

# Collaborative Experience of Value Chain Architecture: A Systemic Paradigm To Building Customer Loyalty

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## Abstract

In most industries, customer retention has replaced the aggressive and offensive customer attraction ideals of transactional marketing. Collaborative architecture within the value chain represents such shift from marketing mix approach to Relationship Marketing, which though lacks knowledge of its own but spans inter-firm alignments to reform marketing activities via debunking selfishness, superficiality and self-indulgence. Traditional marketing management theories focus on oppressive associations, relationship between customer and product, short-term or even single exchange(s), offensive marketing and/or power-based notions whereas relational interactions change conflicts to harmonic co-operation, associations, and connections, and ultimately infrequent business relationships to on-going. The economic soundness of such mutual participative architecture revolves on strategic optimization that serves the interests of stakeholders on the grounds that customer retention and customer loyalty reflect complex activity involving inputs from vendors and other independent firms and continues even by the manner the dealers handle and explain customer complaints and doubts. All the steps from design to after-sales service are mutually integrated flows aimed at reducing marketing expenses; increasing customer switching costs; and moving the customer up, in a co-ordinated manner, to viral level of customer loyalty ladder. Whether in full-fat and semi-skimmed innovations, the implication is that customer satisfaction is a value-chain and systems activity built on trust, mutuality, promise, shared values, and commitment, whereby each subsystem interacts mutually with others to maintain the wholes of customer satisfaction and profitability.

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*Index terms*— collaboration, value chain, paradigmatic shift, participative architectures, relationship marketing, customer retention, marketing management.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

hat is apparently surprising is that researchers and businessmen have concentrated far more on how to attract customers than on how to retain them (Schneider, 1980) when the cost of generating a new customer is much more than that of keeping existing ones (Boone and Kurtz, 2007). Exponential changes (Stamer, 2008; Mancini, 2009) in the forms of consumers being smarter and better informed (Alrubaiee and Al-Nazer, 2010) fundamentally re-tuned the rules of the game. Instability in the world business cycle perhaps since the 1980s; shorter product-life-cycle and market saturation; complexity and globalization of markets; and technological breakthrough (Boone and Kurtz, 2007) have repositioned businesses to give-and-take two-way flow of values (Shaker and Basem, 2010; Christopher et al, 2002). The key success factor (KSF) under these forces is building favourable relationships with stakeholders (De Madariaga and Valor, 2007) to ensure cost-effective and improved customer value-delivery networks. Today, many firms are rewriting the rules of the game (Boone and Kurtz, 2007); trying to rebuild competitive advantages

## 2 II. THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION AND TRANSFER OF CONNOTATIONS

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42 in RM context (Shaker, 2009). The legendary records of how Harley-Davidson Motorcycle, Xerox, IBM, Procter  
43 and Gamble (P&G), Banks, Airlines, Insurance, Telephone, and Direct Marketing Companies built their success  
44 stories through a fiercely loyal customer base signify that in most cases the biggest challenge for firms is not  
45 generating huge number of customers, but meeting needs. The recent renaming of P&G's Trade Department  
46 to Customer Business Development shifted focus to immediate customers (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2002) and  
47 informed the packaging of one-on-one marketing and loyalty building programmes with end-users (Breshnahan,  
48 1998) and other programmes aimed at other value-chain members, including those in mega relationships with  
49 P&G. Harley-Davidson modelled on Japan's Keiretsu huge vertically integrated companies that foster deep, trusted  
50 relationships with suppliers to form strategic alliances and value chain with top-performing vendors. The firm  
51 later learnt that integrating suppliers into the design process leads to more innovative design efficiencies that  
52 reflected on cost effectiveness and other competitive advantages that would ordinarily not envisaged if such  
53 integration were absent. The extension of this integrative relationship to employees, customers, and dealers in  
54 a Networked Relationship Marketing (NRM) brought about even further landmark progress in the competitive  
55 results of Harley-Davidson. Implicit is that firm's prosperity transcends identification and attraction of customers  
56 and so, the novel passion to success is borrowing the ideals of B2B and service sectors to place organizational  
57 destinies in the hands of customers (Gronroos, 1996) through retention, trust, commitment (Gaur and Xu, 2009),  
58 customer satisfaction and loyalty building (Gaurav, 2008) and cost reduction due to better understanding of the  
59 worlds of consumers (Ndubisi, 2004). Firms dialogue with customers and form co-operative marketing networks  
60 with them to cultivate long-term loyalty and switching barriers (Hasouneh and Ayed Alqeed, 2010) expressed in  
61 repurchase intentions and cross-sell opportunities (Eisingerich and Bell, 2007; Lemon et al, 2002).

