CUSTOMISING eCRM STRATEGY IN eMARKETING

Parimal H. Vyas
Arpana V. Patel

*E*BUSINESS *moves fast and very fast. The relationship with the target customers begins as much after the sale as it before the sale. It would be true to state that a shift of marketing to eMarketing and its goal from customer service to customer relationship where designing of eMarketing strategies are directly influenced by advances in IT that has lead to growth of marketing phenomenon called as eCRM. It too focuses on attracting, acquiring and retaining customers at a click of the mouse. eCRM necessitates integration of companies internal processes in form of data organizing and availability as well as external processes in way of viz., Giving customers what they want; providing timely information, access to third party information and easy-to-use ordering processes. Making company's website customer-centric is crucial for a successful implementation of eCRM strategy while designing customized websites keeping in mind that customers should feel welcomed, informed, secure and are presented with cohesive information. Successful implementation of eCRM strategy calls for web design considerations with regard to target audience, website navigation, customer personalization and sound, video and other special design considerations and its integration with eMarketing processes to direct efforts towards establishing, developing.*

Prologue

According to Lee Iacocca, the biggest problem facing American business today is that most managers have too much information. It dazzles them and they do not know what to do with it all. The biggest problem facing business today is that most managers have too much data, and far too little relevant information. The Internet supports the concept of the marketing orientation because it provides a powerful interactive communications medium both within the organization through the use of an extranet. It also facilitates the gathering and management of data necessary to formulate and implement marketing strategies (Kristin and Kerr, 2002). Research has shown that firms where employees understand organizational goals have considerably higher returns on capital than those where employees feel excluded or uninformed (Harris and Dennis, 2002). Too many employees who deal directly with customers are damaging the product, service or corporate brand every time they open their mouths. It implies that internal marketing needs to play a critical role in ensuring that staff is well informed and motivated if a quality service is to be provided to consumers (Piercy, 2000). Dissatisfied or demotivated employees can try to sabotage enforced customer service policies in subtle ways, like by wearing their name badges upside down. It is often suggested that relationships with both staff (Internal) and customers (External) can be enhanced through induction programmes, training courses, benefits, and the use of intranets or through working in cross-functional teams. Too often, customer care programmes are instigated as a quick fix, without making any changes in entrenched management behaviour, or without attempting to evaluate the success of the programme implemented (Harris and Dennis, 2002).

Customer Relationship Management Defined

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a comprehensive approach for creating, maintaining and expanding customer relationships (Kristin and Kerr; 2002). It is attracting, maintaining and in multi-service organisations enhancing customers relationship (Berry, 1995). It is to establish, maintain, enhance and

* *Reader in Marketing, PG Department of Business Studies, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat.*
** *Research Scholar, PG Department of Business Studies, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat.*

commercialize customer relationships often but not necessarily always long-term relationship so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is done by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises (Gronroos, 1990). It is an integrated effort to identify, maintain, and build up a network with individual customers and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of both sides, through interactive, individualized and value-added contacts over a long period of time (Shani and Chalasani, 1992). It refers to all marketing activities directed towards establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational exchanges (Morgan and Shelby, 1994). It is the process of building, long-term, trusting, win-win relationship with customers, distributors, dealers and suppliers (Kotler, 2000). It implies that CRM promotes for long-term mutually beneficial relationships primarily between consumers and companies. The crux of CRM is to direct all marketing efforts towards establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational exchanges with the target customers (Vyas 2000 and 2001).

Literature Scan

One finds evolution of CRM in form of various studies being carried out by different researchers on varying perspectives. An effective use of the Internet can greatly facilitate the Electronic CRM (eCRM) strategy. Company should make use of IT to achieve mass customization of the marketing message and even the product itself. Company should develop the learning relationship, which means a continuous two-way dialogue that will allow the offering of product/service to be adapted to meet customers' specific needs. It can be achieved by means of online feedback forms, analysis of queries to customer service facilities, or through use of increasingly sophisticated software that analyses customers site-searching behaviour before purchase. Company shall offer an incentive to its target customers to engage in the dialogue. It should be easier and convenient for consumers to engage with the company so lengthy registration forms for registration often proves counter-productive. Company should acknowledge the privacy of the customer and the other demands upon their time (Peppers and Rogers, 1997).

The status of relationship marketing was examined in India, based on the perception of cross-section of marketers as a technique for developing life time customers to suggest ways for marketers to win their customers' heart and develop value-laden strong relationships with them (Vardani and Singh, 1999).

Permission marketing has emerged as a tool for online customer relationship is form of marketing in which the customer clearly consents for having an online relationship with a company as well as able to state clear preferences for the type, frequency and context of those communications, and also has a high degree of control over the relationship (Godin, 1999).

