

Customer Acquisition Marketing Strategy (CAMS) – A Qualitative Business Framework

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Abstract— The pattern of new launches into the market and its successful sales results are happening every year. And, it also replaces the old models which are expected in any competitive environment. The numbers in terms of customer's space are likely to be the same with some fluctuations in certain circumstances. Companies can't create great experiences without understanding the customer's needs. The Marketing Strategy underpins the skin of their customers and searching out what they want, what drives them, what makes them happy or sad. But very few marketers have an understanding of the customers by understanding their mindset. The purpose of this business framework is to provide a constructive conclusion to build and connect with the organization's existing business strategies. The techniques mentioned in this framework will help the businesses to attract the target audience leading to a better customer experience. The objective of this article will make the companies understand what it takes to close the gap between good and great helping them to offer market-fit products which are serving the needs and competitively different.

Index Terms— customer; product; service; marketing; strategy; acquisition; experience; perception; behavior; mindset; touchpoint; value.

1 INTRODUCTION

The principal nature of customer behavior tends not to change significantly from one year to the next, but researchers have demonstrated that customer mindsets have an impact with regards to making purchasing choices and attitudes change from day-to-day. The key players in the market even after addressing these to their best are striving hard to go beyond the conversions (initial purchases) and try to develop the relationship. To address this problem, the customers are provided with the staff member(s) from respective companies to boost the sales number. Yet, the result is not as expected. In order to tackle the ongoing problem, this paper will concentrate more on how the company can create value for the customers.

A new era of market communication is administered with the growth of online shopping. The Internet has now combined the communication with the sales channel has overlapped the circles of persuasive communications in terms of activating the major goals such as messages that are displayed and traditionally communicated via advertisements (billboards & commercials) and concrete recommendations in terms of activating the choices such as the messages that are displayed and traditionally communicated by promotions inside the store.

Knowing a customer's goals helps to understand and predict their behaviors. Marketers consider the present to be as web-savvy, versatile empowered information sifters who jump on whichever brand or store offers the best deal. Brand loyalty, the reasoning goes, is disappearing. Accordingly, companies have ramped up their informing, anticipating that the more connection and data they give, the better the odds of clutching these increasingly distracted and disloyal customers. Be that as it may, for some buyers, the rising volume of marketing messages isn't engaging – it's staggering. As opposed to pulling customers into the overlay, marketers are pushing them away with persevering and nonsensical endeavors to

lock-in.

What are my customers going to want? The savviest managers, more often than ever, and understandably so, ask this question. Leading companies understand that they are in the customer experience market and they recognize that it is beginning to be as important as what a company offers to customers. The single biggest cause of stickiness, by far, was "decision simplicity" – the ease with which customers can gather trustworthy product information and evaluate their purchase options with confidence and performance. Simplicity is what customers want from companies. Shifting the emphasis on decision-making simplicity and helping customers complete the buying process confidently is a profound change that typically requires marketers to flex new muscles and reinvent how they interact.

In seeking that attention from overwhelmed customers, brands eventually lead them down excessively confounding purchasing routes. Finding a more efficient path means reducing the number of sources of knowledge that customers need to access when heading towards a purchase with confidence. The savviest brands achieve this by personalizing the route.

The light of decision-making simplicity is not about trusting the brand; it is about trusting the information gathered. This argument is often overlooked by marketers and they put their efforts into enabling brand recommenders that concentrate on product features and benefits. Customers also need information on the decision criteria of a consultant and the use of a brand.

Many brands identify their differentiating characteristics and benefits to help customers determine choices. Some go a step further, giving side-by-side brand or product comparisons buying guides. For example, a bank might compile a

catalog of its options for checking accounts that list each feature. All methods provide a great deal of information, but neither provides much guidance, leaving the customer confused about the 'best' choice.

2 THE MARKET AND REVIEW

2.1 How Market Works?

The companies can't create great experiences without understanding the customer's needs. The Marketing Strategy underpins the skin of their customers and searching out what they want, what drives them, what makes them happy or sad. But very few marketers have an understanding of the customers by understanding their mindset.

