

LAMPIRAN



MENGELOLA PELANGGAN DENGAN JAMINAN MUTU DAN RELATIONSHIP MARKETING UNTUK MENINGKATKAN LOYALITAS PELANGGAN

Azis Yasin

Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Brawijaya

Abstraksi: *Mengelola pelanggan merupakan perkembangan alami tentang segmen pasar, di mana setiap pelanggan tunggal yang potensial dianggap sebagai suatu segmen pasar. Dalam kenyataan, setiap organisasi bisnis harus berfokus pada segmen pasar tertentu, sehingga pada segmen pasar tersebut mereka dapat memperagakan kemampuannya yang khas dan dapat menciptakan suatu keunggulan bersaing yang dapat dipertahankan. Segmen sasaran tersebut harus dapat dijangkau dan mempunyai potensi untuk memenuhi tujuan perusahaan dalam parameter biaya yang cocok. Kemudian segmen pasar yang ditandai itu harus diterjemahkan menjadi pelanggan yang nyata untuk dijadikan sebagai sasaran departemen pemasaran dan tempat penyerahan produk yang menghasilkan pendapatan dan keuntungan yang sebenarnya. Agar supaya perusahaan dapat unggul dalam persaingan, maka perusahaan harus berwawasan pelanggan. Namun perlu diketahui bahwa di dalam memperoleh pelanggan, departemen pemasaran tidak dapat bekerja sendirian dan bahkan hanya bisa merupakan mitra dalam usaha menarik pelanggan, mempertahankan pelanggan, dan menciptakan loyalitas pelanggan, melalui jaminan mutu produk dan relationship marketing.*

Kata kunci: *Jaminan mutu, relationship marketing, loyalitas pelanggan*

Pendahuluan

Konsep relationship marketing merupakan strategi di dalam menarik perhatian pelanggan dan memelihara pelanggan, serta mengelola hubungan dengan pelanggan. Selain itu konsep ini merupakan upaya membangun hubungan yang lebih konstruktif dengan pelanggan terpilih dalam mencapai sukses pemasaran jangka panjang. Oleh karenanya hasil relationship marketing adalah merupakan proses pembentukan kolaborasi pelanggan, membangun hubungan mata rantai untuk meningkatkan nilai pelanggan, kelanggengan pelanggan dan profitabilitas. Konsep relationship marketing memang sangat menarik untuk dikembangkan, namun untuk mencapai sukses dalam implementasinya menuntut adanya komitmen semua anggota (Pemimpin dan bawahan) organisasi perusahaan

Perlu diketahui bahwa sukses suatu perusahaan sangat ditentukan oleh kepuasan pelanggan, oleh karenanya kebutuhan dan keinginan pelanggan merupakan kunci pokok dalam menentukan mutu produk yang diinginkan

pelanggan.

Konsep kepuasan pelanggan ini dapat meningkatkan kelangsungan hubungan dengan pelanggan lama dan berupaya terus-menerus menarik pelanggan baru. Dengan relatinship marketing perusahaan dapat memperoleh profitabilitas jangka panjang dari pelanggan yang loyal. Berhubungan terus dengan pelanggan yang loyal, perusahaan dapat cepat memperbaiki kualitas (mutu) produk dan pelayanan sesuai dengan yang diharapkan pelanggan atas informasi dari pelanggan yang loyal. Pelangan yang loyal tentulah yang terbaik untuk dimiliki. Bahkan tidak saja mereka merupakan pelanggan yang lebih mudah untuk dilayani dibandingkan dengan pelanggan yang tidak loyal, melainkan yang dapat memberikan profitabilitas tertinggi di antara semua pelanggan terhadap perusahaan.

Relationship marketing

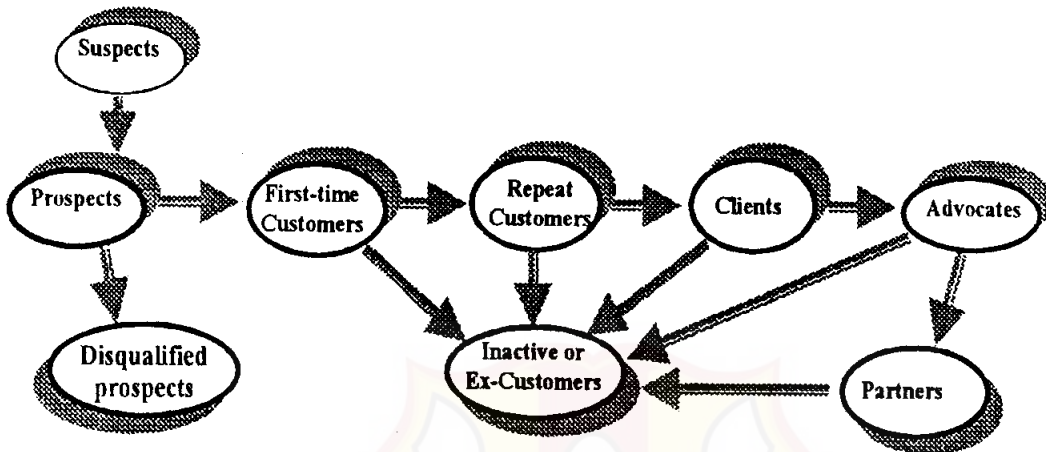
Inti dari kegiatan pemasaran adalah pertukaran. Dalam proses pertukaran, terjadi hubungan timbal balik antara dua pihak seperti konsumen - pengecer. Dalam proses pertukaran satu arah yang terlibat dapat tiga pihak atau lebih, di mana setiap pihak yang terlibat dalam pertukaran tersebut akan mendapatkan keuntungan secara tidak langsung. Dalam proses pertukaran yang kompleks diorganisir oleh hubungari jaringan yang saling terkait, mengacu pada sistem yang saling menguntungkan. Konsep pertukaran yang terakhir mengarah pada hubungan yang bersifat langgeng. Konsep inilah oleh para pakar disebut Relationship Marketing.

Sebagai faktor kunci dalam memahami Relationship Marketing, Kotler (1997) menunjukkan proses perkembangan pelanggan seperti pada Gambar 1.

Langkah pertama adalah menguji *suspects*, apakah mereka akan membeli produk atau tidak dan menentukan siapa yang dapat dikelompokkan menjadi *prospects* yang memiliki daya tarik potensial kuat terhadap produk dan memiliki kemampuan membayar yang kuat. Perusahaan memutuskan *disqualified prospects* yaitu menolak bagi mereka yang memiliki nilai rendah dan tidak memberikan profit. Pelanggan pertama yang *qualified prospects*, oleh perusahaan diupayakan berubah menjadi pelanggan yang berulang - ulang. Perlu diketahui bahwa ada kemungkinan pembeli pertama maupun pembeli yang berulang - ulang melanjutkan pembelannya pada perusahaan pesaing. Perusahaan harus berupaya dengan berbagai macam strategi untuk merubah pembeli yang berulang - ulang menjadi *Clients*, menjadi *Advocates*, dan kemudian menjadi *Partners*, di mana pelanggan dan perusahaan melakukan aktivitas secara aktif bersama - sama dan akhirnya berupaya agar *partners* tersebut menjadi *pelanggan yang loyal*. Selanjutnya dalam kaitannya dengan investasi modal (biaya dan tenaga) untuk pengembangan hubungan dengan pelanggan maka Kotler (1997) membedakan lima tingkat hubungan dengan pelanggan yaitu :

1. *Basic marketing*: Salesperson hanya bertindak menjual produk
2. *Reactive marketing*: Salesperson menjual produk dan meminta pelanggan menghubunginya bila mempunyai pertanyaan, komentar dan keluhan
3. *Accountable marketing*: Salesperson menelpon (menghubungi) pelanggan segera setelah penjualan untuk memeriksa (menanyakan) apakah produk sudah memenuhi harapannya. Salesperson juga menanyakan saran perbaikan produk dan kekecewaan spesifik pelanggan. Informasi ini

4. *Proactive marketing*: Salesperson perusahaan menghubungi pelanggan dari waktu ke waktu dengan saran untuk peningkatan penggunaan produk atau produk baru yang berguna
5. *Partnership marketing*: Perusahaan terus bekerja sama dengan pelanggan untuk mencapai penghematan bagi pelanggan atau membantu pelanggan bekerja lebih baik.



Gambar 1. Proses perkembangan pelanggan (Kotler, 1997)

Dalam praktek, bila perusahaan masuk dalam pasar yang mencakup banyak pelanggan dengan margin yang kecil, maka kebanyakan perusahaan akan melakukan *basic marketing* dan bila dalam pasarnya mencakup sedikit pelanggan dan margin yang besar, maka kebanyakan perusahaan (penjual) akan melakukan *partnership marketing*. Kemudian untuk mengembangkan ikatan dan kepuasan pelanggan yang lebih kuat, Berry dan Parasuraman seperti yang dikutip Kotler (1997) membedakan tiga pendekatan untuk penciptaan nilai pelanggan yaitu: menambah *financial benefits*, menambah *social benefits* dan menambah *structural ties*.

Prinsip Relationship Marketing

Menurut McKenna, yang dikutip oleh Wilfridus (1997), ada lima prinsip yang berkaitan dengan penerapan Relationship Marketing, yaitu:

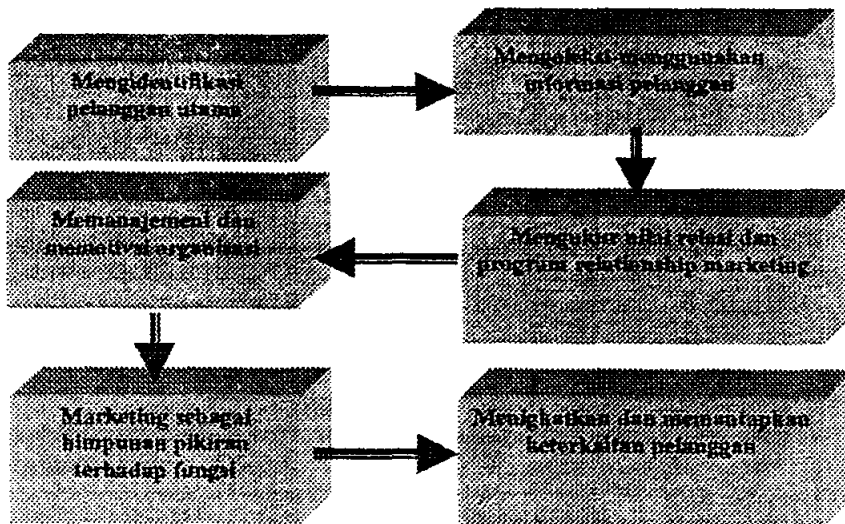
1. Pemasaran adalah bagaikan perjalanan kebulan: Maksudnya memberikan penegasan bahwa perlunya menempatkan pasar sebagai kiblat dari pemasaran dan organisasi dan bagaimana keberhasilan pemasaran dapat ditentukan oleh interaksi di antara keduanya. Situasi ini, pasar dapat menarik masuk suatu produk dan menempatkannya pada posisi yang unggul atau sebaliknya menghancurkan citranya. Demikian juga organisasi dengan melalui kekuatannya dapat menarik produk ke bawah sehingga gagal atau sebaliknya memberikan daya dorong sehingga memungkinkan lepas landas secara meyakinkan. Kekuatan produk, mencakup keandalan produk dalam memenuhi kebutuhan dan keinginan konsumen baik pada level *core product* dan *actual product* maupun pada level *argumented product*. Sedangkan kekuatan pasar mencakup hubungan dengan pelanggan yang strategik, karena kredibilitas

suatu perusahaan di pasar ditentukan oleh hubungan yang dibangunnya. Kemudian unsur yang lain adalah dukungan infra struktur pemasaran seperti pengecer, distributor, analis keuangan, serta manufaktur. Semua kekuatan unsur ini, dapat menciptakan peluang pemasaran yang menguntungkan dan mungkin juga menimbulkan tekanan yang merugikan.

