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Aykut, Arslan

Naval Training Center

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BOOSTING TOTAL RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

TOPLAM İLIŞKISEL PAZARLAMA'YI YENIDEN CANLANDIRMAK

Aykut ARSLAN
Naval Training Center Command, YALOVA, Turkey
draykutarslan@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores the track of marketing, by referring to the literature, through the advancements in digitalized technological systems particularly Information Technologies (IT), the emergence of a more broadly educated and more discerning consumer with increasing discretionary spending and purchasing power, the adoption of Total Quality Management (TQM) as the biggest competitive issue of 1990s, the growth of the service economy, the increase of competitive intensity and its impact on customer retention, and finally from a production-oriented definition of marketing to customer-oriented one(transaction to relationships). Actually all these variables are considered to be the main drivers of Relationship Marketing (RM) that led the pathway to Total Relationship Marketing (TRM).

Key Words: Relationship Marketing, Marketing, Total Quality Management, Total Relationship Marketing

Öz

Bu makale literatür taraması yaparak pazarlama biliminin yakın tarihine ışık tutmaktadır. Özellikle Bilişim Teknolojileri başta olmak üzere sayısallaştırılmış teknolojik sistemler, parasının kıymetini bilen ve satın alma gücü yüksek iyi eğitimli ve kılı kırk yaran yeni müşteri profili, 1990'ların rekabetçi yönetim modeli Toplam Kalite Yönetiminin yerleşmesi, hizmet ekonomisinin büyümesi, rekabetin gittikçe kızışması ve müşteriyi elde tutmadaki etkisi ve nihayet pazarlamanın üretim etkin tanımlamasından müşteri odaklı olarak yeniden tanımlanması (klasik pazarlamadan ilişki yönetimine) ele alınmıştır. Aslında bu değişkenler İlişkisel Pazarlama kavramının itici gücünü oluşturuyorlar. Buradan hareketle Toplam İlişkisel Pazarlamanın tanımsal çerçevesi çizilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlişkisel Pazarlama, Pazarlama, Toplam Kalite Yönetimi, Toplam İlişkisel Pazarlama

I. Introduction

Some factors that have had a major impact on the development of marketing and management during this decade are mentioned throughout the literature (Zineldin 2000; Lancaster 1996; Sisodia and Wolfe 2000; Morris et al. 1999; Parvatiyar and Sheth 1995; Gummesson 1995; Aijo 1996; Grönroos 1994; Magrath 1992; Khalil and Harcar 1999; Dhanji and Jablonski 2000; Yudelson 1999; Lai 1997). Mainly these are; advancements in digitalized technological systems particularly Information Technologies (IT), the emergence of a more broadly educated and more discerning consumer with increasing discretionary spending and purchasing power, the adoption of Total Quality Management (TQM) as the biggest competitive issue of 1990s, the growth of the service economy, the increase of competitive intensity and its impact on customer retention, and finally from a production-oriented definition of marketing to customer-oriented one(transaction to relationships). Actually all these variables are considered to be the main drives of Relationship Marketing (RM) that led the pathway to Total Relationship Marketing (TRM).

The focus of this paper will be fundamentally on ITs and TQM as the enablers of TRM. By trying to find appropriate answers to:

What is TRM?

How have IT and TQM reshaped the marketing strategy and philosophy?

How is the marketing functions integrated with other functions of organizations relating to quality concept?

II. The New Era; Quality, RM and TRM

According to Zineldin (2000), not adapting to the advancements in recent technology may cause fierce competition and can cause to the victory of those who switched their strategies to the more technologically based relationships and advanced products and diverse services. The new era we are living is one of the most exciting periods of change in history. Everything around us is changing; our works, governance structures, and may be the most important of all people are changing. Everything is experiencing-or will soon experience-fundamental transformation. The current era is called the "Age of Information" in general. Some calls it "Digital Age"; whereas for others it is called "Digital Revolution". Whatever the name is, we live in a time when technological advances have transformed our ability to collect, store and manipulate data, and to communicate information in new and innovative ways.

