

From Service to Word of Mouth: A Study on the Customer Relationship Management Path of China's Farmer Professional Cooperatives in the Context of Rural Revitalization

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Abstract: Customer relationship management is one of the effective tools for the high-quality development of enterprises and economic organizations. Since China's farmers' professional cooperatives focus too much on the production and sales of agricultural products and less on customer maintenance and customer preferences and needs, they neglect the importance of customer relationship management to the high-quality development of cooperatives. By analyzing the current situation of customer relationship management in China's farmers' professional cooperatives, we point out the problems that cooperatives lack in customer relationship management, and propose suggestions and initiatives to optimize customer relationship management in China's farmers' professional cooperatives, to promote high-quality and sustainable development of China's farmers' professional cooperatives with certain practical significance and guidance value.

Keywords: Rural Revitalization; Farmers' Professional Cooperatives; Customer Relationship Management

Introduction

With the continuous prosperity of China's market economy development and the promotion and implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, China's farmers' professional cooperatives are constantly moving towards high-quality development. Many farmers' professional cooperatives gradually enhance their economic strength and management efficiency to improve their business competitiveness. However, since most of the farmers' professional cooperatives are formed by farmers, the traditional concept of operating only internal services and external business has become a limiting barrier to their high-quality, breakthrough, and transformative development. Therefore, the advanced management concepts and technologies for farmers' professional cooperatives have not been able to fully penetrate their development. Nowadays, more and more enterprises pay attention to enterprise management and constantly incorporate different stages and aspects of management activities into their strategic planning, especially customer relationship management is a highly important aspect of enterprise development, which determines whether the enterprise can develop sustainably or not. Especially in the global economic recession, the role of customer relationship management in the sustainability of corporate resources has become more and more obvious. However, the application and implementation of customer relationship management in China's farmer cooperatives are still lacking, and there are few studies on cooperative customer relationship management. Therefore, how to improve the shortcomings in the field of customer relationship management in China's farmer cooperatives and how to promote high-quality and sustainable development of China's farmer cooperatives are issues that need to be explored and solved today.

1. Necessity and urgency of customer relationship management application for professional farmers' cooperatives in China

With the intensification of competition in the market environment and the diversification of consumers' needs, more and more agricultural operators are taking the initiative to transform and upgrade themselves from focusing only on the production and quality of agricultural products in the past to focusing on human-related factors, and the development concept of satisfying customers' needs and interests has gradually become the main development trend of contemporary agricultural operators. Only by transforming one-time and temporary customers into long-term customers and long-term "repeat customers" into customers with a certain degree of loyalty, can agricultural business entities develop sustainably in a fierce market environment. Therefore, farmers' professional cooperatives should pay attention to customer relationship management while improving the production and quality of agricultural products, so that they can grow their economic strength and business scale and gradually realize the high-quality development of the modern agricultural industry.

2. The current situation and problems of customer relationship management in China's farmers' professional cooperatives

2.1 Poor customer relationship management concept

Customer relationship management has always been an important management activity for enterprise development. Some large listed companies attach great importance to the maintenance of customer relationships. This is because they deeply understand that high-quality development of enterprises requires a continuous input of resources to ensure sustainable development of enterprises, and these resources often come from customers and consumers. Therefore, some large listed companies or commercial banks have made relatively more investments and construction in customer relationship management. By creating a CRM system in the form of self-development or outsourcing and actively establishing a CRM department, they can effectively and dynamically respond to customer maintenance and the development of new customers in their business (Zhao, Chengying, 2021)[1]. However, due to the weak economic strength of farmers' professional cooperatives and poor advanced management concepts resulting in the maintenance of customer relationships has not been given much attention, which is limited to pure production growth and sales of monoculture agricultural products, with less attention and analysis of customer's needs and preferences (Jiang Jide, 2016)[2]. In addition, some farmers' professional cooperatives do not set up corresponding customer relationship management departments and do not introduce or create customer relationship management systems applicable to cooperatives, failing farmers' professional cooperatives to develop in a high-quality and comprehensive manner.