A mindset is characterized in social psychology as a collection of cognitive processes and criteria of judgment that, once triggered, can carry over to unrelated tasks and decisions. In other words, if a customer thinks somehow, that way of thinking – that mindset – can influence his or her subsequent shopping behavior. The mindset switching weakens the self-control resources of individuals and thus prompts the choice of want behavior that provides immediate pleasure over should behavior that provides long-term usefulness.

2.2 Review Questions

Customers make purchase decisions every day by choosing between large sets of related products available for sale. What factors could have a systematic impact on how customers make decisions across a product range? One aspect of this question is explored in our review. One may be searching within the same store for a particular product to meet an immediate need, while others may simply browse. Just as individual customers can have different goals when entering a store, they can approach buying decisions with different mindsets that can affect how the customers can purchase the products.

The best way to understand the market and customers is by asking questions. With right market review questions in place, the firm can identify the opportunities to further improve in their strategy, operations and marketing functions.

The review questions are framed in such a way to ensure the existing products reposition themselves (if required), launch the new products at the right market segment and understand the perception for new product ideas (at the prototyping stage) with the responses received.

2.3 Respondents and Responses

This review involved interviews from 20 shops of different sizes, types and locations across of the city of Chennai, India. The interviews have also interviewees where there are no specific brand products. This is to ensure what is that making them restrict their purchase, on what grounds.

These In-depth Interviews (IDI) will express the views, opinions and expectations from the various customers as engagement touchpoints.

A) How likely are you to recommend a brand to a customer? How would you comment on the last experience in terms of the deal facilitations from different companies? How do you expect the companies to improvise the relationship?

The recommendations are based on the following characteristics the brand or product can offer on a consistent basis – quality, pricing, warranty, after-sales service, on-time delivery, ad-hoc purchase & billing adjustments and credit-based transactions. The deal facilitations with all relevant documents (including special offers and marginal pricing) should be submitted up-front – zero-delay is expected without pushing the timelines. The point of contacts must be available on an immediate basis for queries or clarifications. It would also be better, if there are technical specialists are available during the onboarding or delivery process. The payment systems should have all the latest gateways.

In short, the following is the business development and retention cycle that the customers are expecting from the distributors or manufacturers.

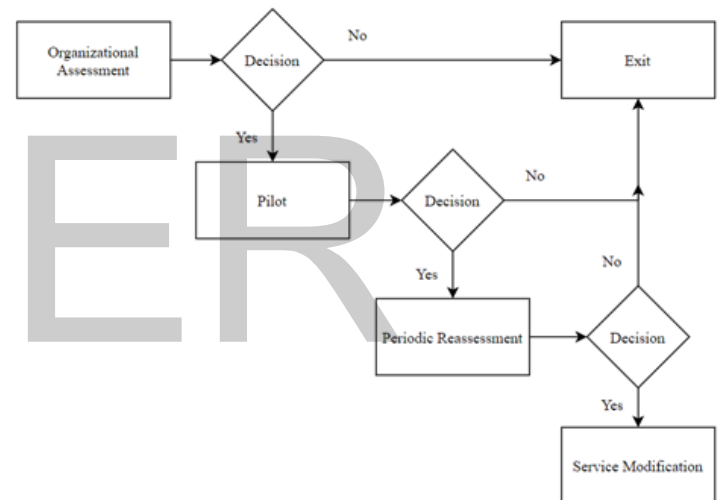


Fig. 1. Business Development and Retention Cycle

B) How long have you been a customer in the industry? On what basis, do you want to continue to be a customer for the brand or company? When you were getting started with a new product, what were you thinking about?

The respondents are experienced from 2 years to more than 3 decades of experience in the market. This gives the broad perspective of what a new entrant and a veteran can help the company to understand the various conditions leading a business sign-up and continuing it for years to come.

The following are the factors which drive the customers or customers to continue their relationship with the companies – warranty period, product quality (explicitly mentioned), marketing campaigns and canvassing during the seasons (print and digital media), prompt attention given irrespective of the size of the store, service-level agreements and best word-of-mouth (WOM) in terms of the technology and design.

The marketing advertisement mediums offered and delivered by various companies, testimonials from other customers, reports on brand value in the market, documents for price comparison and special incentives are considered and expected during the initial deal facilitation between the two parties.

