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Title of report: **Understanding and engaging in the customer experience**

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Executive Summary

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems are the focal point of organisation efficiency and customer engagement. When a CRM system breaks down or is not aligned with the organisation's ethical policy, developments need to be implemented to enhance customer relationship. The researcher's investigation outlines the customer experience of organisations based on ethical and sustainability policies. Corporate Social Responsibility demonstrates transparency and shows the organisation in a positive light. To sustain in today's environment organisations must deliver in a responsible manner. Organisations need to be aware of actions that result in consequences. Changes in the CRM system will create a better customer relationship.

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1.0 Terms of Reference

This report has been requested by RJ Watkins & Sons. The date requested is the 18th June 2019. The purpose of the report is to research and analyse the understanding and engagement in customer experience. The report is compiled by the senior consultant editor of RJ Watkins & Sons. The report will discuss and investigate the customer experience based on organisations' ethical and sustainability policy. The researcher will look in to depth a variety of models/theories that will assist in improving customer relationship management. The report will draw a conclusion to highlight the findings and offer recommendations to further improve customer relationship management. The submission date of the report is 5th July 2019.

2.0 Procedure

2.1 Procedures adopted to prepare the report include books, websites, journals, newspapers and articles.

3.0 Findings

3.1 Definition of Ethics

“Ethical behaviour is behaviour that is morally accepted as ‘good’ and ‘right’ as opposed to ‘bad’ and ‘wrong’ in a particular social context” (French et al. 2011, p. 40).

Ethics play importance in managerial behaviour. Organisations need to represent all acts in accordance with moral and ethical standards. Ethical behaviour should conform to both legal requirements and the broader social moral codes. A person’s adherence to moral codes can differ and is a subject to debate (French et al. 2011). An organisation shapes the trustworthiness of daily conducts and their conduct has consequences on how the organisation will be judged (Kaptein, 1998).

3.2 Definition of Sustainability

Sustainability is defined as

“utilising resources to meet current or present generation’s needs without endangering future generation” and “managers should promote operational activities that achieve economic objectives which achieves both social and environmental goals simultaneously” (Canadian Center of Science and Education, 2019, p. 119).

In context organisational sustainability is durability, ability to survive (Hoque and Parker, 2015). Sustainability is linked to concepts such as ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ (CSR) and the accountability of managing its social, environmental and wider economic impact which would maximise benefits for the organisation (Sustainable Workplaces, 2008). Sustainability is integration of environmental, social and economic performances (Canadian Center of Science and Education, 2019).

3.3 Definition of Quality

“Customer satisfaction is the intangible aspects of quality which customer expresses about the global properties and characteristics which allow a product, or a service, to satisfy the customer’s explicit as well as implicit needs. Customer satisfaction is a result of a good communicative relation which serves to manage commitments and breakdowns within a customer/supplier chain (Schael, 1998, p. 14).

To establish institute process controls is to recognise a quality management process. W. Edwards Deming’s approach to total quality management (TQM) is the notion to continuously improve based on statistical analysis of the organisation's operations. Participation of all levels of management are to be involved in the quality programmes such as:

- Improve supervisions
- Train employees
- Retain employees in new skills
- Create a structure which pushes the boundaries of the quality programme.

Emphasis is placed on learning, consistency of purpose, training which are all of importance in organisations (French et al. 2011).

3.4 Impact on CRM Systems

3.4.1 Definition of CRM

CRM is described as a set of organisational and technological mechanisms intended to improve market instability through various understanding in knowledge of environmental and market variables in anticipation of fulfilling customer needs. To achieve these goals, it is paramount to strategise new processes and to create systems which are consistent in supporting customer interaction through all channels (Rajola, 2003).

3.4.2 Ethics

Ethics are implemented in to the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system due to unethical behaviours that some organisations exhibit which affects and undermines society. This crisis involves all stakeholders from customers, employees to government officials. Whether it is a small run business or an international organisation, some have been involved to a

degree of illegal or unethical behaviour such as risking business ventures with employees' retirement funds to exposing the workforce to hazardous working conditions and unrealistic expectations on performance (Sims, 2017).

3.4.3 Front Page Test

According to Jennings (2009), Front-Page-of-the-Newspaper Test is a simple ethical model which requires an organisation (decision maker) to imagine how a reporter would describe the actions on a front-page of a newspaper. An organisation should contemplate any business acts and whether the decision maker would be willing to see this act described by an informed and critical reporter on the front page. Organisations should avoid not just activities that pass legal requirements but also acts which people would deem offensive. The purpose of this test is for organisations to take a step back from the company's setting where all decisions are made and view acts and business choices from the perspectives of an outsider.