2. Pemasaran adalah penciptaan pasar, bukan *market sharing*. Maksudnya hubungan baik dalam jangka panjang dapat memberikan peluang pada produk baru yang diciptakan dan yang diminta oleh pelanggan.
3. Pemasaran adalah masalah proses, bukan taktik promosional. Maksudnya moral konsep ini menekankan bahwa periklanan dan promosi hanyalah merupakan sebagian kecil dari strategi pemasaran. Kemudian untuk membangun posisi pasar yang berkelanjutan, perusahaan harus membangun hubungan yang kuat dengan pasar dan infrastruktur pemasaran. Dengan memberikan pelayanan yang memuaskan dan mendengarkan keluhan serta keinginan pelanggan mengenai produk perusahaan, akan dapat menciptakan loyalitas pelanggan.
4. Pemasaran adalah kualitatif dan bukan kuantitatif. Maksudnya dalam situasi pemasaran yang berubah - ubah (lingkungan) di mana polanya bukan merupakan kelanjutan dari apa yang sudah dikenali, maka penekanan pada penggunaan data masa kini dan masa lampau untuk memprediksi perkembangan pemasaran di masa depan adalah relatif tidak cocok. Yang lebih cocok adalah pendekatan kualitatif, karena dalam proses penjualan, konsumen sering memutuskan pembelannya berdasarkan pada faktor-faktor kualitatif yaitu: kepemimpinan, pelayanan, reliabilitas, personil, dan citra perusahaan.
5. Pemasaran adalah tugas atau pekerjaan setiap orang. Maksudnya tidak hanya bagian pemasaran saja yang melakukan pemasaran, melainkan semua orang yang ada di dalam perusahaan (bagian operasi, bagian keuangan dan yang lainnya) terlibat dalam kegiatan pemasaran.

Kunci Sukses Implementasi Relationship Marketing

Konsep *relationship marketing* merupakan metode yang digunakan untuk menarik perhatian pelanggan dan memelihara pelanggan serta meningkatkan dan mengelola hubungan kepuasan dengan pelanggan. Oleh karenanya hasil *relationship marketing* adalah proses pembentukan dan keterkaitan di dalam mengelola kolaborasi pelanggan, membangun hubungan mata rantai untuk meningkatkan nilai pelanggan, kelanggengan pelanggan, dan profitabilitas. Di samping itu konsep *relationship marketing* juga berusaha membangun hubungan dan perhatian yang lebih konstruktif dengan pelanggan terpilih (terseleksi) dalam mencapai sukses pemasaran jangka panjang. Konsep ini merupakan bentuk upaya perusahaan masa kini di dalam mempertahankan pelanggannya. Karena mereka sadar bahwa biaya yang dikeluarkan untuk menarik seorang pelanggan baru diperkirakan lima kali dibandingkan dengan mempertahankan seorang pelanggan lama (Kotler, 1997). Menurut Khoe Yao Tung (1997), implementasi *relationship marketing* dalam perusahaan harus dapat mencapai sukses. Kunci sukses implementasi *relationship marketing* dalam perusahaan dapat meliputi langkah - langkah seperti yang dicakup pada Gambar 2 berikut ini.



Gambar 2. Langkah-Langkah Relationship Marketing

Berdasarkan gambar 2 di atas, langkah-langkah relationship marketing meliputi:

1. Mengidentifikasi pelanggan utama; Yaitu memilih lima sampai sepuluh pelanggan utama sebagai target dalam relationship marketing.
2. Mengoleksi dan menggunakan informasi pelanggan, berupa penunjukan manajer *relationship marketing* yang terlatih dan berpengalaman. Manajer ini berkewajiban dalam mempersiapkan orang-orang penjualan yang melayani pelanggan sesuai dengan karakteristik dari pelanggan.
3. Mengukur nilai relasi dan program relationship marketing. Di sini menjelaskan laporan *relationship marketing*, tujuan, tanggung jawab, dan kriteria evaluasi. Kalau perlu perusahaan dapat menempatkan satu manajer atau lebih untuk melayani satu pelanggan utama dan potensial yang melayani segala kepentingan pelanggan itu.
4. Memanajemeni dan memotivasi organisasi bagi *relationship marketing*. Kemudian dapat membangkitkan dan mengkomunikasikan organisasi akan kekuatan pelanggan jangka panjang dan dukungan organisasi dalam meningkatkan keefektifan manajer relationship.
5. Marketing sebagai himpunan pikiran terhadap fungsi, perpaduan dan kerjasama antar bagian organisasi didalam mendukung *relationship marketing*, agar dapat menjadikan organisasi lebih sebagai kumpulan pikiran, dibandingkan dengan fungsi organisasi.
6. Meningkatkan dan memantapkan keterkaitan pelanggan dalam perencanaan dan penetapan tujuan, strategi, dan tindakan spesifik, serta sumber daya yang dibutuhkan.

Selanjutnya Norton Paley (1996) memberikan pertimbangan dalam pengambilan tindakan implementasi *relationship marketing* sebagai berikut:

1. Kebutuhan dan harapan pelanggan. Di mulai mengadakan dialog kontinyu dengan para pelanggan untuk mendefinisikan harapan mereka saat ini

- dan di masa mendatang. Kemudian penuhi harapan pelanggan tersebut sesuai janji yang dibuat dalam presentasi penjualan.
2. Manajemen hubungan pelanggan; Kuncinya adalah menugaskan petugas kontak permanen untuk mengadakan kontak dengan pelanggan secara berkelanjutan.
 3. Standar layanan pelanggan; Mengendalikan semua rencana kualitas, kinerja produk, dan hubungan pelanggan dengan standar pelanggan yang telah ditentukan.
 4. Komitmen kepada pelanggan; Memberi jaminan kepada pelanggan tentang pengiriman barang tepat waktu, memberi pelatihan khusus pekerja pelanggan dan layanan pendukung 24 jam.
 5. Pengukuran kepuasan pelanggan; Mengukur kepuasan pelanggan dengan sistem indek berdasarkan informasi umpan balik pelanggan.
 6. Hasil - hasil kepuasan pelanggan; Mengedarkan hasil analisa indek kepuasan pelanggan kepada para manajer fungsional sehingga mereka dapat mendesain sasaran kepuasan pelanggan untuk masa (tahun) berikutnya.
 7. Perbandingan kepuasan pelanggan; Membuat perbandingan diantara pelanggan dan pesaing yang berkaitan dengan standar industri melalui benchmarking formal dan informal. Kemudian hasilnya (informasi) dibagikan kepada para distributor sebagai pedoman untuk meningkatkan rating kepuasan pelanggan.

Konsep *relationship marketing* memang sangat menarik untuk dikembangkan. Namun keberhasilan dalam implementasinya menuntut adanya komitmen dari direksi atau pimpinan perusahaan. Persyaratan ini harus mengkristal menjadi budaya dalam organisasi perusahaan. Penerapannya, biasanya tidak mudah untuk dipenuhi sehingga menimbulkan hambatan dan bahkan kegagalan. Sebagai kunci sukses *relationship marketing* maka implementasinya harus dibuat dalam satu paket program *three in one* (Budi Sugarda, 1997) yang terdiri dari:

1. Pertama, melakukan *internal marketing*; Maksudnya mendidik staf maupun karyawan perusahaan untuk lebih customer oriented dan bertindak melayani.
2. Kedua, dengan penyusunan program terpadu dalam *external marketing* (*marketing mix*) yang menyangkut : *product*, *price*, *place*, *promotion*, *process* dan *people*.
3. Ketiga, menciptakan kualitas *interactive marketing* atau *moment of truth*; Maksudnya, pada saat pertemuan dengan pelanggan, kualitas pertemuan tersebut harus bagus. Yang menjadi kendala utama disini, biasanya pimpinan organisasi tidak menghayati dan tidak terlibat secara total dalam pelaksanaan program tersebut. Disamping itu juga kurangnya penghayatan bagi diri petugas (staf dan karyawan) dalam pelaksanaan *relationship marketing*.

Manfaat Relationship Marketing

Meningkatkan kelangsungan hubungan dengan pelanggan lama dan terus menarik pelanggan baru dengan konsep kepuasan pelanggan dapat mempunyai pengaruh yang lebih besar pada bagian pasar, sehingga perusahaan dapat lebih

memungkinkan untuk meningkatkan profitabilitas dari setiap daur hidup pelanggan dengan penggunaan strategi *relationship marketing*.

Beberapa manfaat spesifik dari penggunaan *relationship marketing* adalah sebagai berikut:

1. Memperoleh profitabilitas atas penjualan jangka panjang dari pelanggan yang loyal.
2. Memungkinkan adanya peluang yang besar untuk menjual produk baru kepada pelanggan lama yang loyal, karena pelanggan loyal sudah sangat mengenal merk produk yang biasa dibelinya.
3. Memungkinkan promosi tanpa biaya, karena terjadinya penyebaran informasi positif dari mulut ke mulut tentang merk produk oleh pelanggan yang puas dan loyal.
4. Dengan keterkaitan pelanggan yang loyal, maka perusahaan dapat cepat memperbaiki kualitas produk dan pelayanan sesuai dengan harapan pelanggan atas informasi dari pelanggan yang loyal.