2.1. The New Definition of Quality through TRM Perspective

Quality has different meanings for different people. It is a philosophy with several dimensions and can be summed up as "an essential and distinguishing attribute of doing things properly" for competitiveness and profitability. For Magrath (1992:1) quality in general, means, "demonstrating superior product and service as a key performance dimension in a company". He points out the importance of customer-centered quality approach beyond product performance per se. Another writer describes it as "how to do things differently, more cost effectively, right first-time, and enhancing customer value with all those" (Zineldin 2000:3). He continues with his approach and addresses the quality of products and services, of processes and of customer relationships. By referring Ishikawa (1985), he suggests a multidimensional frame that describes quality as the quality of; work, service, system, information, people, process and objectives for fulfilling the customers' requirements.

In terms of Yudelson (1999), quality should comprise the entire distribution system, which creates time and place utility and may also incorporate specific functions like Just in Time (JIT) delivery as a part of channel management. On the other hand, Lai (1997) emphasizes that customer satisfaction is the core philosophy of both marketing and quality management. He argues that marketing orientation provides assurance for the integration of the customer's opinion into internal improvement processes and saves quality management from wasting time on inward focus.

It is also discussed in literature that the characteristics of RM like understanding customer needs, considering them as partners and ensuring that employees satisfy customers' needs, would imply the highest possible quality (Morris et al. 1999). The framework of this kind of quality concept is based upon enabling customers to receive what they want, when they want (JIT), a perfect delivery each and every time with desired levels of service that is really appealing to them.

2.2. Evolution of RM

Khalil and Harcar (1999) divide the history of marketing into three periods in terms of buyer and seller relationships: the simple trade era, the mass production era and the new marketing era. Similar point of view is also explicit in Parvatiyar and Sheth (1995). They break up the orientation of marketing into three periods as well: pre-industrial era, industrial era and post-industrial era. Both streams agree on that RM is a reincarnation of the marketing practices of pre-industrial or simple trade era. The producers and customers interacted directly with each other and developed emotional and structural bonds in their exchanges. Personalized or customized service offering was the key due to one-to-one relationships.

Whereas in the mass production or industrial era, owing to the advent of mass production technology and mass marketing techniques, customers traded relationships for greater variety and lower prices (Khalil and Harcar 1999; Parvatiyar and Sheth 1995). Standardized messages could be communicated to millions of people. Khalil and Harcar

(1999) describe those times as overtaking of symbols that a branded product uses to a relationship, and that consumers became merely statistics in the marketers' databases. For Parvatiyar and Sheth (1995), marketing was considered as successful sales and extreme practices of persuasive selling, in many situations in the forms of deceptive advertising and false claims. This period was also significant with its intensive transactional approach in terms of the practice of competitive bidding.

On the other hand, through the new marketing or post-industrial era, as stated by Parvatiyar and Sheth (1995) two significant developments appeared: marketers started to realize the repeat purchase behavior of customers was crucial to nurture brand loyalty and the appearance of administered vertical marketing organizations where channels of distributions were controlled by industrial marketers.

The maturity of RM was pushed by certain forthcoming events from 1980 towards the present-day. Aijo (1996) emphasizes this issue first on a gradual realization as it is stated above. Furthermore, a transformation of businesses in general resulted in an intensity of service, close customer contact, and a holistic view of the parties and processes. This led to the visibility of TQM.

The literature and research that are contributing to RM theory generation is found in service marketing, the network approach to business marketing, quality management and new trends in organization theory (Gummesson 1995). Gummesson tracks back the term relationship marketing. And found that it was used by Barbara Bund Jackson in her project on industrial marketing from the late 1970's, and published in her book in 1985. The term was also used by Berry in a paper in 1983, but exclusively for services. For banking, the term relationship banking was used in the 1970's. Later on Grönroos (1990) and McKenna (1991) handled the phenomenon of RM in their writings (referred by Aijo 1996).