To summarize, the following flowchart will help us to understand the relationship built by the customers from the overall experience with a particular brand or product.

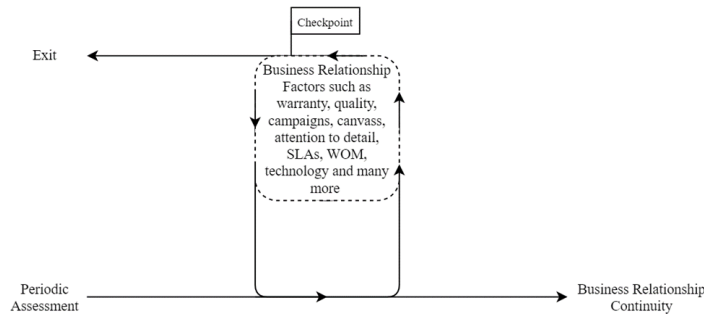


Fig. 2. Business Relationship Continuity Cycle

C) Tell us about the services offered by various brands. Also, about the timeliness and completeness of the delivery. Kindly brief about the service camps and other promotional activities.

The camps offered by various companies include services such as extended warranty (up to 1 year or 2 years), pricing brochures for seasonal and non-seasonal timelines, recommendation specialist (for better explanation), marketing stalls by distributors or manufacturers, exclusive delivery deals. The other promotional activities that are iterated by the leading brands are as follows – gift coupons, company specials case vouchers, replacement offers, buy-1-get-1 offers, escalation point of contacts for exclusive customers, trial purchase offerings, loyalty points, incentives for spares and accessories at special rates, free installations and discount estimation calculator for bulk purchase. These offers should be given the option to be availed starting from the discovery phase until the after-sales period. The following map will indicate the different phases at which these can be made available to build the trust right at the start.

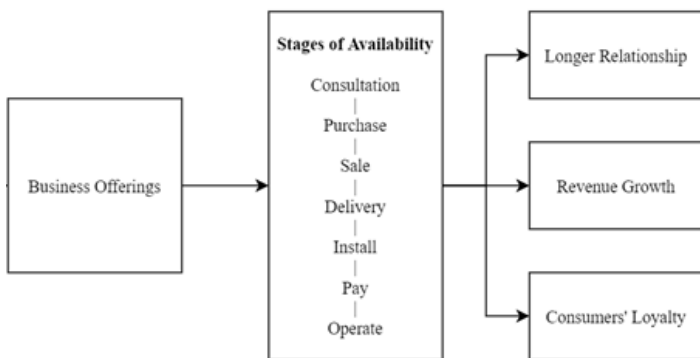


Fig. 3. Services and Promotions Map

D) Do you see a clear reason for the products' benefits? Do you also think the product is fulfilling as expected or are there any requirements?

There are few reasons for the purpose or usage of purchasing such products such as – transparency in the benefits explained by the technical specialists directly from the company with clear communication could be the biggest plus for any brand, the on-demand request should be offered for all products than just limiting to special releases, handouts with unique selling points (USPs) so that the language to communicate is consistent from the customers as well, in-house surveys for the latest and upcoming releases should be documented to push with the general products, internet reviews and the labels could have customers' popular choice.

The additional requirements were to add more service centers in different parts of the city or state based on the sales, special services given should be common to some extent to avoid confusion in the retail customers' minds, mechanical activities of the products should also be documented for corporate customers, do-it-yourself (DIY) kits should be given for self-implementation & installation, brochures and hoardings must be delivered in advance. The following process flow will indicate the usage for today will lead to requirements for tomorrow.

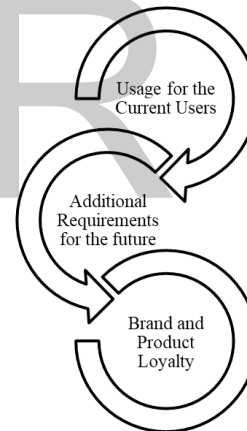


Fig. 4. Circular Process Flow to accomplish the Customers' Loyalty

E) What do you wish the product had that it currently does not? How do you want the companies to look upon the enhancements of their products? Do you expect them to replicate or bring a feature from its competitors all the time?