Kapan dan Bagaimana Menggunakan Relationship Marketing

Relationship Marketing tidak dapat efektif untuk semua situasi tetapi sangat efektif dalam situasi yang tepat. Investasi pada *relationship marketing* akan berhasil baik, jika pelanggannya mempunyai kebutuhan yang bersifat jangka panjang dan mempunyai biaya peralihan yang tinggi. Misalnya, pelanggan yang ingin investasi pada sistem solusi otomatisasi perkantoran, biasanya pelanggan akan memilih pemasok dengan teliti, melihat reputasi dan pelayanan terbaiknya, serta memilih teknologi yang mempunyai kinerja tinggi dan jangka panjang. Namun kalau situasinya menunjukkan bahwa pelanggan hanya ingin memenuhi kebutuhan jangka pendek dengan transaksi sesaat dan memiliki biaya beralih pemasok lain rendah, maka yang cocok adalah menggunakan *transaction marketing*. Sebenarnya, baik *relationship marketing* maupun *transaction marketing* tidak menjadi masalah penting dalam industri, kecuali untuk pelanggan tertentu. Karena ada beberapa pelanggan yang menilai tinggi pada pelayanan dan akan bertahan lama dengan pemasok tersebut. Sedangkan pelanggan yang lain ingin menurunkan biaya (investasi) mereka dan konsentrasi pada biaya peralihan yang rendah. Dalam situasi yang terakhir, perusahaan dapat mencoba mempertahankan pelanggan dengan menyetujui penurunan harga asalkan pelanggan tersebut bersedia menerima pelayanan yang lebih sedikit dari yang seharusnya, misal : pelanggan tidak mendapatkan pengiriman gratis dan pelatihan. Jadi jelaslah bahwa *relationship marketing* tidak tepat untuk semua pelanggan karena biaya yang besar untuk *relationship marketing* tidak selalu memberikan hasil yang sesuai. *Relationship marketing* ini akan sangat efektif pada pelanggan yang tepat, yaitu pelanggan yang sangat terikat pada sistem tertentu dan mengharapkan pelayanan yang konsisten dan tepat waktu.

Membangun Loyalitas Pelanggan

Pelanggan yang loyal tentulah yang terbaik untuk dimiliki. Bukan saja mereka lebih mudah dilayani dibanding dengan pelanggan yang tidak loyal, melainkan mereka juga memberikan profitabilitas tertinggi di antara semua pelanggan. Pelanggan yang loyal ini berfungsi sebagai partner dalam mengembangkan produk baru, dan selalu mendukung layanan istimewa yang diberikan kepadanya. Hal ini tercermin pada sikapnya; di mana pada masa-masa

- pengeluaran, pemberian software, dan pelatihan gratis yang besar untuk meningkatkan hubungan dengan para pelanggan yang loyal.
4. *Infer dari perilaku.* Dengan kontak yang kontinyu akan memungkinkan dapat memahami pola perilaku para pelanggan yang loyal, seperti: aspek dari produk atau jasa yang penting bagi mereka; bagaimana mereka menilai anda dibanding para pesaing; umpan balik apa yang mereka berikan pada anda untuk membantu anda memperbaiki diri. Kemudian yang paling penting, bagaimana semua ini mempengaruhi perilaku pembelian mereka.
 5. *Influence para pembuat keputusan kunci.* Staf komunikasi dan representatif penjualan perusahaan harus meminta segala kerumitan pelanggan, misal, membuat keputusan krusial mengenai pembelian.
 6. *Increase account share.* Penjualan tambahan sering dapat dilayani hanya dengan mengeluarkan biaya variable.
 7. *Imunize terhadap persaingan.* Para pelanggan yang memiliki kecenderungan loyal inheren akan menawarkan nilai yang lebih baik.

Untuk membangun suatu program loyalitas pelanggan yang efektif, perusahaan harus berfikir melebihi loyalitas pada produk-produk individual dan membangun loyalitas merek yang ada. Agar dapat efektif di dalam membangun loyalitas harus menggunakan dua prinsip pedoman berikut (Avison, 1996):

1. Jangan sekedar membangun loyalitas, sebarkanlah.
2. Adalah orang, bukannya konsumen target yang loyal.

Tidak banyak yang dapat dilakukan oleh perusahaan untuk membuat seorang pengguna yang loyal pada suatu produk tertentu, walaupun mereka lebih banyak berbelanja atas produk tersebut, tetapi yang dapat dilakukan oleh perusahaan hanyalah menyebarkan loyalitas tersebut. Oleh karena itu mengikat konsumen yang kokoh dengan merek adalah lebih penting. Agar dapat lebih mudah membangun loyalitas, maka kontak langsung dengan pelanggan akan sangat membantu sekali. Hal ini berarti memberi kesempatan pada retailer semacam suatu keunggulan atas perusahaan manufaktur. Walaupun demikian, banyak

baik mereka membeli produk yang ditawarkan kepadanya dan pada masa musim buruk/krisis mereka juga tetap mendukung penjualannya. Pada situasi ini mereka tidak peduli terhadap kemajuan para pesaing yang menawarkan produk kepadanya.

Walaupun demikian, pelanggan yang loyal ini juga ingin harapannya dipahami dan dipenuhi. Oleh karenanya perusahaan harus dapat memperoleh loyalitas mereka. Ada konsep "**tujuh I essential**" yang dapat meningkatkan loyalitas pelanggan (Srinivasan, 1996), yaitu :

1. *Initiate contac*. Dengan menggunakan informasi dari data base pelanggan yang efektif, memungkinkan pentargetan yang efisien terhadap para pelanggan loyal dengan kontak langsung telpon atau surat. Dalam pemasaran antar bisnis, panggilan (call) penjualan yang lebih sering dan terstruktur akan memperkuat hubungan perusahaan dengan pelanggan.
2. *Inform tentang inisiatif*. Membuat para pelanggan anda yang loyal tahu apa yang sedang anda lakukan untuk meningkatkan pelayanan kepada mereka.
3. *Insentif*. Pemberian kupon *upgrade gratis* dan hadiah-hadiah untuk pelanggan baru. Kemudian untuk perusahaan antar bisnis, diskon berbasis



kesempatan yang dilalaikan oleh perusahaan, misalnya: pelanggan membeli TV, Kulkas, dan sebagainya, kemudian mengirimkan kembali kartu garansinya. Ini adalah merupakan kesempatan melakukan dialog dengan pelanggan sampai sejauh mana tingkat kepuasan pelanggannya atas pembelian yang dilakukan dan dalam situasi ini salesperson juga mempunyai kesempatan untuk menunjukkan produk-produk lain yang mungkin dibutuhkan. Jadi semakin perusahaan memperlakukan pelanggan sebagai individu (orang) dengan memenuhi kebutuhan-kebutuhannya, maka akan semakin loyal mereka dan semakin condong (ingin) membeli lebih lanjut atas merek tersebut. Sejumlah besar informasi yang dikumpulkan perusahaan tentang pelanggannya, merupakan sarana untuk membantu membangun loyalitas. Di sini, pelanggan perlu tahu bahwa perusahaan menggunakan informasi tersebut adalah untuk meningkatkan manfaat merek tersebut yang nantinya berguna baginya.

Ada banyak cara untuk membangun loyalitas merek, namun yang penting adalah kesempurnaan produk haruslah konsisten dengan yang seharusnya, sehingga pelanggan tidak merasa tertipu dan pindah pada produk pesaing.

Jaminan Mutu Produk

Menurut John F. Welch Jr., yang dikutip oleh Kotler (1997) menjelaskan bahwa Mutu adalah jaminan kesetiaan pelanggan. Pertahanan terbaik dalam menghadapi (melawan) saingan dari luar, dan satu-satunya jalan menuju pertumbuhan dan pendapatan yang langgeng. Mutu produk mempunyai hubungan yang erat sekali dengan kepuasan pelanggan. Mutu yang lebih tinggi menghasilkan kepuasan pelanggan yang lebih tinggi, sekaligus mendukung harga lebih tinggi dan bahkan sering juga dapat menciptakan biaya yang lebih rendah. Oleh karenanya program peningkatan mutu biasanya dapat meningkatkan keuntungan. Mutu adalah kunci penciptaan nilai dan kepuasan pelanggan. Sukses tidaknya suatu perusahaan sangat ditentukan oleh kepuasan pelanggan. Karena seluruh kegiatan perusahaan yang diwujudkan dalam produk bermuara pada ketentuan akhir yang ditentukan oleh pelanggan, maka kebutuhan dan keinginan pelanggan adalah merupakan kunci pokok dalam menentukan mutu produk yang diinginkan pelanggan.

Beberapa premis yang diperlukan *Total Quality Marketing* untuk meningkatkan mutu (Kotler, 1997), adalah sebagai berikut:

1. Mutu harus dirasakan oleh konsumen. Pekerjaan mutu harus di mulai dengan menemukan apa yang menjadi keinginan konsumen dan berakhir dengan persepsi konsumen. Bila konsumen menginginkan produk yang lebih handal, tahan lama dan penampilannya lebih bagus maka ini menunjukkan mutu produk di mata konsumen. Untuk menjamin bahwa produk yang ditawarkan memiliki mutu yang lebih tinggi maka perusahaan harus menyalurkan suara konsumen kesetiap bagian yang ada hubungannya dengan produk yang akan dihasilkan, seperti bagian desain, rekayasa, proses produksi dan distribusi.
2. Mutu harus direfleksikan dalam stiap aktivitas manajemen dan bukan hanya pada produk perusahaan itu sendiri. Maksudnya, manajemen bukan hanya semata-mata memperhatikan perbaikan mutu dari produk itu sendiri, tetapi juga mutu periklanan, mutu pengiriman, mutu purna jual dan lain-lain. Iklan sangat menentukan bagi perusahaan dalam mengkomunikasikan produk yang ditawarkan. Bilamana iklan tersebut

terlalu mengada-ada dan tidak sesuai dengan mutu produk yang ditawarkan, ini akan mempengaruhi kesan konsumen. Demikian pula dengan mutu pengiriman: Tepat waktu, kecepatan dan amannya produk tiba di konsumen merupakan salah satu keberhasilan mutu perusahaan. Bilamana produk yang dipasarkan dilengkapi dengan jaminan purna jual, maka semakin lengkaplah *total quality marketing* yang ditawarkan. Jaminan purna jual adalah suatu tawaran perusahaan kepada konsumen yang merupakan tanda bukti bahwa produk yang ditawarkan memiliki mutu yang bisa dijamin.