By focusing only on individuals who have indicated an interest in a product, trust can be built, brand awareness can be improved and long-term relationships can be developed. In the year 2000, US corporations spent \$ 1.4 billion with over 200 email solution providers to support their email marketing programmes. For every dollar spent externally, two dollars was spent on internal support on activities such as viz., campaign management; permission policy management; database development, and systems integration.

According to Forrester Research report (March 2001), 45 per cent of firms considered or piloting CRM projects while another 37 per cent had CRM installations under way or completed. These firms have planned to spend tens of millions on CRM applications, often working with ten or more separate vendors. The American Customer Satisfaction Index, compiled by the University of Michigan's Business School, reported an average decline of 7.9 per cent during 1994 and 2000.

Research by Synesis reported in Marketing in September 2000 concluded that relationship-marketing strategies as currently practiced were more likely to alienate than impress customers. They noted that while the industry is focusing on customization and one-to-one marketing, consumers are feeling bombarded by marketing messages and just want companies to fulfill their promises on the basis of products and services (Harris and Dennis, 2002).

The customers may well tolerate relationship-building initiative only for as long as it suits them because of self-interest and convenience, rather than build up the trust and commitment that the company might expect. On the Internet, of course, it is very easy for customers to compare the offerings of different suppliers and switch allegiance at the click of a mouse (O'Malley and Tynan, 2001).

The Gartner Group described the level of customer relationship marketing in most organizations as fantasy, claiming that fewer than 3 per cent have implemented CRM projects successfully. So-called CRM solution purport to do a company's relationship marketing that can be purchased from technology vendors (Harris and Dennis, 2002).

According to Gartner, new licence review for CRM technology vendors reached $ 3.7 billion in 2000, and forecasted consistent annual growth of 30 to 35 per cent for the next few years. However, true relationship marketing is a company-wide process and philosophy, not a piece of kit (www.gartner.com).

As many as 80 per cent of CRM implementations fail to deliver because of inadequate vision, focus and implementation. Some common mistakes included that of paving the cow path, which means that the new CRM strategy merely automates the company's existing ineffectiveness by maintaining the same business processes. CRM fails because of buying an off-the-shelf solution. As the buyer has to adapt the company's business processes to fit in with the standards built into the new system. Technical imperatives therefore get priority ahead to customer focus. Companies fail to translate plans that seem reasonable on paper into practical action. Employees may not be trained or motivated, or legacy computer systems being not properly integrated (Peppers and Rogers, 2001).

The web allows the collection of a vast amount of data to be stored in a data warehouse and then converted into knowledge through data mining techniques before they can actually be useful for decision-making purposes. Different sources of data may also need to be integrated before they can add value (Rowley, 2001).

Consumer attitudes towards online communities concluded that successful commercial communities must offer quality content; added value interaction; efficient use of participants' time; simple website design that can be navigated quickly; integrated contact channels and minimal requirements for registering personal details (Evans et.al., 2001).

CRM: As a Marketing Strategy

Some of the new business models that are developing online and one of it is consumer-to-consumer (C2C) model upon which online communities are based. These communities have evolved considerably since the early days of news groups, e-forums and chat rooms. They offer a simple means of overcoming the lack of human contact online and hence can meet consumers' social activity needs. Consequently, online communities now represent a significant commercial opportunity. There are a number of different types of C2C interaction through emerging online communities based on viz., purpose; position; interest; profession, and criticism (Harris and Dennis, 2002).

When aggregate customer information is strategically collected and segmented, company can target new customer prospects. When customer preference information is easily accessible, company can craft superior service experiences by face-to-face, via telephone or over the Internet. And when information about changing or additional customer needs is captured, company can expand the department of the customer relationship. eCRM is the strongest weapon, company has to create, maintain, and expand customer relationships and is likely to stay.

In both large and small-scale efforts, it was not uncommon to see the term CRM used as shorthand for the technology that supports the strategy implementation. CRM strategy should drive company's organizational structure (Refer figure no. 1), which should in turn drive choices around technology implementation. Yet, individuals and organisations become enamored of the technology applications and forget that they must start with an eCRM strategy.

CRM has to create a sense of relationship and reinforce brand loyalty with customers who seldom contact the company directly. Companies should turn around a product problem or concern quickly and effectively and gather product code information so that the potential impact of problems and concerns on other customers those who do not make direct contact can also be assessed and corrections and improvements can be made. Company should allow customer contact representatives to demonstrate familiarity with an increasingly wide variety of products and packaging options (Kristin and Kerr, 2002).

Figure 1: CRM Strategy Drives Structure and Technology

CRM is a business strategy, which pro-actively builds a bias or preference for an organization with its individual employees, channels and customers' resultant into increased customer retention and performance (Newell, 2000).

Bain and Co. found that a 5 per cent increase in the number of retained customers could lead to increased profitability of 25 to 85 per cent (Payne, 1995).

