BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES IN EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a process or methodology used to learn more about customers' needs and behaviors in order to develop stronger relationships with them. Marketing practices change as businesses constantly create new ways to reach potential customers and impress the customers they already have. Since marketing is such an integral part of the business structure, many businesses are willing to spend large amounts of money on specific marketing strategies. One of the broadest and most popular marketing strategies is CRM. .'Service' all together tells the customer about the product, the company, the expectations and the reason to trust the company. The effect of service might be positive, or it might be negative depending on the situation but the results have a drastic effect on the business. A satisfied service leads to benefits but a dissatisfactory service leads to mere downfall of the company. The services affect the emotions and feelings of a customer. It creates a personal connection towards the brand or company itself. The paper aims to identify the various behavioral issues that the customers encounter during a service interaction. The various expectations of the customers have been recorded and analyzed for the purpose of the study. A proposed model has also been developed on the basis of the available data. Further the paper also analyzes the behavioural factors as a tool for making an effective implementation of CRM.

KEYWORDS

CRM, behavioural issues.

INTRODUCTION

No matter what type variety of products and services we provide, it is the customers who rule the business after all. The customers from the base of any organization. It's the responsibility of the business to meet the demanding needs of the customers. Even the competition among the companies focuses on superior customer service in order to gain the profit. The success however lies in customer satisfaction and the way the companies deal with the customers. And the essence of the story lies in the effectiveness of these two missiles i.e. customer satisfaction and employee base, launched by the companies. A successful implementation of these two areas leads to better Customer Relationship Management.

In today's scenario the business organizations should respect the preferences of the customers and thus make their experience a memorable and favorable one, because even if the product is best in quality but in case the service experience of the customer with the company is unsatisfactory, it will lead to loss. CRM involves new and advance marketing strategies which not only retain the existing customers but also acquire new customers. CRM has developed into a major corporate strategy for many organizations.

In order to compete effectively in globalized economy, organizations must be customer-focused. Customer relationship management (CRM) is the way to integrate this approach throughout an organization. Many a time's organizations are likely to believe that it is function of marketing to have the customer relationship management. In reality it is meant for every one in the organization starting from the security person, telephone operator and accounting department. Providing good service and then finding a way to leverage the good will created by quality service a company can tie deeply into a consumers psyche and develop a strong business/client relationship. The foundation of customer goodwill is the existence, promotion, and practice of a sound customer relations policy. Such a policy is a formal promise to customers representing commitment to their satisfaction. A customer should not be forced to run from department to department, or individual to individual to get satisfaction. The policy should spell out specifically how, when, where, and who handles complaints or questions. The organization may want to consider incorporating a commitment to a third party dispute resolution mechanism into customer relations policy.

In the era of information revolution, customer relations, or rather "customer relations management" (CRM) is playing an ever-increasing role. CRM entails compiling information concerning customers' profiles, their previous purchases, their preferences, etc. This is very useful when, for example, a customer requests repairs to his refrigerator, because the service company has all the information, such as make and type of refrigerator, date of purchase, etc. readily available. It makes it easier, both for the customer and for the service company, to arrange for a technician's visit because most of the necessary information is already on file. CRM applications are also useful in gathering information from various business departments and merging them into one file, so that the company representative who takes a customer's call can answer most questions that the customer may have. This avoids the problem of having to transfer customers to other departments. Of course, CRM is a "two-way street," in that it enables companies to use information on a customer's previous purchases to focus their marketing on items of special interest to a particular customer.

While acknowledging the benefits of CRM (a technology which would seem to be mainly applicable to large organizations), it must be recognized that CRM covers only a small percentage of what we refer to as "Customer Relations." Customer relations is a multifaceted domain which ranges from business policies, practices and strategy at the management level, to enthusiasm, eagerness to achieve customer satisfaction, resourcefulness, flexibility, and a positive attitude towards customers on the part of employees and company representatives who are in direct contact with customers or clients. Both management decisions and employee behaviors/interactions should be governed by what is referred to as "organizational culture". It is the perceived internal environment of the organization that has a major influence on how a organization operates, values it espouses, and how it treats its employees. In a company culture that stresses customer satisfaction, strives for excellence, values its employees, and is able to instill in them a sense of mission, or of common purpose, all members of the organization will recognize that their contributions play an important role in the overall success and profitability of the organization of which they are a part.

