

BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF MARKETING

**ABSTRACT OF THE
HABILITATION THESIS**

**Creating value for the customer and ensuring business sustainability
– priorities in developing relationship marketing strategies focused
on durability**

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The habilitation thesis entitled „*Creating value for the customer and ensuring business sustainability – priorities in developing relationship marketing strategies focused on durability*”, presents succinctly and documented the main contributions and results that I have obtained in the scientific and teaching research, after I was awarded with the doctoral degree in the field of Marketing, and also the own evolution and development plan of my academic, scientific and professional career.

The first part of the paper analyses the contribution to the development of marketing theory and practice in the Romanian academic environment, containing the results of various fundamental and applied research on the evolution, current state and future development trends in the marketing thinking, both globally and customized for specific areas or sectors of economic activity.

The society and the business environment are subject to a continuous process of evolution and change over time, and the success and market position of companies become dependent on the speed with which marketing strategies and tools are redesigned to meet the new economic realities.

In this context, relationship marketing, customer relationship management (CRM), corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainable marketing and marketing in times of economic crisis are considered innovative concepts in the marketing science, that are developed as natural solutions aimed to direct organizational efforts in the process of adaptation to the environment.

Given the objectives and specific content of the studies undertaken in these areas, my scientific results are structured in **two major research directions**, highlighting both the contribution to the state of the art in the field and the practical implications for Romanian business environment representatives.

The main research direction presents my professional interests and personal contributions in the field of relationship marketing and customer relationship management, as its core.

Conceptual scientific results are described in **chapter 1**, and consist of the following: delimitation of relationship marketing fundamentals; specification of strategic customer relationships management content and the role of technological solutions in relational strategies implementation; presentation of the dimensions, forms and factors that influence customer retention and customer migration, and also staging the process of establishing and developing customer loyalty; analysis of customer satisfaction in the context of consumer behaviour research

and buying decision process, and also determine the methods used for measuring customer satisfaction and loyalty; explanation of the relationship between employees orientation and customer orientation in the current marketing thinking by clarifying internal marketing principles and indicating appropriate methods for recruitment, selection, internal communication and training, motivating and rewarding employees; demonstration of the favourite applicability of relationship marketing in the business to business sector.

In **chapter 2** are summarized the conclusions and managerial implications of the researches carried out individually or in teams of specialists, in various sectors, identifying possible courses of action useful for companies in the efficient management of buying and consumption experiences, and also in their organizational attempts of increasing customer portfolio stability.

Knowing the expectations and customer satisfaction level, the loyal or disloyal consumer behaviour, the positive or negative reasons underlying business relationships, the linkages between factors that determine the strengthening of business relationships, as well as the potential causes of customer migration is a frame of great importance in the decision-making processes, whereby organizations can decide the degree of marketing strategies and programs customization and adaptation to specific customer profile.

Essentially, the main results of the applied studies undertaken in the field of relationship marketing and customer relationship management highlight the following: the global image of banking companies and the drivers of customer satisfaction, loyalty and migration in Romanian retail banking industry; the stage of relationship marketing development and the level of implementation of CRM technological solutions in the Romanian banking industry; the impact of innovative commercial technologies adoption on customer loyalty and future purchase behaviour in hypermarkets in Romania; internal marketing aspects that characterize different companies with business activity on the Romanian market; and other specific features of Romanian consumer behaviour towards goods and services.

The second research direction is focused on corporate social responsibility, sustainable marketing and marketing in the context of economic crisis. Due to the multiple linkages with the field of relationship marketing and customer relationship management, these areas have been among my scientific interests, but having secondary importance compared to the main direction of research.

Although conceptualized as independent notions, the above mentioned specializations are based on a set of common values and objectives, synthesized by concentrating organizational resources and efforts on: customer satisfaction and loyalty, strengthening relationships with stakeholders, welfare of society, sustainable profit, continuous customization and adaptation of marketing strategies according to the changes, opportunities and threats arising in the business environment.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical contributions belonging to the second research direction, namely: conceptual delimitation of corporate social responsibility and the constituents, dimensions and tools for CSR policies implementation; clarification of different principles and strategies specific to sustainable marketing and educational marketing; analysis of priorities and changes in consumer behaviour in times of recession, and establishment of development strategies and marketing policies recommended for companies in the context of economic crisis.

Chapter 4 includes the conclusions of own studies performed individually or in teams of specialists in the area of corporate social responsibility and sustainable marketing. At the practical level, the most significant results of this specific research direction are considering: stakeholders' perception on CSR adoption by Romanian companies and the role of corporate social responsibility in business environment development, as well as stakeholder's own contribution in fostering social responsibility behaviours; the stage of development of CSR environmental policies implemented by companies on the Romanian market, in terms of the importance given to environmental protection, programs content, reasons and future perspectives regarding the involvement in environmental actions; the degree of prevalence of the CSR concept in the Romanian press and main debated topics; consumer perceptions on the fairness of differential prices and its influence on perceived value and purchase intentions; the importance that young generation assign to the sensory dimension of food and its negative impact on healthy eating; specific aspects of Romanian consumer behaviour towards traditional products.

The contributions and results obtained from the scientific research are presented with arguments by indicating the sources where they can be read in detail, including: books that are published in recognized publishing houses, articles published in specialized journals indexed in ISI Thomson Reuters or journals in the field included in various international databases, scientific working papers published in ISI Proceedings or in the proceedings of various international conferences.

The second part of the habilitation thesis contains the evolution and development plan of my academic, scientific and professional career, which is divided into three main directions - teaching activity and professional education; research activity; scientific contribution and professional prestige.

Given the performance, experience and significant results I have achieved so far, and based on the recognition and scientific impact of my work in academia, I made a series of proposals regarding my future professional development for each specific direction, which can be summarized as follows: ensuring the continuous correlation of the teaching process with students' training needs and at the same time with the skills required by employers; updating the information content of the academic materials used in the teaching process, in line with the trends in the international literature of the field; periodically improvements of the disciplines structure in my own area of specialization, based on new knowledge and skills acquired during the process of continuous professional learning; identifying new research opportunities nationally and internationally, as well as intensifying cooperation relationships with teachers, researchers and business representatives; publication of innovative scientific articles in ISI indexed journals, having nonzero impact factor or the value of the article influence score greater than 0.15, in order to achieve new citations and to increase the impact of my own performance; further participation in specialized international conferences to keep up with recent developments in the field of marketing; becoming a member/reviewer in scientific committees/editorials of various conferences or journals in the field, in order to evaluate new scientific papers; taking advantage of the experience gained in teaching and scientific research activities to guide students' work and professional collaborate with young PhD researchers.

In conclusion, I appreciate that my skills, expertise and experience in teaching and research, will be useful to me in coordinating the scientific activities undertaken by PhD students, within the Doctoral School of Marketing, from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies.