

**CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**

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**An Exploratory Study of the Roles of Internal Relationship  
Management (IRM) and its Value Contribution to  
Information Technology Function within a Multinational  
Bank**

內部資訊技術客戶關係經理在跨國銀行內發揮的貢獻  
及價值的探索

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## **Abstract**

Information Technology (IT) is a large investment in the banking industry. A widely held belief was that IT was absolutely vital to a bank's survival and growth. The multinational bank harnessing IT on a global scale to support global operations presents management with problems that were more challenging than those domestic banks. To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of IT investment, past research suggested looking at the relationship management on the IT service supply chain.

This article is to study what is the contribution of the internal relationship manager of the IT function to the IT service supply and how the IRM contributes to the achievement of the critical success factor of the multinational bank.

The research chose a large multinational bank with a large IT teams based in over 10 countries for supporting a business footprint in over 70 countries with over 6000 offices servicing over 50 million customers. The research identified 6 roles of IRM namely 'Financial Management', 'Demand Fulfillment Management', 'Strategy Alignment', 'Customer Service Management', 'Improve the effectiveness and efficiency', 'Risk and Service Quality Management' to facilitate IT function to achieve 7 CSFs namely 'Reduce Cost', 'Ensure Timely Delivery of Services', 'Align Strategy', 'Provide Customer Services', 'Improve Effectiveness and Efficiency', 'Reduce Risk Level/Maintain Service Level' respectively. Within the 6 roles, IRM carried out 27 activities namely

1. Act as trustee partner and encourage give and take between IT and business
2. Provide suggestion(s) on cost reduction
3. Position as the main Contact point
4. Facilitate the liaison and avoid miscommunication
5. Improve customer service and satisfaction
6. Position as escalation point to handle complain
7. Assist customer to navigate in complex and big organization
8. Review Customer demand and orders
9. Prioritize the customer demand according to business priority
10. Bridge the gap between business and IT including information, knowledge etc. and facilitate knowledge sharing and work ongoing
11. Reduce unnecessary inquiry and escalation due to misunderstanding
12. Ensure timely response to business demand as clearance house of questions
13. Explain cost structure, recharge, billing of services
14. Encourage cooperation and collaboration of teams
15. Kick off early discussion to align strategy and keep everything in plan

16. Ensure the provision of service meet customer delivery target
17. Work with business executive to align technology, investment and resources
18. Reduce cost, streamline the application and reduce hardware cost
19. Provide a timeline of demand and avoid late request
20. Cut down Red days (with production service problem)
21. Educate customers on new things, procedure
22. Avoid backdoor (align to company strategy and priority)
23. Facilitate the delivery of IT strategy among IT units
24. Help to optimize resource and use resources in a more effective way
25. Contribute to system onboarding, evergreening and trouble-shooting
26. Review capacity plan to maintain service quality
27. Coordinate activities between IT units

The research also identified 10 challenges that affect the contribution of IRM

1. Face bureaucracy
2. Hard to match customer demand and resource supply
3. The nature of this organization is multinational and geographically spread
4. Need to get alignment and 'buy- in' by all key stakeholders
5. Process is not customer- oriented and customer driven compared to IRM
6. Hard to measure success as there are no defined metrics and sometimes subjective
7. Not efficient governance process to support consistent customer services
8. Lack of a global order book and global procedure for a global company
9. Not easy to know what's going on
10. Roles not clear

The research also identified 4 organizational factors that impact the establishment of IRM

1. Given the size of our organization, there is a need for the IRM function
2. Given the size of globalization in our organization, there is a need for the IRM function
3. The business and IT do not speak the same language
4. The business and IT never meet each other

This research fills up the knowledge gap on the study on the contribution of IRM to IT function. The result guides the IT function to formulate the Target Operating Model of IRM on how to plan and deploy IRM to help the bank to achieve its strategic goals. It also elaborates the interaction between contribution of IRM, challenge and impact to the contribution.