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The Effect of Customization Strategy on Customer Retention: A Study of Key Account Marketing in the Information Technology Industry

IT 行業大客戶營銷中定制化策略對顧客保 留影響的研究

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摘要

隨著技術的進步和消費者需求多樣性的發展,定制化已經逐漸成為企業 提供服務的一個重要方式,通過為消費者提供定制化的服務,不僅可以更好 的滿足消費者的實際需求,幫助消費者實現其價值,還能夠提升消費者對於 企業產品或服務的滿意度。尤其是在 IT 行業當中,由於企業架構、使用目的 以及使用環境等不同,對於 IT 產品的個性化需求更是突出,定制化成為了諸 多 IT 服務提供者的主要服務提供手段。

但是 IT 企業所提供的定制化服務究竟是否有效?是否越高的定制化程度能夠帶來越好的效果?企業提供的定制化服務究竟是怎麼影響消費者決策的?這都是企業非常關心,也是學者們所想要瞭解的。

在以往的定制化研究當中,學者們主要關注的是定制化和消費者滿意度 之間的關係,從而進一步研究定制化是如何提升消費者忠誠度的。但是研究 同時表明,忠誠的顧客並不一定會保持和企業的長期關係,而不忠誠的顧客 有時候反而會一直保持和企業的長期關係。因此忠誠度的提升並不是企業提 升績效的最終手段,企業需要進一步提升消費者的保留率。只有做好了老客 戶的保留,才能夠幫助企業提升業績,提升企業在行業中的競爭力。而在與 企業負責人的訪談過程當中,作者發現企業提供定制化服務,尤其是提供了 成功的定制化服務之後,顧客會更傾向於在以後進行同類型產品或服務消費 時繼續從現有供應商處獲取產品或服務。也就是說,定制化服務的確也會對 顧客保留產生影響。

因此,文章從定制化策略和顧客保留之間的關係出發,主要研究了四個問題:第一,定制化程度和顧客保留的關係;第二,定制化程度和顧客保留關係背後的邏輯,也即信任、顧客滿意以及轉移成本這三個變量是否會對定制化程度和顧客保留這兩個變量的關係起到仲介作用;第三,在信任、顧客滿意以及轉移成本這三個仲介變量中,哪一個變量對於顧客保留的最終影響更大;第四,在所選擇的研究行業中,轉移成本的三個維度(程式轉移成本、財務轉移成本以及關係轉移成本)對於企業顧客保留的影響是否具有差異,

從而為企業如何更好地進行定制化策略的制定提供建議。

在本文的研究當中,文章以IT 行業供應商對組織顧客的定制化服務作為研究對象。之所以選擇IT 行業是因為在IT 行業中,定制化已經成為一個普遍的服務策略。而以組織顧客的定制化服務作為研究對象是因為在IT 行業當中,組織顧客是IT 服務供應商的主要盈利來源,做好組織顧客的保留對於IT 行業來說更加重要。

本文的研究方法包括了深入訪談以及問卷調查兩種。文章首先從定性的 角度來探究前兩個問題,再從定量的角度對前兩個問題進行資料驗證,並對 後兩個問題進一步進行資料驗證。

訪談內容表明,組織顧客大多認為定制化是非常有必要的,定制化的服務可以説明顧客獲取更加滿足需求,促進雙方的合作關係,提供額外的利益並增進彼此之間的信任。這些都會使得組織顧客在成功的定制化服務獲取之後,擁有更強的和企業進行合作的意願。

而通過對問卷資料的回歸分析發現:

第一,在 IT 行業當中,供應商的定制化服務程度的確會顯著提升顧客保持和現有供應商合作關係的意願,也即提升顧客保留概率:

第二,顧客的滿意度、信任以及轉移成本都在定制化程度和顧客保留之間起到顯著的仲介作用,也就是說定制化程度之所以能夠影響到顧客保留,是因為定制化程度的增加提高了顧客對於供應商產品或服務的滿意度以及信任,並同時提升了顧客轉換供應商的轉移成本;

第三,在滿意度、信任以及轉移成本這三個變量當中,信任對於顧客保留所產生的影響是最大的。因此,對於供應商來說,需要通過定制化服務的設計來提升顧客對於企業的信任;