What seems to be misunderstood by people working for companies is that everyone, from the business owner or manager to the telephone operator or receptionist or the sales associate, plays an important part in how customers view a company. Rude, unfriendly, uncooperative, or inappropriate behavior on the part of company representatives who are in direct contact with customers may translate into loss of business, regardless of the quality of the goods or services the company has to offer. It has been estimated that 68% of business losses are because rude behavior of employees. Furthermore, customers who encounter this type of treatment are likely to tell others about their experience, who in turn, will not be very interested in dealing with that particular company, thereby magnifying the extent of customer loss (actual and potential). In this era of fierce competition, both on a local and a global level, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that a business is "customer-centered." There is an abundance of merchandise available, and there is no shortage of businesses that offer

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   OBJECTIVES

   HYPOTHESES

   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

   RESULTS & DISCUSSION

   FINDINGS

   RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

   CONCLUSIONS

   SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

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- Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

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- Garg, Bhavet (2011): Towards a New Natural Gas Policy, Political Weekly, Viewed on January 01, 2012 http://epw.in/user/viewabstract.jsp the same type of goods. It is therefore necessary for companies to try to set themselves apart from their competitors by offering superb customer service. This can be achieved by listening to customers' comments and suggestions; by upper management spending time at the reception desk, at the service counter, or in the store, observing customers' comments and reactions. Anyone associated with a company needs to see him/herself as a company representative who contributes to the company's image.

METHODOLOGY

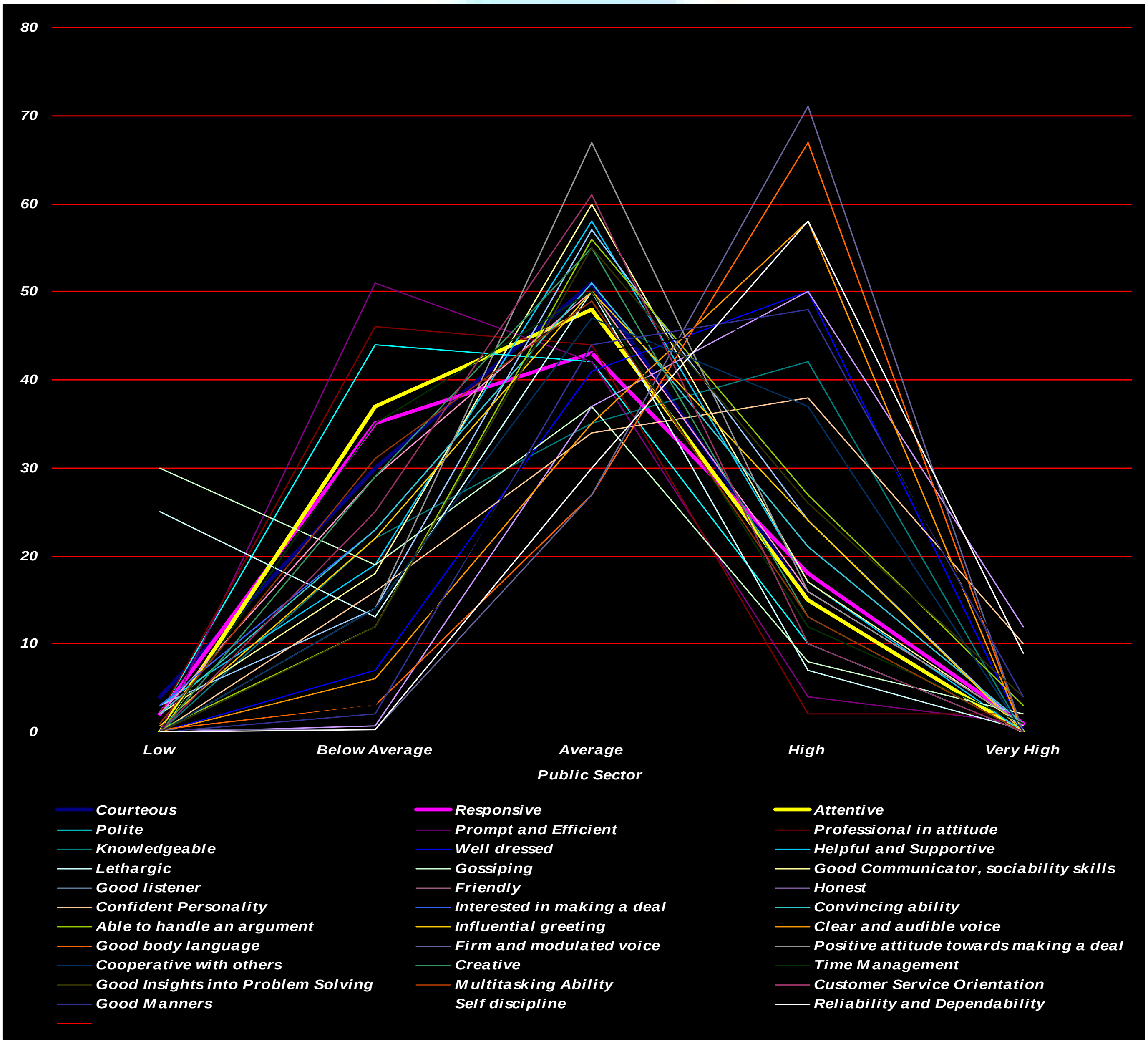
The present study was divided into two phases:

