

**CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MARKETING PRACTICES:
A CASE OF PETROLEUM INDUSTRY IN THAILAND**



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entitled
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A CASE OF PETROLEUM INDUSTRY IN THAILAND**

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CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MARKETING PRACTICES: A CASE OF PETROLEUM INDUSTRY IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

This research studies the implementation and process of customer relationship management (CRM) practices at the Thai state petroleum firm, PTT. The study was based on a conceptual framework of CRM based on customer lifetime value (CLV), proposed by Woo and Leelapanyalert (2014). This model proposed a four-stage model of the customer relationship, with different activities taking place at each stage to increase sales and profits, customer loyalty and other positive outcomes. The study used a qualitative research method. Interviews with ten sales area managers and related staff members in different business units of the organization. Findings showed that CRM was considered very important in the company. The emphasis was on learning about customers and meeting customer needs, as well as providing information about the firm's services. Activities included social activities (such as dining and temple trips) as well as professional development activities (like seminars about the firm's products). The respondents pointed to benefits like increased customer loyalty and commitment, improved profits and sales, and improved efficiency. The main recommendation derived from this study is that they should explore the CRM model and see if it would be effective in their business. The case of PTT showed that the firm's objectives of increasing profits and sales, along with customer satisfaction and loyalty, could be achieved through CRM. It also showed that the program created long-term relationships between the firm and its customers, including social connections between the firms and the area managers supporting them.

KEY WORDS: Customer Relationship / Relationship Marketing / Client Relationship Marketing Practices / Customer Loyalty

53 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research examines customer relationships and relationship building in the Thai petroleum industry. As Table 1 shows, compared to global production the Thai petroleum industry is relatively small. The country has a limited amount of proved reserves of oil (about 0.5 billion barrels as of 2014) (BP, 2015). Its production rate is also low. According to BP (2015) statistics, Thailand's oil production is about 35.5% of its consumption as of 2014. Production has grown significantly in the last decade. Both oil and natural gas production were nearly double their 2004 rate by 2013 (BP, 2015). However, as Table 1 also shows, the net consumption is increasing over time. This means that the gap between production and consumption is growing even though production is more rapid. Thus, Thailand's oil industry is increasingly exposed to the global market.

Table 1.1 Summary of oil and gas situation in Thailand

Year	2004	2013	2014
Oil			
Proved reserves (thousand million barrels)	0.5	0.5	0.5
Production (thousand barrels per day)	241	459	453 (-2.0%)
Consumption (thousand barrels per day)	1025	1255	1274 (+1.6%)
Net consumption (Consumption – production)	784	796	821
Natural gas			
Proved reserves (trillion cubic meters)	0.4	0.2	0.2
Production (billion cubic meters)	22.4	41.8	42.1 (+1.2%)
Consumption	29.9	52.3	52.7 (+0.9%)
Net consumption (Consumption – Production)	7.5	10.5	10.6

Source: BP (2015), calculations by author

This research focuses on PTT Public Company Ltd. PTT Public Company Ltd., which is a partially state-owned Thai company that operates in oil and gas exploration, production, and distribution in Thailand and regionally (PTT, 2015). The company operates a number of different business units. These units focus on oil and gas exploration and production, downstream distribution, and businesses like petrochemical production and distribution. PTT also has regional foreign investments in the oil and gas industry (PTT, 2015).

The main issue in this study is the importance of customer relationships. The customer relationship is the formal and informal agreements and interactions between the customer and the firm (Peppers & Rogers, 2010). Relationships with business partners help both businesses maximize the value of the relationship (Schuh, Strohmer, Easton, Hales, & Triplat, 2014). For a company such as PTT customer relationships are important because they are long-term (Peppers & Rogers, 2010). With stable relationships, PTT and its customers can make long-term commitments to lower costs and improve sales. Customer relationship management can also be used to capture more of a given customer's business (Peppers & Rogers, 2010). Close customer relationships result in increased sales to that customer, as well as more effective terms.

1.2 Problem Statement

The problem of this research is how Thai companies like PTT can build relationships with its customers or clients. There has been little research done in large petroleum firms and their approach to customer relationships. However, one study showed that customers do not all have the same value (Gloy, Akridge, & Preckel, 1997). This study examined the customer lifetime value (CLV) of rural petroleum customers in agribusiness. It showed that customers vary in consumption, retention and willingness to pay (WTP). This leads to high variation in the CLV of different customers. Retention also had a high effect on CLV. Because of this variation, it is important for businesses in the petroleum industry to focus on the most valuable customers and try to retain them (Gloy, et al., 1997). However, few other studies have focused on customer relationships in the petroleum industry. One study suggests that this is because the petroleum industry's customers are relatively small (Banerjee, Dasgupta, & Kim, 2008). This study found

that petroleum companies were much less likely than other companies to report a few large customers. However, Gloy, et al.'s (1997) research showed that even for small customers, relationship management was important.

There have not been any previous studies on customer or client relationships in the petroleum industry of Thailand. However, these relationships are likely to be important for efficiency and profitability of the company. By focusing on the customer relationship management approach of one company in the industry, it will be possible to understand how customer relationships form and their impact on operations. This will help fill the research gap for Thai and other petroleum companies. It will also help operational decisions in petroleum companies.

This paper aims to investigate how a Thai company builds customer relationship with its customers by focusing on the petroleum industry.

There are two objectives developed based on this aim, which are:

1. To identify the process or practice of building customer relationship management in petroleum industry.
2. To examine the responsibilities of marketing specialist in building customer relationship management in each process.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

This section provides the theoretical foundation for the research. The theoretical foundation establishes the knowledge and theories needed for the study. The first section explains the concept of relationship marketing and identifies its importance. Next, theories of the customer relationship process are explained. These theories help to identify the important parts of customer relationships. They also explain how customer relationships develop and how they can be managed. The third section explains client relationship marketing practice. This section explains that appropriate marketing activities are different at different stages of the relationship between the firm and the customer.

2.1.1 The importance of Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing is a marketing approach that focuses on long-term customer retention and high levels of customer satisfaction, rather than on the direct impact of marketing activities on sales (Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne, 2013). The concept of relationship marketing is based on the idea of customer lifetime value (CLV), or the total sum of transactions over the timespan of a customer's relationship with a firm (Christopher, et al., 2013). Thus, relationship marketing practices emphasize lifetime share of wallet (or how much a customer spends in a given category with the firm) and factors such as customer repurchase (Christopher, et al., 2013).

Relationship marketing is important because it encourages identification of the customer with the firm through the formation of trust and commitment and the company's approach to communication and conflict handling (Ndubisi, 2007). The result of this relationship building and identification is that customers develop loyalty to the firm, continuing to buy the firm's products and recommend the firm to others (Ndubisi, 2007). Thus, relationship marketing is a critical strategy for firms that are

building long-term earnings and performance (Christopher, et al., 2013). However, as it is a time-intensive and targeted strategy, it is not appropriate for firms focused on short-term transactional earnings growth.

2.1.2 Building customer relationships

There are many approaches in the literature to building customer relationships. Several of the most commonly identified theories are explained below. These theories include the importance of establishing objectives, how firms should select customers, and how customer relationships can contribute to customer retention.

2.1.2.1 Customer relationship objectives

A number of authors have examined different objectives for customer relationships and customer relationship (CRM) practice. One author identified three types of objectives, including increasing revenue, improving customer loyalty, and reducing costs (Tavana, Filli, Tohid, Vaghari, & Kakouie, 2013). Each of these objectives can be accomplished in different ways. For example, increased revenue can be accomplished by increasing sales to each customer (share of wallet) or attracting new customers. More advanced CRM approaches may try to maximize customer value by offering ancillary services (von Martens & Hilbert, 2011). For example, an airline may control its ticket prices or booking classes to maximize the potential value from each customer (von Martens & Hilbert, 2011). Each firm needs to set its own objectives and priorities for customer relationships and establish the approach they want to use (Buttle & Maklan, 2015). It is only after the objectives of the customer relationship have been established that operational tools and techniques should be selected (Buttle & Maklan, 2015). This helps to make sure that the CRM program and software tools are meeting the goals of the business.

