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Principles of Cust. Exp. Mgmt.

Professor:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Company Status Quo

Company Status Quo 4

Company Background and History 4

Customer Interaction Channels 5

Existing Customer Strategies 5

Existing Customer Experience Overview 5

Interaction Scripts and Software Vendors

Interaction Scripts and Software Vendors 6

Interaction Overview 6

Generating and Maintaining Trust 7

Diffusing Negative Feedback 7

Scripted Interaction Suggestion 8

Software Vendor Comparison and Selection 9

Customer Data and Privacy

Customer Data and Privacy 10

Identifying Individual Customers 11

Relevant Customer Data 11

Data Collection Limits 12

Internal Data Sharing 12

Assuring Privacy 12

Customer Valuation and Retention

Customer Valuation and Retention 13

Needs-Determination Strategy 13

Customer Valuation 14

Customer Retention Policies 15

Excellence through Sales 15

Customer Interaction Monitoring 15

Customer Loyalty Programs 16

Social Media and Email marketing 16

Use of Gaming as a Customer Retention Policy 16

Social Media Strategies

Social Media Strategies 17

Responsiveness 17

Transparency 18

Adaptability 19

Data Management

Data Management 20

Database Requirements 20

Database Solutions 21

Data Mining Strategies 21

Organization Strategies

Organizational Strategy Overview #

Current Organizational Structure #

Suggested Organizational Structure #

*Works Cited* 24

**Company Status Quo**

In 1985, the Coca-Cola Company replaced its classic formula with New Coke. The new soft drink was sweeter than the original, and it had performed much better in blind taste tests. But this change was a great failure in marketing strategy. American consumers reacted negatively not because they disliked the taste of New Coke, but rather because they opposed the withdrawal of the old formula which was later reintroduced— quite successfully—as Coca-Cola Classic."

**Company Background and History**

Coca-Cola history began in 1886 when the curiosity of an Atlanta pharmacist, Dr. John S. Pemberton, led him to create a distinctive tasting soft drink that could be sold at soda fountains. He created a flavored syrup, took it to his neighborhood pharmacy, where it was mixed with carbonated water and deemed “excellent” by those who sampled it. Dr. Pemberton’s partner and bookkeeper, Frank M. Robinson, is credited with naming the beverage “Coca‑Cola” as well as designing the trademarked, distinct script, still used today.

Prior to his death in 1888, just two years after creating what was to become the world’s #1-selling sparkling beverage, Dr. Pemberton sold portions of his business to various parties, with the majority of the interest sold to Atlanta businessman, Asa G. Candler. Under Mr. Candler’s leadership, distribution of Coca‑Cola expanded to soda fountains beyond Atlanta. In 1894, impressed by the growing demand for Coca‑Cola and the desire to make the beverage portable, Joseph Biedenharn installed bottling machinery in the rear of his Mississippi soda fountain, becoming the first to put Coca‑Cola in bottles. Large scale bottling was made possible just five years later, when in 1899, three enterprising businessmen in Chattanooga, Tennessee secured exclusive rights to bottle and sell Coca‑Cola. The three entrepreneurs purchased the bottling rights from Asa Candler for just $1. Benjamin Thomas, Joseph Whitehead and John Lupton developed what became the Coca‑Cola worldwide bottling system.

**Customer Interaction Channels**

An alternative that is growing in interest as a way forward is the Showcase Strategy. In this approach, the store becomes the showcase for the product. But crucially, store profitability no longer exists as a metric in its own right. It’s now more about total channel profitability. Instead of building silos, the whole set of customer channel interactions needs to be captured and effectiveness measured in a genuinely integrated and multi-channel way.

**Existing Customer Strategies**

These days Coke is using the 4Ps of marketing mix in such a way so that a good quality can be provided to the consumers at a reasonable price to attract the consumers towards their brands. They know that there is so much potential in the soft drink industry that can increase their sales by making good marketing strategies. They are spending a large sum of money on advertisement and other promotional activities for their brands.

**Existing Customer Experience Overview**

At Coca-Cola HBC, customers are at the heart of everything we do. Customer preference is a core value of our business. This means building true partnerships that create sustainable value and profitable growth for our business and our customers across all key channels. By finding new ways to win together in the marketplace, we aim to be the preferred supplier to all of our customers. To achieve this, we have adopted a comprehensive set of initiatives designed to build collaborative customer relationships and ensure excellent execution.

