

Service Offering: Forming a Relationship Strategy

Aim: to help clients maximise the impact of their customer relationship management and customer experience efforts using a strategic focus

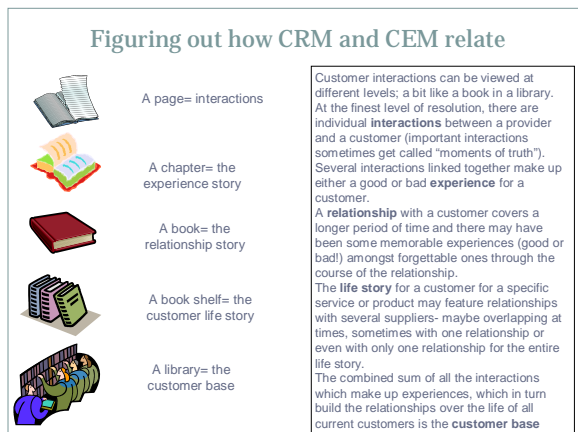
1: Relationship strategy pain points:

For many different reasons, many good companies struggle to set up and execute an effective strategy for managing relationships with their customers and delivering them a positive experience. Without a clear and widely accepted relationship strategy, resources are not maximised. Here are 6 root causes:



2: Strategic vs tactical; relationship vs experience:

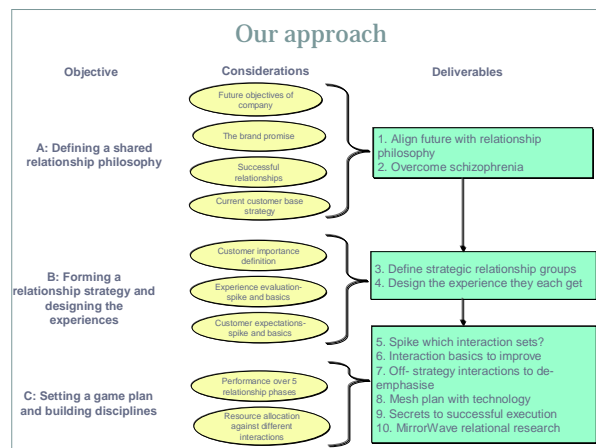
Another frustration for managers is that there is so much conflicting lingo around the whole relationship and experience business. Without a coordinating framework, it's hard to get a common language going with suppliers, let alone colleagues. To cut the confusion, here's our suggestion for how all these things relate:



3: How we can help:

In our view, an effective relationship strategy has 3 main ingredients which together address the spectrum of issues that are usually encountered- from the strategic to the tactical:

- Defining a shared relationship philosophy: recognising how differently people can think about relationships and getting that aligned with the firm's future plans
- Forming a relationship strategy and designing the experiences: strong relationships are founded on consistent and memorable experiences. A plan is needed that defines customer relationship groups and then specifies what experience they will receive (including the desired "spike" and also the necessary "basics" as expected)
- Setting a game plan and building disciplines: many great strategies fizzle out because of poor implementation, weak discipline and insufficient readiness.



4. What a good relationship strategy covers:

A relationship strategy will answer key questions:

- What strategic relationship approach do people in this firm believe works best and how much consensus is there?
- How good a grip does the firm really have on what different customer types think and experience?
- How does improving customer relationships and their experience benefit us?
- Which customer groups are more important and why?
- Exactly what sort of relationship do we want with each of these groups and how do we want them to behave?
- Over the course of the relationship, what experience do we want them to receive?
- What resources do we need to deliver the plan and what barriers would we need to overcome to get there?
- How do we keep the momentum up?
- How do we know how well we are doing?

We have put together an on-line questionnaire to help you make a very preliminary assessment of your firm's relationship strategy status. Feel free to [click here](#) and try it out. It's free and there is no commitment.

5: How we go about it:

One very experienced facilitator sees the whole project through from start to finish. Key components include:

- Treating the schizophrenia: managers with different relationship philosophies do not sing from the same hymn book. We use a revolutionary process called "dynamic directioning" to elicit wide ranging internal opinion and to bring it together to get good consensus on key areas where there is conflict of opinion. Time spent by busy managers is kept to a minimum- it's the facilitator doing all the work!
- Opening the ears and closing the mouth: unfortunately most firms do too much talking and not enough listening. They tend to be too "inside- out" and pay too little regard to the customer view. Also, customer feedback should be relationship enhancing, not a hassle for customers. We usually introduce the unique and cost- effective relationship research method called "MirrorWave".
- Getting a plan and putting wheels on it: Putting together a plan that clearly specifies which customers get what type of relationship experience is only half the task. The rest of the challenge is to get it in front of employees and keep it front of mind
- Treating the fizzle factor at the source: the best strategies can fail in the execution. Our treatment to minimise the danger of fizzle out uses a well proven framework than gives plenty of attention to the human side of implementation.

6. Getting started:

Quickfire assessment: this provides a top of the line view of the situation and suggests immediate actions to be taken and proposes a way forward. Quickfire takes about 7- 10 days. We are happy to provide clear deliverables and a quote.

Forming a customer relationship/ experience strategy and road map: The aim is to form a widely embraced relationship approach, clearly define relational customer groups (and the experience they will get) and prepare a road map that will achieve it. This will generally take six weeks. We are happy to provide clear deliverables and a quote.

Contact for more details, referees and case studies:

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