

EDUCATING CUSTOMERS AS A WAY TO INCREASE THEIR LOYALTY AND ENGAGEMENT

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Annotation: This article highlights the importance of customer training as a competitive advantage tool that has a direct impact on customer satisfaction and trust. The introduction of customer training, customer-oriented educational practices sponsored by companies, in order to increase customer loyalty and their ranks, as well as their satisfaction of the requirements they expect, as one of the strategies leading to improved customer relationship management, is disclosed.

Keywords: customer training, CRM, customer, company, competitive advantage, customer training area, education, product, customer retention, relationship management.

In today's fierce competition and continuous proliferation of technologies, customer education is of particular importance as a new strategy for creating a competitive advantage related to the provision of personalized and customized services. Customer education is part of the philosophy of customer relationship management, where it is used as a public relations and advertising tool to retain customers and gain their trust by persuading them to buy products after focusing on the value-added aspects of the company's products. is organized. Customer training, as well as ensuring the effectiveness of working with customers and helping them acquire knowledge related to the product, is gaining great importance as one of the important directions in the conditions of innovation. Therefore, customer education is the cornerstone of customer satisfaction, retention, and profitability.

Today, the relevance of this topic increases in the context of economic crises, the devaluation of the national currency, the decrease in the real income of the population, the decrease in the size of the banking market, and the effects of increasing competition. At the same time, due to the impact of globalization in the socio-cultural sphere, it is observed that the customer's needs for high-level service and, as a result, a constant increase in consumer value are growing rapidly.

The purpose of this article is to focus on the importance of customer education as a means of competitive advantage that directly affects customer satisfaction and trust. Companies strive to meet and exceed customer expectations in order to increase and retain customer loyalty. Customer education, customer-oriented company-sponsored training, can be considered one of the strategies to improve customer relationship management.

Discussing the state of academic research in the field of client training, Gayyard-Meer noted that "although virtually no research has been conducted in the field of client training, there is no doubt that it exists widely." Today, this view has changed a little. Various training events are being conducted to prepare clients. Some researchers have tried to give a managerial perspective to this activity. Various lines of research in customer education are emerging, but the area related to customer relationship management (CRM) has received insufficient attention. Therefore, in this article, the issue of

presenting conceptual and empirical approaches to consider the role of customer education in CRM strategy was put forward. Customer Relationship Management Companies today are realizing the importance of delivering high value to their target customers and developing marketing strategies that lead to customer growth. Being a customer-centric company means adding value to the customer and satisfying them with products and services that are valued and exceed customer expectations. Competition, changing customer attitudes and behaviors, and overcapacity in many industries have made it more difficult and expensive to attract new customers. Thus, retaining and developing existing customers is a necessary strategy for any business.

Customer relationship management is an approach to organizing and coordinating a company's interactions with customers. It is an organizational strategy aimed at establishing, maintaining and improving customer relationships that benefit the company. This can be achieved by satisfying customers and providing them with added value to make them repeat customers. Self-satisfaction does not lead to increased customer loyalty. In addition to customer satisfaction, loyalty requires customer trust and dedication. To achieve this, companies must adopt a customer-centric philosophy and build personal relationships with customers. It is important for companies to retain customers and build long-term relationships with them. Losing a customer means losing all their lifetime purchases.

Thus, CRM is a long-term relationship strategy based on trust and understanding. CRM allows companies to collect information about customer interactions with the company and use this information to identify valuable customers, understand their behavior and trends, and improve service in order to improve and retain customer relationships. . From an operational perspective, companies can use several marketing tools to build relationships with customers. These tools differ depending on the level of relationship companies seek to develop with customers. These tools include advertising, sales promotion, after-sales support and services, loyalty and retention programs, and partnership programs with customers and sales channel members. Customer education can become one of the tools available for companies to differentiate their products and services and gain a competitive advantage. The main goal of CRM is to develop mutually beneficial relationships with regular customers.