**Interaction Scripts and Software Vendors**

Every organization focuses on satisfying its customers to the maximum extent that helps in building the customer loyalty and also helps in retaining the customers. In the following discussion, the new customer strategy of Coca-Cola is discussed by elaborating the interaction procedure and the strategies the company adopts to generate and maintain trust with its customers. The discussion also throws highlight on the ways the company handles its complaints procedure.

Coco- Cola has adopted new customer strategy in which the company focuses on the ways of dealing with its customers. Along with this, strategies that are adopted by the company in order to generate and maintain trust among the customers are also defined. Further, the ways of handling the complaints and their management is also a focus area of the company. Moreover, the type of interaction the company's representative has with the customers are also provided. Apart from this, the strengths and weakness of the customer experience management software from different vendors is also discussed.

**Interaction Overview**

Coco-Cola interacts with its customers through YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Along with this, targeted e-mails to customers on special occasions like festivals, birthdays and others also serve as an effective means of interaction that helps in enhanced level of connectivity with the customers (Bullas, 2012). The nature and character of interaction are to increase the customer empowerment so that real-time demands are met effectively (Cameron, 2014). The employees of the company are trained by providing classroom training, e-learning, external conferences and field training that helps in their personality development so that customers dealing turns out to be more effective (Staff, 2012). The company has also implemented customer interaction guidelines by opening state of the art consumer interaction centers, which aims at excellence in marketplace execution, proper customer care centers, good morning meetings, and marketing and merchandising (Staff, 2012). The company also has its website with its basic tone of refreshing the world and achieving sustainable and quality growth (Cola, 2015).

**Generating and Maintaining Trust**

The company focuses on the behavioral ethics of its employees along with the consistent availability of the products and constantly improved quality helps in developing the trust among the customers. The company also rewards its customers on repeated purchases by providing free coupons, extra meals and beverages, and special offers. The company always tries to be honest with the encounter of any problem because the company believes in sustainable growth and quality products (Cola, 2015).

**Diffusing Negative Feedback**

The company has activated feedback page, Twitter handle, and Google Plus so that the complaints and feedback are welcomed properly, and corrective measures are taken effectively. The company will try to reach the maximum extent to make the customers delighted and satisfied by attending them affectionately and patiently along with the maintenance of their dignity. The company also follows a standard procedure to calm down its irate customers by relieving their stress, apologizing for the mistakes, being empathetic, attending them immediately and by taking follow-up actions (Felder).

Yes, the company can turn the complaints into new sales by taking the complaints constructively, looking into the dissatisfying features, continuous improvements, and immediate rectification. Along with this, the company can also prevent its customers from sharing the criticisms with peers by resolving their issues on urgent basis, by offering open discussion so that customers will feel valued and this will help in maintaining the loyalty (Sernovitz, 2012).

After understanding the interaction techniques and complaint management, the further discussion provides knowledge about the way in which the interaction is carried away by the customer and the representative. Along with this, customer experience management software solutions from different vendors are also highlighted.

**Scripted Interaction Suggestion**

Customer Service Representative: Hello, how can I help you today?

Customer: I have been calling you for the third time regarding the business party order of beverages.

Customer Service Representative: Sir, I am extremely sorry for the inconvenience. I request you to provide me your customer ID.

Customer: My Id is 789HJJ.

Customer Service Representative: Let me check the details. Please bear with me.

Customer: Be quick as the business party is going to start within 5 minutes.

Customer Service Representative: I am trying to address your problem, sir. Thank you for your patience and give me 2 minutes.

Customer: OK

Customer Service Representative: Yes sir, I am sorry for the trouble, and it is to inform you that the delivery boy is on the way. Your order will be at your place within few minutes.

Customer: OK, kindly provide me the mobile number of the delivery boy.

Customer Service Representative: Sure sir, the number is xxxxxxxxxx.

Customer: Thanks, and make sure that the order is delivered on time next time.

Customer Service Representative: We are extremely sorry for the inconvenience and the delay; this will not be repeated.

Customer: Ok.

