Importance of ethical and sustainability policies on the quality of organisational CRM

(BMSW5103-BIRM)

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Introduction

Many Organisations, to conduct their business, are using new technologies to interact with customers and potential customers. And customer relationship management (CRM) can help to build relationships and streamline processes, by giving some companies the possibility to increase sales, improve customer service and profitability by enhancing best practices through ethical and sustainability policies. Principally by producing items in good quality in order to satisfy consumer requirements, to meet the needs and customers' expectations throughout, reliability, good functionality, durability, good design, consistency, good after sales service and value for money. The aim in this study is to investigate and understand better how ethical and sustainability policies could impact customer experience and also how they impact on the quality of CRM. In the first paragraph the study will be based on the discussion of ethics and sustainability policies and its components for three broadbands suppliers (Sky, Virgin and Talk Talk) and how they can impact customers. After the discussion will talk about quality and its components before finishing the last paragraph by analysing three quality models/theories (Juran model, Crosby model and Deming model) that may assist improving the CRM of an organisation like TOYOTA.

1- Ethical policies of Sky, Virgin, Talk talk broadbands and their impacts on customer experience

As we know, internet has become a utility like electricity or water. In UK the market is dominated by some suppliers giving broadband internet connection to a large number of homes. And, among those companies Sky Virgin and Talk talk supply the well-known broadband packages. In this chapter the study will focus on ethics and its components of those different broadband suppliers and how they impact customers. Because according to White (2001), in the world several ethical issues are noticed in many businesses concerning environment, product liability, illegal activities, child labour etc...

A-1 Sky Ethics and its components

In the marketplace, marketing ethics addresses some principles and standards that define an acceptable conduct which protect consumers from unethical practices by businesses throughout laws and regulations (CIM, 2016). In this way, Sky has a policy of conducting its affairs including integrity, honesty, forthrightness and fairness by protecting the personal information collected from customers, employees and all the individuals. By also avoiding conflict of interest of employees involved in activities or relationships that interfere with the performance of the employees' job responsibilities or duty of loyalty(sky.com). Sky is committed to ensure financial responsibility by maintaining the integrity of the company's accounting and communicating responsibly in accurate and honest way, to compete fairly and do not accept offer or a bribe and having ethical relationships with suppliers and other business partners. Corporate opportunities avoid directors and employees do not use their position, their information or their property for personal gain. Also, discriminations based on race, culture, gender, age, physical ability, religion, sexuality, family status, political belief is prohibited

Like many companies which creates ethics programme to train employees to act ethically, Sky has a code acknowledgement where all employees, officers and directors are required to read and understand about the human rights, labour rights and the health and safety.

A-2 Sky ethical policies and its impacts on customers

Applying its own value system to determine what is and what is not ethical, Sky has put in place some usage policies regarding ethics in distribution, ethics in promotion and ethics in pricing. that is why the company has created an acceptable use of policy (AUP) avoiding customers to use its broadband illegally to store, transmit, receive, send, post, store, distribute, upload or download any materials or data violating any laws, promoting or encouraging illegal or socially unacceptable behaviour(sky.com).

Also, Sky calls his customer do not use its broadband to violate its network security and by fixing a usage caps linked of data that people can upload and download each month. But, despite the transparency on ethical policies, many complaints are received from customers. Some of them related to the service itself where the company want to charge more money for an upgrade service or for a delayed broadband upgrade scheduled days before, causing difficulties in this pandemic period where a lot of people are working at home. Sometimes, customers complaint about difficulties they have when they want to cancel their contract even with months' notice by continuing to receive collection agencies to take payment in arrears. And this is not embracing ethical values like honesty, fairness, respect, transparency and citizenship which help to build relationships and enhance consumer confidence.

B-1 Virgin Ethics and its components

In many companies, marketing ethics refers to standards of conduct and moral values. And Virgin media, one of the world's largest international TV and broadband company has established some ethical policies to provide guidelines for ethical conducts for his employees, to avoid their personal values conflict with employees' ethical standards and also for their suppliers to make sure they have the right policies and processes to comply with these principles(virginmedia.com) with laws and regulations. Virgin is fighting against modern slavery or human trafficking in its operations and supply chains, and also against child labour. Also, Virgin is trying always to treat employees with respect and dignity, so they should never be abused, harassed or intimidated and have freedom of Association by joining trade unions and employment relationships. Working hours and health and safety are appropriate policies and procedures for all employees. The business ethics allows the company to avoid for all the staff and suppliers do not take part in any form of bribery or corruption, and not be associated with any group that supports acts of violence, terrorism or discrimination (virginmedia.com).

