

W debacie nad przyszłością państwa «opiekuńczego» coraz mocniej podkreśla się znaczenie działalności wolontarystycznej przy czym uznaje się ją «nie tylko za pracę społecznie użyteczną, ale również jako formę zdobywania umiejętności i kwalifikacji do podjęcia pracy zarobkowej». Identyfikacja istnienia zwrotu z działalności wolontarystycznej jest więc wartościowa w kontekście poprawy kompetencji pożądanym na rynku pracy, zmiany sposobu zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi, a nawet stała się narzędziem biznesu.

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THE IMPACT OF BRANDED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON SERVICE COMPANIES' PERFORMANCE

The role of branding in the performance of service companies is receiving an increasing amount of attention in the literature on marketing and management. Strong brands enhance the customers' trust which, in turn, tips the balance at the moments of making purchase decisions. Owing to strong brands customers can better visualize, and therefore better understand, the intangible service product. Strong brands reduce the perceived monetary, social and safety risks entailed in buying a service. Thus, strong brands in services perform the role of surrogates in that they, as it were, replace the fabric of a physical product that can be touched, tried on, tasted, or otherwise examined [1]. Various authors point out that a characteristic feature of a strong brand is that it provides the customer with value by evoking positive associations with specific overtones [2]. A product (in the form of a material article or a service) becomes branded as a result of a combination of serious actions performed by the company whose aim is to cause the customer to have some specific information, associations and impressions, directly connected with the product, to be imbedded in the minds of consumers [3]. The imbedded in customers' minds brand image is a result of interaction between the common metaphors (i.e. shared set of

abstract notions) and the direct experiences related to a given brand, including advertisement and service experience [4]. As a matter of fact, a brand image is generated by the customers in their minds and therefore it is not possible to entirely control their meanings of that image by simply displaying symbolic materials that attract the customers' attention. Brand image may operate at different layers in that it can be superficial or more deeply ingrained in the customers' minds. As regards the superficial layer, a customer may easily produce some associations connected with the brand name, whereas in terms of a more deeply imbedded brand image, that customer will relate a specific brand to their personal matters, social values or even fundamental values.

The notion of brand image is strictly connected with company reputation. The company reputation is based on the stakeholders' opinion thereof in respect of its: 1) reliability, concerning both their core and peripheral functions, 2) credibility, in terms of satisfying the needs as promised, 3) trustworthiness, i.e. bringing comfort and feeling of safety, and 4) responsibility for the local community and environment [3].

Over the years, it was the marketers and creative employees from advertising industry who were responsible for building a brand image [5]. It is necessary to understand what brand really is, what it does and what it involves so as to be able to create a customer brand experience. The customer brand experience consists in the direct contact of the customer with the service provider and is often referred to by as «the moments of truth» [6]. According to Jan Carlzon, a former president SAS airline, «the moments of truth» have a crucial impact on building corporate image. In contrast to a random customer experience, a brand experience ought to be: 1) consistent, i.e. delivering high quality experience over time and location, 2) intentional, i.e. delivering the experience with intention to enhance the brand, 3) differentiated from their competitors, 4) valuable, i.e. offering a customer proposition which satisfies their needs [5]. A combination of the above ingredients translated into the likelihood of customers trust and brand loyalty.

In order to adhere to the above principles of the customer brand experience the service company has to meet several requirements such as: a careful design, new forms of collaboration between marketing, HR and operations, and empowering the personnel so that they are turned into brand ambassadors. In addition, it is vital that the two major components of service provision, i.e. high-tech and high-touch be fully integrated to make the combination of process, product and people more powerful.

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E-PROCUREMENT PROCESS IN BUSINESS

Procurement is the business management function that ensures identification, sourcing, access and management of the external resources that an organisation needs or may need to fulfil its strategic objectives.

Procurement exists to explore supply market opportunities and to implement resourcing strategies that deliver the best possible supply outcome to the organisation, its stakeholders and customers.

Procurement applies the science and art of external resource and supply management through a body of knowledge interpreted by competent practitioners and professionals.

Procurement includes activities and events before and after the signing of a contract as well as the general management activities associated with a range of contracts:

- pre-contract activities such as planning, needs identification and analysis, and sourcing,
- post-contract activities such as contract management, supply chain management and disposal,
- general activities such as corporate governance, supplier relationship management, risk management and regulatory compliance.

Benefits:

- security of supply,
- lower costs,
- reduced risk,
- improved quality,
- greater added value,
- increased efficiency,
- innovation.

Generally procurement controlling is the provision of methods (techniques, tools, models etc.) and information in order to support planning, management and control processes in the procurement department.