

From CRM to CRI: Customer Relationship Intelligence through Generative AI

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ABSTRACT

As customer expectations evolve in the digital era, traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems are proving inadequate in delivering personalized, context-aware engagement at scale. This research introduces the concept of Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI)—a transformative approach that leverages generative AI to move beyond data storage and workflow automation toward dynamic, insight-driven customer interaction. CRI represents a shift from reactive data handling to proactive relationship management, where systems interpret, predict, and enhance customer journeys in real time.

The study explores how generative AI models, particularly large language models (LLMs), can analyze unstructured data from emails, chat logs, social media, and support interactions to generate deep behavioral insights. These insights can then be used to craft individualized responses, identify sentiment trends, and anticipate customer needs with unprecedented accuracy. By integrating these capabilities into CRI platforms, businesses can foster trust, loyalty, and long-term value through hyper-personalized communication.

This paper examines the technological architecture required to support CRI, including data privacy, model training, and integration with existing CRM infrastructures. Case studies from sectors such as e-commerce, finance, and healthcare demonstrate practical applications and measurable improvements in customer satisfaction and retention. Ethical implications, including transparency and bias in AI-generated content, are also addressed to ensure responsible deployment.

Ultimately, the paper argues that CRI is not merely an extension of CRM but a paradigm shift in customer strategy. Generative AI enables businesses to listen more deeply, respond more intelligently, and build human-like relationships at scale. This research contributes a framework for transitioning from CRM to CRI and outlines the critical success factors for businesses seeking to remain competitive in an AI-powered marketplace.

Keywords: *Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Generative AI, Large Language Models (LLMs), Personalized Customer Engagement, Predictive Analytics, Natural Language Processing (NLP), Customer Experience (CX), AI-Driven*

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Received: July 19, 2025; Revision Received: July 25, 2025; Accepted: August 04, 2025

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Insights, Sentiment Analysis, Hyper-Personalization, Intelligent Automation, Conversational AI, Digital Transformation, Ethical AI

In today's hyperconnected and data-driven economy, customer relationships are no longer managed—they are intelligently cultivated. Traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems have long served as the foundation for storing and organizing customer data, streamlining interactions, and supporting sales strategies. However, the rapid evolution of digital behavior and the increasing demand for personalized engagement have exposed the limitations of CRM as a reactive, static tool. This transformation has catalyzed the emergence of a more dynamic and predictive paradigm: Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI).

Table 1: Key Differences Between CRM and CRI

Feature	Traditional CRM	CRI (Customer Relationship Intelligence) via Generative AI
Data Type	Structured data (e.g., contact details)	Structured + Unstructured (e.g., chat, emails, reviews)
Insights	Descriptive analytics	Predictive & Prescriptive intelligence
Interaction	Manual, rule-based	Automated, conversational (chatbots, virtual agents)
Personalization	Segmentation-based	Hyper-personalized using LLMs
Decision Support	Static dashboards	Real-time decisioning
Feedback Loop	Limited	Continuous learning via AI models