There are few touchpoints that are missed which can affect the market share such as – public attention (frequent advertisements using print, TV and digital media) is a must to keep the customers at the top of product requirements to include technological buzzwords, reports of recent success results must be shared, product launch with beta versions is a great idea to give a glimpse of what the major release will benefit the customers, separate ads for the enhanced products, add-ons should be given additional visibility, low-end and high-end

plans to each product can just differentiate by themselves in the market with clear documentation, customer satisfaction (CSAT) score for each purchase is crucial and finally, competitive pricing and related modification is a trump card during the festive seasons.

The customers always stand at the point – quality, proper installation and after-sales service are primary and enhancements to it are secondary because they believe the initial product push, pull or mixed strategy happens based on the quality factor. The defect rectification is a must for all the companies and prioritizes before the next delivery. The companies with new launches driven by advanced technology will be considered than a replica from other brands and it also gives a boost even if it is a new entrant in the market. This is the best way to interact.



Fig. 5. Customer Experience Strategy Gear

F) What made you choose from the list of competitors? How do you allocate space the products, on what grounds? Do you really see a value-add at all the times, or see a brand to be the favorite beyond the monetary pull?

The reasons are quite common in terms of the choice made from the list of potential competitors and those are quality & service built from the past successful products, cash discounts & attractive prices (one of the top reasons to allocate space for the products), margin price on-spot & bulk purchase options are major value-adds, creative ads and crafty gifts, new product demo at regular intervals, timely response for queries or clarifications from the manufacturers (producers), conducting product expo with past sales data for corporates and on-call after-sales service initiative (one of the demanded expectations).

There are certain ads with shorter duration and straight-forward communication which can pull the customers towards the brand which automatically builds the trust and loyalty right from the time the impression is made.

The following funnel will depict the three important factors to contribute to the end result benefitting all the parties involved, the 'value-add'.

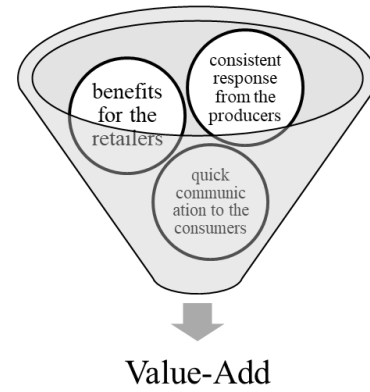


Fig. 6. Value-Add Funnel

G) How are different brands doing in terms of performance at the industry level? How do the competitors effectively attract customers?

The various services offered by the leading companies to attract the customers include the following – service marketing, quick defect replacements, payment adjustments, unique offers, free gifts & add-ons and most importantly the rise of star-rated products.



Fig. 7. Customer Attraction Equation

H) What are the different competitors doing to acquire customers? What other products would you like to see them offer in future?

The extended warranty is now made available for most of the products, apart from the annual maintenance contracts (AMCs) signed. This ensures the customers are given prompt attention right from the first-ever use. The product-specific training should be regularly conducted based on the feasibility – either at the customers' store or at a common place where the customers can gather to avail the demo and training kits containing different types of selling techniques. The domestic toolkit is a common ask in the form of gifts which can benefit throughout the customer journey. Foreign acquisitions and tie-ups can also boost sales. There are different types of sales which include – year-end sale, one day off sale, buy-back offers, exchange offers, replacement offers, corporate offers and festive offers. The household electronics is one big request to be in the suite of products from the leading brands. The following process flow will indicate the importance of the revenue growth after the conversion is complete which can also lead to automatic upsell or cross-sell from the customer's point of view.

$$\text{Understanding Concern} + \text{Framing Strategy} = \text{Growth for Everyone}$$

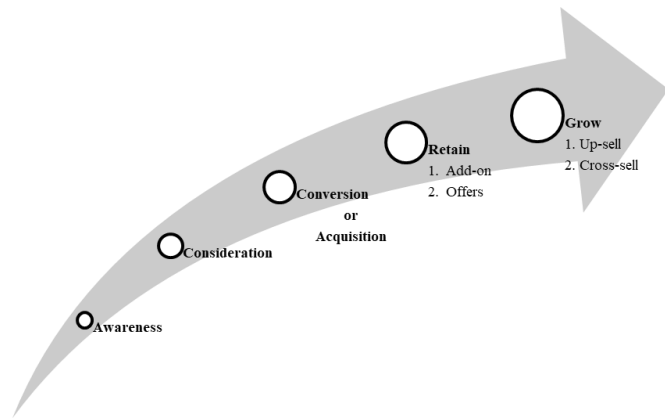


Fig. 8. Expansion of Revenue Cycle post-conversion adapted from Full-Funnel Strategy

I) What improvements could the companies make to existing offerings to improve customer satisfaction, and increase repeat sales and referrals?