第四,在 IT 行業當中,僅考慮轉移成本不同維度對顧客保留的影響時,程式性轉移成本對於顧客保留的影響並不顯著,而關係性轉移成本和財務性轉移成本則會對顧客保留產生顯著影響,而且關係性轉移成本對於顧客保留的影響顯著高於財務性轉移成本。因此,供應商在轉移成本的維護當中,應該將更多的資源投入到對關係性轉移成本的提升當中。

關鍵字: 定制化策略; 顧客保留; 組織顧客

Abstract

With the progress of technology and the development of the consumer demand diversity, customization has gradually become an important way for enterprise to provide service. Through providing customized services to consumers, the enterprise not only can better meet the actual needs of customers, help customers to achieve its value, but also can improve customer satisfaction for enterprise products or services. Especially in the IT industry, due to the differences in enterprise architecture, usage purpose and usage environment, the personalized requirements for IT products are more prominent, and customization becomes the main service provision means for many IT service providers. But are the customized services provided by IT enterprises effective? Is the more customization the better? How do the customized services provided by enterprises influence the decisions of consumers? This is what businesses care about and what academics want to know.

In previous studies on customization, scholars mainly focused on the relationship between customization and customer satisfaction, so as to further study how customization can improve customer loyalty. However, the study also shows that loyal customers do not necessarily maintain long-term relationships with enterprises, while disloyal customers sometimes maintain long-term relationships with enterprises. Therefore, the improvement of loyalty is not the ultimate means for enterprises to improve performance, and enterprises need to further improve the retention rate of consumers. Only the retention of old customers can help enterprises to improve performance and enhance the competitiveness of the industry. During the interview with the person in charge of the enterprise, the author found that when the enterprise provides customized services, especially after providing successful customized services, customers will be more inclined to continue to obtain products or services from existing suppliers when consuming the same type of products or services in the future. In other words, customization does have an impact on customer retention.

Therefore, starting from the relationship between customization strategy and customer retention, this paper mainly studies four issues: First, the relationship between degree of customization and customer retention; Second, the logic behind the degree of customization and customer retention relationship, namely, whether the three variables of trust, customer satisfaction and switching obstacle will play an intermediary role in the relationship between the degree of customization and customer retention. Third, among the three mediating variables of trust, customer satisfaction and switching obstacle, which variable has a greater final impact on customer retention? Fourth, in the selected research industry, whether the impact of the three dimensions of switching barriers (procedural switching costs, financial switching costs and relational switching costs) on corporate customer retention is different, so as to provide suggestions for enterprises to better develop customization strategies.

In the research of this paper, the paper takes the customized service of IT industry suppliers to organizational customers as the research object. I choose IT industry because customization has become a common service strategy in IT industry. The customized service of organizational customers is taken as the research object because in the IT industry, organizational customers are the main source of profits for IT service providers, and it is more important for the IT industry to retain organizational customers.

The research methods of this paper include in-depth interview and questionnaire survey. This paper first explores the first two questions from a qualitative perspective, then conducts data verification for the first two questions from a quantitative perspective, and further data verification for the last two questions.

The content of the interview shows that most of the organizational customers believe that customization is very necessary. Customized services can help customers get more satisfied with their needs, promote the cooperation between the two sides, provide additional benefits and enhance mutual trust. All these will make

organizational customers more willing to cooperate with enterprises in the long term after successful acquisition of customized services.

Through the regression analysis of the questionnaire data, it is found that:

Firstly, in the IT industry, the degree of customized service provided by suppliers will significantly increase the willingness of customers to maintain long-term relationship with existing suppliers, namely, the probability of customer retention.

Secondly, customer satisfaction, trust and switching barriers play a significant intermediary role between the degree of customization and customer retention. that is to say, the degree of customization can affect customer retention, because of the increase of customization leads to a higher satisfaction, trust and switching barriers;

Thirdly, among the three variables of satisfaction, trust and switching barriers, trust has the largest impact on customer retention. Therefore, for suppliers, it is necessary to enhance customers' trust in the enterprise through the design of customized services.

Fourthly, for IT industry, when only considering the influence of different latitude of switching barriers on customer retention, procedural switching costs has no significant influence on customer retention, while relational switching costs and financial switching cost have a significant impact on customer retention. What's more, the influence of relational switching costs on customer retention is significantly higher than the influence of financial switching cost. Therefore, in the maintenance of switching barriers, suppliers should devote more resources to the increase of relational switching costs.

Key words: customization strategy/ customer retention/ key account customers

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