



EXPLORING THE IMPORTANCE OF BEHAVIOR DURING PERSONAL INTERACTIONS AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT: CASE INTERVIEWS

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Abstract

An individual's behavior during personal interaction is an important issue in business matters. Personal interaction behavior can influence the formation of organizational relationships built on individual interaction. From the perspective of customer relationship management and through interviews with top-level managers, we aim to determine and understand their thoughts and ideas with regard to this matter. In this study process, we describe two cases to understand how to make interpersonal interactions easy and smooth, as well as how to establish good interaction in commercial relationships. In this study, we use case interviews to explore the interaction and cognitive issue of both distributors and retailers.

Keywords: personal interaction behavior, customer relationship management, globalization, economic scope, sustainable operation, trust and commitment

Introduction

Trading relationships have evolved from the simple exchange of tangible resources to that of intangible resources and the formation of creating value and relationships in order to provide more integrated goods and services to customers (Vargo & Lush, 2004). Personal interactions in business operations include friendships, kinship, and specific relationships (Syuan &

Sung, 2013). One of the important discussions within a company relates to an individual's behavior during personal interactions. (Parente & Ishman, 2007) Behaviors during personal interactions shape organizational relationships, and the interaction between organizations leads to the establishment of motivation, coordination mechanisms, and performance. Mouzas, Henneberg, and Naude (2007) argued that the relationship of interactive behaviors is based

on the rational and subjective trust between parties. An interactive behavioral relationship refers to the value created by the cooperation between two parties through mutual resources in the cooperative process (Vargo & Lush, 2008).

Uncertainty will increase when customers require long-term services from a company; however, that uncertainty can be reduced if the quality of the relationship between the enterprise and the customer can be maintained (Gosby et al., 1990). Therefore, companies must understand customers' needs in order to enhance the interaction with customers. Carolyn Heller Baird and Gautam Parasnis (1996) believed that customers could obtain the actual value of a product or service when the enterprise provides correct information about such products or services; therefore, if enterprises create good customer interaction, they can strengthen the mutual trust between them and their customers.

Research Method

Based on the case interviews and data collection, we ran empirical analysis in theoretical mode and cross-case analysis using the data analytical method. After analysis, the research structure was adjusted according to the data generated from the empirical research in order to verify the cause-effect relation. Each finding was unique. Furthermore, we explored and discussed the issues of improvement and recognition within distributor and retailer relationships. Differences in culture and race must be excluded before interviewing each case so that both parties can start from the same foundation in the interview. The interviewers

were required to have professional or practical experience before being allowed to provide a series of clear explanations with regard to the interview questions.

Data Explanation And Analysis

We targeted senior managers of companies for our in-depth interviews and collected secondary information as the source of empirical data. The responsibilities of the senior managers often involved dealing with various businesses related to customer relationship management. Senior management personnel are often assigned by the corporation to different areas to serve as management representatives. After the interviews, the records of the interviews were written down word for word and the information collected was sorted before we analyzed the various company constructs and described the research structure of the interview cases in order to determine essential processes and theories.

Case Interviews

(1) Case A

The New Year was coming, but I was not feeling a very festive atmosphere around me. All I wanted to do was complete my work at hand, hoping that the interview would go smoothly. Suddenly, the gentle and graceful Meifang (Mei) came to mind. Although I (Jo) graduated many years ago, I still have a lasting impression of her. She is currently a senior executive of a chain that has more than 100 coffee shops. I was very happy to contact her. I drove to where we had agreed to meet and I called her to confirm. Her pleasant voice greeted me:

Mei: Hi!

Me: Mei? Where are you? This intersection is so wide.

Mei: I am in front of the pastry store!

Me: Oh! I see you. See you later!

As I walked across the wide intersection, I observed this genuine “little lady” with her signature long hair waving to me.

Me: Hello! You haven’t changed a bit! I am so sorry to bother you.

Mei: It’s okay. I am glad to meet with you. Let’s go to coffee shop F. If it is too crowded, we can go somewhere else. I know of another coffee shop that is quieter and very cozy and would be a nice place for a chat.