B-2 Virgin Ethical policies and its impacts on customers

Sometimes it is very difficult to discuss the relationships between ethics and customers, and the impacts of ethical policies on customers. And the question is really to know if an organisation can influence customers in the way the business is done by creating a trust in developing strong ethical principles? With the Virgin code of conduct which all employees, vendors, suppliers and directors must adhere, it is also necessary to build a business relationship on a foundation of trust.

Like the other broadband suppliers, virgin uses AUP (acceptable use of policy) to outline the principles that govern the use of the systems, services and equipment provided by the company, by taking action for any abuse on the services and suspected violations on servers and networks. Customers are also responsible for the security of the information sent and services used through Virgin. And with a customer service based on consumer complaints code of practice, the company is facing many complaints from customers linked in many times to a slow Internet speeds, an unreliable internet correction and a long waiting times for engineers. Indeed, intermittent connection problems and some days without connection are showed a poor service pushing lot of customers to break their contracts for other competitors. the high price is also one of the biggest issues for Virgin.

C-1 Talk Talk ethics and its components

According to Ferrel (2016) to maintain a connection with stakeholders, employees and suppliers, businesses need to be guided by principles such as norms, values, ethical and unethical practices. In this sense, talk talk has created a broadband speed code which aims to govern the information given when the customer signs up with the company and protection about minimum speed quoted during sign up. And also, by defining the conditions under which customers can terminate their contract without penalty. the company adheres to all applicable codes of practice, including advertising and consumer protection regulations(talktalk.com) and not containing any false or misleading information about price, value or service. Talk talk insists on consumer protection and other legal requirements by helping with the queries regarding products, billing and tariffs and possibility to cancel the contract without any cost or charges at any time.

Talk talk has also a robust anti-bribery and corruption policies reminding all his employee's laws to ensure and identify instances of bribery or corruption and how to report concerns. Modern slavery is also banned within Talk talk and supply chains.

C-2 Talk talk ethical policies and its impacts on customers.

Throughout its policies, Talk talk tries to treat customers ethically by not exceeding customers' expectations, including an excellent customer service and quality products. This, even ensuring the business to meet the customer needs, make also the customer feeling valued and appreciated to reach informed decisions by having accurate product and service information. And marketing decisions attract customers through a good publicity and get a good reputation. This is a customer value which is a perception of the balance between benefits received from a product or service and the sacrifice made to experience those benefit (Battle and Maklanm,2015).

But many complaints from customers like for example a slower broadband than promised, a price increase versus guaranteed price, an unreachable customer service are noticed. And for its defence, the company calls the priority of its employee's wellbeing due to Covid 19 by reducing its team available and trying to help over the phone.

2- Sustainability policies of Sky, Virgin and Talk talk broadbands and their impacts on customer experience.

For a long time, companies think only about profit but now they introduce many changes regarding sustainability in their policy which calls for socially and environmentally responsible actions. According to Thiele (2016), sustainability is considered as meeting present needs in the way to conserve future welfare for next generations. This concern for eliminating waste, not damaging society and not polluting environment. In this way, Sky, Virgin and Talk Talk are always searching to achieve sustainable marketing goals of long-term consumer and business welfare.

A-1 Sky sustainability policies and its components.

In its sustainability policies, sky is working to reduce the environmental impact throughout its business strategy. And in the 2020 targets, the company has focused its attention on energy, travel, waste and water by reducing 55% on carbon intensity and 39% in business travel emissions (www.sky.com). That is why Sky has created also positive change on the issues of environmental destruction in rainforests and plastic pollution in the seas, and want to

become net zero carbon by 2030. The aim is to protect the planet by giving people ideas to cut single-use plastic and increasing the recycling rates. The company is making also design improvement to refurbish more products and replace some parts without dismantling set-top boxes by reducing the amount of energy consume. This means that Sky is involved in pollution prevention, not just cleaning up waste but also eliminating or minimising waste before it is created, product stewardship by minimising the pollution from production and all-environmental impact through full product life cycle. And finally design for environment by thinking design products that are easier to recover, reuse, or recycle(www.sky.com)

A-2 Sky sustainability and its impacts on customers

Sustainability gives now the right to consume in a way that will preserve the world for future generations of consumers. In another words, customers have the right to influence product practices in ways that will improve the quality of life. That is why, studying sustainable consumer behaviour, Belz (2009) found that the products selected and used by consumers are disposed of in pursuit of their individual sustainability goals. The Sky's strategy concerning manufacturing and logistics, energy consumption, waste management allows it to cut costs and save customer money.

