

Customer Relations: Not a Choice but Mandatory in Any Industry

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Abstract: The primary objective for any product, idea or service is to ultimately sell as well as make the customers happy and satisfied. It requires a sense of enthusiasm and passion to take these kinds of job. If perceived in this way that the customer is the one, who will buy the product and the profit which is generated will benefit the company and as well as to earn our bread and butter. Customer could be retained only through unconditional customer service. Customer Relations is a part of human relations.

It is written in Sri Isopanisad that Human beings are not meant to quarrel like cats and dogs. They must be intelligent enough to realize the importance and aim of human life. Time should not be wasted only for thinking about competitors rather quality time should be devoted to manufacture a product at low cost without compromising the quality and absolutely as per Customer needs and priorities. "God has sent me down in order to profess and practice moral values and deeds" said by v Sharah al – Sunnah is the no.1 saying from 365 sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Moral values should not be ignored in case of any situation. It is prime factors of long term success. On macro level, customer relations & sales are same. Sales are nothing but just a byproduct of relationship. Sales are the output of various experience of a customer. It starts from enquiring to finally buying a product and d every step is very important and crucial. Once a prospect is happy with the entire process then automatically product /services/ideas would be sold. In this case pull mechanism is anytime better than push mechanism. Nobody should be forced to buy a product. Customers should have every right to choose a product as per his choice and requirement. By keeping in mind the long relationship with a customer and consistent performance, only the right product should be suggested even in case of temporary loss. Honest opinion should be placed and the same would be genuinely appreciated. Loyal customer would be made accordingly.

The basic fundamental of marketing is to serve your customer as per his needs. Therefore "Customer feedback is a gift" It gives several ideas to improve your products.

Selling ice to Eskimos could be possible but is it really worth selling something to a person who really does not need it.

Philip Kotler defines marketing as a social activity directed towards satisfying customer needs and wants through an exchange process.

Nowadays, there is huge gap between demand and supply in major industry therefore once customer is lost could be lost forever. The trend has gone where company used to manufacture products first and they used to monitor the response. Now product is being manufactured only on the basis of customer's feedback and requirement.

Customer Relationship Management helps in studying the minds of the customers, the demography as well as providing a good customer database. But the primary objective of CRM is to provide better customer service.

At the end of the day, it should not happen that, we are successful in our life but back of your mind, our self-conscience will bite us every day and every moment. Ethical selling is a prime factor to be happy and to make others happy. Let us make this a practice.

I. OBJECTIVES

The aims of this paper are

- To discover the implementation of CUSTOMER RELATIONS by businesses across the world, and the onward impact that this has on the organization's marketing strategy;
- To assess the experience that customers gain from the CUSTOMER RELATIONS process; and
- To evaluate the challenges and opportunities that exist for businesses, and how they can be overcome through developments in CUSTOMER RELATIONS.

Concept of Customer Relations

For any business to succeed with its consumers, they need to establish a working relationship that understands the customer. One way of doing so is by implementing CUSTOMER RELATIONS. The term CUSTOMER RELATIONS is used to define the tools and methodologies used by an enterprise to manage the relationships it has with its customers. It forms the foundation by which a company brings sense to the needs of customers and can analyze the future changes that could develop. As knowledge is important in gaining competitive advantage in a challenging market, companies make every effort to differentiate themselves and retain customers, while reducing operational costs.

Another view of looking at CUSTOMER RELATIONS is as a process of learning, by which organizations can develop stronger relationships with customers having gained information on their needs and behaviors.

In order for a company to implement CUSTOMER RELATIONS within its organizational strategy, it is essential that the customer is regarded as the most valuable asset by the management, and the relationship considered vital for future progression. Additionally, the collaboration of various departments within an organization helps establish a defined process for data retrieval and the effective use of the information to bring positive change to the organization.

Importance of Customer relations in Business World

In the global business world, customers have become an important aspect of success for companies, and their management is core to the fundamentals that drive the organization forward. Large corporations have taken the active step of investing heavily into various modes of relationship management, also known as CUSTOMER RELATIONS.

The underlying basic of CUSTOMER RELATIONS is to help a company by highlighting the procedures and processes for understanding a customer. Entry-level CUSTOMER RELATIONS software provides a company's sales staff with valuable information about a customer, including some that could be more of personal nature. Call centre businesses often end up being the biggest users of this software, by saving customer details in order to provide a more personable service in the future. However, the whole concept of CUSTOMER RELATIONS is not simply software. It is also the front-line staff and employees from the lowest level of the organization, who should be trained in the principles of customer relationship in order for the processes to be more effective and efficient.