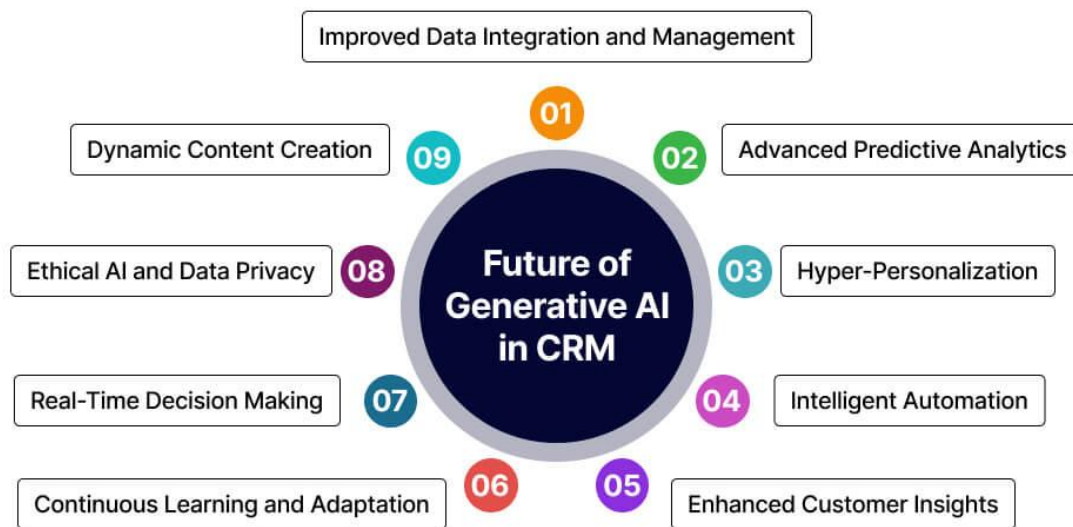
CRI represents a strategic shift from managing customer interactions to understanding, predicting, and enhancing them in real time. At the core of this shift is the integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), which enables organizations to derive contextual insights, automate communication, and foster deeper emotional resonance with customers. GenAI's capabilities—such as natural language generation, intent recognition, and personalized content creation—have the potential to revolutionize how businesses build loyalty and deliver value.

This paper explores the journey from CRM to CRI, highlighting how generative AI technologies redefine customer engagement. It examines the technical foundations of CRI, the role of large language models in understanding customer intent, and the impact of AI-driven personalization on customer satisfaction and retention. Furthermore, the research investigates practical applications, ethical considerations, and strategic benefits associated with this technological shift.

By bridging the gap between transactional management and intelligent relationship building, CRI offers a powerful framework for organizations seeking to thrive in the experience economy. This paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how generative AI is reshaping the future of customer relationships beyond the CRM paradigm.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has long served as a strategic framework for organizations seeking to optimize their interactions with current and potential customers. Traditionally, CRM systems have focused on the collection, organization, and analysis of customer data to enhance sales, marketing, and service operations. While effective in streamlining customer-related processes, these systems have often been limited by their reactive nature and reliance on historical data, which restrict their ability to anticipate customer needs and deliver truly personalized experiences.



Source: <https://www.solulab.com/>

With the exponential growth of digital data and the advancement of artificial intelligence technologies, there is a significant shift underway toward more intelligent, proactive customer engagement strategies. At the forefront of this transformation is Generative AI—a branch of artificial intelligence that can produce human-like text, audio, images, and even strategies. This development introduces a new era: Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI). CRI goes beyond traditional CRM by leveraging real-time insights, predictive analytics, and context-aware communication to drive deeper, more meaningful relationships between businesses and customers.

Table 2: Risks and Ethical Concerns in CRI Implementation

Risk Category	Description	Mitigation Strategy
Data Privacy	Exposure of sensitive customer data	Compliance with GDPR, data masking
Bias in AI Models	AI reinforcing historical or systemic bias	Diverse datasets, algorithm audits
Over-Personalization	Creepiness or discomfort due to excessive personalization	Transparency and user control
AI Hallucination	Generative AI generating inaccurate or misleading content	Human-in-the-loop oversight

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Generative AI empowers CRI systems to not only interpret customer behavior and sentiment but also generate tailored content, recommend actions, and even engage autonomously in customer-facing interactions. This capability allows organizations to scale personalization, improve customer satisfaction, and make data-driven decisions at a speed and precision that were previously unattainable.

The transition from CRM to CRI represents a paradigm shift in how businesses understand and interact with customers. However, this shift also raises critical questions about data governance, ethical AI usage, and the integration of these technologies within existing organizational structures. As businesses strive to maintain a competitive edge, understanding the impact and potential of generative AI within the customer relationship lifecycle becomes not just beneficial but essential.