Customer Service Representative: Have a nice and delightful day. Thank you for calling.

**Software Vendor Comparison and Selection**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Software Solutions | Strengths | Weakness | Price |
| Ascribe | Saas based offering, Ascribe intelligence helps in better handling of unstructured complaints and employee feedback  Fast and concise software services that help in dealing with complaints through open conversations  The software is coded and available in multiple languages, providing user friendly accessibility (Ascribe solutions, 2015) | Inefficient systematic analyzation of data  Lack of immediate actions  Unstructured feedback system | Cost-effective by having competitive rates and with minimum overall billing |
| Beyond Feedback | Customized  affordable  hosted system | Time-consuming  Sometimes difficult to understand  Delayed action steps | Comparatively costlier than Ascribe (Beyond Feedback, 2014). |
| Allegiance | Availability of big data platform  Focus on continuous improvements  Greater level of customer satisfaction | Possibility of errors  Lack of adequacy  Incomplete information loading | Very cheap and the work is accomplished in seconds (Allegiance, 2014). |

For Coco-Cola, the best software solution to be chosen would be beyond feedback as it provides full service assistance and have strong communication channels. In addition to this, it is easily affordable.

**Customer Data and Privacy**

Coca-Cola is committed to customer privacy. Any data collected by Coca-Cola which is personally identifiable information includes name, address, telephone, cell phone numbers, and email address. These are normally used to create an account with Coca-Cola and are used while interacting with the website or when contacting by phone. Coca-Cola keeps this information within the company and subsidiaries.

**Identifying Individual Customers**

Coca-Cola identifies individual customers by an account number. The personal identifiable information collected (see topic #1 above) is used by Coca-Cola for any and all legal purposes which include contacting the customer, responding to any email or contact from the customer, contests, and any other deals, coupons, discounts, and prizes.

Customers are asked if they wish to "opt-in" and if the customer agrees to that, then Coca-Cola will share the information supplied by the customer with affiliates of Coca-Cola or their subsidiaries. This will engage marketing to send advertising, promotional items, communication about special events or contests, and any other information that will promote purchases of their products.

**Relevant Customer Data**

Customers may also be requested to supply more intimate information such as date of birth, gender, race, as well as area county names and zip code. Coca-Cola will then process that information collectively with other customer responses to show where products are sold the most and to whom. Sometimes no name is required as they are looking for demographic information for planning future locations (Coca Cola: Continuous refreshment, 2012).

Surveys may also be sent to those customers who "opt-in" in order for Coca-Cola to get a better understanding of the who, what, when, where, and why of buying their products. Those surveys may be demographic without names or may be individually oriented to get a better idea of what changes need to be made or to show what is working and not working.

**Data Collection Limits**

Data collection limits are noted in Coca-Cola's disclosures in their Privacy Policy. Online, Coca-Cola can obtain the personally identifiable information of the customer and can share that information with other companies other than Coca-Cola within the law. The data collection is limited to allowing third parties to have access to the personal identifiable information of the customer but it is only for situations where a customer agrees to participate in a contest or game or with store loyalty programs that provide an award. This information goes not further than for that particular purpose (The Coca-Cola Company Privacy Policy, 2013).

Other limits would be about intimate personal information, financial, or any other extremely secure information that should not be shared with strangers or online. This information would be public information and shared with a wide range of people. Any personally identifiable information released that would be in conflict with the Privacy Policy - the terms of the policy will be the control.

**Internal Data Sharing**

Within the company, Coca-Cola handles the personally identifiable information for customers as discussed above. If a customer enters personally identifiable information on a third party website with a link for Coca-Cola - that information is entered on the third party site and Coca-Cola is not responsible for that information. The privacy policy of the third party will take precedence.

**Assuring Privacy**

Coca-Cola has security procedures in place to protect against private information from being misused, lost, stolen, or altered. Personally identifiable information and account transactions are all protected as with other outside businesses. Coca-Cola provides the standard industry practices for keeping information safe and keep it from public tampering (The Coca-Cola Company Privacy Policy, 2013).

Key personnel are the ones that have access to customer information. Logins are in place to have a data trail for seeing who accesses what information. Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) are in place and this prevents others from being able to access this information and also encrypts it. User Names and Passwords are needed for logins.