3.4.4 The Golden Rule Ethical Test

According to Gensler (1996), the golden rule requires that a person should treat others as they would want to be treated themselves. The GR Theorem (Golden Rule Theorem) requires the person to imagine themselves in the exact place of the other person on the receiving end of the action. This ethical test is essentially a probe to be consistent in treatment of another regardless of position (organisation or customer). U.S. President Woodrow Wilson observed that responsibility is akin to opportunity. Maxwell (2007) states that this is because a person of responsibility can be entrusted to choose the right thing over the easy thing. Ethical management requires to ask three core questions:

1. Is it legal?
2. Is it balanced?
3. How would one feel about themselves?

Maxwell (2007) states that to be accounted as trustworthy, the Golden-Rule the organisation must create is a predictable environment which would demonstrate peoples' confidence in them as consumer would feel that the organisation is consistently doing the right thing.

3.4.5 Sustainability

Organisations in today's environment are required to deploy and design customer centric strategies to sustain in the market in the long run.

Organisations have recognised the importance of consistency in service quality delivery to the customers for long run sustainability. In order to retain customers, customer relationship highlights the identification of customer needs and finding means to satisfy them. This will achieve high customer revenues and profitability which demands matching customer expectations with satisfaction. CRM will allow narrowing the gap between organisation and its customers (Shanthi, 2013).

3.4.6 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development (SD) is the concept that plays a important role in business and industry of the 21st century. Industry sector is responsible for appreciable material flows within human society as well as the exchange of material and energy with the environment (Krajnc and Glavic, 2005, pp. 189-208).

The impact of industry can be evaluated in the “triple bottom line”, encountering all aspects of sustainability. These are:

- Social responsibility
- Environmental performance
- Economic contribution.

The organisations need to implement activities to address sustainable development, via the creation of goods and services which are:

- conserving energy/natural resources
- Non-polluting
- Economically viable, safe and healthy for employees, consumers and communities
- Socially rewarding for all workers.

(Kranjnic and Glavic, 2005).

3.4.7 Corporate Social Responsibility

Henriques and Richardson (2013) state that, The Triple Bottom-Line (TBL) agenda is the responsibility of the corporate board and the appropriate balance between shareholders and stakeholders in terms of who has a say on how the organisation is run such as issues on pay packets etc. The better the corporate governance, the greater the chance of a genuine sustainable

capitalism. Corporate sustainability revolves risks associated with climate change, processes in product design and the design of corporations (value chains).

3.4.8 Quality

Quality of service is a performance or act performed for a customer. Service is a critically important part of most organisations and service is the core product when delivering to distributors and customers. It is essential for organisations to understand that their efforts to improve service should be focused on. They need to establish what elements are important to customers, improve and fulfil them (Buttle, 2009).

3.4.9 Eight Dimensions of Quality

The eight dimensions of quality capture the meaning of quality which is critically important in organisational success. Understanding on the meaning of quality is a good step in managing quality effectively. Quality determines a product or service which has higher durability and reliability than a product or service of lower durability and reliability. Quality has been characterised to have eight attributes which satisfy the dimensions that determine implied needs. These are attributes such as performance of product's primary operating characteristics to the functionality and reliability in terms of durability (measure of product life). Conformance to a required standard is paramount and aesthetics will appeal to the customer (Griffin, 2008).

3.5 Organisations CRM System

3.5.1 Ethics, Sustainability and Manufacturing

Primark has published a list of all the suppliers that been used to manufacture clothes. The list consists of addresses of over 1,000 factories in 31 countries along with the number of employees working at the factories. This move came after a petition was signed by over 70,000 consumers asking them to publicly share information on suppliers. A campaign #GoTransparent led by a coalition of Human Rights, Clean Clothes Campaign and International Labour Rights Forum have called for more transparency. Though Primark were hesitant in disclosing information due to competition have now complied with the public in seeking transparency (Singh, 2018). The need for compliancy was due to an investigation which found that Indian garment suppliers were enforcing slave labour by holding female workers captive. Primark accepted responsibility to

improve employment conditions and further rectify issues through collaboration with mills (Retail Insight, 2018).

Primark (2019) regard themselves as an ethical organisation as they say they are committed to:

- Good working conditions in the factories where products are manufactured
- Paid a fair wage
- People are treated decently.

They say they are very strict and selective on where they place their orders who manufacture for them. Factories used are vetted to international standards set out in the Primark Code of Conduct. This conduct implements areas such as pay, health, safety and employment policies. Once approved they allow their Ethical Trade and Environmental Sustainability Team of more than 100 experts to source key countries to monitor compliance. Each factory is audited once a year to monitor standards. The team also believe that factory management and workers should know about the standards expected and an awareness on why these standards matter creating an environment where workers are more likely to adhere to the guidelines stipulated. The team also provide training and programmes that would benefit the factories reach their full potential and address local relevant issues. Primark (2019) say they make real effort in reducing their impact on the planet where possible. The Environmental Sustainability Team cover the raw materials such as how cotton is sourced, the manufacturing process in factories and the environmental impact to the efficiency of running of Primark stores and they are fully committed to recycling. All these initiatives are in place to make a difference. Primark have demonstrated commitment through:

- The use of brown paper bags by customers
- Longstanding partnership with children's charity Newlife where unsold clothes are donated, reducing the number of clothes ending up in landfills.

