari@ambitsoftware.com.

I'd like to know what you think.

About Ambit Software

Ambit Software helps enterprises globally to become agile - adapt rapidly and cost effectively in response to changes in the business environment through the efficient use of IT. Ambit partners with its clients to understand their business pain points and arrives at appropriate IT led interventions to deliver a relevant solution.

Ambit helps organizations across sectors such as Discrete and Process Manufacturing, Financial Services, Logistics, Consumer Goods, Hospitality etc. to achieve their business goals through effective use of technology.