We walked along while I explained to her what I had wanted to meet her for and praised her business achievements. Because coffee shop F was full, we proceeded to coffee shop E, which I later found out was her favorite place. While the service staff skillfully brewed coffee behind the counter, they introduced the various kinds of coffee and drinks available for customers to choose from before taking our drink orders. Then they brewed the coffee that we ordered.

We started chatting, and Mei, with her usual smile, told me that she was currently unemployed. I was taken aback and unable to conceal my feelings. She had worked for Dan Coffee for many years. Still, I asked her about the business philosophy of Dan Coffee Shop Company and how they planned and implemented it in terms of marketing management to achieve their desired performance. (Hoffman and Schlosser, 2001) Strategic planning and good partner preparation are substantial behaviors for success, but the value still needs to be developed. To estab-

lish the continuous competitive advantage of a company or enterprise, creating products and services is both economical and practical.

Management Concept

She explained to me that the Dan Company was established 23 years ago with the basic philosophy of “always bright.” To enhance the quality of goods and services, the company regularly arranged for its top-level executives to travel to Italy, the United States, and Japan in search of new information and techniques that could help expand and improve the company’s product innovation and create an even more comprehensive management system. Porter (1991) suggested that the value chain is the main source of an enterprises’ competitive advantage, which can be deconstructed according to relevant tactical activities to understand the cost features and sources of existing and potential differentiation, as well as develop an enterprise’s competitive advantage, so that the product or service can be provided to the customer at a lower cost and higher efficiency than the competitors, thus achieving the business’s objective. Although Mei has met some setbacks, her world view is one of expansion. While investments rely on chances and opportunities, sustainable operations require capability. Mei explained that the company has gradually grown by following its core values of strength, care, and reliability.

I was surprised to learn that Dan Coffee Shop Company also invested in such faraway places as the Middle East. She told me that this was the first time that a Taiwanese coffee firm had invested in a Middle Eastern country and

that the local Taiwanese offices warmly welcomed and encouraged their representatives.

Globalization will become the company's competitive advantage. Directly developing the foreign market absorbs large amounts of cash flow from foreign competitors and the foreign market. Before accessing the market, the enterprise shall be internally and externally evaluated, and the country's economic growth, political control, and nationalism situation should also be reviewed.

For an enterprise whose economic scope is expanded to foreign countries, political risk is a major factor when making decisions. The issues and principles that most concern foreign investors are related to whether the government can effectively implement policies among unstable political, economic, and social situations. With political stability, investors are confident in the ability to regulate the environment, as well as that the economic returns on investment will pay off.

We both laughed as we talked and enjoyed our coffee with its various fruity notes. Mei recommended the particular coffee we were enjoying, explaining to me that it flown into Taiwan from Somaliland in Africa and that the ground coffee beans were roasted using special technology. This coffee had a delicate aroma, and its fruity flavor lingered in our mouths. John Egan (2002) explained that products and services need to be assimilated into people's sanation in order to show the value of such products, which tend to be highly personal. The related benefits are associated with customers' emotional importance while the prod-

ucts and services are also of great importance.

Emphasis on Food Safety

The soft atmosphere, soothing music, and warm colors of the interior design fostered the intimacy of our conversation. I then mentioned the food safety problems that arose in Taiwan three years ago. I was curious about her thoughts on this issue. She started that with regard to the total quality of food industry management, she believed that certification of food ingredients were clearly under the government's control.

The product can select safe food for consumers, as well as control the country of origin for food selection and purchase and supervise manufacturing plant links. Managerialist Henry Mintzberg has shown that enterprise organization understands direction, and the goal of adopting strategies is to make use of all technologies, which is the formal and analytical approach to achieving goals. However, when a problem occurred, she wondered why the downstream supplier was always blamed, as well as why the government had not inspected the source of the goods. She wondered whether the imported goods had been inspected by the customs inspection unit in accordance with standard processes and what percentage of products failed inspection. She further questioned whether the outbreak of a serious food safety crisis was actually the result of lax government control, including government food inspection, food additives, risk of non-inspection projects, and food containers.

With regard to producing, processing, marketing, checking, and certifying agricultural products, the source of agricultural products must be strictly controlled in advance, and such control should be extended to following processing and marketing behaviors. According to the overall policy operation depends not only on special executor but also on the cooperation of all executors to achieve policy goals.