There are some improvements requested by the customers such as – feature-driven marketing, quality comparison (differentiation) videos, hints for upcoming products, technical information should be additional spaces in brochure, after-sales service should be an incorporated process & not a procedure, minimal services beyond the warranty period, referral programs (with loyalty points), sharing economy formula (trial and buy), multi-product purchase offers and conditional boards and hoardings for better transparency (including guarantee and warranty).

Actually, every organization has a one-of-a-kind customer journeys, each promoting channel has a remarkable customer acquisition and retention loop, and each product has an interesting customer journey. All customers experience an alternate journey and draw in with a brand in a ‘one of a kind’ ways. It's about building a relationship with the customers and companies as well. The customer journey has since a long time ago ruled as a cornerstone of modern advertising era. As we move into a cross-channel world, where brands are promoting to, giving content to, and taking part in discussions with clients.

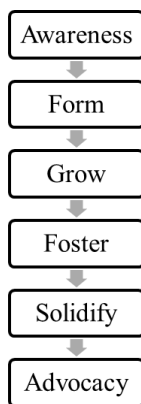


Fig. 9. Future of Customer Acquisition and Retention Process

J) Please help us understand the typical customer behavior seeing the future of the advancements.

The general offers include quantity discounts, freebies like installation, outsourced experts for installation, repair and maintenance in selected showrooms, corporate gifts, cross-channel offers, travel offers & awards/mementos, additional accessories, early-bird promotions, gift vouchers and lucky draws.

The power tracking & energy efficiency are future enhancements, every customer is looking with solar and renewable energy driven technology to save nature.

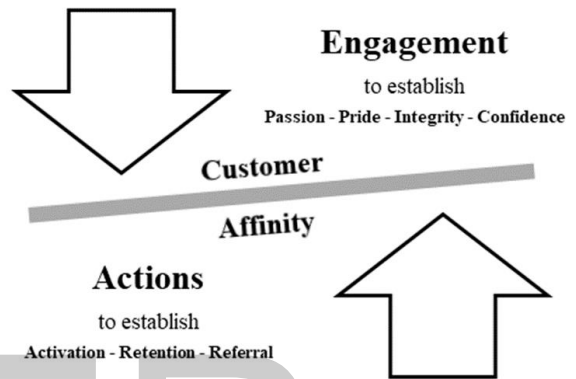


Fig. 10. Affinity Counterbalance Model adapted from Blast Analytics and Marketing's Customer Journey Model

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The importance of customers' perception in the acquisition journey has been the most important element to consider in this framework. The same has been mentioned in various publications. See below for the key mentions by other authors.

- 1) The factors affecting the customers' perception are selected based on the influences to drive the market and embrace the positioning strategy (STP) of the organization. The segmentation and targeting are transparent enough for a business to concentrate on building right relationships with the customers. **(Kotler, Philip., Marketing Management)**
- 2) The customer perception to influence the buying decisions are factored at the forefront of a company's mindset. This ensures the brand equity and value are obtained by differentiation, relevance and knowledge. These are achieved by boosting loyalty & increasing trust as end-result. **(Kotler, Philip., Marketing Management)**
- 3) The strategies in the retail sales promotion helps to shape the overall promotion mix. This sets the overall promotion budget for the organization. The push, pull and now a combination of the two will result in a sync between the flow of marketing and flow of demand. **(Kotler, Philip., Marketing Management)**

4) The phases of Customer Acquisition Journey help to understand the retail marketing of consumer products on the lines of the 'Decision Making Process' stages in the Consumer Behavior context. (Schiffman, L. G., **Consumer Behaviour**)