**Customer Valuation and Retention**

As a multinational company, Coca Cola operates in culturally diverse regions and territories. The company uses a decentralized approach when it comes to customer valuation and retention. This is primarily due to the need to accommodate diverse cultures. However, the company is increasingly experimenting with strategies that have worked in specific countries, by rolling out the same in other countries. Its most effective customer valuation and retention tool in recent years is a call recording platform known as ‘NICE Perform’ that enables the company to assess the quality of customer contact as well as to identify and promote best practice.

**Needs-Determination Strategy**

Coca Cola’s needs determination strategy is to use differentiated customer contact centers to handle specific aspects of customer needs analysis. The customer contact centers fall under two broad categories. The first category solely focuses on direct sales while the second category focuses on providing service support. Combining this with call recording of all customer interaction sessions allows Coca Cola to carefully analyze the effectiveness of its customer service personnel. Consequently, the company is able to identify examples of customer service excellence, and this in turn allows Coca Cola to share and reward best practice.

Analysis of recorded calls allows Coca Cola to assess which customer service delivery techniques are working and which ones are not working. It also allows the company to better understand the kind of information or services its customers need. Using the data obtained from these analyses, the company is able to determine customers’ needs. This in turn helps in better training of customer service personnel, and in the management of customer contact centers. Recorded interaction with customers enables the company to acquire better understanding of what types of information and services are in demand, and to provide its customer service personnel with up-to-date information.

**Customer Valuation**

Coca Cola aims to maximize the retention of existing customers, maximize their value and to drive the acquisition of new customers. The main approach that the company has used in order to achieve these objectives is to adopt a strategy of excellence. The core focus of this strategy is to improve sales and the quality of services rendered to customers. For many years, Coca Cola has focused on call volumes and durations to drive its customer valuation. The company maintained data related to call volumes in its customer contact centers, and the durations of these calls to determine staffing levels.

During the past decade, Coca Cola has changed its customer valuation approach by seeking to understand the quality and value of customer interaction as opposed to volume and duration. The company mainly relies on call recording to facilitate quality monitoring of the interaction between its customers and its customer services personnel. This enables the company to acquire relevant data to drive sales through high quality coaching of telephone customer advisers which helps to improve management performance.

**Customer Retention Policies**

Excellence through Sales

Coca Cola Company operates within a highly competitive business environment that requires it to establish viable marketing interventions for it to remain competitively active. For this reason, the company adopted the excellence through sales policy that adequately drives sales excellence from a normal strategy framework to a hands-on execution platform. In order to enhance this policy, the company has established development programs, which are meant to improve organizational efficiency and build sales capabilities through; funnel management and reporting, account management, value based pricing, sales tools, systems and data, as well as, win-plans and bid management. The rationale behind the adoption of this policy was based on the fact that the current financial recession facing the global market impacted negatively on the company’s sales, something that prompted the company to conduct a critical analysis of its policies in order to avert the existing menace. Exemptions should not be granted for this policy since it is a policy that determines the company’s prospective success in the dynamic business environment.

Customer Interaction Monitoring

Under this policy, the company keenly monitors the interaction between its customer care representatives and its customers or clients. This is aimed at achieving a higher customer satisfaction thereby building a strong customer base that demonstrates higher levels of customer retention. Customers are the principal clients of any business entity and for that reason, their needs and demands should be met with a lot of considerations. In light of this, this policy should not contain any exemptions.

Customer Loyalty Programs

The rationale behind the adoption of this policy is based on the fact that the company wanted to reward its loyal customers by providing them with incentives that could motivate and increase their retention thereby building a strong customer base. A good example is the “My Coke rewards” program that enables customers to win various products. In order to enhance fairness in this process, this policy should be granted some exemptions. In this case, for a customer to win a prize, he or she must show evidence of having purchased at least one Coca Cola item.

Social Media and Email marketing

With the increased charges of both radio and TV ads, Coca Cola opted to utilize social media platforms as well as emails to market its products at a reasonable cost. Besides, the increased awareness of social media platforms by individuals prompted the company to diversify by embracing technology in marketing its products. This policy should not be granted some exemption since it is aimed at increasing the company’s marketability.