1. **Pilot study:** The purpose of this phase was to find out the various dimensions of CRM. The study was conducted among 90 customers randomly selected from different private and public services (banks, mobiles service providers and hotel and restaurant service) of Allahabad city. Interview technique was used for data collection using a structured questionnaire, which was developed by the researcher on the basis of existing literature, consisted of both open and closed ended questions. The data obtained from this pilot study was analyzed and the various behavioural dimensions that are most critical to CRM success were identified.
2. **Main Study**: The results obtained from the pilot study were analyzed and on the basis of the results the questionnaire was modified as per the requirements of the main study. The main study was now conducted over a sample size of 400 respondents. Out of the 400 respondents 300 were individual customers and 100 were the people working in the organizations. Cities undertaken for the main study were Mumbai Delhi Lucknow , Kanpur, Varanasi and Allahabad. Primary data was collected through the questionnaire. Secondary data included sources like journals, magazines, newspapers and internet websites.The interview schedule consisted of both open ended and closed ended questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

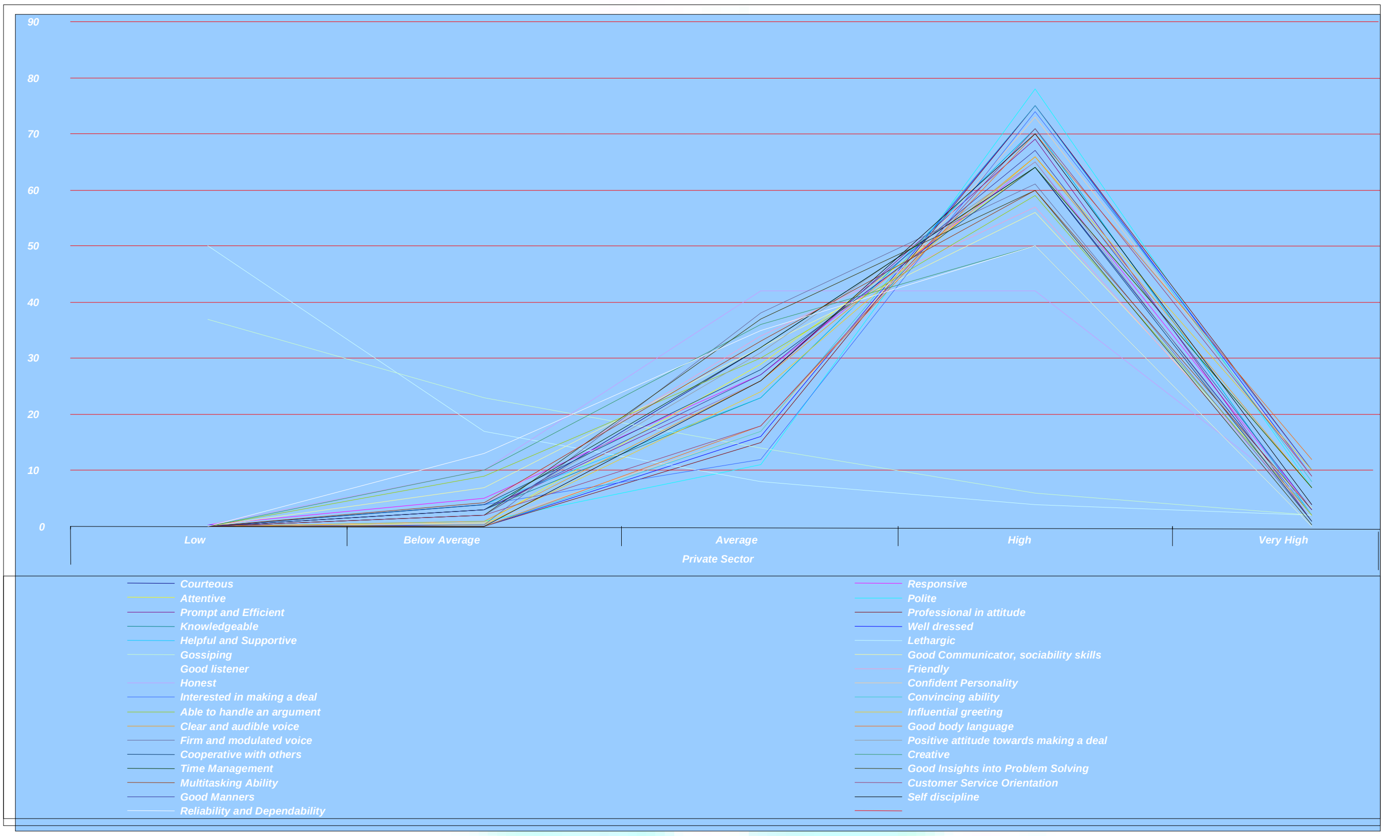
The representatives of service providers play an important role in effective customer relationship management. Business success is dependent on a variety of factors -a realistic business idea, a well thought-out business plan, an appropriate marketing strategy and great customer service are amongst the top ones. While customer service is a part of marketing, it can be segregated as a separate field on its own. Customer service includes all aspects of interaction with a customer and speaks to the organization's image in the mind of a customer. Regular and sustained interaction with a customer ensures that the customer feels connected with the business. If the customers have a good experience they feel that the establishment treated them well. So the next area of pilot study was to study the respondent’s interaction process and the behavioral factors of the interaction process was studied. The results obtained were as under:

FIGURE NO.1: CUSTOMERS’ EXPECTATIONS OF REPRESENTATIVES BEHAVIOR IN PUBLIC SECTOR



The findings of Figure No. 1 showed that most of the respondents rated the behaviour of the public sector representative's to an average level. The behavioural factors of the public sector representative's that had the highest percentage value as 'Average' rating were Courteous (51%), Responsive (43%), Attentive (48%), Knowledgeable (35%) Helpful and Supportive (58%), Lethargic (50%), Gossiping (37%), good Communicator and Sociability Skills (60%), Good Listener (57%), Friendly (50%), Interested in making a deal (51%), Able to handle an argument (56%), Influential Greeting (50%), Positive attitude towards making a deal (67%), Cooperative with others (47%), Creative (55%), Time Management (50%), Good Insights into problem solving(55%), Multitasking ability (49%) and customer Service Orientation (61%). There were other variables also whose ratings were different. The behavioural aspect of Polite (44%), Prompt and Efficient (51%) and Professional in Attitude (46%) had the highest percentage for 'Below Average'. Regarding the behavioural aspect of Honesty (50%) and Confident personality (38%), the highest percentage was for 'High' rating. Clear and audible voice, Good Body Language and Firm and Modulated voice had a percentage response of 58%, 67% and 71% respectively of 'High' rating. Good manners (48%), Self discipline (47%), Reliability and Dependability (58%) had the highest percentage for 'high' rating.

FIGURE NO 2: CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS OF REPRESENTATIVES BEHAVIOR IN PRIVATE SECTOR



The findings of Figure No. 2 showed that most of the respondents rated the behaviour of the private sector representatives to 'High' category of rating. The behavioural factors of the private sector representative's that had the highest response percentage for 'High' rate were Courteous (64%), Responsive (65%), Attentive (64%), Polite (78%), Prompt and Efficient (69%), Professional in Attitude (75%), Knowledgeable (71%) Helpful and Supportive (71%), Well Dressed (75%),Good Communicator and Sociability Skills (56%), Good Listener (65%), Friendly (57%), Honest (42%), Confident Personality (73%) Interested in making a deal (74%), Convincing ability (75%), Able to handle an argument (59%), Influential Greeting (66%), Clear and Audible voice (66%), Good Body Language (70%), Firm and Modulated Voice (61%), Positive attitude towards making a deal (65%), Cooperative with others (64%), Creative (50%), Time Management (64%), Good Insights into problem solving(60%), Multitasking ability (60%) and customer Service Orientation (71%), Good Manners (67%), Self Discipline (70%) and Reliability and Dependability (50%). The behavioural aspect of Lethargic had a response of 50% for 'Low' category and the behavioural aspect of Gossiping had a response of 37% for 'Low' category.