5) The approach involved to understand the power of customers' mindset are to match and maneuver them accordingly is to deviate the customer from not fitting the incoming information into existing mindset. (Kotler, Philip., **Marketing Management**)

6) The strength of the brand, which integrates the distribution parameter: market share, price premium, numerical distribution of store presence, weighted distribution (by size and global category sales), growth and so on. This is how the brand contributes in the road to purchase and the engagement touchpoints moving from customer funnel to cycle. (Kapferer, J. N., **The New Strategic Brand Management**)

Customer understanding goes far beyond their interaction with a product or service. There are many different factors that can influence the understanding of the customer and how they represent business or a brand. Considering these different factors will help companies to boost their customer satisfaction, leading to better brand loyalty and customer retention. Here are some factors that need to be considered when dealing with customers.

- Quality
- Service Quality
- Reputation
- Customer Experience (CX)
- Consistency
- Value
- Price
- Packaging and Branding

Customer Perception is an influencing factor to buying decisions. If you run a business, the way potential customers see you will always be at the forefront of a company's mind. Customer awareness is influenced by all that the business does. Quality, customer service and pricing have been to be the main three factors that influence brand loyalty from the in-depth interviews as well.

But what if the company is doing well in these factors, but the customers are not experiencing it?

That's where customer perception comes in. To run a successful business, the company needs to do more than just provide a great service and prove it to customers. Here's how the business can do to better their competitors with a lot of positive impact around the brand built by enhancing the factors affecting customer perception.

- Boost Customer Loyalty where the odds that have taken a stab at impacting the impression and they're

compensated with expanded deals and reliability.

- Increases Customer Trust is the more transparent the business, the simpler they will discover it to impact the customers – regardless of whether it's to purchase from you, to share the substance via web-based networking media, or to prescribe the brand to loved ones.

The present marketers need better approaches to ensure their brands are among the products that a customer, first considers. Brands today ought to be set up to move past a conventional, single direction stream of data into a relationship-based, two-path discourse with their buyers.

The key advance for streamlining content for the buyer journey is to really imagine the customer's perspective. You need to change the attitude to concentrate on what's useful for the buyer instead of what's useful for the brand – in any event for the time being. In the event that the product or administration has a genuine association with its buyers, at that point what's beneficial for them will, at last, be what's useful for the brand.

Rather than adopting the customary strategy of touting the brand's properties, the present substance should be more extravagant and increasingly valuable to Buyers. It needs to talk legitimately to the buyer's interests and offer data and arrangements that stretch out past the basic realities about the product. This may mean fitting the substance all the more explicitly for different phases of the buyer journey. Rather than building up a solitary message that works for everybody, let buyer explore and a two-way exchange shape explicit informing. This will demonstrate unquestionably increasingly significant for an uncertain buyer.

Keep the substance crisp and much of the time refreshed. You should stay a dependable wellspring of convenient and valuable data for the potential buyers – and the unwavering customers.

By and large, the motivation is to make the substance simple to discover, simple to peruse and comprehend, and simple for a customer to consolidate in an individual manner. The more work you put in here, the simpler you make it for Buyers to hold returning to the brand both for data and for purchases. What's more, the more they return to you, the almost certain they are to inform others regarding their encounters, which drives the immeasurably significant verbal promoting.

To an enormous degree, improving the substance for the customers rely upon just knowing them. What do the customers need? How would they get to data? What impacts them? What do they esteem? At the point when you know these things about the buyers, it encourages you to make content

that normally associates with them – and which they're probably going to share.

Set aside the effort to consider the customers. Auxiliary research, center gatherings, and other subjective research techniques would all be able to yield valuable bits of knowledge. When you have enough information, you can create buyer personas that speak to explicit portions of the customer network and build up the substance considering those personas. What's significant for an anecdotal persona is likely additionally important for the genuine customers the persona openings.

A few marketers may likewise need to assess their customer reliability projects and how they draw in with customers at the tight finish of the conventional deals pipe. How would you develop the brand envoys? Do you influence their mastery and experience to draw in with others in prior phases of the buyer journey? Is this something you can retool or fabricate on the off chance that you don't as of now, have it? Taking part in tribute promoting utilizing the current steadfast buyers can be immensely viable.