It is also very interesting to evaluate those views in terms of marketing's new role in organizations. According to Gummesson (1995) RM is a marketing-oriented management. That is an aspect of the total management of the firm, which is not limited to a marketing or sales department. Now, marketing plan has become part of the strategic business plan. Same stream of thought is also viewed in Lancaster (1996), Gummesson (1995), and Grönroos (1994) who introduce the concept of part-time marketers by referring the non-marketing people in an organization. Magrath (1992) also describes this new role of marketing by emphasizing its impact on all functions in terms of RM and TQM. Other writers mentioned it through the importance of a broadening vision. The new marketing concept is defined as one portion of a totally integrated, customer-driven value chain (Yudelson 1999; Grönroos 1994; Parvatiyar and Sheth 1995; Khalil and Harcar 1999; Aijo 1996; Zineldin 2000; Sisodia and Wolfe 2000; Morris et al. 1999).

RM has flourished from six streams of research (Brodie et al. 1997). The first stream examines marketing from a service context (e.g. Berry 1983; Grönroos 1994; Gummesson 1995; Zineldin et al. 1997). The second stream deals with inter-organizational exchange relationships (e.g. Hakansson 1982; Ford 1990; Hallen et al. 1987; Dwyer et al. 1987; Gummesson 1995; Zineldin 1998). The third stream underlying the new paradigm of RM is based on channels literature such as the development of effective and efficient channel relationships (e.g. Brown et al. 1995; Buzzell and Ortmeyer 1995; Zineldin et al. 1997). The fourth one examines network relationships (e.g. Webster and Frederick 1992; Easton 1992; Johanson and Matsson 1985; 1988; Zineldin et al. 1997). The fifth stream stems from strategic management literature about the role or relationships in value chains (Normann and Ramirez 1993; Zineldin et al. 1997). Finally, the sixth stream examines the strategic impact that information strategy has on relationships within and between organizations (e.g. Scott Morton 1991; Zineldin 2000; Sisodia and Wolfe 2000; Khalil and Harcar 1999; Parvatiyar and Sheth 1995).

2.2.1. Increase in Competitive Intensity

The new millennium promises unexpected and wide opportunities for all. But at the meantime the framework of competition is becoming very rigid and tough. There are many reasons behind that. Some argues about saturated markets, changes in the nature of competition and an increased urgency in obtaining knowledge about customers and their needs (Morris et al. 1999). Some states intensity of competition is higher than it has ever been and there is a great threat for traditional companies due to the new competitor; “they have better weapons at their disposal; unencumbered by “legacy systems” or traditional practices, have the ability to deploy highly cost-effective and powerful technologies to aid in customer acquisition and retention (Sisodia and Wolfe 2000). Both writers also point out the new competitors’ advantage. These new incomers are unburdened by stranded or uneconomic assets, such as extensive physical inventory management or distribution infrastructures. Zineldin (2000) discusses today’s businesses confrontation of fierce and too aggressive competition while operating in both a domestic and a global market. He states out the "diversity and uncertainty" of the new environment and how these force organizations to restructure (mainly RM) themselves in order to enhance their changes of survival and growth. Same concern is also visible in Lancaster (1996) and Aijo (1996). Lancaster contends the worldwide political and regulatory climate towards liberalization and free trade efforts which make it difficult to sustain market leadership based on short-term sales oriented transactions. In parallel with these views again, Aijo emphasizes the recent developments of markets, trade and investment liberalizations, globalization, technological innovations, IT revolution etc. that led to "hyper competition". The writer argues the unlimited customer choice and that the companies' effort how they simultaneously had to lower their costs, improve efficiency, raise the level of quality and service, as well as accelerate innovations and the innovation cycle. Like Zineldin, Aijo and Lancaster highlight the organizational change by focusing on strategic responses to these reasons above, like flexibility (to be flexible companies must de-layer hierarchies, streamline and re-engineer their operations etc.); like standardization and customization (companies have formulated an innovative solution-the modular design, and service has become one of the key competitive tools that enables differentiation). Owing to the fact that ongoing advances of IT, markets has been transforming from push (product-driven) to pull (consumer-driven) (Sisodia and Wolfe 2000; Lancaster 1996). It's striking to hear that it costs three to seven times more to get a new customer than to retain an old one (Dhanji and Jablonski 2000).

