



Create Relationship Excellence

A Brookeside White Paper



B2B MARKETS ARE ABOUT PEOPLE

In B2B markets personal relationships are critical. That's why companies invest so much in employees who are responsible for creating and maintaining successful relationships.

Historically, B2B companies have had powerful sales functions, while marketing used to focus on market research, product management and promotional activities. In more recent times ownership of the customer relationship has become less clear. This has been driven by marketing departments becoming more responsible for the total customer experience.

Consequently a greater proportion of available resource is being committed to managing customer relationships. Companies are doing this because they need loyal customers, receptive to cross and up-sell offers to grow revenue. How do they make sure that is happening? The traditional approach is generally a combination of the following:

- Employing the right people to manage customer relationships
- Training them in what they hope are the right skills
- Promoting the right ones to management roles

- Building CRM systems to increase the level of discipline in sales activities
- Monitoring the sales numbers
- Tracking customer perceptions through customer satisfaction surveys

This has been the combination for many years and it's difficult to believe that this is as good as it gets. So much in this approach is based on guesswork, anecdotal evidence, gut feelings and what worked before, regardless of a changing world. But B2B relationships are complex and managers need to adopt a more rigorous approach in assessing these factors.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS ARE NOT ENOUGH

For many years companies relied on customer satisfaction surveys to get some form of external validation for their sales management. However, such surveys have proved disappointing for many reasons, including:

- Except at the extremes, satisfaction is a poor predictor of subsequent behavior
- Satisfaction surveys tend to be conducted on an anonymous basis so data is only providing an overall shape and no specific customer action plan can be implemented
- Scores tend to cluster around 7-8 out of 10 which does not say much – is 7.2 out of 10 good or bad?
- Surveys try to cover every aspect of the business relationship and tend to be superficial on individual issues
- The many different areas covered by satisfaction surveys tend not to be weighted, so different issues are treated equally when this is often not the case in the customer's mind
- It is very unclear how action to improve customer satisfaction will translate into profits.

Over time, companies have become disappointed by traditional customer satisfaction surveys as an effective weapon in their arsenal, but there was no alternative.

NET PROMOTER HAS HELPED BUSINESSES FOCUS ON GETTING CLOSER TO THEIR CUSTOMERS

In the last few years understanding the customer view has been re-energized by the emergence of the Net Promoter Score (NPS). Instead of the uncertainty of customer

satisfaction, Net Promoter offered a single score. This made it easy to measure, report and target. Furthermore, the Net Promoter Score claimed to be superior in terms of predicting individual customer behavior. Net Promoter has led to big changes as marketers realized they could now take a more active role in managing customer relationships. As a result, whole departments have been created and new senior roles have appeared with titles like Director of Customer Experience.

BROOKESIDE INSIGHT™ OFFERS BUSINESSES A MAJOR STEP FORWARD

There is no doubt Net Promoter can offer companies a quick and easy way to get a temperature check on an individual customer's loyalty. But in the complex area of B2B relationships, more is required. On its own, Net Promoter cannot unravel a customer relationship and point the way forward to make improvements. Until now, there have not been any tools to enable companies to get a real understanding of those relationships. What is needed is data that predicts long term loyalty, the ability to benchmark, so results can be seen in context, and output that leads to effective action.

Such a tool now exists. It is called Brookeside INSIGHT™ and has been developed by The Brookeside Group, a consultancy specializing in effective sales management based outside of Boston, Massachusetts.

INSIGHT™ is a survey-based platform/SAS which gives companies a full picture of their B2B customer relationships and loyalty. It gives them the data they need to develop sales strategies for each customer based on a full understanding of what they need to do to improve the relationship. Companies now have the knowledge and understanding to improve customer retention, increase up-sell and cross-sell and improve margins.

THE INSIGHT™ RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT® MODEL

This model offers companies a step change into the future. It gives them the opportunity to build more profitable customer relationships through a scientific approach to understanding what they need to do.

Contact us to find out how we can transform your customer relationships and grow your business.

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The Brookside Group is the B2B client relationship company. Our new kind of customer feedback and sales coaching software, called SalesEquity.comTM, is a field-proven tool that helps B2B sales and service teams unlock revenue growth hidden within 1:1 client relationships. Brookside helps its clients significantly increase revenue by providing actionable, 360° client feedback, personalized coaching, world-class sales and management training and award-winning consulting.

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