By focusing on the provision of a quality service to a customer, a company is increasing the chance that the customer will return. If customers are pleased with the attention and service received that they start recommending the company to others, then marketing cost begin to fall, as word-of-mouth recommendations are completely free. From the customer's perspective, developing a long-term relationship with a company can also help to reduce the perceived risk associated with the purchase of products/services. The key is to focus on customers with the greatest profit potential (Refer Figure no. 2).

Traditionally, the majority of marketing resources have been expended on the more costly activity of acquiring new customers without any significant effort at retaining them, once the transaction has been completed. This can lead to disenfranchisement among existing customers, who feel neglected and under-valued when potential customers are offered better deals (Rosenfield, 1999).

Market segmentation based on the degree of potential customer profitability is vital to focus resource expenditure on the most lucrative customers (Reichheld, et. al., 2000).

In brief, the cross functional journey of an email relationship starts when a customer registers on a website, perhaps to receive a copy of a free newsletter. This registration information then is stored in a centralized marketing database. The email address might be selected for a forthcoming promotional campaign. In response to this email, the customer may make a telephonic call or call on call centre to place an order or to register complaint about receiving unsolicited emails. Ideally, the call will be passed on to sales people to arrange a sales visit, to deliver customer services or to ask for an apology.
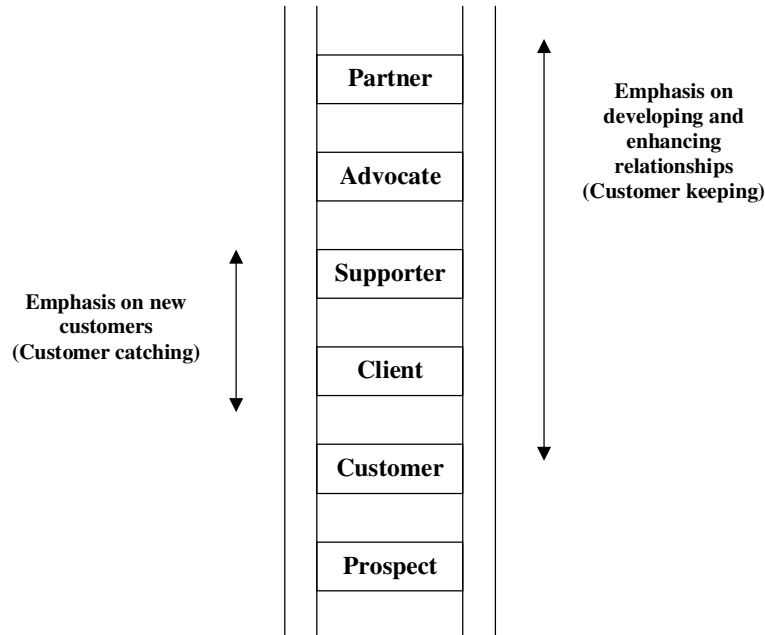
```
                              ┌──────┐
                              │Partner│          Emphasis on
                              ├──────┤          developing and
                              │Advocate│          enhancing
                              ├──────┤          relationships
              ▲               │Supporter│         (Customer keeping)
   Emphasis on new            ├──────┤            ▲
     customers                │ Client │          │
  (Customer catching)         ├──────┤            │
              ▼               │Customer│          ▼
                              ├──────┤
                              │Prospect│
                              └──────┘
```

Figure 2: The Relationship Marketing Ladder of Customer Loyalty

Source: *Kristin Anderson and Carol Kerr (2002), "Customer Relationship Management"; Tata McGraw-Hill Pub. Company ltd. New Delhi, p.7.*

A Shift Towards e-CRM Strategy

The history of CRM can be traced back with those retailers who wanted to make sure that their customers returned for which they collected feedback on their likes/dislikes about merchandise. It gave rise to personal relationship. Now, the Internet and online sales too have created new challenges to enhance customer relationships. To illustrate, an online marketer, which never physically interacts with target customers and therefore, need to look for alternative means to establish a personal relationship. CRM strategy, tools and practices are very much helpful in e-marketing to improve and strengthen marketers' relationship with traditional customers. Although, it is true that many companies find it hard to use the Internet to its fullest potential rather than simply attracting its customers to a website. It represents a major change in the conventional business model. Many companies, are therefore, still unclear about web contents, web design and other aspects of website on the Internet that can provide for eCRM strategies.

Traditional business models were simply not designed to integrate with the world of e-business. Though courteous customer service was certainly a goal of any good business, customer relationships were often a grass-roots type of process. Customers believed that the sales people were the only persons who could help them though this mindset was not true. A customer could certainly get personal attention at the grocery store around the corner, but for that business to expand beyond a certain size was impossible. Today, into the world of e-business, customers search product information on companies' websites. An important distinction concerning the customer service is its availability via e-business is personal versus personalized service. There is no longer an exclusive provider of information or pricing in this new e-economy. The product information is no longer under the control of a channel member but it is being published by independent sources that are easily accessible and available to the consumers. This new paradigm has forced the channel members to compete not only with its familiar competitors in geographical location, but also with competitors in other areas.