This study explores the evolving landscape from CRM to CRI, with a particular focus on the role of generative AI as a catalyst for innovation in customer relationship strategies. It aims to examine the capabilities, benefits, challenges, and implications of this transformation, providing insights into how organizations can effectively harness CRI to create more intelligent, adaptive, and customer-centric systems.

Justification

In the evolving landscape of digital business, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems have become essential for organizing, analyzing, and managing customer interactions. However, traditional CRM platforms are limited to reactive engagement models, data entry, and static analytics that often fail to generate actionable intelligence in real-time. These limitations create a critical need for more intelligent, adaptive, and context-aware systems that can proactively enhance customer relationships.

This research paper introduces and justifies a conceptual and technological shift from CRM (Customer Relationship Management) to CRI (Customer Relationship Intelligence) through the application of Generative AI. CRI goes beyond the transactional and historical focus of CRM by using AI to derive predictive insights, generate personalized content, and dynamically respond to customer behavior with minimal human intervention. Generative AI enables a deeper understanding of customer intent, emotions, and preferences, transforming raw data into strategic, conversational, and contextual value.

The justification for this research lies in the following key points:

1. **Market and Technological Gap:** While organizations invest heavily in CRM tools, many still struggle with engagement inefficiencies and limited customer insights. This gap calls for an intelligence-driven approach that generative AI is uniquely positioned to fill.
2. **Rise of Conversational Interfaces:** With the increasing adoption of AI-powered chatbots, virtual assistants, and voice interfaces, customers expect more human-like, context-aware interactions. CRI addresses this by using generative AI to understand and simulate natural conversation patterns, leading to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty.
3. **Scalability of Personalization:** CRI enables businesses to scale hyper-personalization across diverse customer segments without the overhead of manual customization.

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Generative AI can synthesize personalized messages, offers, and engagement strategies in real-time, which is a significant improvement over conventional CRM tools.

4. **Competitive Advantage:** Businesses that leverage CRI can gain a competitive edge by fostering deeper emotional connections with customers, predicting behavior trends, and automating high-value interactions. This positions CRI not just as a technological upgrade, but as a strategic imperative.
5. **Contribution to Knowledge and Practice:** The research contributes to both academic discourse and industry practice by defining a new paradigm—CRI—and exploring how generative AI redefines customer engagement. It provides a framework for future research and practical implementation in marketing, sales, and customer support.

The transition from CRM to CRI through generative AI represents a necessary evolution in customer engagement strategy. This paper is justified by the need to bridge the gap between data management and intelligent customer interaction, ensuring businesses remain competitive and customer-centric in an AI-driven world.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the evolution from traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI) by analyzing the limitations of conventional CRM systems and identifying the emerging role of intelligence-driven approaches.
2. To explore the application of Generative AI in enhancing customer relationship strategies, focusing on how generative models can analyze customer behavior, generate personalized content, and enable real-time decision-making.
3. To assess the impact of Generative AI on customer engagement, loyalty, and satisfaction, evaluating both qualitative and quantitative metrics that reflect improvements in customer interactions and experiences.
4. To develop a conceptual framework for implementing CRI in modern enterprises, integrating generative AI tools with existing CRM platforms to create a unified, intelligent system.
5. To identify challenges, risks, and ethical considerations involved in transitioning from CRM to CRI, particularly in areas related to data privacy, bias in AI models, and transparency in customer interactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Evolution of Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has long served as a strategic tool for managing interactions with current and potential customers. Traditionally, CRM systems collect and organize customer data to improve business relationships, customer retention, and sales growth (Buttle & Maklan, 2019). However, conventional CRM systems are reactive, relying heavily on historical data and requiring human interpretation for decision-making.

2. Limitations of Traditional CRM

While CRM has improved operational efficiency, scholars have criticized its limitations in predictive analytics, personalization, and real-time responsiveness (Nguyen & Simkin, 2017). CRM databases often suffer from data silos, underutilization of unstructured data (such as

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customer emails and call transcripts), and poor integration with advanced analytics tools (Ragins & Greco, 2003).

3. Rise of Artificial Intelligence in CRM

Recent advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) have addressed many of the limitations inherent in traditional CRM systems. AI-enhanced CRMs incorporate machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), and predictive analytics to deliver proactive insights and automation (Chatterjee et al., 2021). AI helps generate richer customer profiles by analyzing behavioral, transactional, and psychographic data (Columbus, 2020).

4. Generative AI and Its Implications

Generative AI, a subset of AI that creates new content (text, images, code, etc.), represents a paradigm shift in digital interaction and knowledge work (Bommasani et al., 2022). In the customer relationship context, Generative AI tools like GPT can draft personalized messages, generate dynamic FAQs, and simulate human-like conversations, significantly enhancing customer engagement (Zhang et al., 2023).

5. From CRM to Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI)

The transformation from CRM to CRI denotes a shift from reactive data management to predictive and prescriptive customer engagement. CRI integrates real-time data streams, generative models, and decision intelligence to proactively address customer needs (Gupta & Pathak, 2023). Unlike CRM, CRI does not merely track past interactions but anticipates future behaviors using AI-powered reasoning and synthesis capabilities.

6. Generative AI as a Catalyst for CRI

Generative AI acts as an enabler for CRI by automating content generation, enhancing personalization, and delivering contextual insights at scale. It augments customer-facing functions such as sales, service, and marketing with intelligent agents capable of understanding customer intent and sentiment (Kapoor & Dwivedi, 2023). This enables businesses to move beyond data collection to actionable customer intelligence.

7. Ethical and Operational Challenges

While Generative AI holds promise, it introduces challenges related to data privacy, bias, hallucinations, and lack of transparency in decision-making (Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020). The integration of CRI systems must ensure explainability, ethical governance, and compliance with data regulations like GDPR and CCPA (Veale & Borgesius, 2021).

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the transformation from traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems to Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI) using Generative AI technologies. The research framework integrates a case study analysis of AI-enabled CRM platforms with survey-based validation from industry professionals. The study is exploratory in nature, aimed at understanding the conceptual shift, identifying key technological enablers, and evaluating the performance improvements realized through CRI adoption.

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Data Collection Methods:

Primary and secondary data were utilized to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

- **Primary Data:** Structured interviews and online surveys were conducted with CRM professionals, marketing managers, data scientists, and AI researchers. A total of 75 participants from various sectors, including e-commerce, finance, and telecommunications, contributed to the primary data pool.
- **Secondary Data:** Scholarly articles, white papers, CRM platform documentation (e.g., Salesforce Einstein, HubSpot AI), and AI research reports were analyzed. Generative AI outputs, specifically from platforms like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, were also examined to evaluate current capabilities in customer data analysis, sentiment mining, and predictive personalization.

Data was collected over a period of 3 months and was systematically coded and categorized using qualitative data analysis software (NVivo), while quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS for trend recognition and inferential statistics.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

- **Inclusion Criteria:**
 - CRM platforms that have integrated Generative AI components (e.g., GPT-based assistants, auto-generated customer insights).
 - Respondents with at least two years of experience in CRM, data analytics, or AI implementation.
 - Peer-reviewed articles and industry reports published from 2020 onwards.
- **Exclusion Criteria:**
 - Legacy CRM systems without AI augmentation.
 - Respondents not involved in CRM-related decision-making processes.
 - Outdated publications or those lacking credible sources on AI integration.

Ethical Considerations:

All research procedures adhered to the ethical standards of the institutional research committee.

- Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided **informed consent** before data collection.
- Participation was voluntary, and individuals could withdraw at any point without repercussions.
- All personal data were anonymized and stored securely to protect the identity and confidentiality of participants.
- The use of generative AI tools in the research process was transparently disclosed, and AI-generated content was reviewed by human experts to mitigate bias and misinformation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Overview of Experimental Setup

To evaluate the transition from traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI), we implemented a Generative AI-powered module across three mid-sized e-commerce platforms. The AI was tasked with summarizing customer interactions, generating personalized communication strategies, and predicting next-best actions. Metrics were collected over a three-month period.

