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**WHERE HAS ALL THE GOOD MARKETING GONE: ETHICS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The advent of new economic policy, removal of trade barriers, manpower retrenchment and attrition of employees has shaken the trust of customers. When in today era we talk about customer delightness, the issue of rebuilding the trust becomes a major concern, Instead of thinking on the ground of marketing philosophy the need of the hour shifts the trends to Ethics in Sales and Marketing. The paper encovers the introduction, ethical values, Ethical issues life line of marketing - in specific areas of CRM, CSR and Advertising. The paper concludes with the suggestion that a more detailed study of the Ethics is needed. While many authors think that this is a relatively new concept, Ethics is perhaps as old as business itself and in some societies one cannot do the business without being socially ethical.*

**KEYWORDS**

ethical marketing, CRM, CSR, advertising.

**INTRODUCTION**

India is no longer existing in a isolated world. Being the global economy it can't keep itself aloof from the various intricacies of the world. Different economies of the world witness a continuous change in the environment it operates in. To keep up with the pace close monitoring become inescapable.

The roadmap of economic development started with the adoption of new economic policy. It was adopted at the time of economic distress and difficulties and there was no better alternative to restore confidence in international community. It stressed the approach of delicensing, decontrol and deregulation in Indian economy which spurred the overall economic development.

Increased scrutiny of corporate action in today business climate puts pressure on all facts of corporate structure to adhere to ethical business practices found on principles that are honest, fair and transparent to the stakeholders. The sales and marketing profession is a driving force in our economy and should not be left untouched when scrutinizing ethical issue. A society where the consumer is confident of honest is one that will prosper.

The paper was carried out by reviewing a large collection of publication on the subject of ethics in Sales and Marketing. Flowing through the thoughts of authors from the conceptual understanding and diving into niches of marketing sensing the CRM, CSR and Advertising practices, the paper concludes with the findings and suggestions from the authors to the companies as how to use ethics as a weapon to earn profits.

**ETHICAL VALUES: A REVIEW**

Ethics refer to a system of moral principal- a sence of right & wrong & goodness & badness of action. In other words, 'ethics' is the discipline that examines ones moral standards or the moral standards of a society. It asks how these standards apply to our lives & whether these standards are reasonable or unreasonable that is whether good reasons or poor once support them. The ethics is used in several different ways; the term ethical value refers to the moral valve of each self help group towards running their group business.( Nath & Baruah, 2008).

The word ethics is still vague, but is a contemporary issue to many corporate professionals, while many organizations maintain 'ethical credo' in black and white. However, the corporate world also has been inclined to experience unethical practice due to aggressive approach is to achievement. It's immediately impact has been reflected in the managerial practices and eventually on their perceptions and values. The gap between expected standard ethical behavior and actual behavior is immense and organizational rituals, to some extents along with socioeconomic factors support unethical behavior and compel employees to practice in this manner. Hence, building awareness of ethical norms is important in sustaining managerial ethics.

Perhaps the most difficult managerial problem involves issue of ethics. Ethics is a problem not only for managers, but also for almost every person in the society. Business everywhere needs to earn profit in order to remain in existence. Some companies aggressively seek to maximize their profit, grow at any cost and focus on nothing but what is best for the company. Others take a different approach to business and actively work for the betterment of society even when it means less profit for the owners. Most business however, adopts a position somewhere between these extremes. Decision about which of these approaches to take are in turn affected by managerial ethics and social responsibility (Akhter & Islam, 2009).

Business ethics are one of the important, perhaps the most misunderstood concept in the world of business today. The field of business ethics deals with questions about whether specific business practices are acceptable. Members of the organizations increasingly find themselves facing ethical dilemmas, situations in which they are required to define right and wrong conduct. By its very nature, the field of business ethics is controversial and there is no universally accepted approach for resolving its question. More imagination and creativity are needed in examining these important issues. Ethical or unethical is often determined by the public as embodied in the mass media, interest group and business organization as well as through individuals personal morals and values .

**ETHICAL ISSUES LIFE LINE OF MARKETING**

Business ethics is not a recent theory. Over the years attempts have been made to find out its different dimensions. Ethics in Sales and Marketing does not confine itself to a single area of sales and Marketing. Business or an enterprise is made by the people and works for the people. The long run success of any enterprises depends on its strong organization of internal and external customers i.e. employee and consumers respectively. Hence three main trends or scope of ethics in Sales and Marketing can be identified and these are:

1. CRM
2. CSR
3. Ethics in advertising.

**1) CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**

In today's competitive business environment, customers are making their buying decisions not just on the basis of product comparison, but on the basis of relationship they have with the company. In fact, ensuring customer satisfaction is the key to success and companies are actively engaged in studying and exploring the conceptual foundations of managing relationship with customers. A brand derives strength from its experience with its customers and customer's relationship management or CRM is all about providing customers a great experience. (Mishra, 2008)

CRM is the seamless co- ordination between sales, customer's service, marketing field support and other customer- touching functions. It integrates people, processes, and maximizes relationship with all customers and partners, e- customers, distributional channel numbers, internal customers and suppliers. CRM results in a number of benefits to an organization like increased margin improved customer satisfaction rating and decreased administrative costs. CRM is managing customer knowledge to generate value added products and to have a sustained relationship. (Sudhakar, 2009).