The most ideal approach to advance the substance is to gauge it. How do individuals connect with it? What amount of the substance do they read? How far down a page do they scroll? Do they watch the recordings or download things you make accessible to them? How would they react? Cautiously concentrating the manner in which the buyers draw in with the substance you give can frequently give all of you the pieces of information you need about how to furnish extra substance that they'll connect with later on.

- Marketing with the Customer Acquisition Journey in Mind
- Update to the Business's Traditional + Digital Media Mix
- Invest in the Right Technology Platforms
- Boost the Sales Associates
- Placing Products in the Influencers' Hands

There are two distinct mindsets that are important to how customers settle on choices while picking among related products: abstract and concrete. An abstract mindset urges individuals to think in a progressively wide and general manner. Buyers in an abstract mindset who face a variety of related products will concentrate more on the common product traits related with a larger purpose.

On the other hand, a concrete mindset causes to notice lower-level subtleties and traits related to execution or utilization; customers in a concrete mindset will subsequently concentrate on factors that separate between products. To improve sales, companies should either match or maneuver the mindset of the customer. These two approaches are important

implications for companies to effectively observe the customers in practice.

- There are two approaches to match the mindset and maximize the conversion – one, to explain the benefits for a certain group of products (abstract mindset) for long-term purpose – second, to group substitutable products (multiple selections) and help them to understand the immediate purpose.
- While coordinating the mindset might be a powerful methodology for companies whose products normally advance a distinct mindset, for some companies the assortment of products they offer is to such an extent that no reasonable mindset prevails. For these companies, controlling shoppers' attitude as they see an explicit set of products might be one successful approach to increase the price bandwidth. There are two approaches to improve sales – one, to implement promotions and increase the customer's interest to purchase from a particular brand (abstract mindset) – second, to highlight unique benefits of the various products from different brands (concrete mindset).

The path to purchase products is as complex as the tech-savvy customers – use of modern technology. The 'Customer Acquisition Journey' is so complex that it looks like a plot where the murder is not revealed until the end (whodunnit) than a decision to buy a particular product where there are details to refer and decide. Customers have more than one choice – offline and online.

- Joining the touchpoints
- Brand's contribution to Customer Acquisition Journey in the form of poking and heuristics.

THE FRAMEWORK

We have discussed the review findings and it is time to fuse the literature review points leading to a holistic framework. The framework has included all the individual process flows or models into one roadmap that transforms a company into a power player.

An effective customer experience transformation from the touchpoints defined in review findings will require a customer-centric vision and ambitious goal-setting.

Not all potential users of a new product or a new generation of a technology adopt the new product at the same time. The companies have to ensure they are present in all the stages whenever the customers are ready to buy the product.

The companies will have to start with education before enabling the conversion strategies. Then, the customer is onboarded with various engagement touchpoints before closing the deal and continued to engage with best practices.

The companies spend months working on a great idea, invest tons of time and energy into crafting the perfect market-

ing, but without customers, the business ceases to exist. Peter Drucker’s quote on customer acquisition will continue to apply for years to come with the difference in approach.

All future growth hinges on one thing – customer acquisition.