By putting the customer at the centre or consumer-oriented marketing, by creating value for the customer or customer-value marketing, by finding better ways to make products called innovative marketing, and by targeting customers wants and interests called societal marketing, the company has developed business actions towards sustainable marketing to reach and promote consumer actions about sustainability.

B-1 virgin sustainability and its components.

Virgin, in its purpose wants to use its power's brand, its people and its connectivity to create positive change in society(virgin.com). The company as a plan with three big promises the future related the building connections for people, communities and environment. The first promise is to build a business where no one is left behind and all people and customers feel they belong. The second promise is to bring people and communities closer together by creating a sense of belonging and reducing loneliness. And the last and not least important promise is to make a zero waste and zero carbon future faster. Indeed, Virgin shrinks its impact on the planet by using the potential of connectivity to reach this goal by the end of 2025(virgin.com)

And to achieve the UK's carbon and waste targets, the company focuses on a plan to reduce energy demand in technical estate and using more efficient equipment, to reduce vehicle fuel consumption through driver monitoring software and more efficient vans, to work toward zero office waste and cutting single-use plastic waste. And to install good environmental management principles through ISO 14001 certified environmental management system.

B-2 Virgin sustainability and its impacts on customers.

as we know, sustainability refers today as a complete moral system of cultural values, beliefs and attitudes connected to a sense of responsibility. consumers today are confronted by immediate sustainability challenges helped by media to get a visible representation of the scale of the plastic waste problem and a perceived need for collective action to solve that. And Virgin has putted on place some programmes to tackle social isolation, and a focus on issues like mental health and reducing single-used plastics. Throughout its sustainability strategy, the company is using its business, its brand, its people to create positive change for the customers and the communities, by improving the sustainability performance of every new customer product, and growing the business without increasing carbon footprint by doing what is good four people, customers and the environment.

C-1 Talk talk sustainability policies and its components.

nowadays, telecommunications are considered has big consumers of energy, increasing climates changes issues. That is why Talk talk, like many broadband providers has making many efforts to reduce the use of energy and CO2 intensity by 80%, tracking carbon emissions from all sources. In this order, the company has a commitment to increase energy efficiency which is becoming more important and significant in coming years (Clausen, 2009) and has considered its data centre footprint by investing on energy efficient technology such as alternative cooling, low energy lighting, high efficiency power systems, removal of legacy IT hardware and the transfer of platforms and applications to cloud- based solution (talktalk.com).

Externally, Talk talk focuses on reducing the consume of energy when delivering its products through the Fibre to the Premise (FTTP).

C-2 Talk talk sustainability policies and its impacts on customers.

In present days, consumers want socially sustainable products. Indeed, informed, people are more inclined about environmental impact of the products they buy by spending more on ethical and sustainable items. Because now consumers are giving real importance on climate change, human rights, pollution and resource scarcity orienting lot of businesses to act eco-friendly, green responsible and sustainable. About how sustainability can improve customer experience, Dente (2017) think that businesses need to analyse and improve how they interact with customers to maximise their long-term success.

In 2011, the company switched its procurement of electricity, and started using 100% of consumable units from renewable sources, particularly on sustainable paper and lower ink coverage on consumer direct marketing and bills. Also, engaging with customers on sustainability, talk talk has introduced an initiative to reward customers who return routers which are going after to be refurbished and safely recycled.

3- Quality models/theories and their impacts on organisations CRM.

In this chapter we will describe what is quality and what are its different components. And also, analysing three models or theories of quality, we will see how organisations can improve their customer relationship management.

A- Quality models/theories and their components.

Before going further, let see what is quality. Many people think that quality is a process of building and sustaining relationships. According to Pryor, et al (1998) quality refers to the extent to which processes, products, services, and relationships are free from defects, constraints and items which do not added value for the customer. Indeed, four main components of a quality management processes are noticed: first there is quality planning which identify needs and processes and allowing business to determine the strategy, to create the framework and to find high risks of possible problems occurring or becoming major. After we have quality control which is a process to verify and maintain quality in a product or service throughout a proper use of equipment, continued inspection and corrective action. Then quality improvement which seeks a new level of performance by giving opportunities to improve management processes and keep any organisation to focus

on its goals and priorities. And finally, we have quality assurance considered as processes that ensure production quality meets the requirements of customers. This allows companies to focus on continuous improvement of product and services with the involvement of all the workforce.