3. Mutu memerlukan komitmen seluruh karyawan. Perusahaan hanya dapat memberikan produk yang bermutu, bilamana seluruh karyawan merasa terbebani, termotivasi, dan terlatih menciptakan dan memberikan mutu kepada konsumen. Perusahaan yang berhasil adalah perusahaan yang mau menyingkirkan berbagai macam hambatan antar bagian dalam manajemen. Untuk mengejar (meningkatkan) mutu, karyawan perlu membiasakan diri bekerja secara tim antar bagian.
4. Mutu memerlukan mitra usaha yang memiliki *high - quality*. Perusahaan dapat menghasilkan produk yang bermutu tinggi bilamana memiliki mitra usaha yang sangat peduli terhadap mutu, contoh, pemasok dan distributor. Manajemen bertanggung jawab menyiapkan mitra usaha yang memiliki kesadaran tentang betapa pentingnya penyediaan produk yang memiliki mutu tinggi.
5. Mutu harus selalu dapat diperbaiki. Perusahaan terbaik Jepang selalu percaya dengan philosophy "*Kaizen*", yaitu perbaikan segala sesuatu yang kontinyu oleh setiap orang mulai dari direksi, manajer, dan seluruh karyawan dalam lingkungan perusahaan. Cara lain untuk memperbaiki mutu adalah mengadakan "*Benchmark*" kinerja perusahaan pesaing yang *the best-of- class* dan berusaha melebihi mereka bilamana perlu mengadakan "*Leapfrog*" jauh melebihi pesaing.
6. Perbaikan mutu perlu sejumlah lompatan. Perusahaan dalam mengadakan perbaikan mutu kadang-kadang butuh kerja lebih keras hanya untuk sejumlah kecil perbaikan. Bila perusahaan masih mampu menargetkan perbaikan 10 kali lipat dari biasanya, mengapa tidak dilakukan.
7. Mutu tidak perlu mengeluarkan biaya lebih besar. Ide lama mengatakan bahwa untuk menghasilkan mutu yang lebih baik perlu mengeluarkan biaya lebih besar dan dapat memperlambat produksi. Hal ini sebetulnya tidak perlu terjadi bilamana pada awalnya perusahaan mempelajari cara-cara yang tepat dalam menghasilkan produk yang bermutu. Mutu tidak dapat diperiksa saja, namun harus dirancang. Kalau semuanya benar sejak awal banyak biaya yang diadakan seperti: biaya perbaikan, biaya yang mengakibatkan kehilangan konsumen.
8. Mutu mutlak perlu, tetapi itu belum cukup. Perbaikan mutu adalah mutlak perlu, karena membuat konsumen menjadi lebih menuntut. Akan tetapi mutu yang lebih tinggi belum berarti akan menghasilkan keunggulan bersaing, karena bisa saja pesaing akan lebih meningkatkan mutu dan sekaligus lebih memperluas pasarnya.
9. Kendali mutu tidak dapat menyelamatkan produk yang jelek. Pontiac tidak dapat menyelamatkan mobil *Firero*nya dengan hanya meluncurkan gerakan mutu, karena mesin mobilnya bukan mesin sport. Gerakan mutu

tidak dapat mengkompensasi kekurangan produk. Jadi sekali perusahaan menghasilkan mutu produk yang jelek, hal itu akan memberikan dampak bagi produk lain dalam perusahaan.

Kesimpulan

Pelanggan yang loyal tentunya merupakan pelanggan yang terbaik untuk dimiliki. Agar dapat memiliki pelanggan yang loyal, perusahaan harus bekerja keras untuk mendapatkannya. Konsep *relationship marketing* dapat digunakan untuk menarik perhatian pelanggan dan memelihara pelanggan serta meningkatkan dan mengelola hubungan kepuasan dengan pelanggan. Perhatian yang lebih konstruktif dengan pelanggan terpilih dapat menciptakan sukses pemasaran jangka panjang. Sebagai kunci sukses dalam mengimplemenntasikan *relationship marketing*, maka Pimpinan puncak organisasi dan seluruh karyawannya harus dapat menghayati konsep *relationship marketing* dan harus terlibat langsung secara total dalam program implementasi *relationship marketing*.

Daftar Referensi

- Avison S., *From loyalty to eternity*. Marketing, June 1996, pp. 27.
- Kotler, P.J. (1997), *Marketing Management : Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control* , 9th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice - Hall , Inc.
- Paley Norton, *Romancing Your Customers*. Sales & Marketing Management, Maret 1996 pp.30 - 32.
- Sugarda Budi, *Relationship Marketing Menjaga Hubungan*. Manajemen Usahawan Indonesia, No. 03, Maret 1997, Hal.17.
- Srinivasan, M., *When it comes to loyal customers, the I's have it*. Marketing News, July 1996 pp.4.
- Tung K.Y., *Relationship Marketing Strategi Kemampulabaan Jangka Panjang*. Manajemen Usahawan Indonsia, No. 03 , Maret 1997, Hal. 6 - 10 .
- Wilfridus,B.E., *Membangun Keunggulan Melalui Relationship Marketing*. Manajemen Usahawan Indonesia, No. 03, Maret 1997, Hal.14 -16.

EMPAT BELAS PROBLEMATIKA SUMBERDAYA MANUSIA YANG MEMBAHAYAKAN PERUSAHAAN/ORGANISASI (Sering Terjadi dan Sering Dilupakan)

Achmad Sudiro dan Alex S. Nitisemito
Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Brawijaya

Abstraksi: Berdasarkan pengamatan penulis terdapat 14 (empat belas) Problematika sumberdaya manusia yang membahayakan perusahaan/organisasi (yang sering terjadi dan sering dilupakan), yaitu lemahnya kesadaran. Betapa pentingnya perencanaan Sumberdaya manusia, dukungan terhadap sasaran organisasi, komunikasi di dalam organisasi di era kemajuan di era teknologi informasi, peran dan kecermatan dalam penilaian prestasi kerja dan pemberian imbalan kepada para karyawan, Penerapan gaya kepemimpinan yang tepat, pembentukan jaringan antar organisasi dalam bisnis global, koordinasi untuk mencapai keunggulan kompetitif, kualitas sumberdaya manusia yang dimiliki, menghentikan salah pilih berlanjut, kesan bahwa mutasi sebagai hukuman, keputusan promosi yang benar, latihan dan pendidikan diiringi dengan usaha meningkatkan loyalitas, komunikasi terutama dari bawah ke atas, dan keputusan yang memerlukan partisipasi.

Kata kunci: Problematika, sumberdaya manusia, organisasi, perusahaan, bisnis global, kepemimpinan

Pendahuluan

Pada dasarnya organisasi itu adalah sebagai suatu wadah yang dibentuk dengan sengaja dan sadar untuk mencapai tujuan. Dalam upaya untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut unsur manusia adalah sangat penting peranannya, terutama tentang kesadarannya (awareness) untuk berperilaku yang dapat mendukung tercapainya tujuan organisasi. Kesadaran yang diperlukan antara lain :

1. Berkaitan dengan perencanaan sumberdaya manusia dalam menghadapi organisasi/perusahaan yang semakin kompleks.
2. Pemantapan peran manajerial dalam mendukung tercapainya sasaran organisasi.
3. Penerapan komunikasi di dalam organisasi di era kemajuan di bidang teknologi informasi.
4. Penempatan peran dan kecermatan dalam penilaian prestasi kerja dan pemberian imbalan kepada para karyawan terhadap kelangsungan hidup perusahaan.
5. Penerapan gaya kepemimpinan seseorang manajer yang tepat seiring dengan kondisi keorganisasian yang semakin tumbuh dan berkembang.



Does relationship marketing improve customer relationship satisfaction and loyalty?

Andreas Leverin

Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, Centre for Relationship Marketing and Service Management, Helsinki, Finland

Veronica Liljander

Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship marketing (RM) strategy of a retail bank and examine whether – after its implementation – customer relationships were strengthened through perceived improvements in the banking relationship and consequent loyalty towards the bank.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey was conducted on two profitability segments, of which the more profitable segment had been directly exposed to a customer oriented RM strategy, whereas the less profitable segment had been subjected to more sales oriented marketing communications.

Findings – No significant differences were found between the segments' evaluations of the service relationship or their loyalty toward the bank. Furthermore, regression analysis revealed that relationship satisfaction was less important as a determinant of loyalty in the more profitable segment.

Research limitations/implications – This study was conducted as a case study of one specific branch of a bank group in Finland, which limits the external validity of its results. It was not possible to ascertain if, or to what extent, customers of the more profitable segment had received the intended RM treatment. Other limitations are also discussed.

Practical implications – Customer orientation is desirable within retail banking and more studies are needed on the differential drivers of loyalty across customer profitability segments. By identifying the aspects of a banking relationship that are more highly valued among more profitable customers than among less profitable customers, bank managers would be able to more effectively devise appropriate strategies for different segments.

Originality/value – The study contributes to the RM literature and marketing of financial services by providing empirical evidence of the effects of RM activities on customer relationship perceptions in different profitability segments.

Keywords Relationship marketing, Customer satisfaction, Customer loyalty, Segmentation, Banking

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Relationship marketing (RM) has been put forth as a way for firms to develop mutually beneficial and valuable long-term relationships with customers (Ravald and Grönroos, 1996). RM is believed to work most effectively when customers are highly involved in the good or service, there is an element of personal interaction, and customers are willing to engage in relationship building activities (O'Malley and Tynan, 2000). Customer oriented RM programmes that enhance the flow of information between the



bank and customers increase customers' positive feelings towards their bank, thereby also increasing satisfaction and relationship strength (Barnes and Howlett, 1998; Ennew and Binks, 1996). Although past studies provide knowledge regarding the nature and importance of banking relationships from a customer (O'Loughlin *et al.*, 2004), business (Madill *et al.*, 2002), and dyadic (Paulin *et al.*, 1998; Åkerlund, 2004) viewpoint, some questions remain unanswered. For example, we lack information on the extent to which specific RM programmes have succeeded in strengthening relationships in different segments.

RM can, but need not be, directed towards all customers of the bank. Most retail banks are characterised by having both profitable and unprofitable customers, where the former subsidise the latter (Carson *et al.*, 2004; Zeithaml *et al.*, 2001). Retaining the profitable customers has become increasingly difficult in a competitive environment where other financial institutions specialise in offering attractive services and prices to this lucrative segment. Since, investments across all customer segments will not yield similar returns (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2001), RM is often directed only at the most profitable segments defined by, for example, income and wealth (Abratt and Russell, 1999). There is, however, a lack of research on how RM activities affect relationship outcomes in the target segment. This is the focus of our study.

The aim of this study is to investigate the RM strategy of a retail bank, in order to discover whether the implementation of the strategy has had the intended strengthening effect on customer relationships. A survey was conducted on two different profitability segments, collecting data on customer relationship satisfaction, perceived relationship improvement, and loyalty towards the bank. Of the two customer segments, the more profitable segment (Segment 1) was directly exposed to the RM programme, whereas the less profitable segment (Segment 2) was not.

The paper is structured as follows: The literature review outlines previous findings on RM, the interrelationship between customer relationship satisfaction and loyalty, and customer profitability segmentation. The empirical part of the paper describes the RM programme at the case bank, and the design, collection and analysis of survey data. The paper concludes with a discussion of the results, managerial implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

Literature review

Relationship marketing

RM emerged in the 1980s as an alternative to the prevailing view of marketing as a series of transactions, because it was recognised that many exchanges, particularly in the service industry, were relational by nature (Berry, 1983; Dwyer *et al.*, 1987; Grönroos, 1994; Gummeson, 1994; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000). Within a retail banking setting, Walsh *et al.* (2004, p. 469) define RM as "the activities carried out by banks in order to attract, interact with, and retain more profitable or high net-worth customers."

RM thus aims at increasing customer profitability while providing better services for customers. Several studies have empirically demonstrated a positive association between RM strategies and business performance (Naidu *et al.*, 1999; Palmatier and Gopalakrishna, 2005). Within a banking context, Keltner (1995) found that German banks, in contrast to American banks, managed to maintain a stable market position during the 1980s and early 1990s as a consequence of relationship oriented banking strategies.