62 Inducement of feelings and emotional states through respects, courtesy, warmth, empathy and assistance  
63 (Al-alak, 2006) may be signs of shifts from marketing mix frameworks to building relationship with immediate  
64 customers in a manner that pushes them upward in the hierarchy of customer loyalty ladder (Bhardwaj, 2007;  
65 Christopher et al, 2002). This is often expressed in competitive positioning, financial performance (Alrubaiee  
66 and Al-Nazer, 2010; Shaker and Basem, 2010; Forrester, 1958; Wood, 1997), repurchase intentions, cross-sell  
67 opportunities (Lemon et al, 2002; Eisingerich and Bell, 2007) and data mining. Theorists demonstrate that  
68 a 10 percent reduction in value-chain cost structure may yield 40 to 50 percent improvement in pre-tax profit. As  
69 little as a 5 percent improvement in customer retention can upsurge profitability to about 25 to 85 or 95 percent  
70 (in terms of NPV) (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990) depending on the industry. Boone and Kurtz (2007) observe  
71 that generating a new customer costs 5 to 7 times as much as keeping a current one, so firms pay a steep price  
72 when customers stray to other brands. The same could be said of the relationships with dealers, suppliers, and  
73 employees.

74 In Nigeria, this paradigmatic shift was loudly noticed in the mid 1990s, perhaps with service organizations  
75 (e.g. banks) and B2B organizations in fore-front. Although too many counter-productive events took place in  
76 Nigeria's economy then; bank distress and its attendant turnaround strategies by some to reengineer progress had  
77 the most significant all-encompassing effects on the different strata of Nigerians. Quite a number of revolutionary  
78 moves permeated the value chains, which in the words of Sheth and Parvatiyar (2002), attempt to upsurge cost-  
79 effective acquisition and retention of customer, customer commitment, and share in customer business instead  
80 of the traditional search for market share increases. Thus the significant change in the value-chain interaction  
81 represents one of the strategic developments in marketing scholarships and practices through the 21st century.  
82 This time relationship is rarely thought of within the contexts of selfishness, superficiality and self-indulgence  
83 (Smith and Higgins, 2000) rather on the assumed relational commonalities. Parties exploit their socio-economic  
84 ties (Shaker and Basem, 2010), pursue longevity goals for mutual benefits and develop confidence in one another to  
85 achieve co-operative marketing networks. This paper is motivated by the laudable quest to unravel the possibility  
86 of RM in its nascent status to have the potential of constituting a general marketing theory. This is based on  
87 the fact that a number of authors have called for a synthesis of the fragmented ideas and theoretical frameworks  
88 of RM to generate perhaps an all-encompassing theory (Gummesson, 2002). The objective of this paper is to  
89 critically provide meta-theoretical analysis to ascertain whether RM theories are entirely new or derived from older  
90 theoretical tradition; whether RM has taken-over marketing management theory; and whether the underlying  
91 theories are okay for all exchange relationships. A number of scholars have done similar works (e.g.; Broide et  
92 al, 1997; Moller and Halinen, 2000) but this paper differs in terms of being more pragmatic in analysis.

## 93 2 II. THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION AND 94 TRANSFER OF CONNOTATIONS

95 Since Berry (1983) conceptualized RM, dozens of definitions unveiled but the core of all is to re-build relationships  
96 with publics in a manner that incorporates long-term marketing process than simply acquiring widespread public  
97 awareness. Berry (1983) draws existing conceptualizations to re-engineer marketing thought as transcending  
98 individual and one-time transactions. Relationship Marketing theory is not about funky accord with one's  
99 customers rather it involves using event-driven tactics of customer retention marketing to reposition marketing  
100 as an on-going multitransactional relationship with customers (Veloutsou et al, 2002; Berry, 1993) rather than  
101 single unconnected events as in the case of traditional marketing. Harker (1999) reviewed 26 definitions of  
102 RM and proposed his own in terms of organizations being proactive in creating, developing and maintaining