As a concept, CUSTOMER RELATIONS is quite old in practice. Firms involved in both business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing has looked for ways to acquire regular clients, which can also be linked to attempts of encouragement in a bid to entice loyalty in customers. The daily consumer experiences this concept at various shopping outlets, either directly or indirectly. The change to marketing and the introduction of CUSTOMER RELATIONS in the process can be laid down to the collaboration and cooperation of various entities of a single organization.

The CUSTOMER RELATIONS structure utilized for business-to-business marketing is quite different from the one used for consumer marketing. Either way, it is primarily a relationship process, where companies are looking to cultivate consumers who can provide information that is beneficial to both parties of the trade. The following form the pre-requisites of a CUSTOMER RELATIONS program:

- For there to be mutual benefits, there needs to be commitment from the company and customer. The cost and time that is utilized for the company is justified, since CUSTOMER RELATIONS requires changes to organizational processes.
- An orientation towards understanding the importance of 'non transactional processes', which is the foundation for the creation of strategies that maintain the relationship with the customer once the original transaction is completed.
- Agreement from the organization to invest implementing in a new or revamped system that could result in changes to the current infrastructure.

The Customer Relations Strategy

Customer relations is often thought of as a business strategy that enables businesses to improve in a number of areas. The CUSTOMER RELATIONS strategy allows you to do the following:

- Understand the customer
- Retain customers through better customer experience
- Attract new customers
- Win new clients and contracts
- Increase profitably
- Decrease customer management costs

Impact of technology on CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Technology and the Internet have changed the way companies approach customer relationship strategies. Advances in technology have changed consumer buying behavior, and today there are many ways for companies to communicate with customers and to collect data about them. With each new advance in technology, especially the proliferation of self-service channels like the Web and smart phones, customer relationships are being managed electronically.

Many aspects of customer relations rely heavily on technology; however, the strategies and processes of a good CUSTOMER RELATIONS system will collect, manage and link information about the customer with the goal of letting you market and sell services effectively.

Benefits of Customer Relations

- Lower costs of customer acquisition: Utilizing the existing customers as the primary marketing tool, companies can save on promotional activities.
- Profitability from fewer customers: The number of customers required in maintaining sales and profitability is lower because of the loyalty of the retained customers.
- Assessing Customer Profitability: By implementing CUSTOMER RELATIONS, businesses are in a position to assess which of its customers are profitable and which are not. This is essential in understanding which group of customers the business should focus on in order to generate more profit.

How Customer Relations is Used Today

CUSTOMER RELATIONS solutions provides the business data to help you provide services or products that your customers want, provide better customer service, help sales teams to cross-sell and up-sell more effectively, close deals, retain current customers and to better understand who your customers are. Organizations frequently look for ways to personalize online experiences through tools such as help-desk software, email organizers and different types of enterprise applications.

Customer Relations in Practice

Customer Relations practices in the Banking sector

Indian Banks have recorded a phenomenal growth in the past decade with the initiation of Economic Reforms. The banks, both Public and Private, have transformed themselves into profit-oriented business organizations besides playing a developmental role in the economy. In an attempt to be more profitable, the banks have become competitive and more customer – oriented. This new orientation has compelled them to take a more pragmatic approach for conducting the business. The CUSTOMER RELATIONS is one such tool which helps in meeting the customer's expectations according to their changing needs. While analyzing the CUSTOMER RELATIONS Implementation in both the sectors, it was found that the Private Sector Banks have been able to implement the CUSTOMER RELATIONS practices more effectively when compared to their Public Sector counterparts. This indicates that strategically speaking, the Private Sector Banks have been more innovative in understanding their customers and in building good relations with them. This fact has further been corroborated by the findings of the service quality level being provided by these banks. These suggest that in case of the Private Sector Banks, all the five dimensions of service quality have scored higher values when compared to the Public Sector Banks. It also points towards the same fact that these banks have been able to enhance the service quality levels for their customers making them more customers oriented.