RM will not automatically lead to stronger customer relationships; rather, customers will exhibit different levels of relationship closeness and strength (Berry, 1995; Liljander and Strandvik, 1995). In order to be attractive, RM strategies should enhance customers' perceived benefits of engaging in relationships (O'Malley and Tynan, 2000). However, all customers do not want to engage in relationships and, in fact, it has been suggested that close customer relationships in banking are rare, and that they are being further weakened by the increase in self-service technologies (O'Loughlin *et al.*, 2004). An alternative is to look upon new technologies as relationship facilitators (Sweeney and Morrison, 2004) and to use them strategically in customer relationship management (Payne and Frow, 2005).

One of the basic tenets of RM is customer orientation. Already the selling orientation-customer orientation (SOCO) scale, developed by Saxe and Weitz (1982), was based on the premise that customer oriented sales people strive to increase customers' long-term satisfaction. Selling oriented sales people were considered to prioritise the achievement of an immediate sale at the expense of customer needs. Subsequent research has shown that the degree of customer orientation indeed has an effect on a firm's relationships with its customers (Clark, 1997; Yavas *et al.*, 2004). In a study of financial services, Bejou *et al.* (1998) found that customer oriented employees had a positive impact, while sales oriented employees had a negative impact, on customers' relationship satisfaction.

To our knowledge, there are no previous studies on the effect of RM activities on customer loyalty in different profitability segments. Before describing profitability segmentation, we will briefly review two desired relationship outcomes, customer relationship satisfaction and loyalty.

Customer relationship satisfaction

Customer evaluation measures should reflect the type of exchange that is being evaluated, i.e. transactional or relational. Often used measures in a relationship context are relationship quality (Bejou *et al.*, 1996; Crosby *et al.*, 1990; Lang and Colgate, 2003), and relationship satisfaction (Abdul-Muhmin, 2002; Rosen and Surprenant, 1998). A positive relationship between service quality and satisfaction has been well established in the banking sector (Ennew and Binks, 1999; Jamal and Naser, 2002; Hooi Ting, 2004). However, the constructs are highly correlated and sometimes difficult to separate in transactional interactions (Bitner and Hubbert, 1994), but even more so from a relationship perspective (Dabholkar, 1995). In long-term relationships perceived quality and satisfaction are likely to merge into an overall evaluation of relationship satisfaction.

Customer loyalty

Customer loyalty is defined as:

... a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour (Oliver, 1999, p. 34).

As illustrated in the definition above, loyalty has both an attitudinal and behavioural dimension (Dick and Basu, 1994). It is assumed that customers who are behaviourally loyal to a firm display more favourable attitudes towards the firm, in comparison to competitors. However, in some cases behavioural loyalty does not necessarily reflect

attitudinal loyalty, since there might exist other factors that prevent customers from defecting (Aldlaigan and Buttle, 2005; Liljander and Roos, 2002; Reinartz and Kumar, 2002).

Customer satisfaction and loyalty are highly correlated (Athanasopoulos *et al.*, 2001; Hallowell, 1996; Silvestro and Cross, 2000), but form two distinct constructs (Bennett and Rundle-Thiele, 2004; Oliver, 1999). Customer satisfaction with a bank relationship is a good basis for loyalty (Bloemer *et al.*, 1998; Pont and McQuilken, 2005), although it does not guarantee it, because even satisfied customers switch banks (Nordman, 2004). One important reason for switching is pricing (Colgate and Hedge, 2001; Ennew and Binks, 1999). Hence, banks have launched customer loyalty programmes that provide economic incentives. Although the effectiveness of loyalty programmes has been questioned (Dowling and Uncles, 1997; Sharp and Sharp, 1997; Stauss *et al.*, 2005), research has shown that they have a significant, positive impact on customer retention, service usage, and/or share of customer purchases (Bolton *et al.*, 2000; Verhoef, 2003).

The link between loyalty and profitability

Numerous studies have shown positive links between loyalty and firm profitability (Anderson *et al.*, 1994; Hallowell, 1996; Reichheld, 1996; Silvestro and Cross, 2000). Nonetheless, not all loyal customers are profitable (Storbacka, 1994, 1997). According to Reinartz and Kumar (2002), the overall link between loyalty and profitability in many industries is questionable for two reasons:

- (1) a relatively large percentage of long-term customers are only marginally profitable; and
- (2) a relatively large percentage of short-term customers are highly profitable.

It is noteworthy, however, that Reinartz and Kumar's (2002) findings from four industries (high technology, postal service, retail food and direct brokerage) still indicate that a larger proportion of the long-term customers than of the short-term customers exhibit high profitability, and a larger proportion of the high-profitability customers than of the low-profitability customers are long-term customers. Thus, the theory of an overall positive connection between customer loyalty and profitability cannot be rejected.

As noted by Anderson and Mittal (2000), customer relationship profitability arises through the acquisition and retention of "high quality" customers with low maintenance costs and high revenue. In the context of retail banking, Storbacka (1994) describes relationship costs as comprising direct variable costs, such as transaction related costs and costs related to specific services, in addition to overhead costs that may or may not be attributable to particular relationships. Relationship revenue, meanwhile, is split into volume-based revenue that is derived from interest margins, and fee-based revenue. Customers' patronage concentration (Storbacka, 1994), or share-of-wallet (Keiningham *et al.*, 2003; Perkins-Munn *et al.*, 2005), and pricing policies are important aspects of relationship revenue in banking. Since, a large part of banks' revenues are received from interest margins, customers' volume of business has a major impact on profitability. If relationship costs are minimized and relationship revenue is maximized over time, long-term customers should generate greater profitability than short-term customers.

Profitability segmentation in banks

Market segmentation is one of the central concepts in marketing, attributed to a seminal article by Smith (1956) in the *Journal of Marketing*. However, customer profitability as a segmentation criterion is a newer phenomenon (Storbacka, 1994). It has become increasingly predominant in many industries, leading to differential treatment of customers (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2001).

In order to increase the profitability of customer relationships, Storbacka (1997) suggests applying the principles of segmentation in an RM context. The following segmentation criteria are proposed:

- relationship revenue and relationship cost;
- relationship volume;
- relationship profitability; or
- relationship volume and profitability.

In an empirical study of two Nordic retail banks, Storbacka (1997) found that both banks opted for a segmentation based on relationship volume and profitability. Relationship volume was defined as the sum of the customer's yearly average deposit and loan balances, and absolute profitability was measured as the customer's relationship revenue minus relationship costs over a fiscal year. Six main segments were identified based on different levels of volume and profitability. The least attractive segment included the low volume, unprofitable customers. Storbacka (1997) recommends that efforts should be made to increase the volume of these customers, or impact the nature and/or price of transactions in order to increase relationship revenue and cut relationship costs. Similar recommendations are found in other studies (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2001). The most attractive segment comprised high volume, profitable customers, a majority of whom represented a large portion of the total profitability of the customer base. Storbacka (1997) emphasises that customer defections from this group must be kept to an absolute minimum (optimally at a nonexistent level) in order to maintain and/or increase the profitability of the customer base. In a similar vein, Reinartz and Kumar (2003) suggest that customers can be grouped according to share-of-wallet and profitable lifetime duration, and that each customer group should be targeted with a specific strategy.

In summation, RM activities should be directed particularly towards the most profitable customers in order to increase their satisfaction with and loyalty towards the bank. Therefore, in the case study, which is presented next, we expect that the high profitability segment that was targeted with a relationship oriented strategy will express higher relationship satisfaction and loyalty than the mid-profitability segment that was targeted with a more sales oriented strategy. Furthermore, we expect the perceived relationship improvements since the bank's RM strategy was launched, 4-5 years prior to the study, to be greater within the high profitability segment than within the mid-profitability segment.

Method

The empirical study was conducted in 2003 at a member cooperative bank branch of the OP Bank Group (formerly the OKO Bank Group), one of the major bank groups in Finland. The case bank was chosen for this study because it had fully implemented

an RM strategy that was first launched in 1998. Our case study examines the RM strategy and investigates whether its implementation has led to customer-perceived improvements in the banking relationship, and to increased loyalty in the targeted segment.

In line with the recommendations of Eisenhardt (1989), different methods were used to collect data. Primary and secondary data on the bank's RM strategy were first gathered from the bank's web site, annual reports, information brochures, seminar presentations by bank representatives, and interviews with the bank manager and staff. A survey was then designed to investigate customer relationship satisfaction, customer-perceived improvement in the relationship during the past 4-5 years, and customer loyalty towards the bank. The survey was directed towards two profitability segments. Customers in one of the segments had been exposed to a customer oriented RM strategy, whereas customers in the other segment had been subjected to a more sales oriented marketing strategy. Thus, the aim was to investigate if the two segments differed in their perceptions of the bank relationship, or more precisely, if customers who had been exposed to the customer oriented RM strategy had more positive perceptions of the relationship.

The following sections describe the OP Bank Group's RM strategy, its segmentation of customers, and management's perceptions of the new approach. After this introduction of the strategy itself, the customer survey will be described and its results will be analysed.

Relationship marketing and profitability segmentation at the bank

In 1997 the OP Bank Group started implementing a strategy with the purpose of becoming the leading bank in Finland. The strategy was referred to as a customer oriented way of working (Osuuspankkilehti, 1997). In 2000, the strategy was revised in response to changes in technology and competition. Three benchmarks of success were established, namely performance in customer relations, internal performance, and financial performance.

The main benefit of concentrating banking affairs at the bank group is the collection of bonus points within a kind of customer loyalty programme. Bonus points are awarded based on the amount of monthly deposits, loans (including credit), and mutual fund investments. The bonus points can be used as payment for many of the bank's service fees. In 2003 the programme was revised, allowing customers to receive cash payments corresponding to the number of bonus points they collect.

The OP Bank Group and, consequently, also the bank in this study internally divide customers into three segments, here referred to as Segment 1, Segment 2, and Segment 3. The segmentation is part of the RM strategy that was launched by the bank in 1998 and that began to be implemented in late 1998 and early 1999. The main criteria for segmenting customers are contribution (i.e. profitability) and volume (loans, deposits, and investments). In addition, customer wealth is a criterion for Segment 1 and age is an additional criterion for Segments 2 and 3. Customers in Segment 1 are the bank's most profitable customers, or have the highest business volume or wealth. Customers in Segment 2 have a certain volume or profitability (less than Segment 1), or are younger than 26 years old. Segment 3 customers are at least 26 years old, have a smaller volume than the other segments and are less profitable than the other segments[1]. The age criterion is used because young customers often have not been

able to reach high levels of volume, profitability, or wealth, but may hold great potential for the future. At the time of the study, 5.9 per cent of the case bank's private customers belonged to Segment 1, 56.1 per cent belonged to Segment 2, and 38.0 per cent belonged to Segment 3. The customers themselves do not know which segment they belong to.