Other initiatives in showing progress in tackling sustainability challenges include:

- Reviewing the type of chemicals used on dying materials (Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals programme)

- Working with industry-wide Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) to improve supply chain sustainability.

3.5.2 Fishbone Framework – Cause and Effect Analysis

According to Wilson (1993) the Fishbone Framework aids the process in which the root cause of the issue is determined and identify where and why a process is not working. The solution (head of the spine) for Primark is the CRM system in satisfying the needs of the customer in wanting to shop in an ethical and sustainable organisation where good working conditions are met (Primark, 2019). The next step is to identify the factors that may be the problem (skeleton of the fish). The researcher has identified that the factors are:

- Site – Primark have many suppliers (Primark, 2019), some who have not complied with the Primark Code of Conduct, ethical and moral conduct (Singh, 2018). This had let to a breakdown of CRM where customers felt dissatisfied with the service (Retail Insight, 2018).
- People – Consumers have led petitions (Retail Insight 2018) due to Primark's lack of transparency. In order to maintain retention of customers, the full disclosure of suppliers is essential (Buttle, 2009).
- Procedures – Primark have undertaken initiatives to combat issues of working conditions (Primark, 2019; Retail Insight, 2018; Singh, 2018) by monitoring factories annually. Primark also ensure all factory management adhere to standards set. Primark also provide training programmes to help with guidelines (Primark).
- Environment – To fully demonstrate compliancy in reducing waste (Primark, 2019), Primark have taken initiatives such as donating unsold products. The Environmental Sustainable Team are in charge of raw materials and are committed to recycling.

3.5.3 Ethics, Sustainability and Retail

John Lewis (Employee Ownership Association, 2017 and John Lewis Partnership, 2018) is a business whose ethics involves valuing the happiness and satisfaction of the employees (partners) who work for them to the success of the company. Moral normative ethics such as sharing power of the running of the business with all partners gives them the opportunity to feedback and challenge management performance. The advantage of being served by

owners of the business creates an authentic service (Marketing Week, 2014). John Lewis recognise the hard work of the employees, the dedication and focus in delivering a great service in creating a value led experience for the customers such as Experience Desks at John Lewis playing the roles as advocates (John Lewis Partnership, 2018). The partnership aims to retain employees who the organisation believe are people with ability and integrity (My Customer, 2018). The success of John Lewis is due to reasons that the products on offer are of high quality and responsibly produced and the excellent service provided by the partners and the extraordinary relationship with customers. Inspirational products play a key role at John Lewis as the products are own-brand and exclusive to John Lewis (My5, 2019). To demonstrate retailer transparency, John Lewis released its Human Rights and Modern Slavery report and a full published list of factories (John Lewis Partnership, 2018). To create trust amongst customers products are ethically sourced. John Lewis have implemented three goals:

- Further strengthening brand appeal to customers
- Creating better jobs for better performing partners on better pay
- Strengthening financial position.

Furthermore, John Lewis have embedded a Corporate Responsibility Framework which outlines aims to:

- Source and sell with integrity
- Unlock partner potential
- Deliver more with less.

The partnership has announced that all own labelled packaging will be recyclable and compostable by 2025 (John Lewis Partnership, 2018). The suppliers used are a strong and trusted supply chain who responsibly manufacture products. Community relationships are maintained by investment locally and helping tackle the issues facing communities they serve.

3.5.4 John Lewis and The Customer Loyalty Matrix

To improve quality John Lewis have placed their CRM system in to the apostle/loyalist bracket. Apostles demonstrate super loyalty and are satisfied with the products and services. (Cartwright, 2003) whereby offering high quality products. The promise, 'Never knowingly undersold', means John Lewis will match the price. This promise does not mean the prices are the cheapest

but rather demonstrating the need not to shop around (John Lewis & Partners, 2019). There are some products that will be bought repeatedly by customers, this could be due to pricing, quality of product or the fact that it cannot be found elsewhere. John Lewis's objectives are to retain and deepen relationships with old customers and attracting new customers. This is done by listening to the needs of customers and responding swiftly. Customer feedback on prices, flexible shopping hours and the information provided on the sourcing of products, including ethical sourcing and reducing carbon footprint has attracted new brand loyal customers while retaining old customers who share the same values (John Lewis Partnership, 2018).

