



## UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

### Preface: customer centricity requires a multichannel approach

Bronner, F.

**Publication date**

2011

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

Customer Centric DNA Awards: 24 May 2011

[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

Bronner, F. (2011). Preface: customer centricity requires a multichannel approach. In *Customer Centric DNA Awards: 24 May 2011* (pp. 4-5). BearingPoint & TNS NIPO.

**General rights**

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

**Disclaimer/Complaints regulations**

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

# PREFACE

## Fred Bronner

Prof. dr. University of Amsterdam  
Department of Communication  
Science



### “Customer Centricity requires a multi-channel approach”

My view on Customer Centricity can be summarized as follows:

1. Customer Centricity is not a luxury but a necessity
2. Several concepts in this field have a research history
3. Customer Centricity is more important than ever because of the recent empowerment of the consumer

A broad range of academic research shows that Customer Centricity is a profit strategy. Positive effects are found on retention rates, repeat purchases, lower propensity to switch, more new customers, more insulation from price competition and lower marketing costs. What many forget: it also leads to higher motivation and job satisfaction of employees. An adequate Customer Centricity strategy requires personalization at an individual level and usage of a broad range of channels.

Some concepts in this field are not new. Service quality dimensions, critical incidents, customer loyalty and moments of truth are concepts already studied in the seventies and eighties of the last century. The difference between now and then is that internet technology has empowered the consumer. From negative rumors at a birthday party to the possibility of reaching millions (potential) customers. This has made Customer Centricity and the creation of a mutually beneficial relationship between organization and customer more important than ever before. Let's look in more detail to this recent process of empowerment.

We moved in the academic discipline of Communication Science from WOM to eWOM: from Word-Of-Mouth to electronic Word-Of-Mouth. A variety of eWOM channels developed: blogs, virtual communities, Facebook, Twitter, instant messaging, online review sites and hate sites. Some are used to send each other private messages. Others are used to discuss brands, services, strong and weak points of products.

During the last five years our research has shown that brand and product related eWOM has a strong influence on consumers' product and brand attitudes and purchase behavior. The persuasive aspect of eWOM is often attributed to the perceived non-commercial nature of their authors. Consumers are believed to have no vested interest in recommending a brand or product and their assumed independence renders reviews more credible. But of course *'not all reviews are created equal'* as we showed at the University of Amsterdam. Perceived usefulness of online reviews is dependent upon factors like expertise claims made by the poster, review valence and argumentation style used by the poster.

The increasing importance of eWOM calls for a more agile and flexible marketing strategy, requiring ongoing monitoring of eWOM. Monitoring is a first preliminary phase of adequate Webcare; reacting to negative reviews of consumers and providing information. However reinforcing positive information is just as important and is often forgotten in the marketing strategy.

We can conclude that the recent consumer empowerment requires adequate Webcare. At the other hand we have a long history in customer satisfaction research and we learned that a more holistic approach is necessary that takes into account all channels of customer service. *'Customer Centricity has to go beyond the web'*.

The challenge for commercial management the coming years is to create a symbiotic relationship between advertising, the marketer generated website, consumer-generated sources and personal contacts either by phone or face-to-face. Research carried out by academic and commercial institutes into customer perceptions and evaluations can help to steer this creative process.