
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Edyta Rudawska is a Professor and Head of the Marketing Department, Head of Management and Marketing Institute at the Faculty of Economics and Management, University of Szczecin in Poland. She is interested in issues regarding customer relationship management and marketing management. She is an author or co-author of 180 publications. Her latest book is titled: *The Significance of Customer Relations in the Process of the Development of a Company Value*. She has been a Manager of five scientific research projects financed by the National Science Centre and a marketing coordinator of three European projects. In 2010, she was awarded by the President of the Polish National Bank for the best habilitation thesis.

I have great pleasure in introducing this special edition of the *International Journal of Business Performance Management* on organisation management through the value for the customer.

The articles in this special issue present theoretical and practical aspects of the management of value for customers both in B2B and B2C markets. Each article covers core concepts (theories) and research results expanding the current knowledge on organisation management through value for customers.

Building up the competitive and financial position of a company nowadays requires particular focus on the value delivered to customers. This approach means shaping the company's strategy along with its organisational structure to be aimed at creating, communicating and delivering value to customers. Despite the rising significance attributed to value for customers, there are only a few coherent and widely accepted concepts explaining its meaning, ways of creating and delivering it to customers, or the way companies perceive it.

According to the paradigm of consumer behaviour rationality recognised in economics, the sources of this value have been traced to product usability, physical attributes and price. Recently, however, sources of value for customers are sought not in the product itself, but in the consumption process as well. Consumption, as a kind of experience for the customer and the emotions and feelings arising as its result, is being recognised as the main source of value. For a particular experience to leave a customer impressed it needs to have a vital meaning for them, that is – it needs to positively influence their emotions. This experience and the emotions generated drive customers to buy offers because of not only the physical features or cost level, but of the symbolic meaning as well.

Directing of a company's actions to creating satisfying experiences stems from the fact that a customer looks for values that are not only useful, but also hedonistic, aesthetic and spiritual. Thus, it is assumed that value for the customer results not only from the product itself and accompanying additional services, but also from work, competence, personnel motivation, service quality and the supplier's image. These activities lead to a certain emotional state in the customer connected with security, trust, credibility, reliability, guarantee of flexibility and continuity of cooperation. Technology and employees knowledge also play an important part, hugely influencing customer time management efficiency. Literature on the subject is more and more commonly stressing the fact that a customer alone is the source of value for the customer. This fact results from the development of so-called interactive forms of market communication and the more and more important presumption process of a company's offer. All actions aimed at creation and delivery of value to customers must be the effect of the company strategy, painstakingly planned and consciously realised in the long term.

This issue presents papers from different countries and are a consequence of different cultures. It covers a range of fields relating to value proposition that is creating, communicating and providing customers with expected value. I would like to open this special issue with six papers referring to the general concept of value for the customer.

The first is a timely paper from Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro, Ana Regina Pires and Hans Ruediger Kaufmann on 'Creating value for customers through engagement and participation in brand communities'. The authors aimed at better understanding of antecedents and impacts of engagement and participation in brand communities. They revealed that brand relationship quality is an important initiator of the process, together with the brand identification, the presence of other members and satisfaction. Being engaged a member tend to be more active in participating in the community, which in turn improve the brand knowledge, the brand loyalty and word-of-mouth.

The second paper by Tymoteusz Doligalski, Piotr Zaborek and Sylwia Sysko-Romańczuk is titled: 'Value proposition and firm performance: segmentation of Polish online companies'. The focal point of this paper is the value proposition of internet companies. In particular, the authors identify its building blocks and how it is related to business performance metrics. The findings show that despite different characteristics of segments identified in the paper they do not show statistically significant differences in sales profit margin.

Katarzyna Dziewanowska, Agnieszka Kacprzak and Monika Skorek have prepared the next paper on 'Value in shopping experiences in the perception of Polish consumers'. Based on five focus group interviews, they identify types of value that arise in the shopping context and the factors that determine it, as well as present consumer attitudes towards the value generated by experiential marketing activities.

The fourth paper titled 'The impact of service delivery system effectiveness on service quality: a hierarchical approach' is written by George Lodorfos, Giannis Kostopoulos and Kostas Kaminakis. They focus on the effectiveness of the service delivery system (SDS) and re-examine its influence on customers' perceived service quality. As a result of conducted research, the authors prove the positive influence of role performance, effectiveness of coordination and effectiveness of process' control on perceived service quality. The fourth analysed indicator – employees' adaptability was not found significant.

In the next paper, titled 'Hedonic or utilitarian buying behaviours – what values do young adult customers seek in online group buying?', Edyta Rudawska, Kristina Petljak

and Ivana Stulec focus on two dimensions of value acquired by customers during shopping: hedonic and utilitarian value. The theoretical part of the paper discusses sources of value in retailing, with special emphasis put on utilitarian value and hedonic value and current knowledge in the field of utilitarian versus hedonic shopping values in shopping behaviour research. The empirical part of the paper is aimed at profiling young adults as online group buyers with special emphasis put on their hedonic or utilitarian buying behaviours. The first part of the special issue ends with the concept of value resulting from social responsibility.