Customer education. customer training is defined as "any targeted, sustained and organized learning activity that enables the transfer of business or network relationships, knowledge or skills to current or potential customers". Customer education is an important process that many organizations need to take the lead. This process is developing as a new way to promote the company's products and services, because it is known that the information surrounding the product is no less important than the product itself, especially during the sales phase. Due to its performance in terms of sales, satisfaction or loyalty, customer education is steadily growing in the V2S and V2V industries. A great deal of evidence of companies' interest in customer training can be found in management publications.

In the V2S sector, distributors also place great emphasis on consumer education. For example, stores such as Castorama in France or Home Depot in the US hold "How-to" workshops to help potential customers acquire basic DIY skills. Similar practices are continuously introduced in the cosmetics, electronics or toy sectors. It is relatively easy for distributors to implement training because their outlets allow face-to-face interaction with customers. With a similar approach, the financial sector (banks or stock brokers) regularly conducts education for its potential or real customers. Most financial organizations use face-to-face seminars, e-learning or hybrid solutions (a combination of face-to-face and e-learning) for this activity. Electronic product manufacturers have also launched education and training programs to help users better understand the technology and improve the use of the products.

For example, Nikon launched Nikonschool in USA, Great Britain and France. As all of the above examples show, many companies understand that customer education is now a key enabler of a number of business trends that are critical to revenue growth and shareholder value. Rapid development of the software and infrastructure needed to provide effective learning programs for

partners and customers can provide a competitive advantage. Customer Education Customer education in a CRM strategy can take the form of classes, workshops, multimedia courses, or online seminars. Product support activities involve educating customers to help customers properly use the products or services they have purchased. In this case, the goals are to increase customer satisfaction with the product, as well as to increase the quality of the relationship and customer loyalty.

We believe that product training, information on product performance and benefits, and ongoing product support are important activities at all stages of the commercialization process. The author states that every stage of consumer decision-making represents an opportunity for learning, and that learning is part of relationship marketing because it affects companies' long-term relationships with their customers. Customer education is essential throughout the customer's lifetime, which consists of three main stages: consideration, purchase and use. The first step in the consideration phase is to educate the customer to understand the need to buy and to look for alternative solutions. At the purchase stage, customers are expected to provide information to help them evaluate, select and place an order. Finally, during the use phase, customers need to know how the product works, how to maintain it, and how to decide whether to renew or retire the product.

Based on the above evidence, the following can be concluded.

Education is not limited to a specific product or type of sector. Various case studies show the relevance of education in various sectors of the economy. Regardless of the product, simple or complex, regardless of the sector, education has a common goal: to give the consumer or organization the skills necessary to be an effective customer. The packaging of the products shows the composition of the product, the procedure for its use, its beneficial and harmful aspects, but the training about this product focuses on the main factors of consumer efficiency (for example, satisfaction and loyalty) and the efficiency and profitability of companies. can rotate. By providing customers with the necessary skills, companies ensure that these customers work for the benefit of the organization, and thus ensure high levels of behavior and impact. Any training should be simple and understandable for the client. As Peter Honebein said, "There is nothing worse than teaching that doesn't teach. Take, for example, the failure of the Coleco Adam computer in the early 1980s, when customers who bought the computer returned it for parts, claiming the computer didn't work. But the computer was working fine. It turned out that the computer's operating manual was so bad that customers couldn't figure out how to use it."

The first factor that leads to successful customer education starts with top management support. Additionally, companies need to be aware of their competitors' customer education strategies to provide up-to-date training tools. Eliminating the use of redundant information and providing appropriate education for appropriate consumer behavior at each stage of the buying process is a key success factor. Companies should never rely on their customers' intelligence. Successful companies help their customers and partners quickly find relevant training opportunities by offering "how, when and where" options across multiple sales channels. Companies should also provide an effective feedback collection system to measure the business impact of their customer education strategy. It's also important for companies to make customer education a core part of the company's values and mission. The author acknowledges that some important problems have not been adequately addressed by researchers and practitioners to date:

- despite the fact that customer education has a positive effect on satisfaction and loyalty, there is little evidence in the literature.
- to date, no clear distinction has been made regarding the impact of customer education at the pre-and post-purchase stages.

Of course, all the proposed research directions will help companies to develop more effective strategies. But companies shouldn't expect these results to start thinking about education as a potential competitive advantage.

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