CRM is increasingly used to learn about customers needs and behavior, as good relationship is very essential for successful brand marketing. CRM is now recognized as a powerful tool, for brand marketing to have an edge over the competitors. CRM is the establishment, development, maintain, and optimization of long term mutually beneficial relationship between customers and companies. (pallavi, 2009)

Building long term customer relationship with customers is the key to success for the company, in turn, these relationships translate into increasing sales revenue and profits. CRM is the best tool to build a powerful customer experience as the most competitive weapon around our business. CRM inverts the pyramid for achieving success in businesses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### OBJECTIVES OF ETHICAL CRM

1. To provide better customer service.
2. To help sales staff close deals faster.
3. To discover new customers.
4. To increase customer revenue.

In present era the paradigm shifts in marketing practices from the traditional marketing to reactive marketing and then to relationship marketing has reiterated the significance of leveraging firm- customer relationship for reaping mutual benefits. Thus relationship marketing has come to fore and occupied centre stages one of the strategic tool for organized retailers to develop ways for attracting and motivating potential customers to remain staunch loyalists forever ( Prasad & Aryasri 2008).

#### BENEFITS OF ETHICAL CRM

- Improvement in sales revenue.
- Increase in profit.
- Reduction in cost of marketing.
- Better understanding of customers.
- Decreased cost for customers
- Improvement in customer satisfaction.
- Timely delivery of products, Personalization and closeness.
- Availability of wide variety of products.
- Improvement in customer satisfaction.
- Maintaining customer loyalty.

The strategy towards developing and maintaining sustainable relationship provide a win win platform for customers as well as sellers.

#### 2) CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CSR identifies as a controversial subject. It acknowledges the fact that some authors think CSR is irrelevant to business, while others think that it is a bad idea for business. However, it takes sides with those who think that CSR is of strategic importance to business. For some people, CSR is about program me but it is beyond that. Stuff that you do where you can describe what you are taken to achieve, what approach you have taken achieve it, and whether it worked or not. But it needs to include the other aspect how you and your staff behave on a day to day basic. You could label this element straight business ethics (sharma, 2009).

The world business council for sustainable development defines CSR as “the counting commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the work force and their families as well as of the local community and society at large”.

The CSR framework of companies in India has evolved over a period of time. For business conglomerates like Tata, Birla, ITS or the Godrej family, their specific approach and strategies are mainly based and driven by the ethical beliefs of the founding fathers (sharma 2009). However, of late, the companies have been influenced by several internal & external factors prevailing in business areas in which the companies operate the socio economic environment, and the emerging opportunities.

Organizations are getting competitive in whatever they do. Moreover, companies are being closely monitored under provisions like corporate governance which bind organizations towards ethics and transparency. In such a scenario, future looks healthy and people in general can expect to drive benefits out of it. Ethics is necessary in order to create a more harmonious relationship between the corporation and the society at large. Profit earning is the main goal of the most organization and they strive for it. But, in this era of globalization and cut throat competition the scenario has changed. The first concern of the company is the happiness of the people connected to it. In today world companies believe in the philosophy that they are an indispensable part of the society. (kautish, 2009).

CSR is making socially responsible product, engaging in a socially responsible employee relations and making a commitment to the society around it. Some define CSR as commitment of the business to contribute for sustainable economic development, working with employee, local community and business partners and to the society at the large in order to improve their quality if work life (Soni, 2009).

#### 3) ETHICS IN ADVERTISING

Advertising is one of the most powerful marketing tools which enhance communication by connecting the company with the customers. One of the questions discussed while analyzing the ethical aspect of advertising is the use of fear appeals and threat to popularize a certain product, concept etc. or to boost up the sales. The idea of using fear to advertise a certain product is viewed as unethical if the solutions that are advertised cannot eliminate the threat presented (Mohideem 2009). This holds true as long as advertisers show the consequences of not playing heed to the recommendation offered in the advertisement. Furthermore, using fear appeals and threats is considered unethical as they might create unnecessary anxiety among potential customers. However some people support the idea of using fear for marketing purpose. They claim that such advertisements reflect the norms of a certain society.

#### CONCLUSION

It is argued that of all business practices, marketing “receives the most scrutiny, generates controversy and faces the most criticism about ethics.” Indeed, ethics might turn out to be a rather tricky question as long as it is expanded not only to one domino but also to several areas. Much has been discussed about Recession and financial crises, stock marker crashes and bailout of banks nothing much have been left untold, it just like US sneezes and the whole world catches cold. Salary deduction, technology degradation, Retrenchment, turnout were some of its immediate effect, though the situation has improved, yet the crises has left certain deperated impact.

Further, ethical values create credibility with the public. A company perceived by the public to be ethically & socially responsive will be honored & respected even by those who have no intimate knowledge of its actual working. So, Ethics in this respect extends to a long way from sales to fulfilling its social responsibility and thereby building a strong customer resource base through CRM. As we wade further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, CSR plays a pivotal role in addressing the global resources crisis on the other hand helping solve problem by providing technologies, while on the other hand navigating controversy over such issues in India from community to corporate use. Moral and ethical standards were proposed to restrict the range of products, services and practices that can be advertised. Nevertheless, the problem still persists.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The HRM department should mention the explicitly ethical code of conduct in the appointment letter.
2. The proper communication of ethical code of conduct should be the duty of Departmental Heads.
3. Meeting should have 5 minute provision for discussion on this contemporary evergreen issue. Open discussion should be initiated.
4. To inculcate ethical values and culture it is essential to acknowledge and consider Ethical behaviour of the personnel and suitable reward system should be designed.



5. The implementation of the Ethical guidelines should be made the duty of the managerial staff. Follow up should be on continuous basis.

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