Segment 1 customers are priority customers of the bank, which has adopted a customer oriented strategy towards these customers, based on the principles of RM. Each qualified front-line employee at the bank is responsible for a number of these customers. Lists of customers who currently fulfil the criteria for the segment, as well as of those who no longer fulfil the criteria, are compiled monthly. The goal for 2003 was to map the needs of 80 per cent of the customers in Segment 1 and a bonus system was introduced to motivate the staff to reach the objective.

In order to map each Segment 1 customer's needs, these customers are contacted by telephone and offered a personal appointment with the bank employee to discuss current and possible future needs. The aim is to keep continuous contact with each customer, approximately twice per year. Customers that visit the bank at least twice a year are asked by contact employees how satisfied they are with the bank and its services. Customers that seldom visit the bank office are contacted by telephone. By offering additional services during these contacts (cross-selling) the bank also strives to increase the profitability of each customer relationship.

Segment 2 customers, meanwhile, are exposed to a sales oriented strategy whose objective is to increase the long-term savings of customers in this segment. These customers are contacted by telephone and offered different types of long-term savings, such as mutual funds. However, they are not offered personal appointments and no continuous contact is kept with these customers in order to map their needs.

Segment 3 customers are generally unprofitable, or only marginally profitable, and the bank's goal is to increase their profitability, or at least decrease their unprofitability. The bank directs a transaction oriented strategy towards these customers, minimizing the amount of time spent on them and encouraging them to use self-service options, such as online banking, thus aiming to reduce the relationship costs. The bank also attempts to increase relationship revenue from these customers by increasing their volume, for example, by offering loans.

Management perceptions of the RM strategy

According to the bank manager, the main change that has occurred as a result of the more customer oriented strategy is that the bank is now responsible for establishing and maintaining contact with customers, whereas formerly this used to be up to the customer. The continuous contact entails gathering and storing information about customers for use in future contacts. A deeper customer relationship is also established with Segment 1 customers. The manager claims that the strategy has resulted in higher volumes of loans, deposits, and investments.

Educating front-line employees in the new ways of working with customers was not always easy, according to the manager. As personal contacts for Segment 1 customers, employees are now required to be more knowledgeable about a wider range of products than before. Moreover, employees were not used to actively contact customers and did not immediately feel comfortable doing it. Individual and group bonuses are used as incentives. According to the manager, a potential problem in having a personal contact

at the bank might be that customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is too closely tied to the contact person, taking attention away from the quality of the service products.

Survey design

A survey was designed to capture customer-perceived relationship satisfaction, perceived relationship improvement and loyalty towards the bank. To gain further insight, three customers (two from Segment 1 and one from Segment 2) were interviewed about their bank relationship. Their comments on a preliminary version of the questionnaire were also sought.

The final questionnaire consisted of 15 declarative statements, with five-point Likert-type scales, ranging from completely disagree to completely agree. The statements were constructed for this study and the length of the survey was restricted to increase the response rate.

As previously noted, there is little difference between satisfaction and quality in an ongoing relationship and our measures of customer relationship satisfaction are akin to what others have called relationship quality (Roberts *et al.*, 2003). The measures included customer trust and satisfaction (Roberts *et al.*, 2003), handling of critical incidents (Liljander and Strandvik, 1995; Michel, 2004), and perceived economic benefits in the form of a bonus programme. Although a number of studies have examined, for example, the effect of changes in satisfaction on behavioural intentions over time (Mazursky and Geva, 1989; Mittal *et al.*, 1999; Verhoef *et al.*, 2002), to our knowledge, no previous studies have measured customer perceptions of relationship improvement. Four measures were constructed to tap into customers' perception of changes in their bank relationship. Customer loyalty was measured as self-expressed loyalty, using well-established items, such as switching and recommendation intentions, in addition to an item capturing self-stated share-of-wallet, a rare measure in retail banking studies (Baumann *et al.*, 2005). One background question on relationship length, measured in number of years, was included as a single measure of actual behavioural loyalty. Data on customers' age and gender were also collected. An open-ended question was included at the end, seeking additional comments from the respondents. A total of 70 respondents (21.9 per cent) added handwritten comments.

Data collection

The study was conducted in June 2003 on a random sample of 947 customers, consisting of approximately an equal number of Segment 1 and Segment 2 customers. Segments 1 and 2 were chosen, because these segments were the most important for the bank. They also differed on the type of customer relationship strategy used by the bank to maintain and enhance relationships: a customer oriented strategy for Segment 1 and a sales oriented one for Segment 2. Segment 3, which included the most unprofitable customers who were not exposed to any particularly active strategy, was not included in the survey. The approximate equal number of questionnaires sent to Segment 1 and Segment 2 allows for easier comparison between the groups than if a proportional sample had been used, since the proportion of customers in Segment 1 was only 5.9 per cent compared with 56.1 per cent in Segment 2.

A random sample was generated with the aid of a computer programme. Only customers who were at least 20 years old, resided in Finland, and who were not

employed by the bank, or a member of the board, were included in the sample. The questionnaire was sent to 443 (46.8 per cent) customers from Segment 1 and 504 (53.2 per cent) from Segment 2. They received the questionnaire with a cover letter that encouraged participation (Peterson, 2000), and assured complete confidentiality of the responses.

A total of 345 questionnaires were returned, of which 26 were discarded as incomplete. The remaining 319 represent 33.7 per cent of the sample, which can be considered high for a mail survey, where a 20 per cent rate is common (Fink, 1995). The response rate *per segment* was even, resulting in 146 respondents belonging to Segment 1 (45.8 per cent) and 173 respondents belonging to Segment 2 (54.2 per cent). A profile of the respondents, which accurately reflects the characteristics of the bank's customer base, is displayed in Table I.

Survey findings

In general, the mean average scores of all 319 responses were quite high, ranging from 3.45 to 4.38 on a five-point scale (Table II). The mean scores for perceived improvement over the past 4-5 years also indicate that customers had perceived improvements in their relationship with the case bank. However, contrary to expectations, independent *t*-tests revealed no significant differences between Segment 1 and Segment 2 on any of the items. It should be noted that the data was not normally distributed. Many of the items were negatively skewed and peaked, in particular items (1) and (4). Customers' average length of relationship with the bank (Table I) was also similar between the segments (*p* = 0.869).

Before proceeding to explore differences in the interrelationships between constructs, the items were factor analysed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.922 was high (Kaiser and Rice, 1974) and indicated that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Principal component factor analysis with Varimax rotation yielded the three expected factors, together explaining 57.59 per cent of the variance.

Characteristics	Number (and percentage) by segment and in total		
	Segment 1	Segment 2	Total
<i>Age</i>			
20-34	24 (16.4)	21 (12.1)	45 (14.1)
35-49	46 (31.5)	45 (26.0)	91 (28.5)
50-64	47 (32.2)	58 (33.5)	105 (32.9)
65 years and over	29 (19.9)	49 (28.3)	78 (24.5)
Mean average (in years)	50.48	53.76	52.26
Standard deviation (in years)	14.64	14.97	14.89
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	90 (61.6)	85 (49.1)	175 (54.9)
Female	56 (38.4)	88 (50.9)	144 (45.1)
<i>Relationship length</i>			
4-10 years	23 (15.7)	20 (11.6)	43 (13.5)
11-20 years	42 (28.8)	50 (28.9)	92 (28.8)
21-30 years	32 (21.9)	55 (31.8)	87 (27.3)
More than 30 years	49 (33.6)	48 (27.7)	97 (30.4)
Mean average (in years)	26.44	26.19	26.30
Standard deviation	14.00	12.59	13.23

Table I.
Respondent profiles in
segments

Constructs and items	Mean (N = 319)	SD
<i>Customer relationship satisfaction</i> , Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.719$		
(1) I am satisfied with the quality of the OP Bank's services ^a	4.29	0.66
(2) I am satisfied with the OP Bank's bonus programme ^a	3.75	0.94
(3) When I have experienced unforeseen or critical situations, the OP Bank has managed these in a satisfactory manner ^a	3.89	0.89
(4) I am satisfied with the interactions that I have had with the OP Bank ^a	4.38	0.73
(5) I trust that the OP Bank informs me about new services/products ^a	4.13	0.77
(6) The OP Bank satisfies my needs	4.22	0.73
(7) The OP Bank understands my needs	3.90	0.82
<i>Relationship improvement</i> , Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.789$		
(8) The quality of the OP Bank's services has improved over the past 4-5 years ^a	3.67	0.84
(9) I am satisfied with the changes that have occurred in my relationship with the OP Bank over the past 4-5 years ^a	3.89	0.85
(10) My overall satisfaction with the OP Bank has increased over the past 4-5 years ^a	3.63	0.88
(11) I have become more loyal towards the OP Bank over the past 4-5 years ^a	3.45	1.04
<i>Customer loyalty</i> , Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.783$		
(12) I have never seriously considered changing banks ^a	3.90	1.19
(13) I consider myself to be a loyal customer of the OP Bank ^a	4.25	0.83
(14) I conduct all my banking affairs at the OP Bank ^a	4.11	1.17
(15) I would recommend the OP Bank to friends and acquaintances ^a	4.21	0.81

Note: ^aDenotes the items that were retained after factor analysis

Table II.
Item means, factors, and
reliability coefficients for
the retained items

Two statements on customer needs were removed because they did not load highly on any of the factors, or form a factor of their own. The retained items (marked with an asterisk in Table II) loaded clearly and highest on the expected constructs. Cronbach's α s for all three constructs were above 0.7, which is considered adequate construct reliability (Hair *et al.*, 1998).

A vital question was if the implementation of a RM strategy on Segment 1 customers had any differential effect on customer loyalty, compared with Segment 2 customers. Although no significant differences were found between the item means of Segment 1 and Segment 2 customers, it is necessary to identify any differences between the two segments with regards to the antecedents of loyalty.

In order to determine differences between Segment 1 and Segment 2 customers regarding the relative impact of relationship satisfaction and perceived improvements in the relationship on customer loyalty, regression analyses were conducted. To avoid collinearity effects, a new factor analysis was conducted on the nine variables forming customer relationship satisfaction and relationship improvement, and the resulting uncorrelated factor scores were used as independent variables in the regressions. The regression results are summarised in Table III.

The results show that loyalty in both segments depends more on the current level of relationship satisfaction than on perceived relationship improvements. It is also notable how similar the effects of perceived relationship improvement are in both segments. Furthermore, a comparison between explained variances in the models

reveals that customer loyalty in Segment 2 is much better explained by the two independent variables ($R^2 = 0.559$) than customer loyalty in Segment 1 ($R^2 = 0.273$).

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the RM strategy of a case bank and to analyse whether its implementation resulted in relationship satisfaction and customer-perceived improvements in the bank relationship, thereby increasing loyalty. The most profitable customer segment is small but important to the bank. Therefore, the bank has paid particular attention to the needs and wishes of these customers compared with those of other customer groups. Consequently, it was expected that Segment 1 customers would experience relationship improvements and that the improvements would be reflected in higher loyalty. However, this was not the case.

