



E-business technologies for xRM: Exploring the readiness of public broadcasters



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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the possibilities of enhancing relationship management between public service broadcasters and their stakeholders by harnessing the potential of newest e-business technologies and concepts, such as: social media, digital and interactive TV, and mobile computing. In order to facilitate adoption of relationship management strategy, a framework for leveraging relationship management is proposed. Evaluation was performed within the e-business system of a public broadcaster. This empirical study explored the readiness and expected benefits of relationship management implementation. The research results have indicated that a public broadcaster could achieve a higher level of social responsibility, improve business sustainability, and empower communication and collaboration with all the stakeholders by using emerging technologies for relationship management activities.

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1. Introduction

The business of the public service broadcaster encompasses a corpus of intertwined networks of relations, rights and responsibilities (Finnemann, 2011). The main characteristics of new business models are: information transparency, thinner barriers for establishing and maintaining partnerships, integrated activities, multilayered collaboration and communication, etc. Nowadays, building a sustainable public service broadcaster is a complex task as it implies handling and managing relations with heterogeneous groups of stakeholders. A public broadcaster has to incorporate several important concepts in its business philosophy: social responsibility, sustainability, transparency, democracy, development of civil values, etc.

Thus, media companies are forced to develop new methods and services, to harmonize appropriate business processes and implement newest concepts in communication and collaboration with all partners.

As technology continues to advance and new products emerge, the interactions between media companies and their stakeholders have changed. The management of relationships increasingly becomes more dependent on new technologies (Pires et al., 2006), such as e-business technologies, mobile technologies, social computing, integration technologies, etc. It is crucial for both public broadcasters and their stakeholders to understand how these new technologies affect their relationships and how these relationships can be optimized (Obala and Lancioni, 2015).

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This paper examines possibilities of harnessing the newest e-business technologies, such as: social media, digital and interactive TV, mobile and omnipresent computing in relationship management between public service broadcasters and their stakeholders. The main goal of this paper is to improve the outcomes of the public broadcaster business ecosystem by introducing a new framework for business relationship management. The approach used in this paper is based on the idea to combine the advantages of the newest e-business technologies and modern e-business models into an integrated environment for stakeholder relationship management. Research context is the e-business system of a Serbian public broadcaster. The aim of the empirical study is twofold. Firstly, the study explores current level of relationship management and readiness for relationship management implementation. Secondly, the goal is to analyze relationships with business partners and to determine attitudes and possibilities for improvement of relationship management. Further, the idea was to explore current relationships between a broadcaster and its partners, as well as to foster the process of adopting a comprehensive relationship strategy.

The main contribution of this paper is enhancing relationship management with public broadcasters' stakeholders by using social media, mobile services and infrastructure as a service.

The rest of paper is organized as follows. Firstly, we provide a literature overview related to stakeholders relationship management and role of public broadcasters. Next section provides the model for relationship management and details of implementation. After that, we describe research and provide discussion related to the research and recommendations for public broadcasters.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. xRM

In modern e-business systems, relationship management is explained through customer relationship management (hereinafter: CRM) concept. This term includes the integration of marketing, social, sales and service activities through IT-enabled business process automation in a way that the value of each interaction with customers can be maximized (Pan et al., 2006; Ryals and Knox, 2001; Sin et al., 2005). However, processes covered with CRM are no longer related only to relations with customers. Nowadays, CRM includes a large number of other processes such as managing relationships with suppliers, managing employee relations and managing machinery maintenance. In order to manage all the issues, a company has to develop "a multilayered perspective of the relationship dynamics of customer-supplier interactions" (Stein et al., 2013). Creating a large and useful customer base implies nurturing the long-lasting relationship with customers to encourage their further action and loyalty (Rauyruen and Miller, 2007).

The described tendencies have implied a new phase in the development of the CRM, called xRM (McArthur, 2015; xRM, 2015). xRM implies extending the common CRM, where an e-business system should manage any relationship it has. xRM includes management of relations with suppliers, employees, partners, assets, knowledge bases, and almost every party of interest the company can have relations with. The main idea behind the concept of xRM is to build an integrated system that includes all e-business components and processes. xRM definitions go in two groups depending on meaning of "x". From one point of view, "x" in xRM refers to extended relationship management, which represents the extension of CRM platforms far beyond customer relationship management (McArthur, 2015). On the other hand, the "x" can be considered as an algebraic variable that can represent almost any relationship that an e-business needs to manage (McArthur, 2015). The key point is in extending the functionality of the CRM platform. However, so far, we have not been able to find any real attempts to fully integrate xRM in public service broadcaster business.

xRM is more a strategic approach than a new feature or a service. However, in order to execute e-business transactions with all the stakeholders, xRM should be seen as a component of a broader e-business system. Today, web portals technologies are used for integration of different e-business components. Considering the issue of xRM integration, business-to-business (B2B) portals are seen as a necessary platform for the integration of heterogenic system's component (Clarke and Flaherty, 2003). A B2B portal is a comprehensive platform for all the participants in an e-business of a company, such as manufacturers, government bodies, distributors, retailers, and others. In modern e-business, B2B portals are central communications hubs. B2B portals provide equal opportunities for both small and big enterprises. The B2B portal makes it possible for an enterprise to form electronic relationships with their distributors, resellers, suppliers and other associates (Oracle, 2011). B2B portals may include features such as: business intelligence, workflows management, transaction integration and processing, cross-channel management, taxonomy creation, collaboration on social media, cross-repository searching, document management, subscription services, and syndicated data (Clarke and Flaherty, 2003).

Another important component of xRM includes services and applications of social media. Social media empower collaboration, building communities, conducting marketing activities and information sharing (Michaelidou et al., 2011). In the context of relationship management social media can foster interactivity between a public broadcaster and the audience. Further, social media can offer a low-cost platform for two way communication with stakeholders.

There is a lack of the papers related to the application of newest e-business technologies for enhancing relationship management with stakeholders. In the literature more dominated are studies related to deployment of social media and mobile technologies for customer relationship management. Social networks are recognized as a useful tool for relation management in public sector (Bertot et al., 2012). They enable transparency, participation and collaboration related to providing

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