

Persbericht  
Oktober 2008

## CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS IN EUROPE: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE FINANCE, TELECOMMUNICATION, AIRLINE, TOUR OPERATOR, CAR AND RETAIL SECTORS

**Currently companies are able to manage and monitor 50% of their customer relationships.**

This summer, Peppers & Rogers Group / Carlson Marketing and InSites Consulting held the Relationship Monitor 2008, a Pan-European survey of 17,000 people about the perception, the effectiveness and the evolution of customer relationships in six big sectors: finance, the automotive sector, telecommunication companies, tour operators, airlines and retail in eight European countries, i.e. Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, France, Sweden, Spain and Romania.

Product, "Value for money" ratio, sales team, delivery, customer service, communication and rewarding are the 7 principal factors analysed in this survey. On the one hand, they can help companies improve their customer relationship using, among others, a method based on four key contact points. On the other hand, they can identify the elements of interest in the eyes of their customers. In the future the "Value for money" ratio in the field of loyalty programmes will become an element which customers in all sectors will increasingly need to take into account.

Another new trend is that customers like to be surprised and want unique experiences. Rather than playing it safe by limiting the risks, companies now offer new products and services that meet everyone's expectations to attract and bind customers. Customer relationships today comprise one-to-one marketing.

### Four fundamental contact points

The Relationship Monitor 2008 is based on four fundamental contact points in the relationship between company and customers. These contact points allow companies to manage and monitor 50% of their customer relationships.

First contact point: the **neutral contact point**, the company has little or no control over the power of the brand in the mind of consumers; ("customer equity").

The second: the **basic contact point** (related to the customer's basic requirements).

The third: the **performance related contact point**.

And finally the **enjoyment related contact point** which allows an excellent relationship to be built with the customer.

### Financial sector: aspire to a better "value for money"

Regarding the **financial services**, all contact points in the field of customer relationship are important. A company is able to set itself apart from its competitors through the services it offers its clients (e.g. via online services, etc.).

The financial sector still has room to improve the value for money.

Banks offering good services to clients in combination with a clear communication policy can set themselves apart from other banks.

### Telecommunication: attractive services in terms of customer relationship

Just like in the financial sector, customers expect their **telephone operator** to work on the 4 contact points. But also the product offers, the daily service (e.g. the reliability of the network and of the

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products/services) and communication are decisive factors for a good customer relationship. The products and services are considered to be important and critical elements if a company active in the telecommunication sector wants to improve its customer relationships.

Making the difference on the market is chiefly about 'customer service' and the notion of 'value for money'.

### **Cars: the importance of an individual service**

The customer relationship in the **automotive sector** is chiefly determined by the everyday driving of the car and by the services sellers offer customers. The customer relationship can be improved on all levels through better services.

### **"Value for money" and services determine customer expectations in the food sector**

With regard to **retailers in the food sector** the diversity of the product range and the shopping experience are important elements in the customer relationship. The lack of basic products can be a negative factor. When the product range is satisfactory, an excellent relationship can be built by improving the services. The "value for money" ratio and services to customers allows companies to stand out in the eyes of customers. Advantages in kind (gifts, vouchers, etc.) appear to be a less decisive factor for retailers in the food sector.

### **When people travel with an airline company, they talk about it!**

For **tour operators and airline companies** the services to customer and customer service are the most decisive factors in terms of loyalty. The tour operators on the European market have recorded similar performances for all contact points (neutral, basic, performance related and enjoyment related). On the other hand, airline companies chiefly set themselves apart in the field of "value for money" and the services offered to customers. The travel sector still has room to improve the services to customers.

### **One-to-one services and offers**

Nowadays, customers increasingly expect to receive services tailored to their needs. In other words, the challenge for companies is to bind customers via one-to-one offers and services. When companies understand why, how and what consumers buy, they can focus on the expectations of customers in 2008. The study of the four contact points allows companies to identify **the needs and expectations of their customers** and **build a real interaction with their customers by offering individual services adapted to every type of customer.**

And finally the Peppers & Rogers Group underlines the need for a better customer experience management, among others by improving the organisation of the customer processes, the IT infrastructure, the corporate culture, etc. Ultimately, the customer is responsible for the value of companies.

It is also important to indicate that not all contact points have the same impact on the relationship with the customer. Its importance varies according to sector and customer type. For instance all contact points have practically the same value for the users of financial services, whereas the product range and the shopping experience (e.g. the delivery) are more important for customers of retailers in the food sector.

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The full results of the Relationship Monitor 2008 are available on request.

**Peppers & Rogers Group** is a management consulting firm, recognised as the world's leading authority and acknowledged thought leader on customer-based strategies and underlying business initiatives. Peppers & Rogers was established in 1993 by Don Peppers and Martha Rogers PhD. Peppers & Rogers Group coined the term 1to1<sup>®</sup> marketing to illustrate the importance of treating different customers differently, and transformed the concepts into practical methodologies driving financial results for companies as well as the strategies. A world leader in the field of management consulting, Peppers & Rogers Group offers its services to customers on 5 continents and it has wide-ranging experience in Europe.

**InSites Consulting** is a leading marketing research company in the field of online market research with a strong international position. It was established as a spin-off of the Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. Via an online panel comprising more than 2,000,000 panel members spread over 25 European countries, both quantitative and qualitative online marketing research is carried out. The head office in Ghent has 80 highly-skilled and experienced employees. InSites Consulting stands for: expertise and consulting, driven by innovation, excellent customer service and quality-oriented.  
More information on [www.insites.eu](http://www.insites.eu).

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<sup>i</sup> 1 Price/quality ratio