To conclude, all literature aims at concepts like customer retention and long-term relationships. To meet those challenges new organizational approaches are needed. Competition has always been strong and tough but the current a widespread comment about the special intensity of competition is clear enough; corporations can no longer afford to maintain barriers between functions and departments.

2.2.2. The Growth of the Service Economy

As it is mentioned before, services have become one of the competitive tools, which are used for differentiation. Parvatiyar and Sheth (1995) pinpoint the emergence and the growth of the service economy by its pushing effect on RM. They state that the services are typically produced and delivered by the same institution so that the role of the middlemen has become minimized and created the atmosphere where both the producer and the buyer started a mutual and lasting relationship.

According to Brown et al. (1995) as the industrialized nations began the transition to service economies, the development received little notice in the marketing discipline. Although some of these nations' economies were dominated by services as early as the mid-1940s, some time elapsed before marketing scholars began to discuss and study service economies and the marketing that occurred within these settings. From 1986 to present, he addresses, the focus on service was intensified and reached to a peak with RM.

The 1970s witnessed the successful expansion of the application of ***marketing*** beyond the realm of consumer products and even business-to-business ***marketing*** into services (Yudelson 1999:1 referring Kotler 1972b; Kotler and Levy 1969). The service concept particularly in marketing was a result of criticism of the traditional marketing-mix paradigm (Grönroos 1994; Yudelson 1999), but also from realising that services are inherently different from products. Services cannot be stored, they are produced and consumed simultaneously, they are generally intangible, and they are heterogeneous (Grönroos 1998).

The very nature of RM is service-focused. That's why it is not a coincidence that through the growth of service economy has the hot debate about RM was intensified.

2.2.3. Changing Customers

All these developments described above have multi-dimensional impact upon customers of our era. Dhanji and Jablonski (2000) argue the new consumer type in perspective of information economy and its effect. They call this type as savvy one; well educated, demanding and skeptical, with zero tolerance for wasted time or unfulfilled promises. This type is also well versed in possibilities of technology. Similar approach is visible in Morris et al. (1999). According to them the customers have become more diversified and demanding. Sisodia and Wolfe (2000) emphasize the shift of balance of power away from marketers towards customers. This is achieved through continuous IT revolution indicated by replacement of knowledge for the natural sources and money. New marketing paradigm requires customer-driven strategy (pull effect). They further argue this customer type as the one whose needs and expectations has changed to the point where traditional solutions do not fulfill his/her requirements. Because of the heterogeneity of that new customer neither stereotyped categories nor the mass-market approaches are useful anymore.

2.2.4. IT Revolution

From 1980s to present a great deal of technological advancements has been witnessed. Many companies use technology enablers to better exploit and develop the tacit, explicit and cultural knowledge found within their organization. This knowledge is then strategically used to expand the company's knowledge capital and derive tangible benefits ranging from higher quality service, more efficient delivery of services, and increased profits. Advances particularly in ICTs are among the defining technological transformations of the late twentieth century (Riley 2000).

The impact of IT upon RM has been widely discussed throughout the literature, mainly by Sisodia and Wolfe (2000) and Zineldin (2000). The ability to store and process information both locally and remotely, the availability of cheaper system integration and advanced database techniques provide excellent support for RM. According to Sisodia and Wolfe (2000), the use of technology has the power to change both scale and scope economies of RM. Their point of view is based on ease of individualized attention suitable for a much larger number of customers (scale side) and technology as an enabler for a broadening of the geographic scope of relationships in time and in range of offerings made available to a particular customer. Particularly recent IT, based on digital electronics, has several unique properties; it is convergent and versatile, boundaryless and global, affordable and addictive. The further discussion by both writers was founded on impacts of technology-enabled RM (ibid.4):

a. It will greatly increase the velocity at which commerce occurs

b. Better knowledge and anticipation of customer requirements can reduce time demands on customers

c. With linkages to operational systems in place, order fulfillment can readily be expedited

d. Moves company toward "Just-in-time" marketing

e. Leads to higher levels of marketing effectiveness in two-dimensional way;