Further, it has been observed by analyzing the service quality dimensions that responsiveness and empathy of both the Public as well as the Private Sector Banks, scored the least. However, a micro analysis reveals that the Public Sector Banks have highest scores in terms of reliability and assurance whereas the Private Sector Banks have fared better in terms of 12 tangibility, reliability and assurance. This indicates that the banks are in a dire need to make proper strategies to improve their working. This will make the banks more efficient in serving the customers and in maintaining the long term relations with them. The analysis of the results received

on customer retention suggests that the banks (whether Public or Private) are equally affected by the kind of CUSTOMER RELATIONS initiatives they undertake to retain the customers. The banks are now under tremendous pressure to retain the older customers because of the competition in the Banking Sector. This would not only ensure better customer relations but also loyalty among them, which is very critical and important in today's competitive world. Banks have started acknowledging the importance of the customers in developing their business. They have recognized that it is essential to protect and grow its customer base and ultimately its profitability. The banks can do this by building a strong relationship with the customers. To meet the customer needs and to beat the competition, they must deliver superior quality service. The CUSTOMER RELATIONS approach adopted by banks focuses on maximizing the value for the customer and the bank.

The key drivers to customer loyalty are:

- (a) Positive Staff Attitude.
- (b) Honesty, Integrity and Reliability.
- (c) Productive advice and delivery of the promised service.
- (d) Consistent delivery of superior quality service.

Price Waterhouse Coopers Customer Relations practices

Within Customer Experience we help our clients better understand and enable their customers to transform their customer experience and relationships to be not just a short term individual transaction but a long term relationship and sum of all experiences a customer has with the supplier of goods and services over the duration.

Leveraging Oracle's CUSTOMER RELATIONS/CX technology, PwC helps companies to better understand and build stronger relationships with their customers while transforming their experience. With the right strategy, design & technology implementation, companies can leverage customer experience analytics and better process management to make more integrated cross channel decisions that:

- Build customer loyalty through optimized and superior customer service
- Increase revenue through effective cross-and up-selling
- Align processes, IT applications & infrastructure around the customer experience – via the cloud, on premise or hybrid
- Clean customer data from all sources to better serve the customer with accuracy
- Enhance high value activities and technology to achieve sustained migration to lower-cost sales, marketing & service channels
- Beyond Insights: Meaningful interactions and brand defining experiences

PwC's Customer Experience Transformation Offering

Some more Examples

One example of this is TISCO; a large Anglo-Saxon corporation whose area of expertise is software and compiler development. Over the years, it has undertaken market research into various segments of the consumer-base, understanding where it holds advantages for building relationships. This includes the automobile sector, where better pre-sale service would create differentiation in the end-product (Bose, 2002).

In another context, Dell Computers portrays a different view, having succeeded in the computer industry with the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and home office setups. As their objectives could differ, they may focus on the large companies under the CUSTOMER RELATIONS programme, in order to gain loyalty.

Wal-Mart did an analysis of customers' buying habits and found a statistically significant correlation between purchases of beer and purchases of nappies (diapers in the US). It was theorized that the reason for this was that fathers were stopping off at Wal-Mart to buy nappies for their babies, and since they could no longer go down to the pub as often, would buy beer as well. As a result of this finding, the supermarket chain is alleged to have the nappies next to the beer, resulting in increased sales of both.

Utilizing CUSTOMER RELATIONS, Wal-Mart was able to collect detailed customer information, and then create a flexible and high-speed supply chain IT system for effective business strategy.

The implementation of CUSTOMER RELATIONS helps an organization to compete both in service and quality. The key point of CUSTOMER RELATIONS is that it helps organizations win customers enhance stable relationships, utilizing appropriate time, money and resources of the organization.

II. CONCLUSION

CUSTOMER RELATIONS has become a key element in the modern marketing world in recent years. Across the world, companies of various sizes have adopted and implemented CUSTOMER RELATIONSS systems to help in establishing a competitive business. At the same time, the increased level of competition in the market has resulted in it being harder for companies to acquire new customers, as well as retain those who have an active and sound relationship with the firm.

It is important for CUSTOMER RELATIONS processes to be implemented across all departments of a business, especially the sales and marketing ones which forms the core focus. In recent years, corporation has become attracted to a new ideology or market approach called customer value management. The aim of this process is to identify the value that can be delivered to a customer through processes and services running in parallel to the product offerings. This new approach encompasses a key idea of CUSTOMER RELATIONS which is to focus and understand the customer, and target the ones who bring more overall value to the organization, rather than simply going after larger volumes of clients.

In order for there to be a successful relationship, it is up to the company to perform a customer's profitability analysis. This analysis allows the company to judge whether or not a customer is doing well against the set of products and services that are on offer, allowing an informed decision to be taken in regards to finding an ideal solution. It is also important for an organization to understand the variety of customers that it has relationships with, and therefore must accommodate when establishing new strategies or developing new products and services.

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