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When details are the embodiment of essence in customer relationships

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Abstract

Often (service) providers are surprised about how customers pay attention and react to details in the offering or details in interactions in the relationship. This paper strives to present ideas about how a focus on details may enhance customer understanding and can improve business decisions. The word *detail* stands for something particular, a smaller part of the whole, even something insignificant or unimportant. Hence, when used it also implies a *perspective*. The core idea of the paper is to utilize the paradox and mismatch between parties in a relationship: what seems to be a detail for one party is significant for the other. In this paper we are interested in the underlying and often implicitly applied perspectives that make details seem to be details even if they are the embodiment of essence from another perspective. This paper focuses on the perspective of customers and their relationships with firms. Firms struggle to understand their customers in order to be competitive and successful. What might be overlooked in this endeavor is the significance of the perspective applied. Firms often apply their view and logic in interpreting customers, while customers' logics may be different. In this paper we highlight this contrast and the significance of understanding the customer's logic. The paper contributes to previous service and relationship marketing research by showing that the analysis of details in customer experiences with a Customer Dominant Logic perspective may give unique and novel insights into customer behavior.