
Foreword

Customer relationship management's impact in the commercial marketplace cannot be undervalued. Despite traditional economic theory on market entry and pricing prescribing that enterprises should engage customers through prefabricated reactions and interactions given the customer event taking place, the nature, impact and reach of the power of enriching customer experiences has emerged in 2008.

Yet, one of the most common mistakes made by global companies is to view CRM as solely a technology or business challenge. CRM is first and foremost a business strategy that can be effectively executed through the appropriate business process and technology management capabilities that best match to an organization's customer-facing goals.

Long gone are the views of CRM being applications or business process methodologies for engaging customers in contact centers in the customer service functional domains within an organization. Today, every interaction or 'moment of truth' with customers can help sustain, direct, implore or resuscitate desired outcomes by enterprises. These processes transcend functional departmental silos and extend their reach across the process network to include sales and distribution partners and channels. Technology, process and organizational architectures together in concert will determine the effectiveness of how these end-to-end business processes will align to customer intents and enrich their overall experience with an organization.

The CRM strategic paradigm has gone through a three-phase generational shift over the last decade (1998–2008) with enterprises maturing from: 1) Marketing to customers the best products at the best prices, to 2) Marketing customers with the best services, to 3) Marketing customers with the dynamic services and products that they want and desire as measured by customer intent. Today, with the advent and proliferation of social communities across the internet world customers have channels for information-sharing on an enterprise's services and products that is extremely powerful. This emergence has disrupted conventional approaches towards managing customer or product information. Paradoxically, customers no longer look towards an enterprise as the best source of data or information about their own commercial product or service offerings. This sense of brand promise and brand trust has deteriorated, and today customers place their confidence in the shared and communal experiences of others through social community networks which provide transparency on valued customer experiences in the marketplace. In fact, as this book is being printed a great number of CRM Application vendors in the marketplace are vying to provide technology solutions for enterprises to integrate and use these social networks as part of core enterprise ERP and CRM solutions.

It is with distinct pleasure that I introduce you to Francis Buttle's comprehensive work on CRM. His passion for and grasp of the concepts, disruptors and application of CRM approaches will accelerate readers' abilities to grasp these exciting topics.

When considering CRM, there is no strategic alternative for enterprises but a relentless approach towards driving customer centricity in order to achieve current, future and lifetime profitability by creating customers for life.

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