2.2 Lack of customer return visit mechanism

With the promotion and implementation of China's rural revitalization strategy, the development scale of China's farmers' professional cooperatives has been expanding and their number has been climbing. In response to the many problems such as low market penetration, less personalized services and products issued by consumers, and only simple services for members, cooperatives should urgently explore and innovate a management mechanism that is service-oriented and suitable and adapted to the high-quality development of farmers' professional cooperatives (Cai Defang, 2019)[3]. However, the customer return mechanism is the primary factor of personalized consumer service. Because different consumers have different consumer preferences and needs, only through the customer return mechanism can we thoroughly understand and analyze the real thoughts and consumption intentions of customers to respond to and compensate for the defects of the products and services of farmers' professional cooperatives and improve the marketing ability and profitability of farmers' professional cooperatives (Pei-Ran Cao, 2019)[4]. Yajie Liu (2021) [5] showed through statistical analysis that the constant loss of a company's customer resources can have the most direct impact on the company's profitability. If it is not taken care of, then the company's growth will not be stable. Therefore, farmer cooperatives should actively maintain customer relationships and pay attention to customer return visits so that they can guarantee their stable development.

2.3 Lack of quality management awareness

As we all know, it is only when an economic organization has quality services and products that it will have a good reputation and good word-of-mouth, and will have a constant stream of repeat customers. Although the business scope of today's farmers' professional cooperatives has also gradually penetrated different business fields, such as Jitterbug, Jindo, and other e-commerce sales platforms, the lack of a standardized management model and management concept has resulted in farmers' professional cooperatives not paying attention to and meeting consumers' needs for quality and standardization of products and services when providing agricultural products and services involved, and still maintaining the traditional market trading style of transactions. This has contributed to the inability of some cooperatives to improve their marketing ability on a large scale, which indirectly affects the sustainable development of farmers' professional cooperatives (Wang, Gongli, and Cui, Baoyu, 2022)[6]. Therefore, cooperatives should pay attention to the service concept of quality management and continuously maintain and improve their management and product quality levels so that they can fundamentally promote the sustainable development of farmers' professional cooperatives.

3. Initiatives to optimize customer relationship management in farmers' professional cooperatives

3.1 Actively learn from enterprise customer relationship management experience and cultivate the concept of exclusive customer service for cooperatives

Great customer relationship management can make a great organization. Good customer relationship management activities are critical to organizational development. In reality, many cooperative members are mainly farmers, who only know agricultural production and have a relatively weak awareness of customer service, and do not have a very strong will to serve customers. Therefore, cooperatives should boldly learn from the customer relationship management experience of some excellent enterprises, introduce, innovate and design a customer relationship management mechanism suitable for their development, create and cultivate a customer-focused cooperative culture and business philosophy, build a customer relationship management team with the exclusive characteristics of cooperatives, and fundamentally improve the management defects in cooperative customer relationships to help cooperatives achieve high-quality sustainable development.

3.2 Explore the application of farmer professional cooperative customer return visit mechanism

Customer return mechanisms can improve customer satisfaction, increase customer intimacy, and also improve the impression and goodwill of customers to the company, and eventually improve the social status and reputation of the company. The customer relationship management activities of some excellent companies have more complete customer return mechanisms, and these customer return mechanisms can effectively improve the cooperative's products, work, and services. According to Wang Yan (2017)[7], the customer return mechanism can collect a lot of feedback from customers. It allows companies to understand the needs and satisfaction level of customers and target to improve their management activities, thus improving the company's market image and social reputation. However, many companies in China have actively established customer relationship management systems and standards, but have not actively implemented them. Over time, the quality and efficiency of a company's customer relationship management decline. Therefore, in establishing customer relationship management in China's farmer cooperatives, emphasis should be placed on the inclusion of a customer return mechanism to fully mobilize the efficiency and enthusiasm of cooperative customer relationship management, as well as to take advantage of the benefits that customer return brings to corporate management innovation and change.

3.3 Integration of quality management and customer management to help improve the marketing ability of cooperatives

Good quality management helps companies to grow sustainably and also helps them to gain a competitive brand (Gao, Chunyong & Chen, Yueli, 2021)[8]. When a company has a good brand, it will get more customers' attention. Therefore, cooperatives need more

assistance from quality management together with improving customer relationship management. Only based on having high-quality product quality and service quality, cooperative customer relationship management can be more effective to achieve high-quality and sustainable development in an integrated way. For example, if consumers receive good products and services, they will have more favorable feelings toward the company and will increase their consumption, thus increasing the sales and profits of the company. Therefore, the development of cooperative customer relationship management is driven by good quality management activities, then the cooperative marketing ability will be improved.

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