

THE VIRTUAL FIRM AND THE ELECTRONIC BUSINESS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Electronic alternatives for the traditional way of doing business or commerce have appeared, such as eBusiness and eCommerce. CRM's approach represents an effective demonstration of a new customer relationship and characterizes a good example for eBusiness, not as a new invention, but as an efficient utilization of the new information technologies within business. The development within different forms of the electronic commerce will contribute to the exploration and acceleration of the economy globalization process. A good strategy for eBusiness builds an usual environment that stimulates its own development and creates markets large enough to allow the commercial sites' maintenance.

Key words: eBusiness, eCommerce, Customer Relationship Management

New concepts have appeared recently, for instance those of electronic Business (*eBusiness*) or electronic commerce (*eCommerce*), being seen as electronic alternatives for the traditional way of doing business or commerce. The electronic commerce was defined as the process of buying and selling information, products and services through an Internet type network.

The electronic business may be seen as a revolutionary approach to the business attainment concept. We have to deal with some modifications regarding the way in which the information is used or how the clients, the suppliers and the employees are contacted; regarding the marketing, the promotion method etc.

The *eBusiness* solutions have to cope successfully with some new challenges like:

- the new models definition for the business' good functioning;
- the work possibility within varied physical networks - B2B (business-to-business);
- the necessity of customer individualization – B2C (business-to-customer);
- The assurance of transactions' security, both in the case of B2B and B2C.

We should mention that a virtual enterprise is an enterprise realized within cyberspace. All entrepreneurs that wish to be significantly present within the informational global community will have to know how to displace themselves and how to operate within this domain. There are two significant aspects in regard with a virtual enterprise: the first refers to knowledge and technical ability to operate within the already existent cyberspace which continually develops; the second refers to the staff training that prepares them to work within the virtual reality.

When referring to some changes that appeared at the same time with the digital economy's development, we reveal that the last successful approach to the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) represents an effective demonstration of a new customer relationship. The purpose was to recreate the situation that existed in neighborhood shops a few decades before, when the shop assistant knew both names of the customers, their preferences and found time to talk to them, and not necessarily about business.

CRM consists of the same individualized approach to the relationships with the customers, which will succeed, due to the modern information technology, in establishing “friendly” relationships with a more incomparable number of customers. We emphasize the fact that CRM represents a good example for *eBusiness*, not as a new invention, but as an efficient utilization of the new information technologies within business.

The activity laid within the WWW networks, characterizes itself especially through the electronic speed to which all other traditional domains within commerce refer to, such as the production, the transportation and the whole logistics. The easy way how a demand can be created may become a threat, due to a deficiency within the delivery system, if one doesn't obtain with such promptitude a high production or the possibility to deliver on time. Because of this, the virtual shops that used to offer Christmas presents, have encountered difficulties, coming to the point where the orders had a three months delay in delivery.

According to some experts, when referring to big companies, the best solution is to treat *eBusiness* as if it was one of their own delivery channels, and in the mean time to continue traditionally their businesses on the other channels.

The development within different forms of the electronic commerce will contribute to the exploration and acceleration of the economy globalization process, and especially to the commerce globalization. This will lead to the creation of a coherent universal system that functions in the new environment, and that will cover all society's aspects, such as: economical, legal, financial, security, responsibility and property protection.

An important phenomenon that will have a significant influence upon the virtual market's global development consists of many mediators' disappearance, such as agents, dealers or brokers. In the next phase of customer-supplier relationships, the purchaser will directly dictate producers what should they produce. One may forecast the info-mediators' appearance, whose duty will be to approach the participant clients within a virtual community and to assure that the client will find anytime the desired information on his/her own computer display.

These info-mediators' function will be taken over by the so-called 'intelligent agents' – a very sophisticated software, based on artificial intelligence. Such a program will examine the web sites visited by a client till a precise moment, and the analysis' result will become the "client's profile" determination base. Starting from this, the customer's desire to obtain various information regarding the products and services will be estimated/predicted.

A good strategy for *eBusiness* builds an usual environment that stimulates its own development and creates markets large enough to allow the commercial sites' maintenance. The base of creating a good *eBusiness* strategy should be a good estimation of the market and of the current position along with the own market strategy's evaluation. Instead of creating a new dot.com, one should take into consideration the sales department's endowment with such "channels" of Internet selling that could bring more beneficial effects.

When creating an *eBusiness* strategy, a clear distinction should be made between the virtual market of products sales and the virtual market of services sales. Within the typical virtual markets, one may work by means of selling products (such as books, flowers, metals, officialdom etc) and with two types of participants: suppliers and customers. The products available within the virtual commerce are, mostly, products intended for current use. Beside the suppliers and the customers within the virtual markets that sell such kind of products, one may also emphasize the presence of some societies that assure support, such as the banks or the companies responsible for delivery.

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