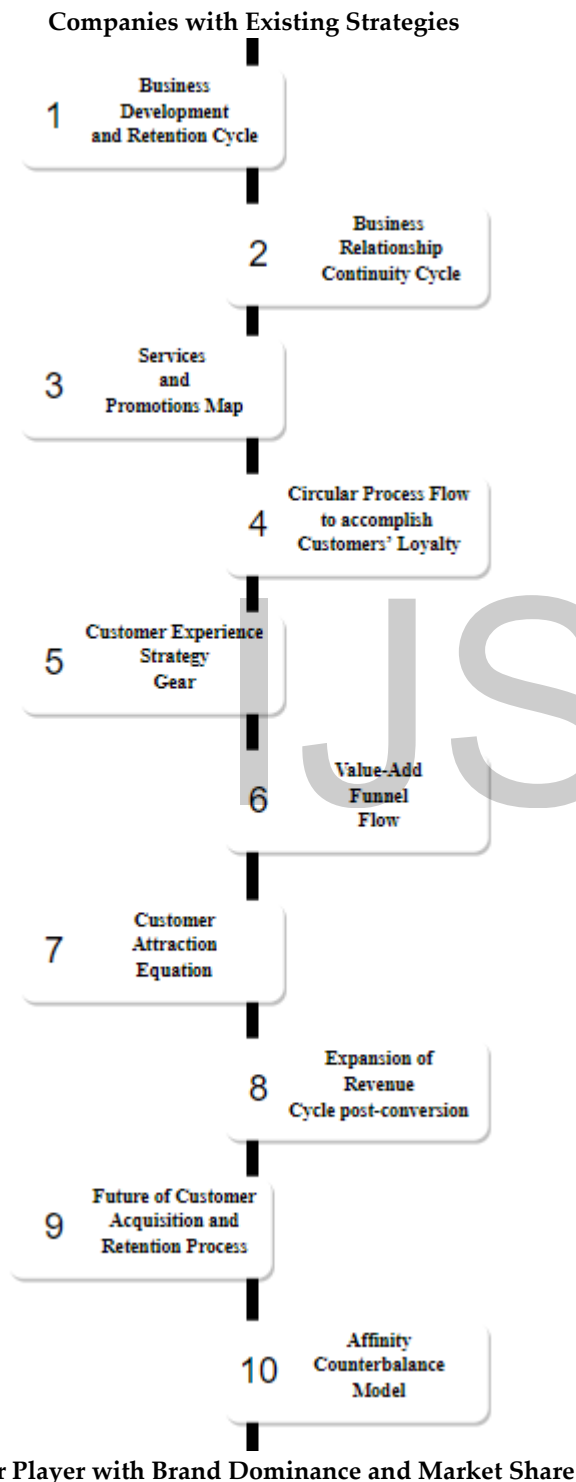


Fig. 11. CAMS Framework

To summarize, Customer Acquisition takes planning and execution. The companies also need to be diligent in how fast they acquire customers, what channels they use and implementing long-term strategies that will keep your customer acquisition cost well below your customer value.

The cost of customer acquisition should improve over time with this framework incorporated into existing strategies to bring out the power player in the market they play.

CONCLUSION

Most companies have made progress to recognize different areas of non-financial performance that can propel their strategy. However, there is no significant connection between the nonfinancial territories and the territories of cash flow, revenue (profit) and share price. The review findings show, there is a lot of business metrics to measure the company’s non-financial performance such as engagement touchpoints and customers’ willingness to promote the brand or product. These will enable an interface between the financial and non-financial statistics like never before. The companies that can link these two measures holds a better chance of improving results.

The recommendations from this review are not just applicable to the companies of a particular industry vertical, but for any company that needs growth for themselves, their intermediaries (if any) and customers who will perceive the benefits. There could be modifications based on the type of business, product and brand value it holds in the market. The customer acquisition journey would be the first insight for any companies to find out the reasons to start from evaluation and continue to purchase as the trigger point (CX).

To conclude, this is a never-ending process for companies to meet the ever-changing technologies, people and their unmet needs. The businesses must ensure to stay at the top in all aspects to acquire the customers and resulting in a long-term competitive advantage. The review findings will imply the various process of each stage in the customer acquisition plan from the business development and marketing areas will lead to the successful establishment of communication and solution to the consumer market.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The following are the limitations of this study during the interviews and preparation of this article.

- The responses were highly subjective and were intended for the kind of review required.
- The distribution of the questionnaire was not distributed equally from the demographic group used for the analysis which might create a biased result considering the number of responses (including the limited time and cost).
- With the sample and sampling technique used in the project to achieve results at the conceptualization of customer acquisition, future research should examine

the level of findings in quant-based studies.

The future of this review will continue to be exploratorily assisted by quantitative findings. Technology is changing the way, customers are looking for products. The next step would drive all the review findings with customer lifetime value (CLV). The cost to acquire a customer (CAC) should improve with this framework. When CLV is greater than CAC, it becomes a well-balanced business model for the companies to apply for all other business units.

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DISCLAIMER

The authors do not intend to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a company's strategy. The authors may have disguised certain names and other identifying information to protect confidentiality.

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