

Managing Disruptive Change in Channel Relationships

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Abstract While extant research on relationship development suggests relationships evolve through incremental change over long periods of time, a single event between exchange partners can ignite dramatic (positive or negative) transformational change. Evidence of transformational relationship events (TREs) is presented to support this premise. Related research streams are identified and integrated (1) to uniquely define TREs against other critical relationship events and (2) to create a model of disruptive relationship change. We identify three underlying transformational mechanisms (customer gratitude/betrayal, customer reciprocity, and relational sensemaking) that facilitate relationship change (customer-company identification, loyalty behavior, relationship velocity) and impact financial performance. We test the conceptual model on on-going, channel relationships and identify several implications for relationship marketing theory and practice. While the majority of relationship marketing initiatives are grounded in lifecycle theories of development, integrating the TRE perspective provides a much richer understanding of relationship change that can inform relationship marketing strategy.

Keywords Transformational Relationship Events • Channel Relationships • TRE • Loyalty • Relationship Velocity

References

References Available Upon Request

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