

Romancing Your Members – Member Relationship Management

I recently read a book called *Romancing the Customer, Maximizing Brand Value through Powerful Relationship Management* written by two British authors. While its message was targeted to large businesses, often in the retail and service sectors, it contained the seeds of important ideas for private club management.

First, the book makes the point that “Brands are Relationships. People don’t buy products; they buy brands.” They go on to say that:

“Brands are:

- **Experiences.** A good experience with anything fuels the desire for more, while a poor experience kills the appetite.
- **Very personal.** They give exclusivity of feeling and association. (*the way private clubs are supposed to do*)
- **Evoke emotions.** Emotion is at the very heart of power brand strategies, aiming to capture both the rational and emotional aspects of the target customer.
- **Live and evolve.** Brands are very much like people. Many have their own distinctive personalities, and these personalities evolve over time, just as ours do.
- **Communicate.** Like people, brands listen, receive feedback, and send messages. They talk to different people in different ways, just as we do. Brands that are successful tend to be those that create a dialogue with consumers.
- **Create equity and loyalty.** It is the way in which brands interact, and the friendship they give that engenders loyalty and a long-lasting relationship.
- **Above all, add friendship and romance.** The greater the emotional involvement on the part of the consumer, the greater the friendship and loyalty that results.

Next the authors state categorically that Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is the quickest way to establish a brand.

“What is CRM? It’s all about collaborating with each customer, adding value to each customer’s life. In return, you get their loyalty. Further, it’s about dealing with each customer individually, because all customers are not equal and should not be treated equally. A small percentage of your customers contribute far more to your revenues and to your profit. But as compelling as the economics of focusing on your best customers, a good CRM program should not ignore the others. In fact, good CRM programs encourage less profitable customers to become better customers. There is no doubt that by turning your organization into one that is centered around the customer, every single customer will ultimately benefit.

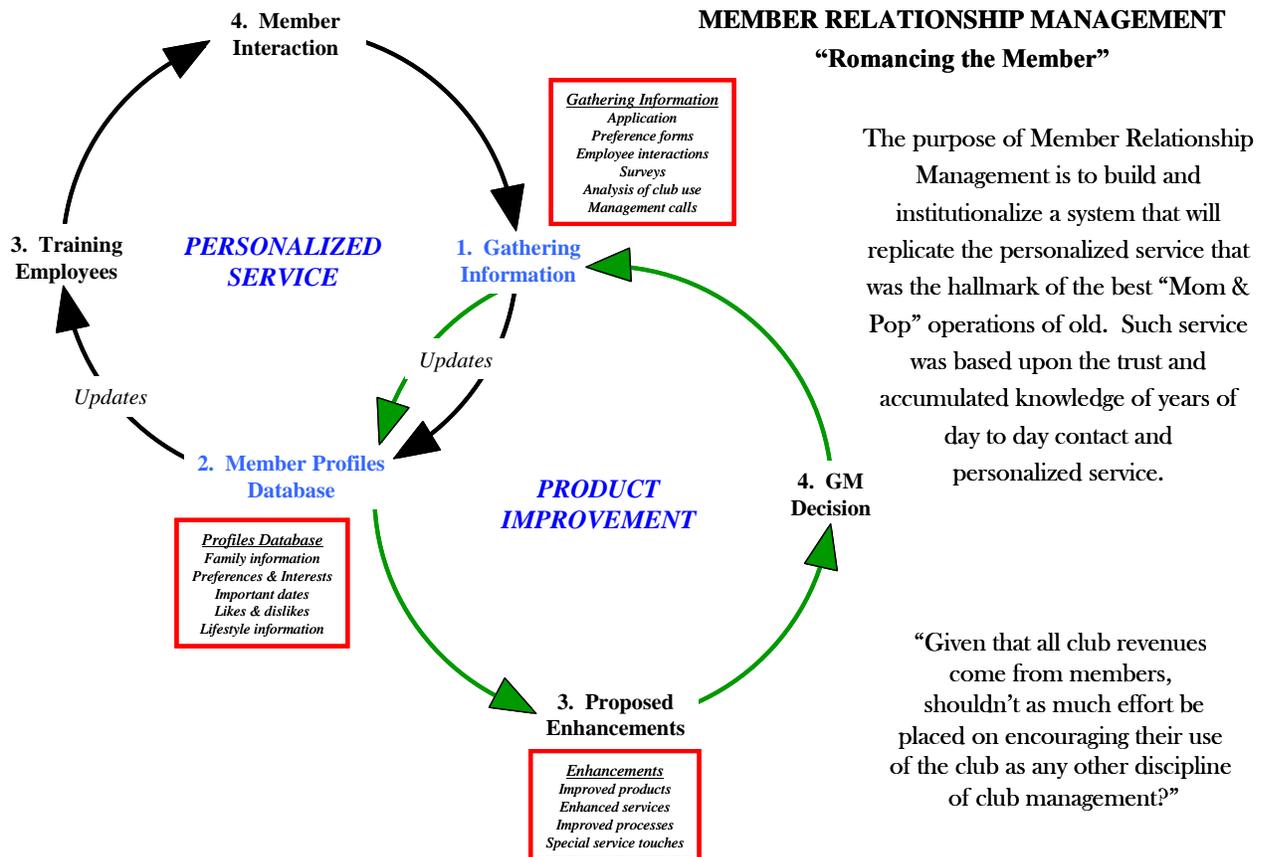
“Effective CRM is about using the knowledge you have about your customer, and applying it in such a way that, every time they interact with you, you do something different, better, or more relevant to that person.”

“But the focus must be on capturing ‘share of heart,’ not ‘share of wallet.’ While money-grubbing will certainly build short-term sales, it will not ensure that you build an enduring relationship.”

Traditional marketing theory says that it’s all a numbers game. The more you market, the more people you contact, the greater your sales. The authors point out that what makes marketing a numbers game “is the lack of specific information about individual customers.” Today, though, with the rapid growth in computing power and data capture, it is possible to know each of your customers far better. And that information provides the power to romance your customers. “Instead of focusing your efforts on your product, focus on your customers. By building up that body of information on each customer over time, you can increase the degree of tailoring of your product or service and, in the process, strengthen the emotional bond between the customer, your brand, and your company.”

Ultimately, “Customer Relationship Management builds strong brand by creating the right blend of **organization, systems, and processes** that allow your people to understand your customers as individuals, and potentially tailor every interaction with a customer to their specific needs.”

What does this mean for us as private club managers? Simply put, the more we know our members, the more we understand their needs, the better able we will be to provide the individualized service that people join clubs to receive.



About the Authors:

Dr. Paul Temporal is a leading global expert on brand creation, development and management with over twenty years experience in consulting and training. He has worked with leading companies and governments, and is well known for his practical and results-oriented approach resulting in record year on year profit increases for many clients. He is also the author of best-selling branding books, *Corporate Charisma*, *Strategic Positioning*, *Branding in Asia* and *Hi-Tech, Hi-Touch Branding*, and is a highly sought after event and conference speaker.

Martin Trott's career began in the 1970s with a blue-chip financial services organization in the UK. His career history spans customer services, finance, information technology, strategic planning, call center management, corporate purchasing and marketing. He was an early adopter of relationship marketing techniques in the mid-1990s, and in 1996, he moved to Asia to work as Managing Director of Relationship Marketing International, an agency specializing in Customer Relationship Management and Strategic Partnering.

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