The companies will have to now design its websites to meet customers' personalized interests keeping them at the center of the action. Customers can search for product/services at their own convenient time and speed without the pressure of having to deal with over-anxious salespeople. Both the customers and

the companies, therefore, emerge, as winners in this eCRM-enabled strategy if customers are well informed and buy products that are mostly self-explanatory. Most companies have begun to incorporate personal tools into their shopping websites to provide target customers a way to enquire about the products they wish to buy online.

This combination of standard and personal information provides customers with a more comprehensive online shopping experience compared with physical buying in traditional stores. In the traditional structure, a company would offer product in stock to satisfy demand for a certain period to satisfy orders from wholesalers. Due to the time to ship from the manufacturer to the wholesaler and considering other delays, the wholesaler also keeps a larger inventory to supply the retailers with product. Today's e-business work on a principle that rather than keeping a large inventory, they will pay for overnight shipping. If a product is not available, an alternate is chosen rather than delaying the order. It is obvious that a good eCRM strategy, implemented via a well designed website, can, therefore, tremendously benefit the buying experience, both for the customer and the companies.

Integration of Companies Internal and External Processes in e-CRM Strategy
The goal of this integration is to allow the customer access to needed information as easily and quickly as possible. The other parts of a good eCRM strategy deals with how data is being organized and made available described as follows (Gosney and Boehm, 2001).

Internal Processes
For a CRM enabled e-commerce website, the internal processes are viz., back-end data sources, servers, etc., that are to be well organized so that the customer will immediately feel at ease. All the parts including web design will have to be created keeping customers in mind to provide an attractive and functional website navigation and immediate access to profiling information.

Data Organization
The data, company is collecting and manipulating, will determine its e-commerce data engine. If information is being gathered and stored in a logical organized fashion, company's customers will not notice its data organization structure. Company must store accurate information at all times having a high degree of usability. As far as customers are concerned, the technical solution is unimportant. The systems put to use in collection of data and collected the data must integrate seamlessly into company's overall business process. The flow of data from the web site into company's data source is of crucial importance, not only for organizational purposes, but also for ensuring that the other various functions areas that manipulate data. Data flow, therefore, needs to be considered early in company's website design. If it is not part of company's initial consideration, website navigation might require considerable changes later on in website development. This makes eCRM as the most important aspect of company's website plan. The customer should be at the center of company's business, and data collection systems need to reflect this and company's processes should be clearly defined to ensure that the departments within company communicate among each another as efficiently as possible.

Data Availability
Company need to ensure availability of the data in a uniform fashion within the organization and to its target customers. If information is exchanged internally, it always needs to be the most current and in a similar format independent of the source. If a customer is requesting the data, company's business processes need to be designed to allow its departments to access the collected data. Company should also consider the problems that may cause the breakdown in the data like the information is not being presented in a uniform manner, and different departments within the company may not have access to the same information etc.

External Processes
Though these external processes are important which are to be integrated in formulating eCRM strategy, these are indeed, absolutely critical to the success of company's eCRM strategy. It should be transparent to the target customers. A successful eCRM implementation strategy involves the logical and effective organization of all methods used to disseminate information to company's customers viz., telephone, fax, website, etc. Company's external processes essentially should focus on following.

Giving Customers what they want

Majority of the companies either get overwhelmed with putting every detail on their home page and thus cluttering it or dividing the content into so many small parts that finding information looked like a chest with 1,000 drawers the customer will have to open to get desired information. Making company's website customer-centric is essential to a successful eCRM strategy. It means that presentation of company data should focus on its target customers who would like to see it, instead of how the company would like to present it. Though, it does not mean that company should not present the information accurately or realistically, but it implies that company's customers will want to get information their own way.

Providing Timely Information

Company needs to be aware of the dynamic nature of the Internet. Information presented is not as static as in other medias. Most product brochures are usually printed either yearly or on monthly basis however, websites are required to be updated very often, unlike traditional forms of media. The ease speed and flexibility of upgrading web pages infact presents a challenge, but if company fails to do so, it can adversely affect company's image too.

Access to Third Party Information

The company's website should be linked to the product manufacturer's online catalogs. Company should underestimate the power of providing complete product information via its website, even if it includes providing indirect links to its competitor's products and or links to independent review firms. When company provides a central location from where customers know that they can find complete product information, it entice customers to use company's website as a point of reference resultant into increased sales.

Easy-to-Use Ordering Process

The internal processes, which are necessary in synchronizing product catalogs and e-commerce websites are far from perfect resultant into disappointed customers and in some cases even the loss of customers. It can be corrected with a direct link between available inventory and the products that are actually displayed in the online category.

Designing Company's Customized Websites for Successful Implementation of ECRM Strategy

Some of the early e-commerce websites were the product of technologists, however, important components were missing in it. To explain, it missed involvement and expertise of individuals from marketing, finance, and other general functional areas of business. So a lot of great-looking websites with a lot of technological razzle-dazzle but very little real world business application. With the exploding interest in e-commerce, businesses have been now forced to view websites not just as expensive marketing gimmicks but also as an essential component of its operation. The growing interest in eCRM has resulted in the cross training of technical and non-technical individuals which is intended to produce websites to strengthen and support business organization processes. It does indicate that one should appreciate the complex integration of various components and expertise required to produce a really terrific e-commerce website.

Companies should design a website that is simple in appearance, easy to use and should encompass the following components and considers for successful implementation of eCRM strategy (Gosney and Boehm, 2001).

Customers should feel welcome

Customers want personalized information but may not go overboard here. By overwhelming customers with information, company may confuse and irritate them. On the other hand, it is good to gather appropriate information that applies to specific customers.

Customers should feel informed

Having well established internal business processes which will help companies better serve its target customers but it is important to have information easily accessible and accurate on companies' products/ services. Besides, reaction time to changes and customer concerns should be a key ingredient. Company must structure the delivery of this information in a logical fashion.

Customers should feel secure

By offering secured transactions and an easy-to-use ordering process, customers would feel confident in knowing that website is well designed and well integrated. Simplicity is of highest importance as it would allow company's customers to place order easily on products/ services from website. Customers should realize that their transactions are treated with the utmost importance and greatest confidence. In essence, the communication of this fact to the target customers is central to company's success.

Customers should be presented with cohesive information

To provide external information through companies website in a uniform fashion, it is important that company organizes it and constitute website team that shall organize and held its individuals responsible for design and maintenance of company's website viz., programmers, webmasters, content writers, marketing specialists, etc. Their collective efforts shall produce the most cohesive, functional site possible.

Web Design Considerations in Successful Implementation of ECRM Strategy

Company need to consider few of the web design considerations that are crucial for successful implementation of eCRM strategy outlined in brief as follows (Gosney and Boehm, 2001).

Target Audience Considerations

Above all, company's first consideration must be on its target audience. In the current technology environment, web design is usually restricted by the speed of the connection a visitor has. The majority of home users in the foreseeable future will still be at speeds much lower than business. The target audience will determine the use of graphics, multimedia, and other large portions of company's website. If target audience is both businesses and home users, company will be forced to implement both a low-speed and high-speed version of website.

Website Navigation Considerations

Though, the best websites should have some degree of aesthetic appeal, the functionality of the website and how easy it is to access that functionality would ultimately bring back company's customers to website. This is especially true in eCRM. If customers cannot get company's product information due to poor website navigation, they may shop from elsewhere. Company, therefore, needs to ensure that it should be compatible across different browser types and versions of the same browsers. Company, therefore, should test and retest its web pages against different browser types, versions, and platforms. Web designers' most common testing involves making sure that their pages are compatible with the most common web browsers like the Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. Less popular browsers are available, but they are not widely used. However, company should consider testing of the selected browsers viz., Lynx, WinTV, and AOL Browser.

When presenting information on company's home page, company should try to have all site functionality in view when the home page loads, rather than forcing the customer to scroll to see information. Though the interested and Internet savvy customer will use scroll bars to see what is not being displayed on the screen, but less scrolling-inclined customer may not do so, therefore, company may shoot itself in the foot by placing important links off the screen, thus literally hiding functionality.

Company should use graphics as functional items, instead of window dressing. When using frames on a website, company should make sure that it cannot accomplish the same functionality with a table. Frames are mostly used when updates are made to only part of the web page it is currently displaying. If all company is trying to accomplish is to divide the page into smaller parts, it may consider using a table. However, if it is using a menu bar that stays the same throughout website, a frame layout will lessen download time for its customers.

Company should also consider different screen resolutions and color schemes. Given the tremendous variability in company's customers' browser/ display settings, it must take into consideration how these individualized setting will affect the display of its web pages. It should stick to a standardized web color scheme by ensuring that all its information on web pages loads and displays in different resolution formats.

The most common resolution currently deployed is 800 Î 600 pixels. Although, this is the actual screen resolution, the design of company's website should be limited to an area of 700 Î 480 due to the browser toolbars and screen-limitation factors. Company should allow customers to move freely within its site, which includes ease of movement within the shopping cart, the order process, and general browsing within the side.

Customers often change their minds, desiring to add or delete items from their shopping cart, search for additional product information, etc. Company can accomplish this with a traditional frame design that utilizes a table of contents frame or DHTML enabled drop-down menu.