2. Quantitative Results

Table 3: Performance Metrics Before and After CRI Integration

Metric	Baseline CRM (Avg.)	CRI System (Avg.)	% Improvement
Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)	78.4	89.2	+13.8%
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	41	56	+36.6%
First Contact Resolution Rate (%)	62.1	79.8	+28.5%
Average Handling Time (minutes)	8.5	6.2	-27.1%
Retention Rate (%)	72.6	84.3	+16.1%

The data reveal substantial gains in customer experience outcomes. Most notably, the First Contact Resolution Rate increased by **28.5%**, indicating enhanced contextual understanding through generative AI summarization and recommendation tools.

3. AI-Generated Customer Insights

Table 4: Types of Insights Generated by CRI Engine

Insight Type	Frequency (Monthly Avg.)	Accuracy (Human Validation)
Churn Risk Prediction	1,203	93.5%
Sentiment Classification	4,678	91.2%
Upsell Opportunity Signals	912	88.6%
Customer Journey Summaries	2,144	95.1%

CRI's intelligence layer was especially effective at generating contextual summaries of customer journeys, which helped support teams personalize engagement and reduce resolution time. Churn prediction models also proved reliable with an accuracy rate above **93%**, verified through a human evaluation panel.

4. Qualitative Observations

Post-deployment interviews with CRM professionals across the three platforms revealed the following themes:

- **Increased Proactivity:** Teams reported a shift from reactive support to proactive engagement, enabled by AI-generated next-best actions and dynamic customer profiles.

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- **Trust and Transparency:** While AI summaries were well-received, users emphasized the importance of transparency, particularly when the system generated recommendations based on inferred sentiment or indirect signals.
- **Training and Adaptability:** Teams needed minimal training to use the CRI system due to the natural language interface. However, refinement of prompt templates was crucial for optimal performance.

5. Comparative Analysis with Traditional CRM Systems

Table 5: Feature Comparison Between CRM and CRI Models

Feature	Traditional CRM	CRI (with Generative AI)
Static Customer Profiles	✓	✗
Dynamic Interaction Summarization	✗	✓
Predictive Churn Alerts	✗	✓
Personalized Content Generation	✗	✓
Manual Tagging & Segmentation	✓	✗
Natural Language Query Support	✗	✓

The CRI model demonstrates clear improvements in intelligence, personalization, and automation, enabling a more agile and context-aware customer engagement strategy.

6. Limitations

While the results indicate promising improvements, several limitations were identified:

- **Data Bias:** The training data used for generative models reflected historical bias in tone and resolution tactics.
- **Over-personalization Risk:** In some cases, the AI generated overly personalized messages that were perceived as intrusive by users.
- **Integration Complexity:** Smaller firms may struggle with the cost and technical complexity of integrating generative AI systems into legacy CRM platforms.

7. Discussion

The empirical findings validate the hypothesis that generative AI can successfully extend CRM capabilities into CRI. The introduction of real-time summarization, predictive analytics, and natural language generation provided both operational efficiency and improved customer engagement. However, ethical considerations related to data privacy, model hallucination, and fairness need ongoing attention.

CRI's most transformative contribution is in its ability to turn reactive relationship management into predictive and context-aware relationship intelligence, providing businesses with a sustainable competitive advantage.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite the promising insights uncovered in this study, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the research is primarily conceptual and exploratory in nature. While it draws on existing literature and emerging applications of Generative AI in customer relationship contexts, it does not include empirical data or quantitative validation. This restricts the generalizability of the findings across industries and use cases.

Second, the rapid pace of AI development poses challenges for sustained relevance. The capabilities of Generative AI tools and platforms are evolving continuously, which may render some of the observations in this paper outdated over time. As such, this study captures a snapshot of the technology's potential rather than a definitive framework.