Positioning and Tenet

At the end of our conversation, Mei once again stressed that the Dan Company believed in attention to detail, integrity, and confidence. For customers, they paid attention to product design, while for internal employees; they focused on staff welfare, education and training, and capability enhancement. They use qualified raw materials for their products to ensure that customers can enjoy themselves without any worries. They aim to create a good corporate culture and a healthy and environmentally friendly atmosphere, so that every customer has confidence in the company.

Mei is a restrained and wise woman who lives a simple life. Although she had impressive chain business management experience, she was not boastful but rather dignified and elegant. She recalled the past with ease and in a relaxed manner, gradually revealing the pragmatism and usefulness of our conversation. Our mutual interaction was harmonious and firm, and we talked about many topics at various levels.

(2) Case B

I was checking the calendar every day. Finally, the appointment I had been waiting for, in which I would meet another alumnus from my school. His low, serious voice passed through the phone.

My phone rang, and I picked it up; before I had a chance to say anything, I heard a voice from the other end.

Alumnus: Where are you?

Jo: I am having a meal with my family, but I will head for Tamsui soon. Please wait for me!

Alumnus: I'm also in Taipei City at the moment.

Jo: I just want to ask you some questions. Let's find somewhere nearby to meet, but the environment has to be quiet and good for conversation. How about Dan Coffee near Shihlin Electric?

Alumnus: OK! I will be there in 30 minutes.

Jo: Good.

After 30 minutes, the person who appeared in front of me was exactly the same as what I had remembered from many years ago, short but smart, more than 70 years old but still agile. He had abundant international and domestic experience, and I have never felt bored listening to him. He is very open-minded with a wide vision, always happy to provide advice, and very helpful to junior schoolmates. He supervised me all the time when I took the post of leader of the student association so that a beginner like me could successfully complete my term in office. I was very happy and excited because I had not seen him for a long time. We exchanged conventional greetings all the way.

Jo: Have you brought your wife with you and shown her around?

Alumnus: Yes, but she went with our daughter and grandson.

Jo: Oh, yes, of course. It is Chinese New Year.

Marsh and Dibben (2005) explained that the interaction among people was based on trust and commitment. In the situation, trust is "an internal attribution, and a freely operating spirit will assume more much of deeper meanings in the lack of a statutory or compelling meaning". Therefore, it can possess profound connotations.

Enterprise Profile

A lot of people were at Dan Coffee when we arrived. We found a table in the non-smoking area, ordered our drinks, and sat down. I explained what I wanted to talk about. Once discharged from military service, I went abroad right away. I worked for an international auto company at first and moved to the U.S. a few years later. I started to build my own branding and manufacturing enterprise and then found a job in a retail group with a total annual revenue of US\$ 0.8 billion. This group had subsidiaries of a Real Estate Development Management Center and a High-Tech R&D Center, with its headquarters in Long Island, New York. Although it was not the largest group, it has a certain level of scale. The Director-general was the third-generation leader of the corporation, and the enterprise belonged to a family business. The corporation's responsible person, King Kullen, never had an entourage and adopted a low-profile and simple management approach, treating employees as his own family. Responsibilities were decentralized in the organizational structure, including the departments of finance, marketing,

human resources, and administration; EVPs were arranged to be departmental managers. The management leadership of President King Kullen aimed to directly control and supervises any problems encountered in order to improve efficiency. Robert C. and Sandy J. Wayne (2013) suggested following the creation of service culture to learn leadership behaviors in order to also enhance performance and personal attitude behaviors.

Enterprise Crisis Handling

One year, the company encountered disputes between labor and capital, and 135 employees of the warehouse unit all went on strike. Mr. King called for an urgent meeting of top managers to discuss solutions and immediately implement them, focusing on respecting employees' expectations in handling the problem satisfactorily in order to reduce the negative influence on society. Another example involved as issue related to food safety. When the internal news spread, all the food that had problems was removed from store shelves overnight before the media released the news. Internal control and treatment were sped up to maintain the company's reputation and reduce the likelihood that the brand would suffer risk of damage. That was Mr. Kullen's management concept. Using resources for risk management may reduce the resources of other activities with potential rewards. Ideally, the goal of risk management is to resolve the largest crisis with the fewest resources. Risk identification, prediction, and control are the primary steps for enterprise risk management. Plan-based deal with risk can ensure the enterprise's smooth operation.