2.1.2.2 Customer selection

One of the aspects of customer relationship management is customer selection (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001). Not all customers are suited for all firms. Instead, some customers offer firms much more value, and can gain more value from a relationship with them. As a result, one of the important aspects of customer relationships is the selection of customers and firms. The firm may choose to form relationships only with certain customers. However, it is more effective for the firm to allow all potential

customers, but only open customer relationship management programs and activities to selected customers. The selection criteria can focus on different factors, like strategic value or potential profitability (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001). What is important is that the customer relationship efforts of the firm are directed at the most valuable potential customers. This helps maximize the resources of the firm's program (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001). A common approach to selection is estimation of customer lifetime value (CLV) (Venkatesan, 2004). CLV is an estimate of the total value of the customer to the firm over the course of the relationship (Venkatesan, 2004). Customers with a higher CLV should receive more of the firm's attention and resources, while those with lower CLV should receive less. Furthermore, resources devoted to lower CLV customers could be effectively directed toward developing customer loyalty and increasing CLV (Venkatesan, 2004). It is noticeable that some companies do not manage their CRM programs this way. For example, mass-market retailers usually open their CRM programs (loyalty cards) to all customers, and use algorithmic techniques to maximize the program's value (Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne, 2013). However, this still results in maximization of value.

2.1.2.3 Customer relationships and customer retention

One of the most important uses of customer relationship management is for customer retention. Customer retention means that customers do not switch brands or service providers routinely, but instead repurchase from firms they have an established relationship with (Verhoef, 2003). Customer relationship management is also associated with increased customer share of wallet (SOW), or in other words the amount the customer spends on a given firm's products or services. Verhoef's (2003) relatively early study of CRM and its impact on customer retention found that programs that include a combination of economic incentives (such as special pricing or promotions) and affective commitment (personal relationships or positive feelings) were most effective at improving retention. While he showed that the change in retention and SOW were relatively small, they could be much greater when applied to larger customers (Verhoef, 2003). Continuing practice has shown that CRM programs have an impact on customer retention by introducing switching costs (Edward & Sahadev, 2011). Switching costs represent the time and resources needed to change suppliers,

and the benefits lost by doing so. By creating switching costs, CRM can reduce churn and increase customer retention.

Measuring specific outcomes such as retention can be difficult (Ryals, 2005). Many firms do not establish metrics or measurements for customer relationships. Instead, they may not even assess response, but instead keep making customer contacts and offering promotions. This means that CRM programs may not be as well targeted as they could be. It can also mean that firms do not have a good idea of their effect on retention or on other metrics such as profitability (Ryals, 2005). Ryals (2005) has provided a summary of measurement and assessment techniques, although CRM program software should also include suitable measurements.

2.1.2.4 Client Relationship Marketing Practices

Woo and Leelapanyalert (2014) identify four stages of the customer-firm relationship, including pre-relationship, exploratory, expansion, and stable stages (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). In the pre-relationship stage, the customer is aware of the firm but has not made a relationship; the exploratory stage begins with the first purchase by the customer. In the expansion stage, the customer makes more purchases, and takes advantage of cross-selling (such as co-branding, brand expansions, or premium deals) (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). In the stable stage, the client is satisfying their needs with continued purchases, but may not be expanding the amount they purchase (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014).

The outcomes identified include building sustainable relationships, improving competitive power, increasing sales and profit performance, and generating positive word of mouth (recommendations) (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). These outcomes result from increased customer trust and commitment of existing customers, which translates into both repeated purchases and recommendations to other potential customers (Hunt, Arnett, & Madhavaram, 2006). However, as Hunt, et al. (2006) showed, the approaches used for firms to reach these outcomes varied widely. In fact, there are several techniques, including direct marketing, channel sales, and others, that can be used to achieve the goals of relationship marketing (Hunt, et al., 2006). This makes it a complex strategy to describe and assess as well as implement.

There are a number of relationship marketing activities or strategies that can be used in order to move the client through the lifecycle stages (Woo &

Leelapanyalert, 2014). However, which activities are used depends on the type of company and service or product offered. Research has shown that some of the most effective uses of relationship marketing are when the customer forms relationships with a specific person (such as a company representative or service provider) and when relationships are more important (such as channel sales or service providers) (Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, & Evans, 2006). These situations are more likely to be perceived as relationship-based and focused on interpersonal interactions (Palmatier, et al., 2006).

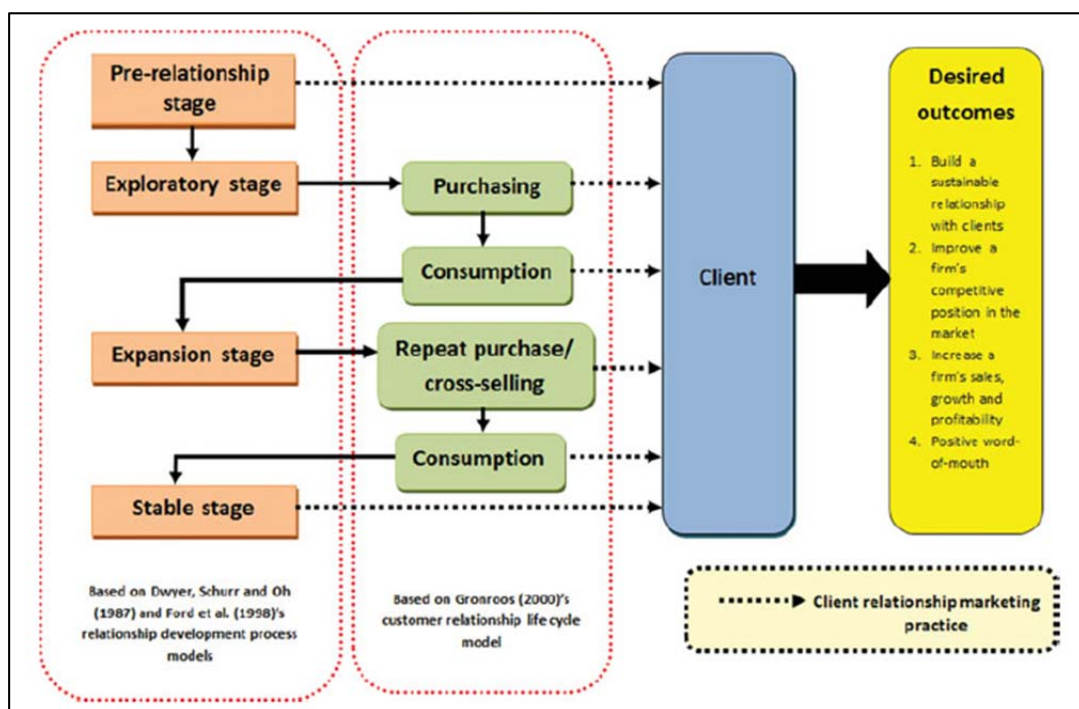


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework of relationship marketing activities at different stages of the customer lifecycle

Source: Woo and Leelapanyalert (2014)

2.2 Conceptual Framework Development

Conceptual framework of this paper has been adapted from Buttle and Maklan (2015); Venkatesan (2004); and Woo and Leelapanyalert (2014). The framework begin from company sets up its objectives for managing customer relationship. Then, selected CLV list from purchasing volume and frequency at exploratory and expansion stages. Next, developed CRM plan to make CLV customers repeat order/ cross-selling

product at expansion stage. The plan can lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty. After follow these process, company should be able to build a sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references. The important part of this model is the concept of customer lifetime value (CLV). CLV refers to the total value of the customer over the lifetime of the firm-customer relationship (Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Venkatesan, 2004; Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). Some customers have a limited CLV; for example, they will buy from the firm one time only. However, customers that develop loyalty, repurchase products and services, expand the amount they buy from the company, and provide positive word of mouth have much higher CLV. Firms need to develop good relationships with customers in order to maximize CLV, especially from potential high-value customers.

The conceptual framework establishes a process for the firm to undertake customer relationship management. The initial stage establishes the customer lifetime value (CLV) list (Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Venkatesan, 2004). This information is then connected to the stages of the firm-customer relationship (Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). The CLV list and CRM plan established during the initial stage interacts with the customer lifetime process. The outcomes (including stable relationships, increased profitability, good reputation and customer references) result from the interaction led by the CRM through the customer lifetime. The CRM plan serves to move the customer through the customer lifetime flow and encourage positive outcomes.