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103 committed interactive and profitable exchanges with selected partner(s) overtime. RM defines the process of  
104 attracting, maintaining, and enhancing interactions with customers and key partners. Boone and Kurtz (2007)  
105 and Jobber and Fahy (2006) interactions and transactions (DiPasquale, 2001). RM is a reform developed from  
106 direct response marketing that builds long range integrative and beneficial relationships with all stakeholders  
107 involved directly or indirectly in value creation. Such integrative relationships may be achieved through multi-  
108 channel collaboration telephone, social software, e-mail, fax, web, post, in person, SMS, etc. One attempts to  
109 ascertain whether the conceptualization of RM is entirely new or developed from existing tradition that had  
110 long guided business and non-business (e.g.; marriage) life. The philosophical domains of RM, though perhaps  
111 not entirely new, question tried-and-tested business models, ways of working, organizational structures, and  
112 accepted truths in marketing. The transfer of connotations from traditional marketing management, services  
113 marketing, TQM, network marketing and network organization (Gummesson, 2002) to RM is quite revealing. The  
114 proliferation of publications, debates, conferences, and symposia on the practical and theoretical conceptualization  
115 of RM attests to the fact that it is an integral development in marketing science (Berry, 1983;Gummesson, 2002)  
116 perhaps emerging as a subfield (Moller and Halinen, 2000;Smith and Higgins, 2000). Kotler (2003) opined that  
117 RM evidently caused most standard marketing texts to be revised to reflect the relationship angle. The long  
118 existing theories of trust, co-operation (Anderson and Narus, 1990; Morgan and Hunt, 1994;Smith and Higgins,  
119 2000), bonding and reciprocity (Egan, 2001), keeping promises (Gronroos, 1996;Calonius, 1988), commitment  
120 (Moorman, Zaltman and Deshpande, 1992), shared values and mutuality (Czeipal, 1990;Morgan and Hunt, 1994),  
121 and absence of opportunistic behaviour (John, 1984), formed the cornerstone of IMP's early relationship theory.  
122 RM drew much from IMP's interaction model (Hakansson, 1982) and commitment-trust theory of RM by Morgan  
123 and Hunt (1994) though both models de-emphasized relative efficiency.

124 The 4Ps of marketing management and marketing concept continually overlap but with modest treatments that  
125 make them more viable bearing in mind the collaborative relationship within the RM paradigm. Further, modern  
126 consumer marketing dates back to 1950s and 1960s partly in an attempt to broaden the scope of marketing to  
127 reflect relationship in the valuechain. Consumer behaviour scientists' studies on brand loyalty and supplier or  
128 store loyalty date back to the early 1950s (Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978); early consumer learning theories contain  
129 consumer engagement in relational market behaviour (Hansen, 1972); and the ideals of relationships in B2B  
130 and service sectors were re-examined and applied to other spheres of business, especially consumer goods sector  
131 (Smith and Higgins, 2000;Moller and Halinen;Jackson, 1985). Moller and Halinen (2000) record that in the late  
132 1970s, researchers in B2B and marketing channels began developing conceptualization on dyadic relationship  
133 between buyers and sellers based on the lapses of marketing management tradition. Marketing mix has limited  
134 framework for assessing and developing customer relationships in many industries and is gradually being replaced  
135 by relationship marketing alternative models (Gordon, 1999).