A company should carefully check that all of its web links are active and point to the desired web pages that may look like a trivial task initially when company is designing its website. However, as company's website grows or if it is already complex, one will find that moving files and reorganizing content sometimes even break links. Before moving company's websites to production, it is always a good rule to run through company's website to make sure that its entire web links are active. Some web layout programs are helpful that provides an automated check to ensure that all its web links are accurate and go to a web page though it cannot check that the link actually goes to the right page or not but one can check that it goes to an actual web page. If company is using external links to link its web pages, it is not under its control, therefore, a company should at least check to confirm and view that the web page exists. Another problem that may occur over time if company is using external links relating to those pages that it too might move, or the external site may reorganize and delete company's page link. It is, therefore, important to periodically check company's website for dead links. One should also check website content with regard to grammatical and spelling errors and typos within its own web pages.

Customer Personalization

The best e-commerce sites are those ones, which can provide simplicity in its interface and simultaneously offer a degree of personalization though it cannot be accomplished without a high degree of internal structure. Certainly, this type of detailed information requires that the internal processes that affect both the order status delays in shipping, inventory control, etc., and appointment scheduling, resource availability, weather conditions, delivery of material, etc. need to be closely tracked. Few of the website surveys have received legitimate concerns consumers have about outdated and inaccurate information that is being displayed on many websites.

The ability to personalize customers' e-commerce experience during visit of company's website should be a key. It should give customers a sense of personal ownership. It is good to leave them with a warm and fuzzy feeling. The process of customer personalization should be a two-way street. First, it should allow company, as to provide personalized service. This should range from suggesting specific products based on earlier purchases to simply giving a personal greeting when company's website first loads in the customer's browser, and second, it should allow the customers to make their own decision in how they want information presented to them on-screen as they navigate around company's website. Company is forced to consider a wide range of issues viz., web design, marketing, customer research, and technology.

Company should present personalized information to its customers based on previous sales experience s/he has on its website. To illustrate, if company has customer records from sales prior to company's journey into e-commerce that is if the customer has purchased goods from a traditional store or through a non-e-related medium, such as a mail-order catalog, company should use this valuable information to build a customer profile. When company's customers are visiting website, depending on the amount of information in company's possession, it should personally guide them in their e-commerce activities. Personalized information about target customers is not dependent on their having made a previous purchase. A good example of gathering information without a sale is the traditional feedback form. On this form, customers are asked to comment on company's website. In the process, company can obtain general details about profile of customers with regard to their age, gender, geographic location, salary, etc. Some of the websites also offer free services like demonstrative versions of software after customer fills in a registration form and such type of non-purchase information-gathering tools too are helpful to companies in preparing customer profile and databases.

Company should present only that information to customers, which is applicable and useful to them.

Though, company obviously want to provide various sales opportunities to all of its customers, it can successfully limit its offerings presented at least, as personalized links on company's home page depending on recorded likes and dislikes of its target customers.

Company should offer its customers a mechanism to personalize their e-experience on company's website. It might provide a profile form that present the customers with various links to related products on website. A customer can then select or reject various links to products, thus targeting his/her interests more specifically. If a customer feels less inundated with information of no interest, s/he may be more inclined to explore specific products in greater detail.

Company should always allow customers access to any and all recorded information they have left behind, from profile information to transaction histories and empower them to change this information on their own in order to keep their database updated to facilitate delivery of personalized service by companies to them.

Sound, Vide, and Other Special Design Consideration

The web is a multimedia platform. Moreover, as bandwidth increases through the use of DSL and cable modems, the full potential of the web would become realized. Nothing turns customers off more during their surfing than waiting forever for a page to load, and then realizing the wait was due to some silly, misplaced, nonfunctional graphic. Though company may be tempted to offer all kinds of snazzy multimedia effects on its website, company should resist. There are, however, some useful multimedia and functional tools to create and distribute sound and video that have been used to stunning effect on even the slowest connections like Adobe Acrobat; Adobe PhotoShop and ImageReady; Macromeida Fireworks; Macromedia Flash and Real Player/ Apple QuickTime etc.

Integration of Companies E-marketing Processes in ECRM Strategy

eBusiness moves fast and very fast. The relationship with the target customers begins as much after the sale or it does before the sale. In the e-economy of today, companies must be prepared to deliver correct information at a moment's notice. eMarketer has to consider and reorganize the internal and external components of companies' processes in formulation of e-CRM strategy. The customer must always be at the center of companies' organizational processes. In this new e-economy, customers should be invited to participate in the design of new products through testing of its early preview releases and via collection of extensive feedback through web forms. Companies must consider ways in which to entice customers to return to their website even after they have received their product especially when they are satisfied with their product. Company can accomplish this by including their opinions in product development and by utilizing its website as a portal where customers can access information that may be of interest to them. Not only must companies' website be directly tied to its inventory, it then must also connected to ordering and shipping functionality to provide assurance to target customers. S/he should get the most accurate information for whatever is requested. It has been felt that even in the recent past, this type of data integration might have been possible internally for employees but certainly it is not being made available to external customers. As more businesses have moved towards providing customer service via web, companies must integrate most of its business processes in its e-CRM strategy to provide the most accurate, and timely information to its target customers.