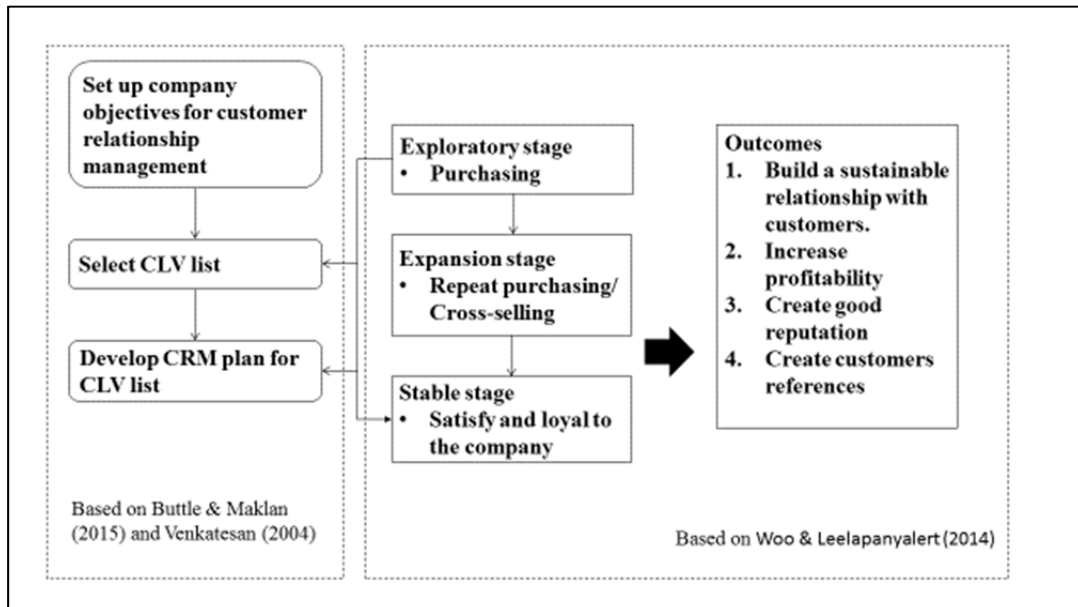


Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework based on Buttle & Maklan (2015), Venkatesan (2004) and Woo & Leelapanyalert (2014)

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

The qualitative case study method was chosen because it provides a holistic view of social, organizational, or historical issues (Yin, 2013). The case study method describes a single case, such as an organization, person, relationship or other situation. The purpose of the case study is to explore the issue from different angles (Yin, 2013). As a result, the data and analysis techniques of a case study can be eclectic. For example, a case study of a company can include financial data, scenario descriptions of a given situation, historical information and information from different interviews and observations as well as secondary data. This is one of the strengths of the case study method (Yin, 2013). There are also other strengths, including being able to describe a problem at multiple levels and identify social and other explanations for specific outcomes.

The case study method does have weaknesses, including claims that case studies can be biased because the researcher selects what data to include (Yin, 2013). Data can also be complex and difficult to analyze properly (Yin, 2013). However, it is still the best choice for the current research. It will help to identify PTT's approach to customer relationships and their effects on the firms' outcomes.

This research uses a qualitative case study of PTT. PTT is a diversified oil and gas exploration, production and distribution company operating in Thailand (PTT, 2015). The company is partly owned by the Thai government and traded on the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET). It operates upstream and downstream operations in several petroleum sectors, including oil, natural gas, and petrochemicals (PTT, 2015).

3.2 Data Collection

In keeping with the holistic approach of the case study, multiple data sources will be used (Yin, 2013). Secondary data (including existing papers, news reports, industry and government sources, and other information) will be collected first. This will help establish what the existing situation is and what the public view of PTT's customer relationships is. However, this is not likely to be sufficient for understanding the internal workings of the relationships. This is because no previous research has specifically focused on PTT's customer relationship management.

Primary research will be conducted using observations and interviews. This technique is adapted from Buttle and Maklan (2015) who study about customer relationship; Venkatesan (2004) who studies on CLV; Woo and Leelapanyalert's (2014) study of client relationships in the legal industry. This was selected as an analysis model because, unlike many other studies, it does not focus on mechanized customer relationship management. It also addresses a relatively poorly studied industry. Observations will be conducted in the researcher's capacity at one of the firms.

Semi-structured interviews will be used to collect the bulk of the information for analysis. Semi-structured interviews are a common data collection technique in qualitative research (Flick, 2014). In the semi-structured interview, the researcher begins with a set series of questions. The discussion is then expanded based on the interviewee's responses, and additional questions may be included (Flick, 2014). The semi-structured approach was selected because it helped collect the same information from all participants. At the same time, it offered participants the opportunity to challenge and provide more information. Interview questions are listed below.

Interviews were conducted with managers and staff members at PTT. The participants were purposely selected to make sure they played a role in the relevant customer relationship. The purposive selection technique is common in qualitative research to make sure researcher and participant time is not wasted (Flick, 2014).

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a process where the researcher examines texts, like interview transcripts, to uncover hidden themes or meanings (Flick, 2014). Thematic analysis is a common technique for qualitative research (Flick, 2014). It is also commonly used in case studies, along with narrative and content information (Yin, 2013). The thematic analysis began with transcription and annotation of the interviews. Each unit of meaning (such as word or sentence) in the transcribed interview was classified with one or more codes that identified its meaning. The first round of coding used open coding as an exploratory approach. Each interview was coded without reference to the research questions. A specific codebook was then developed based on the research questions and interesting points from the open coding. A second round of coding used axial coding based on the codebook. Following the two rounds of coding, codes were collapsed and duplicates removed. The codes were then grouped into categories across different transcripts. This was to limit duplication and group similar codes together. The final stage involved the combination of categories into themes. For each theme, a narrative description, along with illustrative texts and data, was prepared.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1 Interviewee Background

All interviewees of this study worked for PTT. There were 10 interviewees in this study, all of whom worked for different departments and had different levels of responsibility. The number of years experience ranged from seven months (Interviewee 9) to 33 years (Interviewee 6). Most of the respondents were Area Managers in sales and marketing departments of various units, including consumer fuels, aviation fuels, various petrochemical products, and special products (Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10). These Area Managers looked after between 20 and 200 customers, depending on the business unit and their level of experience. The other three positions represented included Industrial Credit Division Manager (Interviewee 6), Finance Officer (Industrial Credit) (Interviewee 8), and Sales Promotion Officer (Interviewee 9). Thus, all interviewees were involved in the customer management processes.

4.2 Attitude toward Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

The first theme explored was attitudes toward CRM. All interviewees agreed that CRM was important and even critical to the success of the company. There were several reasons that interviewees identified as underlying the importance of CRM.

One reason was maintaining a competitive advantage in a highly competitive industry or set of industries. As Interviewee 2 explained, *“The price we offer is very low, but if we do not build relationships with customers there is a high risk of losing clients to competitors.”* Not all customer industries were as competitive. Interviewee 5 pointed out that CRM was less important in the retail fuel segment than in the industrial products segment, because retail fuel customers could calculate their earnings and profits more clearly and because there were fewer competitors in this segment than in industrial products.

Another reason was increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty, increasing sales and profits, and reducing churn (or customer turnover). This is a profit-oriented reason. This is particularly important because, as Interviewee 9 points out, “When customers haven’t had a good product or service, they ... spread word of mouth ... which affects the reputation of the [whole] company.” Thus, providing good service and ensuring customer satisfaction is important not just for the individual departments, but also for the whole firm. This category of responses is classified as increasing per-customer value for the firm.

A third reason was identifying and meeting customer needs and increasing their comfort level with the company, to ensure that customers would stay loyal. This need included identifying appropriate products and pricing for customers as well as understanding their credit needs. This category of responses can be understood as how the firm meets customer needs.

In summary, interviewees identified three key reasons why CRM was important in the firm. These reasons included gaining and maintaining competitive advantage, increasing per-customer value, and meeting customer needs.

4.3 CRM in the Company

The second theme was CRM and its use in the company. Key issues included building relationships, setting relationship objectives, CLV lists (premium customers), generating increased sales and cross-selling, and increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Interviewees generally agreed that establishing relationships involved several key aspects. One aspect was getting to know the customers (and sometimes their families), establishing a social relationship through shared drinks and meals, snacks and small gifts, though some important customers may also be offered international trips or other major gifts. Interviewee 4 stated that much of his sales time actually involved social contacts. Getting to know customers also included research into the firm and its needs. The second aspect was introducing PTT’s offerings and business processes. This aspect involved offering customers or potential customers brochures and information, site visits, seminars, and so on. For some markets, significant negotiation

was involved in gaining initial access, since auctions and tender processes were used to select customers.