### 136 **3 III. NEW BLUES IN MARKETING THOUGHTS AND** 137 **MARKETING TASKS**

138 There is aggressive paradigmatic shift within marketing thought from the transaction-based marketing, which  
139 focuses on oppressive and offensive associations, relationship between customer and product, short-term/single  
140 or few exchanges and powerbased notions to customer-focused relationship marketing, which promises marketing  
141 reforms that reflect on long-term relationship, associations, and harmonic connections ??Smith and Haggins,  
142 2000;De Madariaga and Valor, 2007). RM transcends marketbased relationship marketing (buyer-seller dyad)  
143 to network-based relationship theories (Moller and Halinen, 2000), enabling communication, collaboration and  
144 cooperation amongst online communities (Cook, 2008; Mason et al, 2008). The digital world encourages  
145 appropriate inter-firm alignments and relationships to assure outstanding performance. Advances in IT have  
146 relentlessly restructured and re-engineered processes (Fawcett and Magnan, 2002), integrated resources and  
147 automated transactions across traditional boundaries (Ballou et al, 2000; Kaplan and Sawhney, 2000) to improve  
148 network relationships and knowledge sharing, to cut costs and improve operational efficiencies, transparency  
149 and value-added information, and to create exceptional but difficult to copy customer values (de Burca et al,  
150 2005).The integrative nature of RM implies that it is cross-functional shaped by reengineering. Unlike traditional  
151 marketing where works follow silo approach, from one functional department to another; cross-functional and  
152 re-engineering theorists believe in integrative and pervasive structuring of organizations to reflect complete tasks  
153 and processes. They emphasize company-wide training and retraining of staff on marketing in general and on  
154 relationship marketing in particular. The banking industry and a few others are in the fore-front of seeing long-  
155 term relationship as worthwhile perhaps because they are service-oriented; competitive; and customer decisions  
156 carry high perceived risks. For instance, their effort to induce feelings and emotions through respects, courtesy,  
157 warmth, empathy and assistance (Al-alak, 2006; Al-alak and Alnawas, 2010) may be signs of shifts from marketing  
158 mix frameworks to building relationship with immediate customers in a manner that pushes them upward in the  
159 hierarchy of customer loyalty ladder (Bhardwaj, 2007 In Nigeria, many banks have fostered repeat, product  
160 support, and viral behaviours from incumbent loyalists; and trial and switching behaviours from potential  
161 customers in a variety of laudable ways, particularly in the area of bringing the banking business to the customers'  
162 bedroom. For instance, United Bank of Africa (UBA) launches children's account and advertises loud on making  
163 some customers millionaires upon maintaining a minimum of N50000 balance in one's account for a stipulated

164 period before computerbased drawing commences. Zenith Bank offered bonus shares to shareholders; Eko Bank  
165 offered staff free vacation to USA for meeting targets; and the then Eko International Bank (before its demise)  
166 offered to take care of the school fees of customers' children upon the customer investing in H-Account. These  
167 banks are of the view that in transactional marketing, exchanges with customers are generally sporadic, often  
168 disrupted by conflicts resulting from manipulation of marketing mix and profit maximization syndromes (O'Malley  
169 and Patterson, 1998; Ismail, 2009); and as interactions reform to relationship, infrequent business relationships  
170 turn on-going. Though relationship officers may not maintain plenty accounts, they have challenging tasks; they are  
171 assumed defensive marketers, who manage customer dissatisfaction and create switching barriers, reduce customer  
172 turnover, and increase customer loyalty and purchase frequency (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1987). They give their  
173 employers new opportunities to gain competitive edge by moving customers up in the hierarchy of relationship  
174 ladder of customer loyalty from indifferent prospects to new customers, then to regular accounts, loyal supporters  
175 of the firm's business and finally to viral who do not only buy the firm's products but also use their experience to  
176 reduce the perceived risks of others. Getting these done involve providing meaningful and richer contacts, more  
177 holistic and more personalized service quality that exceeds expectations at each step and the use of consumption  
178 experience to create stronger ties in the value-chain. Christopher et al (2002) and Armstrong and Kotler (2007)  
179 contrast the above from transactional marketing, which muscles on product features, has minimal interest in  
180 customers, limited customer contact, and quality is primarily a concern of production. Transactional marketing  
181 links offensive marketing on accounts of generating new customers perhaps via liberating dissatisfied customers  
182 of rivals or causing switching behaviour (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1987; Shaker, 2009). The framework shows that  
183 all efforts in value chain are geared toward corporate performance. Inward marketing permits intra relationships,  
184 which reflect on marketing programmes designed to deal with the marketing environment. Relationship reflects  
185 on value chain co-operation and integration, and ultimately affects performance metrics profitability, customer  
186 retention and loyalty, and market growth share. These views merit kudos on the premise that the stiff competition  
187 encourages value added, which often comes from relationship marketing.