- The ability to respond quickly to customer needs and to anticipate those needs
- The ability to routinize or automate certain kinds of consumption

f. It will lower system wide costs and improve value delivery to customers and mutual share of the value

g. It will contribute to the companies to implement one-to-one relationship opportunities

On the other hand, Dhanji and Jablonski (2000), by addressing the speed, control and the impact of IT, they claim that RM is convenient for its use. Khalil and Harcar (1999), deal with IT side of RM in terms of successful implementation and the demand for integration of timely and accurate market, consumer and production information. He underlines thus, the quality of data and its vitality in accordance with IT and RM perspective. IT allows high-speed, efficient and effective processing of data and a better interpretation of information. Aijo (1996) reflects similar point of view. He argues the self-reinforcing process of IT and how RM covers this in terms of a paradigm shift. For him, the IT revolution requires the corporations become more flexible, fast, lean and innovative and at the same time provides the tools to make these changes possible. It is interesting to see Zineldin's criticism (2000) of marketing streams. He contends that all literature have considered the impact of IT on marketing activities but viewed IT as a separate supporting element in developing relationships or as facilitative relationship and neglected it as a main core element that has impact on every aspect of all types of organizations, markets and marketing. He also underlines IT's influence of changing the role of the customer and the patterns of market communication, relations and interactions. Not only did Zineldin (2000) incorporate the importance of Internet but also Sisodia and Wolfe (2000) evaluated the Internet from the RM perspective. The Internet affects every facet of the company by obliterating current business models, opening new market opportunities and redefining customer relationships and interaction.

Beside Internet, intranets and extranets are also newly emerged network models that enable channel members interact and exchange information.

Dhanji and Jablonski (2000) argue about an extensive reorganization of traditional IT processes based on customer-centered approach. Those so-called "old" processes were originally designed piece by piece around product lines or application management convenience. And customers were most often neglected.

Grönroos (1994) addresses the importance and requirement of various types of data about customer feedback in an ever-increasing amount and time. He argues its value for decision-making process in general. Thus, a real-time information system network can be of great use.

Technology does not only contribute to expedition of information exchange in real-time scope but also to manufacturing processes in respect to flexibility and customization and to distribution systems by JIT processes.

However, we should bear in mind that technology as only an enabler in meeting our business requirements within all levels. Sisodia and Wolfe (2000) point out the behavioral concepts rather than technical side. They contend that interpretation of information could be possible only by human mind.

2.3. The Adoption of Total Quality Management (TQM)

Another major force driving the adoption of RM is TQM, which recently revolutionized businesses' perspective regarding quality and cost (Parvatiyar and Sheth 1995). The literature and research that are currently contributing to RM theory generation is found in quality management with all the other disciplines (Gummesson 1995).

Total Quality Management (TQM) programs have existed for many years in a variety of forms. Many are the offspring of Dr. William Edwards Deming's doctrinations to the Japanese in the 1950s and 60s (Holness 2001). Throughout the literature, writers such as Crosby, Juran, Hayden and others, conveyed the message that quality is the key to corporate success. During this period, the definition of quality has evolved, e.g., 1970s conform to product requirements; 1980s conform to customers' expectations; and 1990s exceed customers' expectations. TQM is a philosophy and a set of guiding principles that represent the foundation of a continuously improving organization, leading to the elimination of waste. By design, TQM is the application of quantitative methods and human resources to improve 1) the material and services provided by an organization, 2) all the processes within an organization and 3) the degree to which the needs of the customer are met, now and in the future. TQM integrates fundamental management techniques, existing improvement efforts, and technical tools under a disciplined approach focused on continuous improvement.

Within the implementation phase it became necessary to involve suppliers and customers into the program at all levels of the value chain (Parvatiyar and Sheth 1995). Thus, this helped companies to build close working relationships with customers, suppliers and other members of the marketing infrastructure.