Although different interviewees had slightly different perspectives on developing relationships, they were generally clear that the purpose of establishing these relationships was to increase sales. This could be accomplished by gaining new customers, turning good customers into loyal customers, or by increasing the amount spent on the firm's products by loyal customers. However, many of the participants specified that building long-term relationships with customers was the key objective of CRM; increased sales and customer loyalty were the consequences of long-term customer relationships.

Interviewees were also clear that the CLV list approach is used, with high-value (premium) customers being identified and special attention paid to them. Interviewees that described the process of selecting high-value customers explained that customers are graded by factors like the length of customer relationship and total sales, although different departments or units appear to use different approaches to high-value customer selection. Interviewee 1 specified that it is not just current high-value customers, but those that have the potential to become high-value customers (for example, by increasing the volume or frequency of their orders). These customers may be treated differently from other customers.

Different area managers used different approaches to cross-selling and increasing orders. Several participants identified on-time delivery, good service and product quality as key for repeat orders. Good pricing, loyalty rewards, and offers of testers or samples are also important. Area managers often visit high-value customers, and these customers and their families may also be offered trips or other incentives. There is also a cultural element; for example, Interviewee 4 specified that Chinese customers, who are very price sensitive, could be offered a lowered margin. Interviewee 5 specified that in order to increase cross-selling and order value, the salesperson had to understand what the customer was looking for and deliver it.

There were also a range of activities for ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty. Strong relationships were identified as one activity. Another activity was providing information, for example through seminars or market reports on fuel trends. This information could help customers project their own future costs. Communication

was key. Area managers needed to be easily accessible, and communicate proactively with customers, offering information and advice as well as social interaction. Product quality, service quality and on-time delivery of the right products also were identified as factors that led to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

4.4 Effectiveness of CRM and Outcome of CRM Activities

Overall, participants had a positive view of CRM activities, rating them 8 or 9 out of 10. They identified strong relationships and internal training, as well as good internal support for the CRM program and development of specific customer requirements, as contributing to its success. However, there were some problems identified that could impede its success. Interviewee 1 stated that the call centre employees needed to improve their professionalism, as this may lead to a loss of customers. There is also a lot of bureaucracy, which can make procedures like getting customer information (Interviewee 8) and actually talking to customers (Interviewee 5) difficult. Interviewee 5 also stated that some departments over-relied on seminars and training. He suggested that departments should focus more intensively on visiting customers and building relationships.

The main benefit for the firm that was identified by most participants was increased sales and profits, driven by higher levels of customer retention and customer loyalty and increased success at gaining new customers. Interviewee 7 suggests that this may increase sales by 20% across all divisions. The firm also benefits from word of mouth, as satisfied customers refer others to PTT. This has the potential to improve their reputation as well as their market share. There are also customer and salesperson benefits. Some interviewees (2, 5) also noted that the process of ordering becomes simpler for customers, who can simply call their salesperson. Salesperson benefits include social connections and social relationships and company rewards for high satisfaction levels. Several interviewees pointed to the benefits related to their job function, such as increased knowledge about negotiations and customer needs. Thus, there are benefits for all three stakeholders involved in the CRM relationships. Although the CRM program is designed for the firm's benefits, it also has benefits for others.

4.5 Suggestions and Future Plans

Although some interviewees felt the current program worked well, there were also a number of suggestions offered for improvement. These suggestions included:

1. Reducing paperwork to allow sales managers to spend more time with customers;
2. Reducing the amount of time required for budget and expenditure approvals;
3. Offering seminars on knowledge protection and use of information technology to improve the customer experience;
4. Increase the number of sales managers to provide better service to each customer;
5. Improve information technology systems to improve support; and
6. Undertaking a sports sponsorship of a tournament or other promotional campaigns to improve visibility in foreign markets.

This is a wide array of potential suggestions, some of which are only somewhat related to CRM and none of which had more than one supporter. However, there are common themes. These shared responses include: improving IT systems and communicating about their use; increasing efficiency of existing processes (paperwork and time required for budget approvals); and increasing the amount of time sales managers can spend with each customer. If processes were more efficient it may not be necessary to increase the number of sales managers, but this is a long-term strategic decision.

4.6 Summary of Findings

Table 4.1 summarizes the findings of the interviews. This summary is based on the themes identified in the research.

Table 4.1 Summary of findings

Theme	Findings
Attitude toward CRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRM was viewed as critical for the company's success. Reasons for using CRM included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating competitive advantages for the company; ○ Increasing customer loyalty and satisfaction; ○ Increasing sales and profits; ○ Reducing marketing costs and increasing efficiency; ○ Increasing long-term customer satisfaction and loyalty to the company. • There were some differences between market segments, as some segments were more competitive than others and different segments have different customer characteristics.
CRM in the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRM practices were based on customer knowledge, including social relationships with clients and their families. Other important aspects included introducing PTT's products and services to the customer and finding ways to meet customer needs. • High CLV customers are identified and special efforts are made to engage with them and meet their needs. High CLV and potential high CLV customers are offered enhanced incentives such as trips. • On-time delivery, quality, and service are critical. • Strong relationships and continuing education about products, for example seminars and trips.
Effectiveness and outcome of CRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRM programs were viewed as highly effective. • Major issues were attributed to customer service staff members, who were not fully trained and may not provide effective service. Another problem was the amount of bureaucracy and paperwork involved in the CRM process. • Major benefits for the firm included increased sales and profits, higher customer loyalty and higher customer retention. Customer acquisition is also easier. CRM is attributed with increasing sales by 20% across all units. Customer benefits were also noted.
Suggestions and future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested improvements were mainly reducing paperwork and complexity, improving systems and increasing sales managers to increase CRM effectiveness.

4.7 Discussion

The findings were generally consistent with the conceptual framework (Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Venkatesan, 2004; Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). For example, the company did set objectives for CRM (Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Venkatesan, 2004). The CRM objectives that the company set included increasing sales and profits, as well as building long-term customer relationships and customer loyalty. These are consistent with the objectives identified by Woo and Leelapanyalert (2014) for the CRM implementation in the company. However, the specifics of the implementation of CLV were slightly different, based on the descriptions of the interviewees. One difference is the use of a CLV list. The literature review suggested that the CLV list was used to differentiate premium and non-premium customers and direct more CRM resources toward premium customers (Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Venkatesan, 2004). However, the interviewees stated that they had a broader distribution of CRM resources, with premium and non-premium customers having at least some attention paid to them. While there was more commitment of resources to higher-value customers, regular customers also received information, seminars and attention based on their needs. There was also evidence that the company's CRM program followed its customers through the customer lifecycle, from exploratory stage (purchasing) to expansion stage (repeat purchasing and cross-selling) to stable stage (customers are satisfied and loyal). This is consistent with the model presented by Woo and Leelapanyalert (2014). Overall, the findings were consistent with the conceptual framework of the study.

The primary research was also consistent with research into the importance of CRM. CRM is intended to maximize the customer lifetime value (CLV) of all customers, by focusing on provision of their needs (Christopher, et al., 2013). In the interviews, there was clear evidence that maximizing the value of customers was at the heart of CRM practices at PTT. For example, interviewees stated that the CRM focus for occasional buyers was to increase buying frequency and create customer loyalty and routine repurchase, consistent with prior findings (Christopher, et al., 2013).

Interviews explained that the PTT CRM program resulted in increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as benefits for the customer and the salesperson. The benefits to the company, including customer satisfaction and loyalty, are discussed in more detail in the literature (Christopher, et al., 2013; Ndubisi, 2007). The increased

customer loyalty benefits, along with increased revenues and profits, are partly consistent with the known benefits to the firm (Tavana, et al., 2013). There is also some evidence that PTT's programs are designed to increase the customers' trust in the company (Ndubisi, 2007). However, there were some differences. For example, the company does not use an automated process for extracting maximum value from each customer transaction, as with airline ticket sales (von Martens & Hilbert, 2011). Instead, the company has established its own approach, focusing on long-term, personal customer relationships. This is consistent with the conceptual framework, which requires that companies need to establish their own objectives and approaches for their CRM program (Buttle & Maklan, 2015).