3.5.5 Ethics, Sustainability and Service Sector

Yorkshire Building Society (YBS) is owned by members who are customers of the Society. Members benefit by being offered practical solutions and empathy throughout the different stages of life therefore the organisation is run responsibly and sustainability in such a way where employees and partners would be proud. The building society aim to leave a positive impact on society and the environment. CRM is improved through an achievement of enabling 6,960 homes be bought by first time buyers. This has encouraged more people to put trust in YBS and start saving from earnings (Yorkshire Building Society, 2018).

3.5.6 Nine Parts to Juran's Quality 'Route Map'

Juran (2005) states that developing a product that has taken in to consideration needs of the customer and focuses on quality is the most fundamental aspect. Offering ways to people to step on the property ladder is looking after the needs of first-time buyers (Yorkshire Building Society, 2018). It is more effective to establish quality from the offset than to rectify mistakes later in the process (Juran, 2005). YBS choose partners, suppliers and corporate clients who share the same purpose, ethics and values (Yorkshire Building Society, 2018). Optimisation of the product to meet the organisation's needs as well as those of the customers should be recognised as a development process. The development, optimisation and testing of a production process (consulting experience) simultaneously is far more effective for organisations whereby consultations of products are developed by research and development staff and passed on to production staff with instructions on how to manufacture it (Juran, 2005). YBS (2018) strive to be leading employer

where colleagues feel valued and respected. The culture has been developed to support and engage all colleagues whilst prioritising wellbeing and promoting a diverse workplace. If the idea of design in manufacturing is fully understood then the process becomes simple and straightforward. The quality 'Route Map' consists of identifying who are the customers and determining the customer's needs. These needs are to be translated to the language of the organisation. The organisation should develop a product that responds to those needs and optimise the product features to meet customer's and organisation's needs (Juran, 2005). YBS (2019) have implemented a Decency and Fairness charter which encourages staff to be more inclusive of people with different backgrounds. These conferences are run to initiate better workplace settings. Furthermore, mortgage packages (product) offered are customised to customer's specific needs (Yorkshire Building Society, 2018).

3.6 'Gaps' within Organisations CRM System

To achieve best practice, Primark need to initiate total transparency in sourcing suppliers who do not enforce child labour and poor working conditions. Campaigns led to UK government stepping into force companies to act responsibly towards the welfare of workers. As a result, customer relationship with Primark was tarnished (The Guardian, 2008). One of the reasons John Lewis (BBC, 2018) dropped in sales is due to keeping up with price match with competitors and price promise which affects margins. High prices affect the customers and spending habits. Yorkshire Building Society have had to voluntarily refund customers for charging incorrect fees for mortgage arrears to demonstrate that they put customers first and take full ownership of the error made (FCA, 2014).

4.0 Conclusion

Ethics, sustainability and value play importance in managerial behaviour. An organisation shapes the trustworthiness through conduct. Accountability and Corporate Social Responsibility demonstrates transparency in customer relationship management (French et al. 2011; Kaptein, 1998; Sustainable Workplaces, 2008). Organisations must engage with customers (CRM) and stakeholders which would show them in a 'good light' and reflect in a positive manner (Sims, 2017). To sustain in today's environment, organisations must deliver consistency and quality in product/service (Shanthi, 2013). Sustainable development would ensure responsible sourcing of materials and preserving

the environment (Krajnc and Glavic, 2005). Primark's biggest issue in engaging customer experience is the suppliers used and issues faced with working conditions (The Guardian, 2008). To rectify and make amendments in retention of public trust, Primark (2019) have implemented Primark Code of Conduct to ensure all factories are following international standards. John Lewis (John Lewis Partnership, 2018) have however devised a CRM system which consists of putting employees (partners) in the heart of the organisation leading to excellent customer experience as staff are more motivated to serve customers with full engagement. The areas of development would be to strategise a price monitoring system to further retain customers (John Lewis & Partners, 2019). Yorkshire Building Society (2018) have captured the attention of first-time buyers by offering practical and useful savings plan ensuring the individual needs of customers are met. YBS (2018 and 2019) have shown an ethical stance by holding conferences and introduced a Decency and Fairness Charter which encouraged inclusion and acceptance of diversity.

5.0 Recommendations

For organisations to survive and engage in customer experience, productive CRM systems need to be implemented. As Primark is considered as cheap fashion, they produce tons of waste which is impacting the environment (Independent, 2019). The materials used should be recyclable, sourced ethically and be of sustainable nature or collected for other uses (The Guardian, 2018). John Lewis profits have slumped due to the pricing strategy. The price promise is simply not enough. This loss in wages (shares) has impacted the employees who are partners. This has resulted in low job satisfaction. A more efficient system needs to be implemented to keep prices low (Financial Times, 2015). Yorkshire Building society, while offering practical solutions to customers must make sure all formalities are understood and no hard-selling tactics takes place. YBS should ensure they are meeting customer needs and stay in line with the requirements requested (This is Money, 2012).

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