### 188 4 IV. THE RM ARCHITECTURES ON

### 189 5 VARIOUS EXCHANGE APPLICATIONS

190 The theory of mutual exclusiveness does not apply in relationship marketing and traditional marketing since the  
191 use of one does not preclude the use of the other, especially amongst firms that have different product portfolios  
192 that perhaps demand for a blend. Business portfolios that demand relatively high consumer involvement, huge  
193 purchase at a time and high switching costs foster long standing, and of course two-way flow of, relationships.  
194 Studies have empirically shown a strong correlation between corporate success and user collaboration (Berthon  
195 et al, 2004). This finding debunks hard-selling concepts in favour of deep and continual interactions between  
196 developers and customers (Sherman et al, 2000) as if the latter are under direct control of the former. RM  
197 stimulates developers' understanding of the world of consumers and reflecting same in managerial actions. Kotha  
198 (1995) surveyed a bike firm and used his findings to link mass customization and mass production strategies  
199 to maximization of competitiveness. According to Gupta and Souder (1998), such participative architecture  
200 is assumed an important contributory success factor. To reflect the weight of participatory architecture and  
201 relationship, Kaulio (1998) extensively reviewed levels of building customer relationships and proposed the models  
202 of design for, design with, and design by that seemingly akin consultancy, co-development, and apprenticeship  
203 models proposed by Leonard-Barton (1995). Design for involves extensive use of market data,

### 204 6 Variables of Relationship Marketing

205 The Conceptual Framework of Relationship Marketing focus groups, interviews, and consumer behaviour  
206 models to design products on behalf of customers; design with makes use of data on consumer needs and  
207 reactions/suggestions on prototyped products; and design by extensively involves consumers in the design  
208 and development of the final products. The last demands more of marketing relationship (RM). The average  
209 time expended in product development process is shorter when firms institute relationship that aggressively  
210 incorporates users in the entire exercise. Interactive relationships with customers provide detailed information on  
211 key success factors (KSFs) lacked internally and reduce development time and costs (Campbell and Cooper, 1999).  
212 Further the extent of relationship in the value chain, especially with customers in each phase of development  
213 reflects whether the innovation is a full-fat or semi-skimmed. For the latter, corporate challenges and consumer  
214 involvement are relatively less complex because established behaviour pattern is not wholly disrupted. Much  
215 will ordinarily not be expended on RM since many firms engage in technology cluster and improvement upon  
216 existing products perhaps following the enormous cost of launching an entirely new product in some consumer  
217 markets. This approach compromises stimulus generalization theory of Professor Ivan Pavlov, and has proved  
218 very profitable when the original product version has made exploitable name in terms of performance, economy,  
219 technical know-how, durability, etc. In the former, consumer involvement and of course relationship attracts  
220 further complexities. The complexities are often expressed in terms of users not knowing exactly what their  
221 requirements are for innovations that open up new applications (O'Connor, 1998). Totally novel concepts that  
222 disrupt value networks, established behaviour pattern, and/or industry practices demand much of relationship  
223 marketing to aggressively move the consumer progressively through the stages of information processing until

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224 final decision is made. If such disruptive concepts are well managed, RM can cause them to attract the least  
225 competition and may potentially transform the value networks to the designer's advantage (Tornatzky and  
226 Fleischer, 1990).

227 V.

## 228 7 STRUCTURAL GOVERNANCE AND APPROACHES TO 229 RM

230 Developments in relationship theory assert that improved performance (Jackson, 1985) in terms of customer  
231 retention (Ismail, 2009; Bhardwaj, 2007; Alalak and Alnawas, 2010) and customer satisfaction are the main  
232 motivation for entering into relationship. The link between long-term interaction and performance has been  
233 empirically proved. However, literature suggests that relationship performance varies across relationship types  
234 (e.g.; bilateral, discrete, hierarchical, and recurrent) and these types determine how it (relationship) is governed  
235 (Heide, 1994). Varey and Ballantyne (2005) conceptualize informational, communicational and dialogical types  
236 of interaction that are somewhat symmetric to the aforementioned. Depending on management, any of these  
237 underlying structural alliances may attract long-term relationships. Bilateral or dialogical relations extend the  
238 ideals of marketing concept to the structure of co-involvement of parties and mutual co-operative relationships  
239 perhaps by treating one's customers as though employees. The parties learn together and remain innovative  
240 social and economic contributors in order to minimize conformance risks and perceived values in the present  
241 competitive business world (Baxter, 1995). Discrete or arm's length is an extreme case (Jackson, 1985) of  
242 traditional independence model of relational exchanges; it relates to market type but with realistic minimum  
243 levels of relationship activity to facilitate the exchange (O'Toole and Donaldson, 2000). Traditional independence  
244 model of relationship marketing may permit the formulation and implementation of standard pricing, quality,  
245 product returns and delivery policies in a manner that builds long-term relationship between relevant parties.  
246 Dominant or hierarchical relations exist where a partner unilaterally uses its decision making power against  
247 other partners in the value chain. This may be synonymous with the selling orientation; the producer hard-sells  
248 products made without collaboration with the target audiences and other members of the value chain. Finally,  
249 O'Toole and Donaldson (2000) note that recurrent relationships are archetypal JIT relationships; they are close  
250 but not strategic enough to be bilateral. The approaches to RM require an interwoven relationship between  
251 customer satisfaction, inward marketing, customer retention, and customer loyalty.