Table 3 and Figure 3 show the result when matching theories with the finding. This has indicated that PTT has done all the stages refer in conceptual framework, and the outcomes are confirmed as review in literature.

Table 4.2 Summarize of client relationship marketing practice by PTT

Stage	Literature review	The role of PTT marketing specialist
Before purchasing stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up company objectives for customer relationship management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up company objectives for customer relationship management
Exploration stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected CLV list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify CLV customers • Engage with CLV and meet their needs
Expansion stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed CRM plan to make CLV customers repeat order/ cross-selling product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer enhanced incentives such as trips and activities. • Manage on-time delivery, quality, and service are critical.

Table 4.2 Summarize of client relationship marketing practice by PTT (Cont.)

Stage	Literature review	The role of PTT marketing specialist
Stable stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep CLV customer statistic and loyal with the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up Strong relationships • Provide information, for example through seminars or market reports on fuel trends • Easily accessible, and communicate proactively with customers • Provide advice and suggestion • Create social interaction

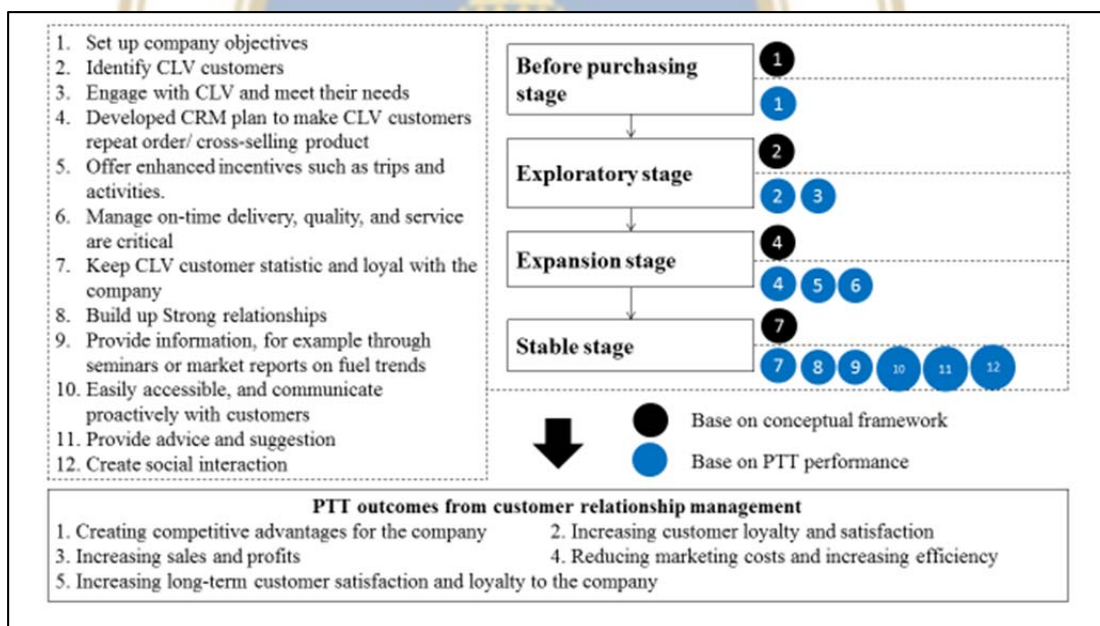


Figure 4.1 Matching between finding and conceptual framework

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This research studied customer or client relationship marketing (CRM) practices in the Thai petroleum industry. The research focused on PTT Public Company Ltd., the Thai national petroleum production and distribution firm. PTT operates in a number of different petroleum industries in Thailand and in international markets, including exploration and exploitation of natural gas and oil resources, production of petroleum fuels and petrochemicals, and downstream marketing and sales to retail and industrial markets. The research examined the PTT and similar companies could use CRM in order to increase their benefit from their customer base, by increasing sales and profits as well as creating long-term customer relationships and maximizing customer lifetime value.

There were two objectives of the study, including identifying the process of CRM in the petroleum industry and examining the responsibilities of marketing experts within this plan. The objectives were accomplished using qualitative research. Interviews were conducted with ten members of PTT staff. Of these interviewees, seven worked as marketing or area managers in various industrial sectors PTT sells product into, while three worked in broader financing or marketing and promotion activities. The literature review of the study established a conceptual framework to understand the process and objectives of CRM, following several previous authors (Buttle & Maklan, 2015; Venkatesan, 2004; Woo & Leelapanyalert, 2014). Interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis.

CRM at the firm includes educational offerings (seminars and information), trips and other incentives, as well as pricing offers, depending on the customer's needs. The firm has strong objectives for the CRM program. These objectives included creating long-term relationships with customers, increasing customer loyalty and customer sales. The ultimate reason for implementing the CRM program was to increase sales and profits

for the firm. The CRM program was also viewed as a way to maintain competitive advantage and to meet customer needs and ensure that they stay loyal. Thus, the CRM program was a way to differentiate the firm in the eyes of the customer. The focus on the customer meant that the CRM program began with a process of learning about the customer and their needs, as well as their value to the firm. However, the firm did not use a specific CRM program for high-value customers, instead emphasizing on individual and social relationships. While premium customers were offered higher levels of incentives (like temple trips and international trips), the program also focused on converting customers in the exploratory stage (initial purchases) into the expansion stage (repeat purchasing and cross-selling), and through to the stable stage (strong satisfaction and loyalty). Participants noted that the program had an estimated 80% to 90% success rate in terms of customer loyalty and other objectives. It was also successful at increasing sales, with one participant estimating a 20% increase in sales from the program.

In conclusion, CRM has been a highly effective strategy for PTT to increase sales and profits and generate customer loyalty. In the long term, this will increase the firm's competitive advantage as it retains customers and increases their customer lifetime value. Thus, although the program does have some costs, it also has some significant benefits for the firm as well as for customers themselves. While the firm still has to ensure quality service and products and on-time delivery, the CRM program is an important tool for the firm to identify and meet customer needs.

5.2 Managerial implication

The main managerial implication derived from this study is that they should explore the CRM model and see if it would be effective in their business. The case of PTT showed that the firm's objectives of increasing profits and sales, along with customer satisfaction and loyalty, could be achieved through CRM. It also showed that the program created long-term relationships between the firm and its customers, including social connections between the firms and the area managers supporting them. This has the potential to improve both financial returns to the firm and benefits to customers. By getting to know customers and their needs, PTT's area managers can improve the firm's offering to the customers. Although firms need to choose their own objectives and

identify ways to meet them through CRM, PTT's example shows that CRM is a highly effective strategy for developing and sustaining customer relationships over the long term. Other firms could also benefit from the introduction of CRM strategies, particularly firms that operate in highly competitive industries. These firms may particularly benefit from creating relationships of trust with customers and going to extra lengths to meet their needs.

5.3 Theoretical Implication

There are also some theoretical Implication for future research in this area. The research showed that there was surprisingly little information about the actual implementation of CRM programs in the firm that were related to the program rather than the underlying software. This means that it is difficult to understand the experience of sales and marketing professionals in their implementation of CRM. This is especially problematic for industries that depend heavily on personal sales like the petroleum industry. One suggestion for future research is studies that focus on CRM in the client-salesperson relationship, particularly in business-to-business (B2B) industries. This type of research could contribute to the existing literature, particularly if it explained or identified variances in real-world implementation of CRM in B2B scenarios. Research into the effectiveness of CRM in B2B settings could also be useful, as this is an area where it was also very difficult to find enough information for the study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Part 1 Interviewee background	1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility and how long have you been working here.
Part 2 Attitude toward customer relationship management	2. In your opinion, do you think customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?
Part 3 Customer relationship management in the company	<p>3. How do you build relationship with customers? Please explain</p> <p>4. Do you set up any objectives to build up relationship with customers? Please explain</p> <p>5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?</p> <p>6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain</p> <p>7. What are activities that you do in order to keep customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain</p> <p>8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.</p>
Part 4 Outcomes	9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.
Part 5 Suggestion and future plan	10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Appendix B: Interview Result

Interviewee 1

Position: Area Manager

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility?

