

## **E-Commerce And Customer Relationship Management**

**Dr.Nishi Bala**

HOD in Management  
Doraha Insitute of Management & Technology  
Doraha.  
Mob:9915517421

**Sachin Kumar**

Reginial Manager  
Karvy Stcok.Broking Ltd.  
Ludhiana.  
Mob:9779715124

**Abstract:-** Growing usage of internet for commercial purposes has increased the growing influence of e-commerce in the over all business activities carried out globally. Countries like India , China, Brazil and South East Asian nations have become hub of the IT enabled services and provide necessary wherewithal to conduct global e-commerce smoothly. Therefore, with growing competition in the global e-market the focus is slowly shifting to the customer. Real challenge therefore lies in retaining the customer rather than just acquiring it. No wonder, most of the business organizations the world over have started integrating Customer Relationships Management Strategies into the e-commerce environs so as to arouse customer's interest and instant customerarial gratification in the long run so that the customer is retained without unflinching loyalty.

The main reason for presenting this subjective paper is to focus on the challenges that e-commerce faces vis-à-vis traditional brick and mortar business. Globalization has brought in its wake an extensive and tremendous opportunity for the growth of e-commerce thereby increasing the quantum of business at a cheaper cost and in hassle free transactional atmosphere in a quick time. Having grown that much, now the real challenge lies in localizing or rather custom rising user interface e-commerce sites, in the organization is dealing with. Localization necessitates local socio-political conditions to be considered while integrating CRM strategies in the modern e-commerce environment.

Therefore cross cultured differences and ignorance of customarial convenience can jeopardize the reach of e-commerce. Hence every strategy of CRM must incorporate easy to use guidelines for the e-commerce environment .through localization of technology based on cultural, nationalistic and linguistic differences.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Assuming an abstract existence of e-commerce environment without internet and internet enabled services is neither feasible nor possible. Growing usage of internet in the context of not only developed world but also in the developing world, has posed a great opportunity for the e-commerce world wide. E-commerce environment fuelled by IT and IT-enabled services supplies both the front as well as back end of the complete process. Web based retail site is the front end while activities like delivery of products and services, post sales support customer loyalty represent bank end of the e-commerce. Security of credit card and other personalized customer data is no less important.

Effective human-computer interface encompasses both front and back ends of e-commerce and therefore there is a need to identify guidelines for designing and therefore thereis a need to identify guidelines for designing user friendly e-commerce websites. While designing such websites criteria that must be considered include:

- a. Faster and accurate download of the web page
- b. Attractive design with attractive colours and decent language communicating the objective of the website
- c. Easy navigation and maneuverability by the customer all through the sites.
- d. Easy and effective interaction with the customers.

Implementing these factors in the design of websites will give an opportunity for the business organization to create user friendly business to customer (B2C) e-commerce sites. Many business organizations which undertake e-commerce activities in one country according to the non-standardised global outreach fail to reach to the customers in other countries because they do not take linguistic and cultural factors/difference into consideration.

Hence the computer applications necessitate design of websites which are analysed and adapted as per requirements of the different set up of customer profile. This will increase the reach of the website contents into local languages alone. Change in colours, graphics, designs discerning to the nationality of the customers also

needs to be carried out. Other factors that can play an important role in this process of localization include cultural and nationalistic and time formats etc. Local cultural icons, symbols and brands need to be incorporated. Cultural symbolism when embedded into the design of website will make them more appealing to each culture or nationality.

Rapidly increasing competition in e-commerce has moved the focus from customer acquisition to customer retention. Any drop in the customer defection can lead to a substantial increase in the quantum of the e-business. Customers live to be part of the organization which takes keen interest in integration of CRM strategies into user-friendly e-commerce websites thereby enhancing customer loyalty and retention. CRM strategies cause value addition in every customer interaction by providing quality services far beyond expectations of the customer.

## **II. DESIGNING USEABLES SYSTEMS**

Human computer interface as a separate discipline brings customer to the fore so that its application becomes user friendly and design of computer systems becomes customer centric. Every organization will have its own unique design with customized application. Wide reach of computers and internet has enabled the growth of e-commerce leading to myriad ways of interaction with the computers. Usable systems can be designed for an accounting firm, a hospital, an insurance company or an airline embarking on e-ticketing etc. Different organizations need user interface which must be user friendly and affable to the customer. It helps to accept customer commands and communicates information back to the customer. Front panels of the system are a two-way process that enable the user to interact with and make the customer know about the task performing capabilities. Easy to use system will help organization to get on the first step of the e-business process.

Extent up to which the customer can use satisfying his/her specific needs effectively and efficiently determine usability of the system from CRM perspective. Usability of the customer-centric systems differs from organization to organization. Customer satisfaction in the realm of CRM results from the comfort level and acceptability of the computer system provided to its customers.

CRM atmosphere encompasses user centered design processes that focus on understanding the user at first and then involving him/her into the design, development and evaluation of that system. User-centric design from CRM point of view encompasses the following four activities:-

- i) Understand and specify the context of usage.
- ii) Specify the customer and organizational requirements.
- iii) Produce design solutions.
- iv) Evaluate these design solutions against requirements.