Involving those different components, we are going to discuss first Three quality models such as Juran quality model, Deming quality model and Crosby quality model. And after we will analyse critically those three theories and how they can assist some organisations like for example TOYOTA; a Japanese car manufacturer on improving the CRM.

A-1 Juran’s quality model and its components.

Created by Joseph M Juran, a naturalised American born on 1904, engineer and management consultant, and considered one of the foremost experts on quality in the world. Indeed, Juran quality model fits all functions and levels, and all products and service which giving it a great way of thinking about quality. In 1986 was presented the Juran trilogy which become the basis for most quality management best practices around the world (Juran,1995). Juran’s theory includes the quality trilogy and the quality roadmap.

Quality trilogy consists of three processes: quality planning first referring to quality design, the creation of new product, service, process...with 100% defect free by preventing some unplanned event such as a power failure, process breakdown, or human error. Secondly, quality control is used to prevent things from getting worse. Quality control is a process through which a business seeks to ensure that product quality is maintained or improved. It consists on testing products and determine any needs for corrective actions in the manufacturing process. And at the end quality improvement, as the third element of the trilogy, helps to release creativity and innovation by solving complex issues and focusing more on outcomes.

The Juran’s quality roadmap is used for product and process development to understand better customer requirements, customer needs, by optimising product design and by transferring the process to operations. However, there are some people who are cons of using the Juran’s trilogy. For them, the program does not work for all companies, mostly those for example without proper personnel who know the statical processes to reach quality control and companies with strict policies which lead to employees suffering because there can be high level of priority (Maldonado,2017).

A-2 Crosby’s quality model and its components.

Called also Crosby’s cost of quality, this theory is defined by Philip B Crosby in his book “quality is free” and contains two components: the cost of good quality and the cost of poor quality. That is why Crosby argues that businesses should focus on attention to customer requirements and prevention of products defects (Crosby,1979). This means the emphasis is prevention not inspection, and cure to be able to achieve conformance to requirements. And Crosby’s approach to quality is that the cost of non-conformance equals the cost of not doing it right at first time but also, routing out any defect in processes (Crosby,1979). Within 14 steps, this approach of quality needs a management commitment to adapt quality improvement with profit improvement. A quality improvement team from each department of function to make corrective action where is necessary by doing an evaluation of cost of quality through training to make employees aware of the cost to the company about defects. However, some people are making criticisms to Crosby zero defects theory because they find it so difficult to achieve. There will be always errors people cannot prevent for product manufacturing or software design. According to Suarez (1992), Crosby’s “zero defects programme” has viewed by some critics has merely a motivational programme with only short-term benefits.

A-3 Deming’s quality model and its components

Theorised by Dr William Edwards Deming, an American engineer, this approach of quality model focuses on improvements in quality leading to lower costs and higher productivity because they result in less rework, few mistake fewer delays and better use of time and materials (Deming,1993). That is why Deming has developed the system of profound knowledge to describe the work of some companies, like for example in Japan where is philosophy has allowed to introduce quality systems responsible of the industrialisation of the country after second world war. The system of profound knowledge is made up for four components: appreciation for a system, knowledge about variation, theory of knowledge and knowledge of psychology, and help the transformation of individual efforts inside their organisations to improve the outcomes in quality. To implement this system, Deming has created 14 points like for example creating a constant purpose toward improvement, stop depending on inspections, using training on the job etc... adopted by many companies and are considered an important guide to build customer awareness, to reduce variation and to foster continuous change on improvement. And also, by identifying 7 “deadly diseases” like for example lack of constancy of purpose, evaluation of performance, merit rating, or annual review etc... that stand in the way of transformation.

But some people find organisational issues related to this model concerning individual worker performance on its emphasis on teamwork, and the gap between quality expects and workers about quality determination work. Also, the model is divided into four phases that form a circular, repetitive process: plan by identifying the problems, do as a test phase, check by comparing collect results with objectives set, an act by adapting and implementing the plan. A specific definition of the theory can lead to incorrect use, and changes must also be planned over longer periods of time (Gartner,1988).

B- impact of quality theories/ models in improving CRM on organisations.

In this chapter, the study is regarding how Juran, Crosby and Deming quality theories can assist organisations to improve CRM. Specifically, how Toyota, a Japanese car manufacturer can be assisted by those three models to improve managing relationships and interactions with customers and potential customers, and business relationships, to grow business.