Answer: I am an area manager. I have been working for PTT company for 23 years. I am responsible for fuel business. For example, gasoline, lubricants, gas product (LPG gas), coal, and wood pellets. In overall, he has customers from approximately 100 companies with the contact points around 200-300 points

Q2. In your opinion, do you think customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: Industrial sector uses the same fuel type over and over unlike short term product like mobile phone. Some customers repeat the orders daily and some weekly. Offering high quality of service and customer relations will gain loyalty from the customers.

Q3. How do you build relationship with customers? Please explain.

Answer: There are many methods to build customer relations. For examples, academic training, business visits, excursion, and give out presents on important occasions. However, it is vital to select suitable methods to the certain type of customers. Sometimes, a combination of methods could lead to the optimum results. Hence, it is significant to know the customers, what they like and dislike. For example, it would give most benefits to the company if we provide academic training to the academic customers and provide excursion that enjoy outings. If we provide compensation that doesn't match their interest, it is unlikely to receive the positive feedback. This information would build up from communication with the customers and observation skills. In general, the company would set a rough budget for customer relations for class A, B, and C customers. However, often customers are busy with the bad traffic in Thailand, frequent visits are not

recommended. Alternatively, telephone call, email, and instant message (such as LINE message) are more suitable to get in touch with the customers.

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: There are three objectives to build a relationship with customers. Firstly, to increase income from the regular customers (who are not yet our loyalty customers). Secondly, good relationship with customers would ease off negotiation when there is any problem. Thirdly, the process in the future is likely to be more convenient.

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: We give special care to the premium customers. Premium customers could be customers that issue a small purchase order with high consumption in their business, which has the tendency to become our premium customers. We would class this type of customer as “Class-A” customer who we give special care to. Hence, premium customers could mean customers who have small purchase order at the moment but in overall have large purchase power.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain.

Answer: For the case of fuel products, firstly, the quality of fuel has to be high as good service itself would not be able to convince customers to buy the products. Hence, in this case, customer relation comes after the quality of products.

Good price, testers, and loyalty reward system are the methods to convince decision making by the customers. An example of loyalty reward would be an excursion to foreign countries when they buy up to the certain amount that we set.

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain.

Answer: One of the seminars that have good feedback from customers is under the topic of fuel trend, which help customers to predict their cost in the future.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: We would rate our customer relationship at more than 80% success. The missing 10-20% are due to the professionalism of customer relation team or call

center. The team lacks of experience and unable to give any solution to customers, which lead to dissatisfaction.

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: What we gain from good customer relationship is the profit.

Furthermore, the unexpected benefit is the happiness of sales person themselves when they gain connections, i.e. the relationship from sales and customers can become friends. Hence, work becomes favors, when they help each other

Q10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Answer: One of the reasons that increase our sales volume is the excellent customer relationship that we have. Previously PTT was ranked at the bottom of the table but currently, PTT is one the top companies that has the most market share.

Interviewee 2

Position : Area Manager, Aviation Sales Division, Aviation & Marine Marketing Department

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility

Answer: I have been working for PTT company for 2 years, looking after aviation fuel products. My main customers are the users of private jet, helicopter, and both international and low cost commercial airline companies. I also deal with pipeline processing staff both inland and waterway transportation. Moreover, I have to contact and deal with people from Thai Airports and Department of Civil Aviation. Currently, I am looking after approximately 45 customers from aviation sector.

Q2. In your opinion, do you think customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: In my opinion, building relationship with customer is very important. Although, the price we offer is low but if we do not build any relationship with the customers, there is high risk to lose clients to the competitors.

Q3. How do you build relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: We build a relationship with customers by spending approximately three months to be acquainted with them. For instance, we initiate the conversation with customers, bring them snacks, take them out for meals, and get to know their likes and dislikes. For premium customer I need to approach their family members' likes and dislikes also. Furthermore, approaching with gift and a meal offer would give an opportunity to tighten the relationship with them. This family-like relationship would help them to speak up their minds and willing to help when we ask for favors. Hence, this would ease many business processes.

New customers that we find on websites will be approached via email and phone calls. We will then ask permission to visit them and introduce the products. However, often PTT already has customers list, so we just need to make an appointment to visit customers and find out what they want.

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: Yes, The main objective build relationship with customers is to maintain good relationship with them. Second objective is to increase sales.

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, I have. I have approximately 10 life-value customer. The ranking of customer grade is measured from total sales and the period of time they have been linked with my division. Customers who frequently order products and have high total sales will classify as a premium customer.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain.

Answer: We deal with different classes of customers differently in order to target for the repeated orders. In other words, we treat general and premium customers differently. For example, for premium customers, we pay regular visits, often

phone them and if they request something, we would immediately response. Furthermore, we also approach their family members. However, for general customers, we only pay a visit once in a while and do not approach their family members.

Regards the activities, we often take customers for a meal and arrange a trip for them. For example, we arrange a trip to Hua-Hin once a year, and small trip to Buddhist temples in Thailand. However, for premium customers, such as Thai Airways, the management team and their families were invited for an excursion in the country. Also, special gifts such as high-class wine were given out in the special occasion such as present for the New Year. However, for the general customer, an only phone call will be given, with occasional visits.

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain

Answer: I thinks my best service can keep customer satisfied and become loyal to the company. The stronger the relationship I have, the more loyal the customer will be. The most popular activity that most satisfy customers is oversea seminar.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: In my opinion, she rates her CRM at 9 out of 10. I thinks PTT has good management process. However, I suggested that the company should not decrease the budget on customer relations because taking care of customer is very important.

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: The outcome that the company get from doing customer relationship management is customer repeat orders and become our regular customers, which lead to increase in total sales. Furthermore, the trading process becomes easier and simpler. For example, customers often give a phone call to repeat the order without having to do paper works.

Q10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Answer: The company should reduce paper works for sales manager, so that they will have more time to visit customers and tighten the relationship with them.

Q11. Does your sales increase if compare to the previous year?

Answer: Sales decrease slightly compared to the previous year as a result from tightening regulation of ICAO, which make customers travel less. However, this is irrelevant to the customer relations.

Interviewee3

Position: Area Manager

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility?

Answer: I am an area manager who responsible for selling diesel oil, LPG, and Lubricants for industrial and automotive purposes. I have been working at PTT for 2.5 years. I have to take care 120 customers both Thai and foreign customers.

Q2. In your opinion, do you thing customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: It is very crucial to use CRM in this department as he has to communicate with clients in order to know what they want and what we have and match this to client requirements.

Q3. How do you build relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: There are a lot of ways to build the relationship with customers. We take them to visit our facilities such as vending company or R &D to show that we are specialized in this industry. Also, we give them some souvenir or take them for a trip abroad at the end of the year. However, if those clients are a very big customers in my portfolio, I will give them souvenir once every quarter.

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: The objective to build relationship with customers is to sell more. As we have other product in line to sell to customer, it would open up the opportunity.

For example, customer may want to try other products from us such as Lubicant. Therefore, we need to build relationship in order to sell more products and boost up the sales.

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, I have a customer life value list. I categorize customers grade by seeing volume and margin. If those clients benefit us a big margin or can create a large sales volume we keep them close. We have to do everything with all available resources that we have. In term of volumes, if that company can generate sales more than half and millions liters of fill oil or diesel, we set this kind of customers as a premium or first priority. And if they can create a margin 1 baht per liter, they are my premium customer as well. With the limited time and high number of customers to take care of, so he has different ways and different priority to take care his customers; premium and normal customers. During the week end, I have to stand by in case the customer needs any help for emergency case.

As I am an area manager, normally I have to know everything about the product but sometime customers want to know insight information, so we take expert person such as engineers to provide the best solution to the customers. We often bring snack and gift but Japanese company is prohibited to receive any gift from the sales person.

I have different ways to take care customers. For example, Chinese customers are the cost sensitive, so we have to provide low price product. While Japanese customers concern about service, so we have to give the right total solutions for them. Japanese company doesn't care much about cost if the products are consistent, qualified, and the service is available at all the time.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain

Answer: We have to know what customer wants, so we can manage the activities to create repeating purchase. For example, the Chinese customers who are price sensitive, we need to lower the margin, reduce the price a little bit to convince them. For customer who concern about service, we provide the best service to them to satisfy their need. This persuades them to buy our products continuously and willing to sign longer contract.