It's interesting to found that in organizations where TQM practices are witnessed at almost every area of product development, manufacturing, operation, administration and customer service but marketing is almost never mentioned (except Magrath 1992) (Zineldin 1999). Only recent papers of Morris et al. (1999), focuses on tools and techniques of TQM to help with implementation of RM; Zineldin (1999) who explores a common ground of TQM and RM; Lancaster (1996), concentrates on TQM and customer focused quality, Yudelson (1999) addresses RM and TQM and their challenge against McCarthy's Four P's; Kanji and Wallace (2000), highlight excellent business model through TQM and RM; Khalil and Harcar (1999), contend tools and techniques of TQM for data quality regarding RM; and Lai (1997) evaluates the idea that TQM and marketing as complementary philosophies.

Tools and techniques offered by Morris et al. (1999) are stated in Table 2.1., which can be used with regards to RM.

Legend for Chart:
A1=Customer satisfaction and internal customers are real
A2=Improving perceived quality, gap analysis customer needs mapping, QFD, force field analysis
A3=All work is process and measurement
A4=Run chart, control chart, flow chart, check sheet, check list
A5=Deployment chart, Kanban, benchmarking
A6=Teamwork and people make quality
A7=Focus groups, quality improvement teams
A8=Continuous improvement cycle and prevention
A9=Fishbone diagram, Pareto diagram, histogram
B1=Taguchi methods, kaizen, SMED, poka-yoke, hoshin planning

Table 2.1. Concepts, tools and techniques of TQM
Source: Morries et al. (1999)

Core concepts	TQM tool	TQM technique
A1	Scatter diagram	A2
A3	A4	A5
A6	Fishbone diagram	A7
A8	A9	B1

One of the rare writers who offer tools and techniques of TQM for improvement of the quality RM is Zineldin (1999). He states out that these 12 items are also implemental for TRM:

1. Deming wheel or cycle (PDCA)
2. Kaizen (change for the better)
3. Hoshin Kanri (quality policy deployment)
4. Histogram
5. Pareto chart
6. Flowchart (or blueprinting)
7. Critical path analysis
8. Benchmarking
9. QFD (quality function deployment)
10. Process cost of quality
11. ISO 9000
12. Cause-and-effect diagram (fishbone diagram) and brainstorming

2.4. A Broad Definition of TRM

TRM stands for Total Relationship Marketing. In order to identify a final definition, we should first evaluate certain characteristics of TRM.

The idea of "total" in literature was first introduced by Zineldin (1999) because it considers and coordinates "all" activities-including internal and external relationships, networks, interactions and collaborations as well as all activities involved in getting, keeping, enhancing and satisfying customers throughout quality. He addresses the importance and the new role of marketing as an integrated function in organizations. The "total" concept was also used by Gummesson (1999:2). His "total" perspective was derived from the three variables that recurrently appear in the new approaches to marketing and management theory and practice during the past two decades: *relationships, networks* and *interaction*. Marketing has to be all pervasive, part of everyone's job description, which complies the concept of "part-time marketers" stated by Lancaster (1996), Gummesson (1995), and Grönroos (1994), indicating people who are not from marketing professionals. These writers also identified the strategic role of marketing and its diffusion to all departments in an organization by referring interorganizational collaboration. Marketing is essential, but it is not the only function of an organization. Marketing in the light of relationships, networks and interaction becomes *marketing-oriented management*, and therefore the marketing plan must be an integral part of *the company's overall business plan* (Gummesson 1999:2). Meanwhile internal and external marketing concepts are introduced which associates the idea of internal and external customer approach of TQM. Both TQM and RM center themselves on customer satisfaction; customer perceives quality. They underpin the shift from product-quality to service-quality by maintaining relationship quality aspects. Thus, the idea of perceived service quality (Grönroos 1994) will be included. Grönroos (1998:3) who first introduced this concept describes it in two dimensions; functional (how the service process functions) and technical (what service process leads to for the customer in a 'technical' sense) qualities. Khalil and Harcar (1999) address that the foundation for effective RM lies in the development and effective use of database marketing principles. He continuous his perception by underlining the response to the growing demand for integrated information for RM and therefore organizations are expected to use the latest IT tools. For him the quality of data is a key to enhancing relationships. Hence, the relationship dimension should also be considered within this framework of quality. Again Zineldin (1999) identifies the quality of a relationship as a function of a number of factors or elements, among others, innovation and improvements, internal cooperation, skills and performance of employees including the managers, physical recources, promotion, quality, delivering and pricing of products or services, customer expectations and satisfaction. However, Naudė and Buttle's (2000) point of view (referring Gummesson 1987) on this is one of four forms of quality encountered by customers. In other words it is the quality of the interaction with the customer. On the other hand, Crosby et al. (1990) (referred by Naudė and Buttle's 2000) studied relationship quality within the context of selling services. They examined the nature, consequences and antecedents of relationship quality. Relationship quality was defined from the customer's perspective as being achieved through the salesperson's ability to reduce perceived uncertainty, leading to an environment.