B-1 Impact of Juran quality model in improving Toyota CRM.

Implemented since 2003, Toyota marketing strategy is focused on relationship with customers. That is why no Toyota product is sold before it has been carefully manufactured and fully tested in the commercial trial, with completely satisfactory results (toyota.com). And to ensure customer safety and to improve and maintain quality, the company tries to apply in different ways the quality trilogy developed by Juran.

This consists on project planning and design by performing a design review and approved to reach the target quality level after a deep exam of a responsible business division. Also, applying quality control, Toyota through its quality assurance team ensure that every vehicle from its factories meets the standards for safety and quality after 2000 different checks before delivered to the customer. And to foster quality improvement, self-audit system has been introduced to identify deficiencies and providing quality education on items that should be reinforced.

B-2 Impact of Crosby quality model in improving Toyota CRM.

By using Crosby quality model in improving its CRM, Toyota provides training and solutions applicable to the work done in its production lines and by transferring learning to the workplace through coaching (toyota.com).

Also, the company is making great efforts to prevent the occurrence of defects in all manufactured products by improving work procedures and processes, and to avoid the recurrence of the defect in subsequent models. Toyota focuses its efforts on vehicles that meet customer expectations throughout consumers needs and how products are used by them. Always, referring to this model and through the CRM, the company is gathering information within customer life cycle and existing customer's feedback to take further actions regarding customised offer by knowing customer need and want; where and when they want and changing customer buying behaviour.

In a world of consummation, to be competitive, manufacturers have to produce quality in short period of time to meet demand and at a cheaper price than others (Ihuoma, 2018).

B-3 Impact of Deming quality model in improving Toyota CRM.

In October 2009, Toyota has recalled 3,8 million vehicles in USA with a problem linked to the poorly placed or incorrect floor mats under the driver's seat which would create an uncontrolled acceleration. Other models were also recalled after report of unintended acceleration from sticky gas pedals (toyota.com). Those issues affected a lot public perceptions about the company long record of building reliable and low defects vehicles. This occurred during the moment when competitors were producing better and better cars. So, by using Deming model, Toyota improved in quality through benchmarking; a tool constantly used to assess and measure products against others intervening in the same business environment elsewhere in the world, to ascertain facts and provide recommendations for coherent development objectives for improvement (Boone & Williams, 2005).

During those moments of business crisis, the company faced big losses and could also be touched on its trust and reputation built for years.

According to Deming (2006), advancement in quality produces resultant progression in productivity by decreasing costs, errors and delays. This means productivity and profitability are linked.

Conclusion

During all this report, we are trying to discuss what ethics and sustainability are for three broadbands suppliers in UK and the impacts on customers throughout their policies. And, focusing more and more on customers, with the development of IT, those broadbands suppliers CRM are evolved on quality by adapting a relationship-oriented approach and by targeting on long-term customer relationships. That is what Kotler (2017) called the overall process of building and maintaining profitable customer relationships by delivering customer value and satisfaction.

And, in this way, ethical and sustainability policies are playing an important role for those broadband's CRM to reach the objective of profitable and long-term customer relationships, based on customer needs which introduce big changes in marketing, sales and service.

Indeed, it is suitable for those companies to implement Total quality management (TQM) based on quality models which could help to focus on improvement that prevents errors from occurring and giving some advantages regarding cost reduction, productivity improvement, customer satisfaction, defection reduction and increase of employee morale

Recommendations

After having developed and highlighted some interesting points about ethics and sustainable policies for Sky, Virgin and talk talk broadband suppliers, the study needs to do

recommendations for those companies to improve the quality of their CRM systems. And with the changing world, where people demand more green products, those organisations are doing great efforts on recycling, reducing waste, and carbon emissions... to preserve the environment.

However, there are lot of things to do on code of conduct by making their business more ethical, because ethics policies could be linked to the improvement of productivity.

So, Sky broadband needs to ameliorate its service, and respect more certain values like honesty, fairness, transparency.... Regarding Virgin, the service and long- waiting time for engineers and poor connection announced on contract must be improved. And talk talk has to improve customer service by being more reachable, ceasing price increase than price guaranteed and by giving right broadband promised.

And to reach all this, CRM systems of those companies have to improve ethical behaviour for all employees, and managers have to support the code of conduct policies edited. And at the end, training sessions are needed to prepare people and particularly managers to consider implications on business decisions.

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