The second part of the special issue is dedicated to the role of value in the process of creating business performance. Two papers are included into this section. The first one, written by Mohamed Ismail Mujahid Hilal and Kaldeen Mohamed Mubarak, is titled 'Influence of selected groceries' marketing mix elements on business performance in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka: retailers' perspective'. The authors identify the selected retail marketing mix elements influencing business performance of retail grocery outlets and suggest strategies for improving the performance of these retail shops. The research results acquired suggest that business performance of retail shops depends mainly on implementation of customer relationship management, improving marketing communication and on building up corporate image.

The second paper prepared by Juhani Ukko, Sanna Pekkola, Minna Saunila and Tero Rantala on 'Performance measurement approach to show the value for the customer in an industrial service network' presents a conceptual process model for the design of a performance measurement system for the industrial service network. The study highlights that the state of the network, services and mutual value elements need to be properly defined before starting the design process for the actual measures.

The next section shows the influence of employees on the process of value creation and delivery. Two papers are dedicated to this research area. Wustari L.H. Mangundjaya, Permata Wulandari and Citra Wardhani have prepared the paper titled 'Adding value for customers by providing service quality training (study at Islamic Bank in Indonesia)'. As the present demand of customers is not merely focusing on the product itself, but also on the process of delivering it, the way customers are provided with the product is a very important source of value for them. That is why service quality training among employees are of key importance in the process of creating service quality as well as customer satisfaction.

An interesting view of sources of value for customers is presented by Anna Pluta and Grażyna Paulina Wójcik. They stress on the 'Research on time-management skills of employees in the process of creating value for the customer'. The results of the study indicate that time management skills can affect the chain of dependence shaping value. In order to provide value to the customer, organisations should not forget about the employee and the skills he/she possesses, especially those related to the rational management of time.

Following on from the above, the fourth part is dedicated to value creation in different sectors. I would like to open this part of my special issue with a timely paper on 'Management of value for customers on the culture market' by Magdalena Sobocińska. The perception of marketing among the decision-makers of Polish cultural institutions is presented in the paper as well as the analysis of the role of customers in value-creation processes on the market of culture.

The second paper stresses the role of product quality in fashion industry. Daniella Ryding, Gianpaolo Vignali, Robin Carey and Mengfei Wu have prepared a paper on 'The relative significance of product quality attributes driving customer satisfaction within the fast fashion market: a UK perspective'. This paper examines customer expectations of product quality and customer satisfaction drivers in the context of fast fashion using a segmentation analysis approach within the female target group, since this is the largest group for purchasing clothing.

The organic food market is the area of research presented in the paper 'Environmental management systems in food processing and production as a source of product value for the customer on the organic food market', by Mariola Grzybowska-Brzezińska and Adam Rudzewicz. She provides a comprehensive evaluation of empirical studies about consumer perception of organic products in terms of product attributes and consumer willingness to pay for environmental management systems in agriculture and food processing. The aim of this paper is to analyse the importance of observed consequences resulting from purchasing organic food, which refer to natural environment and human health, and evaluation of consumer attitudes to ecological food.

Finally, the dairy industry is the focus of interest of Pramod Kumar Mishra and B. Raja Shekhar. The paper titled 'Analysing the product and service aspects of a manufacturing supply chain: a dairy industry perspective', argues that both product and service aspects are relatively important to a consumer. The authors convince that with the best product (in terms of price, quality, etc.) a very low service level will put the supply chain at sub-optimal level of performance. On the contrary, a poor quality product with highest level of service will also not perform well in the supply chain. The paper concludes that service aspects (service level requirements) offset the product aspects for better supply chain performance. The paper has also identified the critical components of product and service aspects of the dairy-food supply chain, which required to be strengthened for better supply chain performance.

The final part of my special issue deals with the issues related to technology. Blessing Funke Ajao, Timothy Oyebisi, Helen Aderemi and Oluseye Jegede in their paper 'Status and impact of strategic technology alliances among telecommunications firms in Nigeria', examine the existence of strategic technology alliance among telecommunications service providers in Nigeria and the benefits service providers and subscribers derive from these alliances. The results of the research show that technology alliances are a source of value for allies. The study shows strong correlation between strategic alliance and improved network coverage, decrease in call drops, decrease in signal down time and decrease in tariff of data and voice services. The study also reveals that allies enjoy increased turnover when they engage in strategic technology alliance.

Technology-based innovations were in turn the focus of interest of Giuseppe Migliano and Eleonora Pantano. In the paper 'Improving the quality of technology-based innovations selection: a quality function deployment approach for retailers', they state that current advances in technology provide new tools for enhancing the quality of retail service and the subsequent consumers' shopping experience. The large availability of advanced systems, the speed of diffusion and the uncertainty involved in the process force retailers to reconsider how and when to introduce these innovations for achieving an advantage over competitors. The authors suggest a new framework based on the quality function deployment (QFD) approach to figure out the best technologies according to retailers' expectations, consumers' needs and technical features, with benefits for the whole retail process.

I make over this issue hoping you will find the papers included inspiring and interesting. I wish to thank all the authors who submitted their manuscripts for consideration. Also, I would like to address special thanks to the reviewers, who through the double-blind reviewing process helped the authors improve their manuscripts. Thank you for your time and very helpful and constructive comments. Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the editor, Professor Jonathan Liu and the *IJBPM* team for their support and help during the process of creating this special issue.