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USE OF WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract

The broadening of Web 2.0 offerings opens up new opportunities and challenges to improve customer relationships. Customers can have an active voice, but this voice has to be carefully "managed" so as to create a lively dialog between customers and the company and to produce ultimately a win-win relationship. The panel discusses opportunities and challenges and shares experiences.

Keywords: Web 2.0, Customer Relationship Management, Wiki, Blog

OVERVIEW

The panel will discuss the potential of Web 2.0 technologies to enhance customer relationships, especially in capturing the "voice of the customer". While companies today find it relatively easy to broadcast information to customers via the web ("roll-out channel"), few are able to capture the needs and requirements of customers in an effective manner via the web ("roll in channel"). Several companies, notably in the IT sector, have explored the use of wikis as a medium to improve customer relationships (Wagner and Majchrzak, 2007), however results have been mixed.

The broadening of Web 2.0 offerings opens up new opportunities to improve customer relationships. For example, customers might be encouraged to participate in social networks, results of which can be mined by the hosting organization. Organizations may also take advantage of customers' interests in blogging and the availability of blog aggregators such as Technorati to determine customer preferences. Furthermore, companies can explore the use of technologies such as prediction markets to determine the future success of products by engaging customers in market trading activities.

1   PANELISTS

The four panel members, three academic subject experts (all with industry experience), and one practitioner, will share their thoughts on the above opportunities and invite the audience to do likewise. The panelists are:

Prof. **Andrea Back**, is Professor and Director at the Institute of Information Management, Management Department, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, where she also heads the research groups Learning Center and Knowledge Source. She is an expert in corporate knowledge and corporate learning management, specializing in the knowledge workers' effective use of IT in support of innovative business processes for competitive advantage. Previously Andrea held faculty positions at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg / Germany, the University of the German Federal Armed Forces and the Koblenz School of Corporate Management, Germany. Prior to that, she was a post-doctoral fellow at the IBM Los Angeles Scientific Center in the field "competitive uses of information technology".

Andrea's primary research interests are corporate knowledge management, workplace e-collaboration, information and knowledge worker productivity, and corporate learning management. Her most recent book reports results on Web 2.0 applications

in corporate practice ("Web 2.0 in der Unternehmenspraxis"). Andrea has carried out consultancy and applied research projects with numerous leading companies including Credit Suisse, Swiss Re, Microsoft, Volkswagen, and Ernst & Young. She holds a Doctorate in Social Sciences (Dr. rer. pol.) from the University Erlangen-Nuernberg.

Prof. **Wolfgang Koenig**, is Professor of Information Systems at Frankfurt University, where he directs the Institute of Information Systems. He also served as Dean between 2004 and 2006. Previously he held a position as Professor of Information Systems at the Koblenz School of Corporate Management, where he served as Dean from 1986 to 1988. Since end of 2002 he chairs the E-Finance Lab, a joint research program of the universities Frankfurt and Darmstadt, together with Accenture, BearingPoint, Deutsche Bank, Deutsche Boerse, Deutsche Postbank, DZ BANK Group, FinanzIT, IBM, Microsoft, Siemens and T-Systems and other leading firms. In 2005 he received the IBM Faculty Award for his research results on risk mitigation in the context of Business Process Outsourcing.

Wolfgang spent more than two years working in the US, in particular at the IBM Research Laboratories in San Jose, CA, and Yorktown Heights, NY, as well as at the Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University, Chicago/Evanston, IL, at the University of California at Berkeley and at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. From 1995 to 2000, he headed an interdisciplinary research program sponsored by the German National Science Foundation on "Competitive Advantage by Networking - the Development of the Frankfurt and Rhine-Main Region".

Wolfgang also serves as Editor-in-Chief of the leading German IS journal *Wirtschaftsinformatik*. He is member of the board of external directors of several IS companies. Wolfgang received a PhD from Frankfurt University for his research on "strategic planning of the information systems infrastructure".

Mrs. **Elke Simon-Keller**, is Director ERP Market Development which is part of ERP Solution Management. In this role, she is responsible for the go-to market strategy and roll out of SAP's enterprise resource planning (ERP) applications in Asia Pacific. She started her career with Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt and New York as solution principle for global SAP financial and travel management implementations. Before moving to China in 2005, Elke worked for SAP America as application consultant as part of the National Competency Centre for Human Capital Management. Elke holds a master's degree from the University of Fulda, Germany with international studies at Anglia Polytechnic University in Chelmsford, UK. She wrote her Master Thesis

"Implementation of an ERP system with focus on end user training" at Mitel Corporation in Canada.

Prof. **Christian Wagner** (panel coordinator), is Professor of Information Systems and Director of the Center for Applied Knowledge and Innovation Management at the City University of Hong Kong. Christian is an expert on knowledge management. His recent research, funded in part by the Society for Information Management, assessed opportunities and challenges of wikis and other collective intelligence technologies in corporate knowledge management. Christian's prior research focused on the role of information systems to support strategic planning and monitoring in organizations. Overall, he has published more than 70 articles on information systems topics.

Previously Christian also held a position as Chief Technology Officer and board member of Nextstrat, a California-based software start-up company, specializing in software to support strategic planning. He received his PhD in Information Systems from the University of British Columbia. Before joining the City University of Hong Kong he served on the Faculty of the University of Southern California.

2   TARGET AUDIENCE

One target audience for this panel will be academic researchers, especially those with interest in application of Web 2.0 technologies in corporations, and those interested in applied information systems research in general. Another target audience, likely less represented at this PACIS, will be practitioners seeking insights on the use of technology to improve customer relations.

3   ROOM SIZE AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The panel will ideally be held in a room able to hold approximately 30 audience members.

Facility arrangements permitting, the panel will seek to "practice what it preaches", setting up a Web 2.0 site and wireless LAN, so as to capture audience ideas and comments throughout the session. We will encourage audience members to use their notebook computers so as to participate in the online discussion. We expect 10-15 participants to take advantage of this opportunity.