The case bank's RM strategy, with the intention of a customer oriented focus on Segment 1 customers, did not lead to higher loyalty in Segment 1 customers compared with Segment 2 customers, who were supposed to receive a sales oriented treatment. No significant differences were found between the two groups on any of the relationship strength items: relationship satisfaction, relationship improvement or loyalty. Furthermore, relationship satisfaction and relationship improvement explained a relatively small amount of the variance in customer loyalty in Segment 1.

There are several explanations for these findings. One possibility is that customers of different segments give different meaning to, for example, what it takes to experience relationship satisfaction. Profitable customers are likely to be aware of their worth to the bank, and thus have a smaller tolerance for anything less than excellent service. They are likely to be more demanding and might more easily feel that the service falls short of their high expectations. Although they receive more personal attention, they may perceive few other benefits in the relationship. When most transactions can be performed as self-services, service improvement and RM efforts may need to be directed towards filling technological gaps (Lang and Colgate, 2003), and facilitating technological relationships. Furthermore, it is possible that other factors, not included in the current study, would have been better at explaining the loyalty behaviour of the most profitable customers. Such variables include, for example, customers' service involvement, their competing banking relationships at other banks and core service perceptions. Answers to the open-ended question also indicated the existence of additional customer concerns.

Based on the freely formulated customer comments, price issues related to fees and interest rates were predominantly a concern for customers in Segment 2, whereas only Segment 1 customers made complaints regarding the complexity or inadequacy of the bonus programme. Segment 1 customers have the greatest

Table III.
Loyalty regressed on
relationship satisfaction
and relationship
improvement in Segment
1 and Segment 2

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Std. β coefficient	p-value	R^2	F-value
<i>Segment 1</i>					
Customer loyalty	Customer relationship satisfaction	0.425	0.000	0.273	26.854
	Relationship improvement	0.332	0.000		
<i>Segment 2</i>					
Customer loyalty	Customer relationship satisfaction	0.656	0.000	0.559	107.715
	Relationship improvement	0.335	0.000		

earnings potential from the bonus programme, since it is based on the customers' volume of business. The programme was revised in the same year as this study was conducted.

With regard to what Segment 1 customers might lack in their banking relationship, several customers suggested "investment evenings" where they could receive information about the different options available for the investment of their money. Although this would require extra time and resources, it would potentially improve the relationships with those valued customers who otherwise do not have time to visit the bank and who conduct most or all of their business with the bank over the internet.

Both Segment 1 and Segment 2 customers added positive comments concerning the friendly and personal service during encounters with bank employees. This indicates that the customer oriented attitude is not limited to the employees' interactions with Segment 1 customers. The questionnaire admittedly did not test for differences in perceived customer/sales orientation between the segments. However, if both segments indeed perceive the employees to be customer oriented, it could explain why no significant differences were found between the segments. Although such a situation does not fit in with the bank's strategy, it can hardly be seen as a failure. As long as Segment 1 customers perceive that they are prioritised and the volume of Segment 2 customers' banking affairs is increased, a general customer oriented atmosphere can only be commended. However, since Segment 1 customers may have higher expectations with regards to being treated in a customer oriented way, it is possible that improvements in the Segment 1 relationships compared to Segment 2 relationships are nullified by the higher expectations of the more profitable customers. Hence, the difference would not be observable in the responses to the questionnaire.

Another possibility is that customers, managers, and employees have different views of how RM should be conducted. Activities that are viewed as extremely customer oriented from the bank management's point of view, such as actively contacting customers, offering them personal meetings, and mapping their needs on a continual basis, may be viewed by the customer as normal services offered by, or expected from, any bank. Furthermore, the changes that have occurred in Segment 1 customers' banking relationships over the past 4-5 years, although positive, may be viewed as relatively insignificant when placed in the perspective of the customers' entire relationship history with the bank.

Managerial implications

The positive effects of a RM strategy on customer-perceived relationship satisfaction and loyalty have not been confirmed in this study. However, the results seem to indicate that the case bank is pursuing a worthwhile strategy since the levels of perceived customer relationship satisfaction and loyalty are relatively high and the customers have perceived improvements in the banking relationship since the RM strategy was launched. Consequently, the adoption of a customer oriented strategy has delivered positive intangible returns, in addition to providing a beneficial spill over effect on a less profitable segment of customers, which was intended to be the receiver of a sales oriented approach. On the other hand, the implemented RM strategy was not sufficient to improve customer relationship strength in Segment 1 compared with Segment 2 and, therefore, the bank should review its current strategy for possible weaknesses.

Branch managers constantly have to balance between marketing services to new customers and investing in RM to retain existing customers, with limited resources (Carson *et al.*, 2004). Role conflicts and role stress may result if employees are asked to manage individual customers of different profitability segments with different communication strategies. The implementation of such strategies is particularly difficult when customers are unaware of their (changing) profitability status within the bank. This makes it impossible to direct customers to different tellers, or contact persons. The personnel need to be willing and able to communicate with all customer segments according to the chosen strategy. Although internal marketing (Ballantyne, 2003; Berry, 1981; O'Loughlin and Szmigin, 2005) can be used to reduce employee discomfort and to increase their understanding of and commitment to the RM segmentation strategy, a completely new model of relationship management, with new ways of contacting and interacting with customers may be needed.

Based on a study of banks and their small business customers, Colgate and Lang (2005) point out that the establishment of a relationship orientation is only a first step; if relationship quality is to be improved, necessary resources and motivation on the bank's part are crucial to ensure successful execution of a relationship strategy. Furthermore, although the aim is to build relationships with selected customers in order to retain them, organisational systems and structures may be configured to support transactional exchange (Farquhar, 2004). As outlined by Payne and Frow (2005), customer relationship management involves a series of processes, which need to be integrated within the firm in order to succeed.

Overall, a customer oriented strategy is desirable within retail banking, but the question remains as to what the differential drivers of loyalty are across profitability segments. By identifying the aspects of a banking relationship that are more highly valued among the different segments, bank managers would be able to devise appropriate strategies, and allocate resources efficiently.

Limitations

The study has a number of limitations, which affect its generalisability. It was conducted as a case study of one specific branch of the OP Bank Group in Finland, which limits the external validity of the results. The fact that the case bank is relatively small and located in a semi-rural area might affect the nature of customer relationships, in that it may be easier to develop closer relationships than in an urban setting.

In addition, self-selection bias cannot be ruled out. The high means indicate that there may have been a self-selection among particularly satisfied customers to participate in the study. However, as past research shows, customer satisfaction does not guarantee loyalty, and self-selection cannot completely explain the differences between the two segments regarding the effect of relationship satisfaction on loyalty.

A limitation of the study is also that we were not able to ascertain if, or to what extent, customers belonging to Segment 1 had received the intended RM treatment. We can only say that the bank's strategic intent was to treat the customers in a certain way and our study shows that the implemented strategy may not have had the intended effect.

The study was also limited by explaining loyalty with only the abstract, latent constructs of relationship satisfaction and improvement. Customer satisfaction and loyalty are affected also by other factors, such as the price of services, or the number

and severity of negative critical incidents. Furthermore, the study did not take customers' past behaviour towards banks into account. Ganesh *et al.* (2000) found that dissatisfied customers who have switched service providers appear to differ significantly from other types of customers with regards to satisfaction and loyalty behaviours. Future research should include more antecedents of customer loyalty and switching behaviour and, in particular, explore the antecedents of loyalty in the most profitable segment.

Finally, considering the lack of significant differences in the responses of customers belonging to Segment 1 and Segment 2, it would have been essential to also include Segment 3 customers in order to assess if they differed significantly from the other segments. The primary reason for omitting them from the study was that they were not considered to be of strategic interest to the bank, due to their lack of profitability. As emphasised by Kumar *et al.* (2003, p. 668), any company needs transactional customers in order to maintain stable cash flows, even if they are only marginally profitable. However, investments should not be made in these relationships unless they exhibit profit potential (Reinartz and Kumar, 2000). In line with this, the bank has adopted an approach for Segment 3 based on cost-cutting and, when possible, increasing share-of-wallet.

Despite these considerations, the study should be viewed as a step towards filling the gap in marketing research resulting from the lack of studies investigating the effect of a particular RM strategy on perceived relationship satisfaction improvements and loyalty in different customer profitability segments.

Suggestions for further research

In addition to the suggestions put forth in the discussion above, there is a general need for more research on RM strategies and their actual effects on customer relationship strength. However, more effort should also be given to studying customers' desire, or lack of it, for maintaining close customer relationships with service providers. Too little is still known regarding the nature of customer relationships, what modern customers expect from their service provider relationships, what forms these relationships take, and how they differ between profitability segments.

RM strategies aim at increasing customers' commitment to the service provider and, thereby, increasing their share-of-wallet through cross-selling activities. This was also the strategy of the focal bank. However, our study did not include measures on customers' intentions to invest in more of the bank's services, and with a few recent exceptions (Bolton *et al.*, 2004; Li *et al.*, 2005; Prinzie and Van den Poel, 2006; Reinartz and Kumar, 2003), very little attention has been given to customers' cross-buying behaviour. It would be of interest to study, for example, the differences in cross-buying behaviour between different profitability and loyalty segments, and the effect of RM activities on cross-buying behaviour.

In addition, more in-depth studies are needed to understand differences between service provider and customer views of relationships, and to gain better knowledge of how front-line employees cope with having to develop different types of relationships with different customer groups. Furthermore, although both the internal (employee oriented) and external (customer oriented) links of Heskett *et al.*'s (1997) service-profit chain have been examined in the retail banking sector (Gelade and Young, 2005; Loveman, 1998), future research should seek to provide definitive empirical evidence of an entire chain of effects, resulting specifically from the implementation of a RM strategy.

Note

1. Although the segmentation criteria for the three segments would become much clearer if the exact amounts of volume, profitability and wealth levels were disclosed, this can unfortunately not be done due to reasons of confidentiality.

References

Abdul-Muhmin, A.G. (2002), "Effects of suppliers' marketing program variables on industrial buyers' relationship satisfaction and commitment", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 17 No. 7, pp. 637-51.

Abratt, R. and Russell, J. (1999), "Relationship marketing in private banking in South Africa", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 5-19.

Åkerlund, H. (2004), "Fading customer relationships", doctoral thesis No. 132, Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, Helsinki.

Aldlaigan, A. and Buttle, F. (2005), "Beyond satisfaction: customer attachment to retail banks", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 349-59.

Anderson, E.W., Fornell, C. and Lehmann, D.R. (1994), "Customer satisfaction, market share, and profitability: findings from Sweden", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58 No. 3, pp. 53-66.

Anderson, E.W. and Mittal, V. (2000), "Strengthening the satisfaction-profit chain", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 107-20.

Athanassopoulos, A., Gounaris, S. and Strathakopoulos, V. (2001), "Behavioural responses to customer satisfaction: an empirical study", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 35 Nos 5/6, pp. 687-707.

Ballantyne, D. (2003), "A relationship-mediated theory of internal marketing", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 37 No. 9, pp. 1242-60.

