Chapter 53
Giving Personalized Treatment: Customer’s Perception Is Your Reality

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ABSTRACT
Healthy profits are critical to any organization’s survival and must be factored into key business decisions, including the decision to hold the customers with the firm. Though these benefits extend beyond the financial realm, organizations should focus more on customers because it makes good business sense. Therefore, to achieve operational excellence, a firm must integrate its sales and service functions across multiple channels that provide personalized services to its customers. From face-to-face contact to self-service websites, they must capitalize on every communication opportunity. Improving customer satisfaction is not enough, to stay competitive; firms must also focus on achieving customer delight. The value of relationships with customers is double the worth of measured brand value. Every single transaction with every customer is a big contributor to successful business. And, nowadays, organizations have started looking for various strategies that can satisfy, delight or excite customers. The most common strategy used is that of engaging its customers with a company or a brand. Various ways are adopted to engage customers both online and offline. It can be through extensive brand and product knowledge, discussion forums, personalized services like e-mails, SMS etc. Online engagement tactics may bring a revolutionary change in the customer’s mindset. Hence, the organization can shift its entire focus on Customers and must provide with an exceptional customer experience. Some of the strategies that can be implemented in this regard are: e-mail marketing and in-product messaging. E-mail Marketing is the commonly used approach by most of the firms these days. The purpose of sending e-mails can be numerous: feedback, upgrades, monthly newsletter, tradeshows, etc. But the question is what would be the
response of the customers to these generalized mails. Will they take them on a serious note? The answer is a big ‘NO’. The customers would be appreciating these mails only and only if they are related to the specific interest of the customer. Personalized services steal a customer’s heart at least to a certain extent. As far as the second approach is concerned, it is in-product messaging which is on a rise currently. It removes the hurdle of poor conversion rates as in the case of e-mail marketing, also, it focuses directly on customer. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the strategies of customer engagement in creating value satisfaction and thereby building customer loyalty leading to excellence in business, which is one of the key factors for excellence, with a special reference to online shopping. This chapter will provide theoretical framework to understand the relationship between excellence, customer Engagement and loyalty. This chapter is structured as follows. To start with, this chapter focuses on excellence of the business which benefits both the internal as well as the external customer, followed by the outcomes of previous investigations on conceptual framework of engagement.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit – Aristotle

INTRODUCTION

Does excellence lead to win-win situation? If yes, does it play some role in building customer loyalty? Can customer engagement help in building loyalty? Is there a relationship between the three?

It is not suddenly the business managers have realized that the customer is supreme or there is a need to render personalized service. However, it was not possible to increase/grow the business merely by employing the best team of engineers, quality assurance experts, procurement specialists and others unless & until company pays attention to what the customer wants. Today’s competitive climate has presented companies with some of their toughest challenges in recent memory. Rising customer expectations, business costs, accompanied by fierce competition, threaten the company’s profitability and share value. While searching for the solutions, issues considered include:

- How to increase customer satisfaction?
- How to retain customers?
- How to improve operational excellence?
- How to deepen customer relationships?

It is quite obvious that businesses cannot survive without satisfied customers, yet in many companies, only a small proportion of managerial effort is spent on them. Those who have prospered by aligning the business around customer needs plan to spend even more this way. Profit maximization is the ultimate aim of every company and it strives very hard to achieve this objective.

The strategies to win this objective can be many including: increase sale of the products, improve quality standards, reduce costs of manufacturing the product, reduce wastage of the product, increase the customer base, retain the existing customers, etc. Of all the strategies, retaining the existing customers with the company is one such strategy; wherein its application altogether leads and the rest automatically follows. In simple words, retaining the existing customers should be of utmost importance for a company. It is so, because the customers cannot be taken for granted anymore, rather this will be the biggest mistake.
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