Sequence of these interactions varies depending upon the customer needs. After indentifying the customer and his needs, consideration must be given to local needs and cultural settings.

E-commerce users interact with sites to conduct transactions. It is done with the help of customer interface which differs from the user interface in the sense if focuses mainly on the task of conveying information in a cognitive way. It therefore must possess such elements that attract a visitor to stay and become a loyal customer and also return for a repeat business. The concept of usability and the HCI (Human Computer Interface) design principles of simplicity, visibility and feedback provisions help the e-business organizations on the design of effective user-system interaction.

Website must be designed by taking into consideration the design characteristics like home page, layout, navigation and structure. Local audience environment apart, the website must address global audiences with an eye on the future business expansion plans. Therefore great deal of sensitivity must be brought to the fore to address localization attributes such as address, currency, calendar and time formats (Dates and name formats) etc. In other words, such an attempt for localizing the website must go beyond the visual design of the website.

User-friendly feature of the websites will not serve the cause of CRM technology and strategy if cultural contours of audiences/customers are not addressed adequately and appropriately. Some specific cultural attractors like colours, icons, religious taboos customs, local conventions, beliefs, values biases and dislikes must be identified and given due attention to.

Indian banks Like ICICI and insurance corporations offer wide ranging value addition services to their valued customers apart from the traditional banking and insurance services respectively. Such organizations have to compete against the best companies of the world. Therefore, they need to integrate CRM technologies and interventions ably guided by IT driven hardware.

Whatever attempt is made to attract the customer, the organizations cannot do without exploring CRM technology and fundamentals, in general and making culturally attractive websites.

### **III. LOCALIZATION AND CRM**

From the customer Relationship Management (CRM) point of view, for a localized e-commerce site, the customer's perception to quality of services/products will vary from one culture to another. Moreover, the visual appearance of the website or the cultural attractors corresponding to the service and privacy etc. will also vary from culture to culture. Hence the cultural differences do make an impact on the CRM strategies to be used to refine the e-commerce process. Therefore the technology deployed for the personalization of the e-business websites, identification of the most valuable customers and the need to treat the customers from different cultural background, all these must be discernible and unique. It is precisely because of the fact that perception of good customer service varies from country to country. Stressing merely on sophisticated technology without cultural localization will defeat even the most assiduous CRM efforts.

We can see the challenges faced by e-business in integrating CRM strategies in e-commerce environs the world over. However, following points will help us in discerning this aspect from the Indian e-business perspective:-

a. While attempting to individualize incentive to the Indian customers, it would be prudent to appreciate Indian family bonding. Therefore, offering family oriented incentives that appeal both the men and the women, young and the old will better suited to Indian customers as compared to the customers in western countries where focus is more on individual than on the family.

b. Indians do not have any history of remote buying and have traditionally banked on person to person to contact especially with the local grocer next door for purchasing any thing for them. Therefore, e-commerce, being sort of impersonal, to Indian customers does not come easily to them. They need to be assured and inculcated with a sense of trust so that they feel encouraged to buy online. For the western shoppers, they don't find e-business so strange as they have the history of tele shopping (shopping by ordering on telephone) and made order purchase.

c. India is a language sensitive country and Indians give a lot of preference to those relationships that accrue out of preference to those relationships that accrue out of lingual basis. They talk in Hindi or other regional dialects/ languages yet correspond through English written documents. Hence appropriate mix of Languages must be used to address the Indian customer who will find it more convenient to relate through his own language. Such linguistic predicament as they speak, read, write and do business as well in English language.

d. Due attention must be paid while addressing Indians by first name or by surname. While providing personalized services/messages to the Indian customers, way of addressing must be thought over clearly.

e. Internet usage is also different among different communities and culture because requirements and expectations differ in degree. Indians neither use much internet for conversational purpose nor for getting product information. In western countries, more and more people use internet for product information. Hence e-commerce environs must be designed keeping this aspect in mind.

Considering these five points, it can be safely concluded that cultural factors are very much relevant all across the CRM cycle of an e-commerce environment, right from preparation stage to the transaction and post – transaction (Retention phase) stage.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Internet has turned out to be not merely a tool of communication but also become a place to conduct e-commerce transactions globally. Organizations therefore need to be sensitive towards cultural and social aspects of the countries in which they wish to do business with Apart from adhering generic HCI (Human-Computer Interface) design principles and usability guidelines for the internet usage, e-commerce environment needs to be localized from a CRM perspective. Such a perspective should not merely be a language translations or other symbolic acts but be a genuine attempt to mark or attract the customer who is globally scattered. Such parameters must be embedded into the websites so that these become a favorite and well known virtual haunt for the diverse clientele. Cultural differences impacting the choice of the products or service must be tide over by localizing CRM strategies. An organization which integrates CRM fundamentals into this basic, customer friendly web designing activity, will become customer or user centric and will be able to meet the requirements of the modern e-commerce business which is expanding day by day. Given the unlimited reach of

internet and its adaptability to the business operations , days are not far when people/customers through CRM interventions will get every product or service customized to the minutest details.

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