Table 2.2. Quality Ingridients of a Relationship

Source: Adapted from Naudė and Buttle's (2000)

Construct	Cosby et al.	Mohr and Spekman	Storbacka et al.	Wilson and Jantrania
Trust	X	X		X
Satisfaction	x		x	X
Commitment		X	X	
Coordination		X		
Communication		X	X	
Joint Problem Solving		X		
Bonds			X	X
Goal Congruence				X
Investments				X
Power				
Profit				

Deming (1986) (referred by Zineldin 1999) argues that customer satisfaction is created through a combination of responsiveness to the customer's views and needs, and continuous improvement of products or services, as well as continuous improvement of the overall customer relationship. Zineldin (1999) supports his line of reasoning by underlining the fact that marketing quality is a relationship management tool within overall marketing functions of a firm and as a process its purpose is to determine whether the quality system is performing at optimum levels from an operational point of view.

However, according to Gummesson (1999:4) total relationship marketing is made tangible and operational through the definition of thirty *market, mega* and *nano* relationships, the 30Rs. Market relationships refer to those relationships that operate directly in the market such as supplier-customer relationships and relationships to competitors. Mega relationships occur on the societal level and concern relationships to authorities, the media and so on. Nano relationships exist on the organizational level, for example, relationships between internal customers. He defines TRM as follows (6):

"Total relationship marketing is marketing based on relationships, networks and interaction, recognizing that marketing is embedded in the total management of the networks of the selling organization, the market and society. It is directed to long term win-win relationships with individual customers and other stakeholders, and value is jointly created between the parties involved. It transcends the boundaries between specialist functions and disciplines."

Total relationship marketing of Gummesson adopts both the existing and the new theory (RM) that covers various areas of characteristic Nordic School approach to marketing and management: traditional marketing management; services marketing; the network approach to business-to-business marketing; total quality management; imaginary (virtual) organizations; and new accounting theory (ibid. 1999).

On the other hand, Zineldin's (1999) viewpoint of TRM focuses on and is concerned with all integrated activities within the organization (internal relationship), customer satisfaction, long-run profitability and mutually beneficial relationships and interactions outside the organization with suppliers, dealers, distributers and other collaborators, e.g. bankers, trade unions, political system or public bodies (external relationships) and continuous improvement of these processes along with products or services. In general TRM is consisted of 6 Qs where Q stands for quality and continuous effort to improve these (Five of the Qs are adapted from Zineldin (1999:8) and one has been added by the author):

Q1. Quality of object: The technical quality of the product or service, i.e. what customers receive.

Q2. Quality of processes: The functional quality of how the customer receives the product of service.

Q3. Quality of infrastructure: The quality of the internal competence, experience, know-how, technology, personnel, internal relationships, leadership, motivation, attitudes, internal resources and activities, and how these activities are managed, cooperated and coordinated.

Q4. Quality of relationship: Described in terms of dependence/interdependence, cooperation, coordination, joint problem solving, bonds, goal congruence, mutual expectation, communication, investments, trust and commitment.

Q5. Quality of atmosphere: The relationship and interaction process between the parties are influenced by the quality of the atmosphere in a specific environment where they cooperate and operate.

Q6. Quality of database: The key element of a successful TRM strategy is a flexible and customized sales and marketing database created by tools that provide flexible access to information. Data has to be accurate, timely, and easily accessible.

As to conclude TRM is a successful combination of three disciplines; TQM, RM and IT.

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