## 252 8 1) Customer Satisfaction

253 Amidst stiff competition in most industries, many organizations distinguish their operations to reflect quality  
254 customer service, innovation and customer responsiveness in an attempt to build customer satisfaction and its  
255 concomitant ideals of profitability (resulting from premium price), loyalty and dominant market share. Customer  
256 satisfaction is viewed as a complex relational and economic activity involving inputs from vendors and other  
257 independent firms and continues even by the manner the dealers handle and explain customers' complaints and  
258 doubts. It is a performance measurement instrument (Ambler and Kokkinaki, 1997) that focuses on experience-  
259 based positive judgment of a product by a customer. It measures product-delivery-attributes as determined  
260 by market forces and undoubtedly reflects on the extent of relationship. Performance generally focuses on  
261 input/output relations (O'Toole and Donaldson, 2000); the input side relates to marketing effectiveness (e.g.;  
262 market orientation and marketing audit) whereas the collaborative Experience of Value Chain Architecture: A  
263 Systemic Paradigm To Building Customer Loyalty output side, which is more predominant especially in inter-  
264 firm relationships, considers marketing efficiency (e.g.; sales volume, market share, costs, customer satisfaction,  
265 profitability and non-pecuniary measures). Measuring customer satisfaction assists to identify the most profitable  
266 customers and to increase loyalty amidst competition; to calculate the lifetime value of each customer; to  
267 increase switching costs, customer retention and viral rates; to reduce marketing costs; to boost sales volume  
268 per customer/customer group; and to build meaningful dialogue that builds relationships and fosters genuine  
269 brand loyalty (Alalak and Alnawas, 2010; Shaker and Basem, 2010). The cost of customer dissatisfaction is  
270 often expressed in terms of weak likelihood of repeat purchase and unfavourable word-of-mouth that may hinder  
271 trial and switching behaviours from potential buyers and competitors' loyalists respectively. Four main tasks are  
272 required of the user organizations in decisions guiding interface with customers. First, data-based marketing  
273 builds relationships from assortments of data on buying habits or preferences from multiple sources. Boone and  
274 Kurtz (2007) noted that enduring relationship with customers (B2C) and/or other businesses (B2B) is subject  
275 to building a front-office system's database that tracks and analyzes each customer's shopping profile in terms of  
276 demography, attitude, perception, psychographics, purchase and other characteristics that determine customer  
277 preferences, activities, tastes, dislikes, likes and complains. Second, subject to individual customer or customer  
278 group life cycle stage and/or extent of loyalty to the firm's market offerings, customer shopping profile forms  
279 the basis for tailoring a customized and differentiated marketing programme based on prediction about customer  
280 upward movement in the relationship ladder as well as how a purchase is financed. Third through relationship  
281 marketing, data warehouse or a back-office system used to fill and support customer orders, stores all customers'  
282 information to help top management or recovery team monitor contacts and make informed decision on how  
283 to add values to the buyer-seller transaction in order to foster continuity in the relationship. Finally, RM uses

284 intimate knowledge of customer preferences to inject in every staff and units of the organization, including external  
285 partners as dealers and suppliers, esprit de corps toward building differentiated business that unbreakably fuse a  
286 lasting relationship with the customers. Sophisticated technology and the Internet services, according to ??rosby  
287 and Johntson (2002), are the dependable tools that make these four interactive tasks workable.