Vocational Experience

As usual, I listened very carefully to what the alumnus said and made notes about the key points. He also mentioned his life philosophy: Efforts do not always lead to success, but success will never come without making efforts. These concepts really inspired me. During our interaction, I realized that I have improved a lot. Knowledge is endless, and in terms of growing and learning, opportunities can arise at any moment. I admired the senior style and wisdom of the alumnus, and talking about all of his experiences would take days. He went on to mention that he worked at a large-scale company that belonged to a group in the heavy industry when he was in Japan. After World War II, the company was nationalized and restructured in a smaller scale after the organizational change. It was taken over and invested in by a bank consortium, and a senior manager was recruited to be responsible for the operation of the enterprise. So far, the company has had a history of more than 100 years and is still standing firmly, with its products having a high proportion of market share all over the world. That was his eight-years of work experience in Japan. Through another experience, he learned that the management style of Americans was based on “from our own value”, which could be interpreted from any angle or position. That aim was to recognize the situations and circumstances and run strategy analysis on capacity in order to achieve the best performance. Perhaps destined by his experience in the family business and his abundant knowledge, he negotiated with the EEC held in Brussels, Belgium on behalf of Taiwan when he was only 28 years old. The issues related to the textiles (un-

derwear and socks) quota were in high and vigorous spirits in those days. Therefore, the company strove to achieve the most benefits in the international trading markets for Taiwan, to promote economic growth in Taiwan, and to further increase output the GDP value.

B. Ramaseshan and David Bejou (2006) explained that the successful growth of the economy and global enterprises comes from excellent communication, information technology, customer relationship management, and the success of the operational strategy plan.

Person-to-person interaction is an indispensable part of a commercial relation. To involve business interactions from personal experience and attitude and create successful relationships, trust must be built on a mutual relationship and reputation. In the relationship layer, the customer and supplier cannot be formalized or established on the statutory standards. Therefore, the alternative relationship shall be built on trust. While trust is built on experience, satisfaction, and empathy, higher levels of trust generate more positive attitudes.

Conclusion

In this study, we mainly discuss the interaction among people and found that dependent situations are shown in problem solving and business planning through professional knowledge and mutual trust. Many researchers (Lewicki et al., 1998) believe that trust is a basic element of a healthy personality, the foundation of interpersonal relationships, a necessary condition for

cooperation, and a basic factor for a stable social system and market. These situational factors represent the consistent role in the function of personal interaction and involve the essential responses to the interview questions provided by the author. These factors create a special interaction background for personal interaction, generate effects for two-way interaction, and explain the importance of personal interaction. Meanwhile, advanced relationships and planning management in terms of business relationship management should be considered for their ability to manage diversity and complexity. Adrian Payne and Peynie Frow (2005) explained that the idea and structure of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is to understand the relationship between the core values of customers and shareholders' benefits.

Professional knowledge is individual in business planning. However, the function of business planning needs to be developed in an earlier stage by being close to customers and approving the representativeness of personal interaction. It is a stable, systematic, and unexpected interaction because customers' trust of the professional knowledge of the business plan is an

important factor. The article also states that professional function refers to having a specific ability and professional knowledge to solve problems and deposit among customers in the industry and various professional data. Chen and Chung (2015) have indicated that knowledge is a kind of faith and commitment that includes judgment and perspective and has a certain purpose and meaning. Knowledge is dynamic because it concerns action and comes from interpersonal information and transformation. Knowledge creation is only developed through human interaction. The impact can be verified by the interaction results generated from personal interaction and social relationships as time progresses. Recognizing the relationship among various commercial situations and personal interaction helps enterprises effectively organize to enhance competition advantage, as well as properly tactical activities. Abdullah Hersh and Khalil Aladwan (2013) stated that the basic theory of knowledge management indicates that the knowledge stock of an enterprise determines its resource allocation and innovative abilities. The ultimate goal is to achieve unique competitiveness in business performance and market force.

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