Barnes, J.G. and Howlett, D.M. (1998), "Predictors of equity in relationships between financial services providers and retail customers", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 15-23.

Baumann, C., Burton, S. and Elliott, G. (2005), "Determinants of customer loyalty and share of wallet in retail banking", *Journal of Financial Services Marketing*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 231-48.

Bejou, D., Ennew, C.T. and Palmer, A. (1998), "Trust, ethics and relationship satisfaction", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 170-5.

Bejou, D., Wray, B. and Ingram, T.N. (1996), "Determinants of relationship quality: an artificial neural network analysis", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 137-43.

Bennett, R. and Rundle-Thiele, S. (2004), "Customer satisfaction should not be the only goal", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 7, pp. 514-23.

Berry, L.L. (1981), "The employee as customer", *Journal of Retail Banking*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 25-8.

Berry, L.L. (1983), "Relationship marketing", in Berry, L.L., Shostack, G.L. and Upah, G.D. (Eds). *Emerging Perspectives on Services Marketing, Proceedings Series*, American Marketing Association, Chicago, IL, pp. 25-8.

Berry, L.L. (1995), "Relationship marketing of services - growing interest, emerging perspectives", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 236-45.

Bitner, M.J. and Hubbert, A.R. (1994), "Encounter satisfaction versus overall satisfaction versus quality: the customers voice", in Rust, R.T. and Oliver, R.L. (Eds), *Service Quality: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, Sage, London, pp. 79-94.

- Bleumer, J., de Ruyter, K. and Peeters, P. (1998), "Investigating drivers of bank loyalty: the complex relationship between image, service quality and satisfaction", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 16 No. 7, pp. 276-86.
- Bohler, R.N., Kannan, P.K. and Bramlett, M.D. (2000), "Implications of loyalty program membership and service experiences for customer retention and value", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 45-65.
- Bohler, R.N., Lemon, K.N. and Verhoef, P.C. (2004), "The theoretical underpinnings of customer asset management: a framework and propositions for future research", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 271-92.
- Carson, D., Gilmore, A. and Walsh, S. (2004), "Balancing transaction and relationship marketing in retail banking", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 20 Nos 3/4, pp. 431-55.
- Clark, M. (1997), "Modelling the impact of customer-employee relationships on customer retention rates in a major UK retail bank", *Management Decision*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 293-301.
- Colgate, M. and Hedge, R. (2001), "An investigation into the switching process in retail banking services", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 19 No. 5, pp. 201-12.
- Colgate, M. and Lang, B. (2005), "Positive and negative consequences of a relationship manager strategy: New Zealand banks and their small business customers", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 195-204.
- Crosby, L.A., Evans, K.R. and Cowles, D. (1990), "Relationship quality in services selling: an interpersonal influence perspective", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 68-81.
- Dabholkar, P.A. (1995), "The convergence of customer satisfaction and service quality evaluations with increasing customer patronage", *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, Vol. 8, pp. 32-43.
- Dick, A.S. and Basu, K. (1994), "Customer loyalty: toward an integrated conceptual framework", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 99-113.
- Dowling, G.W. and Uncles, M. (1997), "Do customer loyalty programs really work?", *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 38 No. 4, pp. 71-82.
- Dwyer, R.F., Schurr, P.H. and Oh, S. (1987), "Developing buyer-seller relationships", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 11-27.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989), "Building theories from case study research", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 532-50.
- Ennew, C.T. and Binks, M.R. (1996), "Good and bad customers: the benefits of participating in the banking relationship", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 5-13.
- Ennew, C.T. and Binks, M.R. (1999), "Impact of participative service relationships on quality, satisfaction and retention: an exploratory study", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 121-32.
- Farquhar, J.D. (2004), "Customer retention in retail financial services: an employee perspective", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 86-99.
- Fink, A. (1995), *The Survey Handbook*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Ganesh, J., Arnold, M.J. and Reynolds, K.E. (2000), "Understanding the customer base of service providers: an examination of the differences between switchers and stayers", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 64 No. 3, pp. 65-87.
- Gelade, G.A. and Young, S. (2005), "Test of a service profit chain model in the retail banking sector", *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 78 No. 1, pp. 1-22.
- Grönroos, C. (1994), "From marketing mix to relationship marketing: towards a paradigm shift in marketing", *Management Decision*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 4-20.

- Gummesson, E. (1994), "Broadening and specifying relationship marketing", *Asia-Australia Marketing Journal*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 31-43.
- Hair, J.F. Jr, Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. and Black, W.C. (1998), *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 5th ed., Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Hallowell, R. (1996), "The relationships of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and profitability: an empirical study", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, Vol. 7 No. 4, pp. 27-42.
- Heskett, J.L., Sasser, W.E. Jr and Schlesinger, L.A. (1997), *The Service Profit Chain: How Leading Companies Link Profit and Growth to Loyalty, Satisfaction, and Value*, The Free Press, New York, NY.
- Hooi Ting, D. (2004), "Service quality and satisfaction perceptions: curvilinear and interaction effect", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 22 No. 6, pp. 407-20.
- Jamal, A. and Naser, K. (2002), "Customer satisfaction and retail banking: an assessment of some of the key antecedents of customer satisfaction in retail banking", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 20 Nos 4/5, pp. 146-61.
- Kaiser, H.F. and Rice, J. (1974), "Little Jiffy Mark IV", *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, Vol. 34, pp. 111-7.
- Keiningham, T.L., Perkins-Munn, T. and Evans, H. (2003), "The impact of customer satisfaction on share-of-wallet in a business-to-business environment", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 37-50.
- Keltner, B. (1995), "Relationship banking and competitive advantage: evidence from the US and Germany", *California Management Review*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 45-72.
- Kumar, V., Bohling, T.R. and Ladda, R.N. (2003), "Antecedents and consequences of relationship intention: implications for transaction and relationship marketing", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 32 No. 8, pp. 667-76.
- Lang, B. and Colgate, M. (2003), "Relationship quality, on-line banking and the information technology gap", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 29-37.
- Li, S., Sun, B. and Wilcox, R.T. (2005), "Cross-selling sequentially ordered products: an application to consumer banking services", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 233-9.
- Liljander, V. and Roos, I. (2002), "Customer relationship levels: from spurious to true relationships", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 16 No. 7, pp. 593-614.
- Liljander, V. and Strandvik, T. (1995), "The nature of customer relationships in services", in Swartz, T.A., Bowen, D.E. and Brown, S.W. (Eds), *Advances in Services Marketing and Management*, Vol. 4, JAI Press, London, pp. 141-67.
- Loveman, G.W. (1998), "Employee satisfaction, customer loyalty, and financial performance. An empirical examination of the service profit chain in retail banking", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 18-31.
- Madill, J.J., Feeney, L., Riding, A. and Haines, G.H.J. (2002), "Determinants of SME owners' satisfaction with their banking relationships: a Canadian study", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 86-98.
- Mazursky, D. and Geva, A. (1989), "Temporal decay in satisfaction - purchase intention relationship", *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 211-27.
- Michel, S. (2004), "Consequences of perceived acceptability of a bank's service failures", *Journal of Financial Services Marketing*, Vol. 8 No. 4, pp. 367-77.

- Mittal, V., Kumar, P. and Tsiros, M. (1999), "Attribute-level performance, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions over time: a consumption system approach", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 63 No. 2, pp. 88-101.
- Naidu, G.M., Praveeniyar, A., Sheth, J.N. and Westgate, L. (1999), "Does relationship marketing pay? An empirical investigation of relationship marketing practices in hospitals", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 46 No. 3, pp. 207-18.
- Nordinan, C. (2004), "Understanding customer loyalty and disloyalty – the effect of loyalty-supporting and -repressing factors", doctoral thesis No. 125, Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, Helsinki, Finland.
- Oliver, R.L. (1999), "Whence consumer loyalty", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 63 No. 4, pp. 33-44.
- O'Loughlin, D. and Szmigin, I. (2005), "External and internal accountability of financial services suppliers: current paradoxes in managing expectations and experience", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 133-47.
- O'Loughlin, D., Szmigin, I. and Turnbull, P. (2004), "From relationships to experiences in retail financial services", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 22 No. 7, pp. 522-39.
- O'Malley, L. and Tynan, C. (2000), "Relationship marketing in consumer markets. Rhetoric or reality?", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 34 No. 7, pp. 797-815.
- Osuuspankkilehti (1997), "Osuuspankkiryhmän ammattilehti, kesäkuu", *The OP Bank Group's Trade Magazine*, June.
- Palmatier, R.W. and Gopalakrishna, S. (2005), "Determining the payoff from relationship marketing programs", MSI Reports: Marketing Science Institute Working Paper Series, Issue 1 No. 05-001, Report No. 05-102, pp. 49-70.
- Paulin, M., Perrien, J., Ferguson, R.J., Salazar, A.M.A. and Seruya, L.M. (1998), "Relational norms and client retention: external effectiveness of commercial banking in Canada and Mexico", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 24-31.
- Payne, A. and Frow, P. (2005), "A strategic framework for customer relationship management", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 69 No. 4, pp. 167-76.
- Perkins-Munn, T., Aksoy, L., Keiningham, T.L. and Estrin, D. (2005), "Actual purchase as a proxy for share of wallet", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 245-56.
- Peterson, R.A. (2000), *Constructing Effective Questionnaires*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Pont, M. and McQuilken, L. (2005), "An empirical investigation of customer satisfaction and loyalty across two divergent bank segments", *Journal of Financial Services Marketing*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 344-59.
- Prinzle, A. and Van den Poel, D. (2006), "Investigating purchasing-sequence patterns for financial services using Markov, MTD and MTDg models", *European Journal of Operational Research*, Vol. 170 No. 3, pp. 710-34.
- Ravald, A. and Grönroos, C. (1996), "The value concept and relationship marketing", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 19-30.
- Reichheld, F.F. (1996), *The Loyalty Effect*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.
- Reinartz, W.J. and Kumar, V. (2000), "On the profitability of long-life customers in a noncontractual setting: an empirical investigation and implications for marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 64 No. 4, pp. 17-35.
- Reinartz, W.J. and Kumar, V. (2002), "The mismanagement of customer loyalty", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 80 No. 7, pp. 4-12.
- Reinartz, W.J. and Kumar, V. (2003), "The impact of customer relationship characteristics on profitable lifetime duration", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 67 No. 1, pp. 77-99.

customer relationships as assets in the retail banking sector. Andreas Leverin is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: andreas.leverin@hanken.fi

Veronica Liljander is Professor of Marketing and Head of the Department of Marketing at the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration (Hanken), Helsinki, Finland. Her current research interests include service and relationship marketing, consumer responses to electronic services, and private label marketing. She has published articles, for example, in the *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, and *Psychology & Marketing*. She is on the editorial board of several international journals, for example, *European Journal of Marketing* and *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. E-mail: veronica.liljander@hanken.fi



To purchase reprints of this article please e-mail: reprints@emeraldinsight.com
Or visit our web site for further details: www.emeraldinsight.com/reprints