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain

Answer: We have to be reachable at all times otherwise we may lose customers to the competitor if we missed their calls. This is a serious matter. Sometimes, we play golf or go to the sport club together in order to tighten the relationship.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: It is well established already.

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: We increase the number of customers by word-of-mouth of the current clients. Once we can maintain existing customers for the current product, we can then move on to the new products. Hence, from good CRM, we can expand the market and also develop new products.

Q10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Answer: As PTT is a very big company, it takes time to approve the budget. I think if the company has less process of approving the budget, it would be beneficial to customer. If we take a long time to respond to the market, company may lose the customer to competitors.

Q11. Do your sales increase if compare to the previous years?

Answer: After doing pushing CRM hard, we have higher number customers, and the diesel oil sales target has increased from 1.25 million liters per month to 2 million liters per months.

Interviewee 4

Position: Area Manager, Special Products Sales Division, Government & Industrial Marketing

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility

Answer: I have been working at PTT for three years. I am responsible for asphalt, chemical, condensate, and solvents products. I have about 20 customers from both corporate and individual. I take care of customers in the North of Thailand.

Q2. In your opinion, do you think customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: It is important to building relationship with customers because I feel more comfortable and reduce the complication of the process.

Q3. How do you build a relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: Before building a relationship, I need to know all information about the products, customer's background, and information about competitors.

I often use the telephone as the main method of communication. I spend approximately 2-3 hours per day on the phone not only just to sell products but to greet, give update information, and build a relationship. In addition, he also invites them for a meal, play golf, and make an appointment to deliver New Year gift to the customers.

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up a relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: the objective of building up a relationship with customers is to create long-term relationship with them.

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, I have loyal customers from the quality of the service that he provided.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain

Answer: For premium customers, I take them on a seminar trip inside and outside the country. However, this will all depend on the purchasing power that they

have. For regular customers, I give out New Year present such as calendar and planner from the company.

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep the customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain

Answer: We call customers to give them advice, useful information, and solution to the problem that they may have. However, the product itself should have high standard to meet customers satisfaction. Then after sell service will be the factor for them to repeat order with us, not with the competitors.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: I think that the existing system of customer relationship management is well established already.

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: The process is smoother, and sales also increase.

Q10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Answer: No. The existing one is already good.

Interviewee 5

Position: Area Manager, Special Products Sales Division, Government & Industrial Marketing

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility

Answer: I have been working at PTT for three years, responsible for asphalt, Jet A1, Gasoline, LPG products in The North-East region of Thailand.

Q2. In your opinion, do you think customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: PTT has two main markets; retails and industry. The petrol station is an example of a retail customer, and a factory is an example of industry customer.

We treat them differently. For a retail customer, we do not need to provide special care as they also make money from convenient store (7-11 shop) and coffee shop (Amazon). The business is more predictable for a retail customer as they can estimate the income and cost. For example, they can calculate the business opportunity by deducting the cost of running this business from the estimated income from 7-11 business, Amazon (200 cups) and fuel. Hence, they can see the benefit of running petrol station from the beginning. In term of quality assessment, every quarter, customers' petrol retails business will be audited to check standard, sales target, and whether if they have purchased any from the competitor.

However, for the industry side, we tend to take better care because there is a higher number of competitors. Therefore, we need to have a tighter relationship with the owner. We take care of many sectors including the owner itself, purchase department, and operational site. We have to make sure that our service is effective, efficient, and punctuality of delivery.

In term of building a relationship with customers, it has to be customized. The sales person needs to know what customer needs. For example, one person concerns about price, another concern about quality or trend. Some customers expect new technology from PTT to help solve their problems, some customers only want a quotation, and some prioritize after sale service.

We categorized customers by three factors; sale order, profit, and loyalty. In my point of view, I would concern the profit that we can make from that customer whether I would class them as a premium customer or not. Furthermore, it is important to provide what matches to their need in order to turn them into loyalty customers. We must know what they want from us as different customers look for different things i.e. low price, service, etc.

Conclusion: CRM is very important because a relationship with customers make things easier.

Q3. How do you build a relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: We give customers telephone calls and also pay visits

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up a relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: The basic objective from building a relationship with customers is able to sell products

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, I have.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain

Answer: Firstly, we need to know what customer wants in order to provide the right solution. For example, are they looking for low-cost product or high quality of service?

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep the customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain

Answer: Different customers want different things, hence, the activities that satisfied them often varies. First of all, we need to talk to them around 2-3 times to learn what they like and their life-style. Often customers like to go outing, seminar out of site, and holiday trip. However, some concern about information on trend, cost, quality of the product, and customer service. Hence, it is important to provide what customers need.

Conclusion: We provide what customers' needs. For example, take customers for an excursion, prepare information that related to the market trend, punctuality of delivery process, low price. The mentioned factors are varied from customer to customer.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: PTT has good customer relationship management; they hold a seminar for customers once a year both locally and overseas. Furthermore, we also give out New Year gifts to customers. However, in some division, there are too many seminars and training, which take up all times that sales are supposed to go out for customer visits.

I think the existing system is well established. PTT hold a seminar for customers twice a year both in the country and overseas. New Year presents are

also given out. However, bureaucracy decreases the time for sales to go out and meet the customers. In addition, the company should provide a seminar on the new technology and petroleum knowledge to the clients.

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: The outcome is that we are bonded to customers at one level. We do not need to guess the game as the customers will tell the budget, which help us to win competitors in the bidding. The result of building customer relations is invaluable. Once we are closed to the customer, they will guide the expected price, so it is most likely that we will get the job in the bidding process. However, every customer has different characters that we have to learn.

Q10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Answer: The company should offer a seminar on petroleum knowledge and new technology. Technologies ease up the process and lower the cost, which meet customers' interests. Holding seminar out of site, also answer the customers' needs as they like to go for a trip.

Interviewee 6

Position: Industrial Credit Division manager, Credit Operation Department

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility

Answer: I have been working at PTT for 33 years, and my responsibility is to pay customer visits and evaluate customers' businesses in order to give and credit line.

Q2. In your opinion, do you thing customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: Relationship with customers is extremely important as if there is no customer; there is no business.

Q3. How do you build a relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: Firstly, we have to do some research on customers' company, especially on the finance. Then, we will know what is appropriate to say in order to impress customer when we meet.

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up a relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: The objective is to impress customers, which make the working process smoother.

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, he has premium customers. Usually, customers have been trading with PTT for a long time. Currently, PTT only trade cash at 10 percent and the rest is credited.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain

Answer: Good service and ability to solve problems for customers are the keys.

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep the customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain

Answer: Giving good advice to customers, help them solve problems, and suggest business opportunity at the same time.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: PTT has good customer relationship management

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: The outcome of having good relationship with customers are that more information is being exchanged between the company and customers.

Q10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Answer: I would suggest reducing the cost of paper works, ideally changing to the paperless system. Moreover, the system should be all linked both internally and externally. These would increase the efficiency of work quality.

Q11. Do your sales increase if compare to the previous years?

Answer: PTT has grown continually in term of the market share in every product.

Interviewee 7

Position : Area manager

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility

Answer: I have been working at PTT for almost three years. I covers the area of lubricants and aluminum products, which use in cookware, car and construction parts.

Q2. In your opinion, do you thing customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: It is important to make a relationship with clients. Building relationship is the way to satisfy customers in order to make the customer buy our products. It is another way to increase the sale volume.

Q3. How do you build a relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: The steps are as follow: First, we call customers or email from the list to make an appointment. Then, we pay a visit to build up a relationship with the customers. After that, we will propose company products and services. PTT Therefore launched a campaign to bring up all manager to become a business solution provider., we don't only sell the product but we have to give them advice and suggest customers business. Hence, we also build a relationship with customers by calling them to give information, the market trend, ask if there is anything else that they need. Lastly, we pay a visit to customers every quarter and take them to a seminar in Thailand and abroad, which will depend on the sell volume and profit margin from individual customers.

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up a relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: I want to maintain long term relationship with customers as the competitiveness is very high. I would like customers to trust and have tight relationship with me.

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: I have customer life-value list. The customers are divided into two main groups, loyalty customers and competitive customers. Therefore, we give priority to the loyalty customers such as for the limited items.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain

Answer: I think the activity that makes customers return is when we are able to give them advice.