As the Internet becomes the sales medium for more customers, company's competition might be transformed as well. By providing target customers a personal shopping e-experience and customer service, companies business will be helped rather than hurt in this new e-economy. The customers' e-experience should be at the center of this entire process.

Companies should implement and can benefit from eCRM wave by realizing that it is ultimately a philosophy of how its business processes are organized. Although, the development of company's website reflects its emphasis on eCRM in a way that it very well-integrate the customers e-experience into its entire business processes. Companies should create a unified information source to distribute information via the phone service, website, or salesperson which must be central part of formulation of eCRM Strategy. As websites have become more sophisticated, company has to focus on website navigation and live support instead of mere use of graphics. A customer visits companies' website or calls on the phone must get required information. Company's internal departments should be well connected to provide them cross-dissemination of information quickly and

efficiently. Customers look for methods to view information in a variety of ways. They see relationships between a current order and other items or they may want to include with some of these items perhaps not yet being immediately available. They should be empowered with a sense of autonomy and absolute control over the informational transactions, actual purchasing transactions they perform with company's guidance for the desired products.

Companies are required to personalize its web interface by conveying a sense of partnership between its customers and products. Its eCRM enabled web solution should possibly be personalized by providing superficial touches such as having the customer's name displayed on the home page. Company should increasingly provide advanced features like making previous order information available, suggesting new products based on previous order information, and offering immediate access at all times to the customer profile, where customers on their own can update personal information regarding address, interests, etc.

A company should provide complete product information. The best e-commerce website provide complete product information, ranging from pictures of the item in question to compete product specifications viz., size, compatibility with other products, etc. Additionally, a central component of e-CRM personalization should reflect in product descriptions. Company should streamline its website by offering products based on customer-centric information considering their interests and geographic location. A company should also integrate other relevant information on its website. One finds number of websites on the Internet that might have information about companies' product category which need to be integrated with company's website. A company should provide an easy ordering and billing process. The electronic shopping cart model is to be used effectively, enabling customers to browse a website and add product items of their interest into cart, able to edit their selections at any point of time. The ease of ordering and billing process including the customized shopping cart, therefore, should be essential features of any eCRM-enabled website. Customers should be empowered to quickly view their orders both past and present and review and update all sorts of information related to their orders viz., quantity, size, color, etc.

Company should provide after-sales-service. A key to successful eCRM is keeping company's target customers satisfied and interested after the sales which may ensure that they shall return in the future and recommend too company's website to other customers. Company should provide, at a minimum, e-mail tracking for its target customers as the product moves from preparation to shipment to delivery, and email communication should be sent to company's customers, informing them regarding the progress of the execution of their orders.

Concluding Remarks

A central aspect of eCRM strategy should be more customer-centric, though it does not necessarily create a new revenue stream instantaneous but can add customer loyalty to company's business. A correct implementation of eCRM strategy can result into positive customer feedback and increased revenue. CRM is a way of doing business that touches all areas of company so its management peers need to form strong internal partnerships. Employees are most likely to comply appropriately with companies CRM system when they understand what information is to be captured and its importance then they are also more likely to trust and use CRM data, its methodology and purpose of data collection. CRM tools should be integrated into company's systems as seamlessly as possible, making them a natural part of the customer service interaction. CRM tool can run a report but it does not mean it should. One should refer back to company's CRM strategy and then run the data s/he will actually use, and share it with company's team. Organisations that successfully implement CRM look for the simplest solution while implementing its CRM strategy. A low-tech solution works for the people who actually use it can be more effective than a high tech solution that is cumbersome, costly and apt to be discarded or inconsistently implemented.

Multi-channel strategies can put severe strain on a company's data collection and analysis processes in order to get a unified view of customer activity through which it has to personalize its marketing campaigns. The benefits of getting it right, however, are considerable in terms of the competitive advantage that could be gained.

In order to make eCRM effective, companies cannot rely upon departmental solutions that it addresses only one part of the customer account relationship. Increasingly, with the growth of inter-organizational networks on the web, customer communication is no longer just one customer talking to one enterprise. To provide the kind of

service that improves the chance of customer loyalty, companies need to co-ordinate with their partners and vendors through extranets that would facilitate the sharing of information across company boundaries. Associated data warehousing and data mining tools facilitate the gathering, analysis and management of information necessary to formulate and implement eCRM marketing strategies.

Companies should consider partners and vendors as part of its extended enterprise, and share customer communication issues with everyone who is in contact with the customers through integrated applications viz., customer service, field service, sales and marketing. The practical organization of marketing functions and activities within such inter-firm networks may be complex. Decisions need to be taken on where responsibility lies for particular tasks, to avoid duplication and customer confusion. Open policies of information-sharing mean that a whole host of issues have to be addressed concerning the ownership of customer data, notwithstanding the technical difficulties inherent in integrating computer systems belonging to different organizations (Kalakota and Robinson, 1999). Such integration is often the most critical issue currently facing bricks and mortar firms in developing a successful eCRM strategy.