### 288 9 2) Inward Marketing

289 A good internal customer satisfaction helps organization to attract, select, and retain outstanding employees  
290 who appreciate and value their role in the delivery of superior services to external customers (Alrubaiee and  
291 Al-Nazer, 2010; Shaker and Basem, 2010). Inward marketing asserts that every employee, team, or unit in the  
292 firm's value chain is simultaneously a supplier of, and a customer of, ideas and/or services. On the instant that  
293 employee loyalty rubs off on customers, the value chain starts with the morale of internal customers-employees  
294 and units-that must understand, accept, and fulfil their respective roles in implementing the marketing strategy.  
295 For instance, employees and units engaged in manufacturing, packaging, and processing orders for new equipment  
296 are the internal customers of salesmen who then complete sales contracts with external customers. Perhaps these  
297 individuals do not have direct contact with the external customers but the company-wide intranets/philosophy  
298 emphasizing on customer mindedness may cause them to condition their performance to impact directly on the  
299 overall firm's value delivered to the external customers. The banking and oil industries, particularly SPDC,  
300 Agip, Texaco, Exxon Mobil, etc; are in the fore-front of this trend by installing organizational culture of training  
301 and re-training employees as well as keeping them constantly informed (often through the intranet) about, and  
302 committed to, corporate goals, strategies, and customer needs.

### 303 10 3) Customer Retention

304 The hallmark of every firm in competitive industry and of relationship marketing is customer retention, which,  
305 if well programmed, involves the creation of novelty and mutuality in values, which often deepen, extend, and  
306 prolong relationship; thus creating yet more opportunities for customers, manufacturers, dealers, and suppliers  
307 to benefit from one another. Unleashing more premiums on incumbent customers make economic sense on the  
308 grounds that, several studies reported that the costs of sourcing and acquiring new customers reasonably out-weigh  
309 the costs of maintaining/retaining existing ones. Many studies have proved that customer retention increases  
310 profitability. Buchanan and Gilles (1990) reported that such relationship exists because of the followings. First,  
311 the cost curve of the relationship is only high at the acquisition time and falls as the relationship becomes stronger  
312 and more enduring. So, accounts maintenance costs decline as percentage of revenue increases per account.  
313 Second, stable or improved sales volume/sales amount may be stimulated by building switching barriers and less  
314 price sensitivity as well as creating avenues through which satisfied customers initiate free-cost viral promotions  
315 and referrals. Finally, profitability is further improved because long-term In other words, such relationship may  
316 lead to more efficient decision-making by customers and higher levels of customer satisfaction. Further, customer  
317 retention and loyalty make the employees' job simpler, cheaper, and more satisfying; which, in a vicious manner,  
318 can be passed on to customers. In addition to running programmes that encourage frequent positive behaviour  
319 in relationship marketing, firms also use affinity marketing to further retain customers and solicit involvement  
320 by individuals who share common interest and activities. For instance, BMW can build affinity by emphasizing  
321 and reinforcing high performance.

### 322 11 4) Customer Loyalty

323 The longer a relationship lasts the more profitable it turns and so, the core of RM is to win and keep customers  
324 by creating relational value chain (Peng and Wang, 2006) in a manner that culminates more points of contacts  
325 and deeper accords, frequency marketing and efficient operations, cannibalization, making disruptive behaviour  
326 costly, and detailed probing into customer complaints and competitive benchmarking to make informed corrective  
327 decisions to keep all relationships improving. Loyal behaviour measures the length of time a customer is  
328 predisposed to resist competitive offers (Peppers and Rogers, 1999).

329 Yim et al (2008) defined loyal behaviour in terms of deeply held commitment to repurchase a preferred  
330 brand in the future despite unfavourable situational and marketing influences that may cause switching. A loyal  
331 customer enjoys satisfaction, is passionate, builds switching barriers and tolerates unfavourable situations in  
332 the hope of future improvements when voiced out. Reichheld's (1996) survey showed correlation between loyal  
333 behaviour/customer retention and profitability. Hasouneh and Ayed Alqeed (2010) opined that new customers  
334 may be initially unprofitable but turn profitable as relationship lasts. A caveat need be observed here to avoid  
335 keeping worthless relationship because Gronroos (1996) categorized customers into transactional mode, passive  
336 relational mode and active relational mode. The last category is the most laudable asset of RM because they  
337 seek contacts and interactions for value-added exchanges. Customer retention rate and customer lifetime value  
338 provide bases for knowing which relationship to deeply invest and which to serve differently or to even terminate.  
339 Koller (2001) indicated that Harrah's Casino created a Webbased programme that allowed gamblers to view  
340 their points and learn how to earn more benefits as they gamble their way up to platinum or diamond status.  
341 Also, the programme identified which of the so-called high-rollers yields the highest profits. Dwakins and opined  
342 that an increase in retention rate from 80 to 90 percent is associated with doubling of average life of a customer