BEHAVIOUR THAT CUSTOMER EXPECTS FROM EMPLOYEE/REPRESENTATIVE OF A COMPANY

The study showed the following activities regarding overall behavioural expectations of customers. They have been classified under the following heads:

a) Expected Behaviour: Regarding behaviour, the most prioritized responses of customers expectations that they have from the employees are that employees should give Proper attention, should be quick in response, should provide proper guidance, polite and alert, should be helpful nature and friendly, talk properly with older people and should be a patient listener,
b) Personality: The responses of personality related factors that customers expect from the employee should be well dressed and be smart.
c) Information and Knowledge: The customers' expectations responses regarding employees knowledge are that employees should have Proper information regarding the product and service, should have full knowledge about the services/product, should be Intelligent and well informed staff should be available, and solutions to problems should be provided
d) Communication: The communication related factors as pointed out by customers are that employees should be good in communication, should be simple and easy so that others understand. Employees are expected that should explain again if the person is not able to understand and not make angry faces and should be able to remove of any confusion.
e) Professional attitude: The factors that customers expect regarding professionalism are that employees should maintain customer database, and be professional in work

BEHAVIOR THAT CUSTOMER DISLIKES IN AN EMPLOYEE OF A COMPANY

a) Behaviour: Regarding behaviour, the most prioritized responses of customers that they dislike in employees are incomplete reply and no proper response, unconcerned dry behavior, no helping tendency, being impolite, and rude behavior, not willing to help if concerned persons are absent, using abusive language, talking to others and making fun of other customers in front of other customers and chewing pan, tobacco at work
b) Personality: The personality related factors that customers are not expected from the employee are his arrogant behavior.

c) Information and Knowledge: The customers' dislikes employees if they are not good in knowledge, not able to give suggestions to rectify the difficulties, having little knowledge about the product and are ignorant staff.

d) Communication: The communication related factors that customers dislike in an employee, are not talking or speaking when a customer asks something and saying I don't know, at least tell the person whom I should talk for the matter, telling lies.

e) Professional attitude that customers'dislike in employees is unnecessary delay in work, sometimes they assure us that the problem will be resolved within 24 hr or 48 hr, but the problem keeps lingering for larger durations. This type of carelessness and non-professional attitude annoys me.

REACTION IF THE REPRESENTATIVE DOES NOT ATTEND THE CUSTOMER FOR SERVICE

The following responses were elicited from the survey regarding the reactions of the customers if the behavioural expectations with respect to employees do not match the actual behaviour or if the problems are not attended properly by the employees, during the interaction:

- Get Angry and irritated
- Tension develops
- Feels like closing the account (ie not utilizing the services any more)
- Start arguing and make a complaint if possible
- Try to stop taking the service and tell others also not to utilize the service of the company.
- If the work is urgent I make repeat visits and advice them to improve the services.
- Feels like beating or giving a slap for not understanding the problem, it might be an emergency for someone.
- I gave up
- I try to resolve it, but if the company does not support then keep quite and managed it on my own.
- I make complaints to the superior or head, by personally meeting them or by e-mail or letter
- I stop taking the services.

The reaction of the customers toward poor service as indicated in the study suggests that it would be very harmful for the company if the services of the employees are not good. Thus a strong work force plays an important role in retaining customers otherwise the customers would not like to be associated with the company and the relations between the customer-company would be hampered.

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CONCLUSION

From the study the behavioural issues were analyzed. The research concluded in finding out the various behavioural dimensions that the organizations may utilize in order to maintain cordial customer relationship. The organizationscan effectively implement the behavioral components in order to develop customer relations and thus using customer relationship management as a corporate strategy in order to get success. Thus a trained workforce plays a major role in the implementation of creating and maintaining customer relations by creating the service environment which leads to cordial and long term relationships.

The study highlights the concept of Customer Relationship Management as a corporate strategy and a tool of marketing used by companies in India to share the various factors that affect the behavior of customers with an emphasis on what behavioral factors affect customer relationship. It aims to understand consumer behavior and how this understanding of customers can lead to better cordial relationships between the organization and its present and potential customers. Successful CRM is what successful enterprise is all about. The interesting thing to keep in mind is that the customer keeps changing at an increasingly faster pace and the change is influenced by many factors. So the challenge before the organizations is to keep serving an ever-changing set of customers because even the needs, wants and requirements of the existing ones keep changing. For an organization to effectively practice CRM, it is critical to practice effective CRM techniques.

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