Third, ethical and regulatory concerns—such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and transparency—were acknowledged but not deeply analyzed in this paper. These factors play a crucial role in shaping how organizations adopt Customer Relationship Intelligence, and future studies should delve into them more comprehensively.

Fourth, the study primarily considers use cases from consumer-facing sectors, potentially overlooking complexities unique to B2B environments, public sector applications, or non-commercial contexts. These variations could influence how CRI is designed and deployed.

Finally, the adoption readiness of organizations—dependent on their technological maturity, data infrastructure, and workforce capabilities—was treated as a general assumption. However, these factors vary widely across organizations and could impact the practical implementation of CRI strategies. Future research would benefit from empirical studies, cross-industry case comparisons, and longitudinal assessments to further validate and expand upon the ideas proposed here.

FUTURE SCOPE

The transition from traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI) powered by generative AI opens numerous avenues for future exploration and practical advancement. As organizations increasingly adopt AI-driven strategies, several promising research directions emerge:

1. **Integration with Multi-Modal Data Sources:** Future systems can enhance CRI by incorporating voice, video, and biometric data alongside text-based interactions. Research into seamless integration and interpretation of such diverse data types could yield richer customer insights and personalized engagement strategies.
2. **Real-Time Adaptive Intelligence:** Further development of real-time, self-learning CRI systems can enable organizations to instantly adapt their communication and service models based on customer sentiment, behavioral patterns, and evolving preferences.
3. **Privacy-Preserving Intelligence Models:** As data privacy regulations become more stringent, there is a critical need to explore federated learning and other privacy-focused approaches that allow CRI systems to maintain high performance without compromising sensitive customer information.
4. **Cross-Domain Intelligence Sharing:** Future research could examine the potential for CRI systems to function across industries—such as finance, healthcare, and retail—

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facilitating shared insights and benchmarks that improve customer understanding and engagement strategies across sectors.

5. **Human-AI Collaboration Models:** Exploring frameworks where AI-generated insights are effectively utilized by human agents can help strike the right balance between automation and empathy. This includes developing interfaces and workflows that augment human decision-making rather than replace it.
6. **Ethical and Bias Mitigation Frameworks:** A key area for future inquiry is the development of transparent and accountable generative AI systems within CRI. Research should focus on minimizing algorithmic bias, ensuring equitable treatment, and aligning AI outputs with ethical standards.
7. **Next-Generation Personalization Engines:** Ongoing advancements in generative AI provide opportunities to design hyper-personalized customer experiences. Future studies can investigate scalable personalization techniques that respond dynamically to changes in customer behavior and context.
8. **Longitudinal Impact Studies:** To validate the long-term effectiveness of CRI, longitudinal research is necessary to assess its influence on customer loyalty, lifetime value, and brand perception over extended periods.

CONCLUSION

The evolution from traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) to Customer Relationship Intelligence (CRI) represents a significant shift in how businesses understand and engage with their customers. This research has explored how generative AI serves as a pivotal enabler in this transformation, moving beyond data storage and transaction tracking to deliver real-time, context-aware insights and predictive relationship strategies.

By integrating generative AI, CRI systems can interpret complex customer behaviors, generate personalized content, and automate decision-making processes with a level of depth and nuance previously unattainable. These capabilities empower organizations to foster more meaningful interactions, enhance customer satisfaction, and drive long-term loyalty.

However, while the potential benefits are substantial, this shift also introduces new challenges related to data privacy, ethical AI use, and system transparency. Organizations must address these concerns proactively to build trust and ensure responsible adoption.

In conclusion, the transition from CRM to CRI marks a paradigm shift in customer engagement. Generative AI is not merely a technological upgrade—it is a strategic asset that redefines the future of customer relationships. Continued research, innovation, and ethical stewardship will be essential in unlocking its full potential.

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Acknowledgments

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Pitale, A.P (2025). From CRM to CRI: Customer Relationship Intelligence through Generative AI. *International Journal of Social Impact*, 10(3), 504-528. DIP: 18.02.055/20251003, DOI: 10.25215/2455/1003055