Call for Papers

Industrial Marketing Management - Special Issue

Customer attractiveness, supplier satisfaction and customer value: Changing the perspective in industrial marketing, purchasing and innovation

Submission Deadline: November 1, 2011

Guest Editors

Holger Schiele, University of Twente
Richard Calvi, Savoie University
Michael Gibbert, Lugano University

In the last decade, the advent of open innovation has brought about a growing need for closer buyer-supplier relationships. More often than not, firms need to collaborate with partners in order to develop and launch new products. While this trend has been monitored closely in consumer markets and lead-user integration, not all findings apply directly to industrial markets and supplier involvement. In particular, industrial markets are increasingly characterized by an oligopolistic market structure. As a result, suppliers may not dedicate their resources equally to all customers, and become highly selective. In order to be able to collaborate with selected competent suppliers, buying firms therefore need to be more attractive for these suppliers than their competitors are.

This seemingly counter-intuitive inversion of the classical marketing approach (buyers competing for suppliers, rather than the other way around) constitutes the starting point for this special issue. We believe that this new perspective offers a chance to considerably advance understanding of buyer-supplier relations and ultimately ensures a new form of competitive advantage. In particular, while purchasing and innovation scholars are interested in finding out how to become a preferred customer, marketing scholars are researching on how to determine the value of a particular customer for the selling firm. Both streams of industrial marketing and purchasing are illuminating the phenomenon of attractiveness in buyer-supplier relations, but from different angles, and with little cross-fertilization. The purpose of this special issue is to bring together these two streams of research. Topics covered include, but are not limited to:

Understanding customer attractiveness:
- Which factors influence perceived customer attractiveness, e.g. the buyer’s corporate culture, the life cycle of the product exchanged, geographical, cultural or organizational proximity?
- Which theories could help to explain the preferred customer phenomenon?
- How to measure attractiveness?

Increasing customer attractiveness:
• How to become a preferred customer? How to become more attractive than the competitors on the supply market and thus achieve a competitive advantage?
• How to increase attractiveness in special situations, e.g. for small and medium sized companies, those located in third world countries or those located outside their main industry clusters?
• Can the public sector achieve preferred customer status or are legal restrictions reducing public actors’ attractiveness?

Profiting from being a preferred customer of leading suppliers:
• Could achieving preferred customer status be a pre-condition for successful early supplier integration in new product development?
• Testing the influence of customer attractiveness on logistics, quality and innovation performance

Understanding supplier satisfaction:
• What are the antecedents to supplier satisfaction and how to measure it? Can we link supplier satisfaction with outcomes, such as pricing behavior, innovativeness, delivery, quality etc.?
• When do suppliers decide to discontinue business relationships?

Assessing the value of a customer relationship:
• How do firms assess the value of customers for them?
• Dynamic aspects of value creation, i.e. how to assess the value and the risk of collaborative innovation and new product launch?

Papers must follow the manuscript guidelines of Industrial Marketing Management. Please refer to the latest issue of the journal or its website for the “Guide for Authors.” http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/505720/description#description. Please send an electronic copy of the manuscript that includes all tables and appendices in one file to the guest editors h.schiele@utwente.nl, rcalvi@club-internet.fr and michael.gibbert@usi.ch, as well as to the IMM editorial office plaplaca@journalimm.com. (Please indicate that the manuscript is for this special issue.)