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343 relationship from 5 to 10 years. This is based on the fact that RM fosters more points of contacts with customers  
344 and builds deeper accords that often cause new learning and disruptive behaviour a costly exercise.

## 345 12 VI.

## 346 13 CONCLUSION

347 Amongst marketing management traditionalists, aggressive attraction of customers or dominant focus on point-  
348 of-sale transaction though besieged with weak pay-off remains a popular approach to deal with the competitive  
349 business environment. Transactional marketing views exchanges as generally oppressive, power-based, intrusion,  
350 short-term, irregular, and often disrupted by conflicts resulting from profit maximization driven manipulation of  
351 the marketing mix variables. A new dawn is right here today. Borrowing the ideals of B2B and service sectors to  
352 build loyalty and mutually beneficial relationships with incumbent customers, dealers, suppliers, and employees is  
353 perhaps synonymous with the search for creative, innovative, and cost-effective strategies for delivering customer  
354 values as well as ways to deal with selfishness, superficiality and self-indulgence of the independent firms to boost  
355 mutual performance. Hence, a paradigmatic shift from push to pull models of integrated relationship across  
356 traditional boundaries and of course the building of customer responsiveness, customer retention and customer  
357 loyalty theories. The theories of relationship have long existed in marketing management literature and related  
358 fields; they provide the theoretical bases upon which the new dawn of change, amidst IT explosion, rests. After-  
359 all RM has not got any knowledge of its own. The new dawn of relationship shifts power to consumers; views  
360 markets as social conversation involving participative architecture and inter-firm alignments; and enables mutual  
361 relationship, interaction collaborative Experience of Value Chain Architecture: A Systemic Paradigm To Building  
362 Customer Loyalty and collaboration to build long-term relationships that reflect on corporate performance.  
363 The implication is that customer satisfaction is a value-chain and systems activity based on value chain trust,  
364 mutuality, promise, shared values, and commitment. Each subsystem interacts with others to maintain the  
365 whole; when one is weak the entire whole fails. This belief guides value chain decisions. If done online,  
366 such relationships allow for overtime creativity, communications, secured information sharing in real time, and  
367 collaboration between members of on-line communities. Networking information for value chain access, including  
368 the customers, provides strong basis for building sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). This requires the  
369 alignment of functional and value-chain partners' activities with corporate strategy and harmonizing such with  
370 organizational structure, processes, culture, incentives, and people in an attempt to build long-term relationship.  
371 Collaborative structure determines authority; sharing of risk and rewards; long-term and shared commitment and  
372 goals; division of cognitive processes into intertwined layers; and mutual participative architectures and esprit de  
373 corps in a coordinated effort to push customers upwards in the relationship ladder. All steps in the value chain  
374 from design to after-sales service are integrated flows aimed at improving corporate performance. Rather than  
375 shaving suppliers' margin, the interests of all stakeholders can be best served through more strategic approach  
376 to optimization. <sup>1 2</sup>

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Figure 1: Figure 1 : 73 Global

For a relationship to permit improved customer retention and marketing productivity, the customer must value it or view the entire exercise as relationship rather than transaction-based. The customer determines whether or not to develop RM based on perceived mutuality of thinking with the developer (Shaker, 2009) and/or the received added value through more customized service (Hasounch and Ayed Alqeed, 2010). Anderson et al (1997) surveyed focus groups in apparel industry and identified four contexts by which a consumer values relationship in the design of clothing. They are copying clothing currently owned, totally custom, co-designing with a trained person, and selecting from a set of opinions or component choice. Similarly, Fiore et al

*[Note: (2001) found that consumers prefer RM in mass customization of products (i.e.; jeans, swimming suits), product features (i.e.; fit and size) to a greater degree; and colour and garment details to a lesser degree.]*

Figure 2:

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