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep the customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain

Answer: I take customers for seminar both in local area and overseas once a year.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: I think PTT has good customer relation management system, so the only suggestion I have is to set up activity between sales and customers such as CSR or trip to temples.

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: The outcomes from building customer relation are the total sells that we gain from the customers. We also have knowledge exchange between sales and customers. By providing good service, we would be in the top of the seller list that they would repeat purchase order. From the experience, good relationship with customers has increased sell volume by 20% of all products. For example, annual sell of lubricant was increased from 950,000 baht per month to 1.35 million baht per month.

Interviewee 8

Position : Finance Officer, Industrial credit division.

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility

Answer: I have been working as a finance officer at PTT for 5 years. I have to analysis customers in order to give a credit line/credit term. Moreover, I responsible for credit collecting and risk management. Main customers are from industrial and aviation sectors. I normally goes to meet clients with sales managers. We work together. Sales manager contact with purchasing division and I contact with financial division. I look after 200 customers.

Q2. In your opinion, do you thing customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: It is important especially in his job. Knowing customers ensure himself in order to give a credit line.

Q3. How do you build relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: I often visit customer as the main method in order to get useful information. This information is used for consideration about credit line. I sometime call to customer and go for a meal with clients. I go to seminar trip with customer once a year in order to build relationship and exchange idea.

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: I have agenda or topic in advance before visiting clients. I need to learn about company background and customer background in order to get to the point when talking to clients.

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, I have customer life value list. Company divide customer into Grade A, B and C. Value customer is arranged by A grade. Because I have a different way of taking care customer.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain

Answer: Being on time for shipping products to customer. Keeping the quality standard of products and service. Customer visiting and keep contacting with customer.

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain

Answer: The quality of product has to reach customer requirement. Product delivery must be on time as an agreement. Yearly Seminar trip can tighten the good relationship with customer.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: The system need to be improved. Because, getting customer data takes long time to get information and data is limited to access.

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: Getting deep information from customer is easier. I got some favors from customers when I had some problem or did some mistake. For example, I could not make some document on time for the deal date but customer who we have strong relationship help postpone the deadline for me.

Q10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Answer: PTT should increase employees for the better service or decrease customers for each staff to take care because one staff has to look after too much customers so that I cannot serve all customers. Moreover, company should increase the system that all departments can access all data about customer.

Interviewee 9

Position: Sales promotion officer (level 6), Ordering and customer Relations Center Department. (ORC)

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility

Answer: I have been working at PTT for 7 months. I work for ORC. ORC has 2 sections which are customer ordering center and customer relationship center. I have to take order from customer for all products that PTT sell. For example, all petroleum products, LPG gas, asphalt, amazon products and so on. My main customers are oversea B2B business customers.

Q2. In your opinion, do you think customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: It is very important. Because my division is the first point that customer contact to PTT both B2b and B2C customer. Contact center is as if the first door when customers enter to company. CRM is very important to reflect the brand image of PTT. Whenever customers haven't got a good product or service, they will not say just some division of PTT but customers will spread word of mouth as PTT which reflect the reputation of the company.

Q3. How do you build relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: I use the telephone as a main method of communication with customer. My division, there have team to analyze voice of customer to improve the service. Well -trained staff have a system to listen and monitor call center staffs when they answer customer's questions. There has random call back process to check feedback from customer for the service.

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: The division is set up the objective to be "a premium contact center in 3 years in Asia Pacific". I have to keep develop the process of looking after customer to response all customer's enquiry. I want customer to be satisfied with the service.

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes. I have B2B life value customer from oversea company. Most of them are customer who PTT make a contact in oversea.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain

Answer: All working processes are important to create repeat order. For example, taking order from customer, processing order, shipping product to customer, sales after service, taking care of customer and solving the problem to customer.

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain

Answer: Improving the service quality to keep customer satisfaction. Customers are divided into premium, gold and silver grade in order to keep customer satisfaction. All telephone number of premium customer is recorded and locked in the system. Whenever premium customers call, the line will be transfer to professional staff to take care. For gold grade customer, telephone number will be locked and recorded in the system for 10 numbers and the line will transfer to different level staff to take care different customer. To keep service quality, the division arrange the meeting every week in order to update all information to answer the question of customers.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: PTT has already good system. However, PTT always keep develop and improve the customer relationship management for the best service according to changing in customer behavior. I rate 9 score. PTT always provide training course which is about how to deal, how to answer the questions with customer to employees

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: Customers call to give appreciations. Company has a reward for employees who get the highest appreciation from customers.

Q10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Answer: PTT should implement higher technology of information system. Because, the system doesn't support and cover for all departments.

Q11. Do your sales increase if compare to the previous years?

Answer: For overall image, the sales volume has been increasing especially Amazon Business. Amazon has a high growth and good expansion. Revenue from Petroleum has been slightly decreased according to oil price of the world market.

Interviewee 10

Position: Area Manager, Aviation Sales Division, Aviation Department

Q1. Please share your experience with this company; for example, what is your responsibility.

Answer: I have been working in PTT for 18 years, looking after aviation fuel.

Q2. In your opinion, do you thing customer relationship management is important. And why or why not?

Answer: Yes, it is important. For sales people absolutely want customer to buy the product to reach the target that organization set up and to make customer satisfy with the service. The price of aviation fuel is the main cost of airline business so customer will focus on the price first. However, if the price is quite similar, customer will consider for the company stability and relationship. Therefore, CRM is important as well.

Q3. How do you build relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: Mostly for aviation sector use the method of auction. Therefore, I have to go and follow negotiation. For outside the meeting or auction, he has to go for meeting, talking and getting together. I sometime make the situation in order to meet the clients such as dinner. For foreigner customer, I have to go abroad for meeting for occasionally.

Q4. Do you set up any objectives to build up relationship with customers? Please explain

Answer: Objectives are to get the auction or to get the highest volume of aviation fuel in auction, to sustain the sales circulation, and to get new customer.

Q5. Do you have customer life value list (premium customer)? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, I have. I have a grade for customer which measured by the volume, the relationship and punctuality of payment.

Q6. What are activities that you do in order to create repeat order or cross-selling order? Please explain

Answer: For customer in Thailand, I have seminar. For example, having academic seminar in topic which customer interested or useful topic that related to customer business. I take customer for seminar trip in other provincial. I regular visiting customer and asking customer for dinner. Also gifts were given for special occasion such as New Year

Regards the activities, we often take customers for a meal and arrange a trip for them. For example, we arrange a trip to Hua-Hin once a year, and small trip to Buddhist temples in Thailand. However, for premium customers, such as Thai Airways, the management team and their families were invited for an excursion in the country. Also, special gifts such as high-class wine were given out in the special occasion such as present for the New Year. However, for the general customer, an only phone call will be given, with occasional visits.

Q7. What are activities that you do in order to keep customer satisfied and loyal to your company? Please explain

Answer: For overall, activities should consist of many activities to keep customer satisfied and loyal to company. If I take customer to seminar trip but I never contact customer after came back from the trip, it is not good to keep customer satisfied. In conclusion, the activities should having regular visit, keeping contact with customer and taking them to seminar trip. I not only visit customer in the working hours but I also visit customer in some weekend. For example, if customer sick, I have to go to visit customer at the hospital. This is a way to create a long relationship.

Q8. How do you rate your customer relationship management such as need improvement, good or excellent? Please support your answer.

Answer: PTT has already good CRM. The executive give an authority and resources to arrange events and provide budget to visit and take care of customer both in Thailand and oversea.

Q9. By adopting customer relationship management activities, are there any outcomes of benefits in term of building sustainable relationship with customers, increase profitability, create good reputation and create customer references? If so please explain in detail, also if there are other benefits please identify and explain.

Answer: Firstly, I could ask deep information from customer for auctions. Secondly, I got good feedback and high score from company survey about customer satisfaction issue.

Q10. Are there anything that do you think your company should do in order to improve customer relationship management in the future? Please explain

Answer: I recommended that PTT could be a sport sponsor for an international tournament in order to increase brand awareness for foreigner.

Q11. Do your sales increase if compare to the previous years after have a good relationship with customers?

Answer: Sales has been increasing. Whenever customers expand their business, company might get more volume of sales for having a strong relationship with customer. Because customer loyal to a company make a repeat purchase.