In a nutshell, eCRM is the strongest weapon company has to create, maintain and expand customer relationships and is likely to stay. It is a business strategy that provides to build a bias or preference for an organization with its individual employees, channels, and customer's resultant into increased customer retention and performance. It deals with data organization and availability and integration of data collection systems keeping customers in the center that gets reflected in clearly defined company's internal and external processes ensuring that its departments communicates in a cost effective way. Company needs to be aware of the dynamic nature of the Internet and design its websites in a customer-centric fashion for successful implementation of eCRM strategy. The growing interest in eCRM has resulted in the cross training of technical and non-technical individuals which is intended to produce websites to strengthen and support business organization processes. The ability to personalize customers' eCommerce experience during visit of company's website should be a key. Company should present only those information to customers, which is applicable and useful to them. Company should offer its customers a mechanism to personalize their e-experience on company's website. By providing target customers a personal shopping e-experience and customer service, companies business will be helped rather than hurt in this new e-economy. The customers' eExperience should be at the center of this entire process. Companies should create a unified information source to distribute information via the phone service, website, or salesperson which must be central part of formulation of eCRM Strategy. As websites have become more sophisticated, company has to focus on website navigation and live support instead of mere use of graphics. To, conclude, companies are required to personalize its web interface by conveying a sense of partnership between its customers and products.

References

Berry Leonard L. (1995) "Relationship of Services-Growing Interest, Emerging Perspectives". Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol.23, No.4, p.236-245.

Evans, M., Wedande, W., Ralston, L. and Van't Hul, S. (2001) "Consumer Interaction in the Virtual Era: Some Qualitative Insights", Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal 4 (3); p.150-159.

Godin, S. (1999) "Permission Marketing", New York: Simon and Schuster.

Gosney, John W. and Thomas Boehm, P. (2001) "Customer Relationship Management Essentials", Prentice-Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.

Gronroos, Christian, (1990) "Relationship Approach to Marketing in Service Context: The Marketing and Organizational Behavior Interface", Journal of Business Research 20 (January); p.3-11.

Harris, Lisa and Dennis, Charles (2002) "Marketing the e-Business", Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi; p.157-182.

Kalakota, R. and Robinson, M. (1999) "e-Business Roadmap for Success", New York, Addison Wesley.

Kotler, Philip (2000) "Marketing Management: Action, Planning, Implementation and Control (10th Ed.), Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.

Kristin, Anderson and Kerr, Carol (2002) "Customer Relationship Management", Tata McGraw-Hill Pub. Company ltd. New Delhi p.7.

Morgan, Robert M. and Shelby D. Hunt (1994) "The commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing". Journal of Marketing 58 (July): p.20-38.

Newell, F. (2000) "Loyalty.com: Customer Relationship Management in the New Era of Internet Marketing, New York: McGraw-Hill.

O'Malley, L. and Tynan, C. (2001) "Reframing Relationship Marketing for Consumer Markets", Interactive Marketing 2 (3): p.240-246.

Payne, A. (ed.) (1995) "Advances in Relationship Marketing", London: Kogan Page.

Pepper, D. and Rogers, M. (1997) "Enterprise One to One", London: Piatkus.

Pepper, D. and Rogers, M. (2001) "One to One B2B", New York: Capstone Publishing.

Piercy, N. F. (2000) "Market-Led Strategic Change", 2nd Edition; Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

Reichheld, F. Markey, G. R. and Hopton, C. (2000) "e-Customer Loyalty: Applying the Traditional Rules of Business for Online Services", European Business, Journal 12 (4): p,173.

Rosenfield, J. R. (1999) "Whatever happened to Relationship Marketing? Nine big Mistakes"; Direct Marketing; May 62 (1); p.30-33.

Rowley, J. (2001) "Eight Questions for Customer Knowledge Management in e-Business", paper presented at the Business Intelligence and e-Marketing Workshop, IBM, Warwick; 6 December.

Shani, David and Sujana Chalasani (1992) "Exploiting Niches Using Relationship Marketing". Journal of Service Marketing 6 (Fall): p.43-52.

Singh, Deepali and Vardani, M.S. (1998) "Relationship Marketing: An Indian Perspective", JIMS, January - March, 8M, p.5-8.

Vyas, Parimal H. (2000) "Some Reflections on Relationship Marketing"; SYNERGY, G H Patel Institute of Business Management; S. P. University, V. V. Nagar, Gujarat. Vol. III, No. 1&2, p.41-49.

Vyas, Parimal H. (2001) "e-Enabled CRM: Hype or Hope"; Delhi Business Review, An International Journal of Society for Human Transformation and Research, Delhi; Vol. 2, No. 2., p.57-63.

www.gartner.com.