Use of Gaming as a Customer Retention Policy

The company sought to improve the health of individuals through gaming initiatives and also increase its awareness through support of sports. An increasing number of individuals support sports, and for that reason, the company identified that through supporting sports, it will increase its customer base through increased customer loyalty. This policy should be granted some exemption in that, not all games should be supported by the company. Only those games that are morally acceptable such as football should be supported by the company.

**Social Media Strategies**

Coca-Cola became the sponsor of the 2014 soccer World Cup. It has packaged each of its social profiles with World Cup headers, campaigns, and content. This has increased its following on social media. On Twitter, Coca-Cola engages with followers (How does Coca-Cola's communication through social media affect the motivations of fans to participate?, 2012). It generates around 2,000 tweets a month creating more than 1 billion potential impressions during a month. Its strategy is to engage audience and generate content they can share. it becomes a part of the Coca-Cola brand experience. It also gives direct replies to customers who like the brand. It gives attention to detail (Social Marketing Goes Multiplatform, 2011).

**Responsiveness**

Apart from being responsive to customers on social media, Coca-Cola is also responsive to direct questions on its websites. Further, the company claims that customer preference is a core value of the business. According to the company, Coca-Cola makes its products available where the customers require them, make the product affordable, and supplies an extensive and increasing range of products. Responsiveness according to Coca-Cola refers to satisfying the highest quality standards required in a country. On the ground level Coca-Cola claims its sales representatives and its people are responsive to customer needs.

Responsiveness, according to the company means it provides best customer service possible and to provide fast answers to common questions and concerns. Specifically it allows a customer to track orders or return a product. From a different perspective, Coca-Cola Company has not be responsive to customer needs. Customers have shown concerns about the health effects of Coca-Cola products. It is supposed to cause obesity (Are All Calories Created Equal? An Analysis of the Coca-Cola Company’s Communication in the Fight Against Obesity, 2014). Also, there is a belief that Coca-Cola indulges in monopolistic business practices. The customers have also doubts about questionable marketing practices of Coca-Cola. The Company has not been responsive to these concerns.

**Transparency**

According to Coca-Cola Company its sustainability report provides transparency to the company. It also provides a broader view of the impact of its business and value chain. The company claims that it provides transparent nutrition information on all of its packages. It says it provides calorie information, and promotes calorie information. The company provides a plethora of information about the company in its annual report and financial statements. These are available in public domain. Coca-Cola Company complies with Global Reporting Initiative framework. It has developed its report at the Core In Accordance level of the GRI G4 guidelines (The Coca Cola Annual Report, 2013).

According to Coca-Cola Company it obtains an independent assurance from an outside auditor that provides inceptors such as water use ratio, Plant Bottle packaging, lost time incident rate, front of pack labeling compliance, and greenhouse gas emissions relating to manufacturing emission (Evidence of The Coca Cola Company’s Human Rights Abuses and Environmental Violations, 2006). From a different perspective in December 2008 the FDA wrote to the CEO, Coca-Cola, to warn him that the FDA had concluded that the label on Coca-Cola’s Diet Coke was in violation of the legal requirements. Further, the company does not disclose all ingredients in several of its products including Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola funded opposition to Proposition 37 requiring mandatory labeling of food containing genetically modified ingredients (The Coca-Cola Company GRI Report, 2013).

**Adaptability**

Coca-Cola Company has experienced different types of adaptabilities. it has made its packaging adaptable for different segments. The product has been made available in different sizes and packages, such as glass bottles, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and drink dispensers. Coca-Cola Company has also been adaptable in selecting distributors who suit the customer profile of the company. It has made separate agreements with each bottler adapting it to the realities in different countries. Coca-Cola has also adapted the price of its products to local requirements and competitors’ prices. The price of a can of Coca-Cola is priced different in the USA and in an emerging economy in Asia. Similarly, Coca-Cola changes it communication from country to country to adapt to its culture and customer segment (BSI Case Study Coca-Cola Enterprises Ltd, 2014).

One of the key adaptabilities that Coca-Cola has used is its ability to adapt to available transport system. Transportation of Coca-Cola products uses semi-trucks, cargo ships, aircraft, and trains. It has been able to reach market segments that were difficult to reach earlier. Coca-Cola Company has adapted itself to the available information technology (Business and Climate Change Adaptation, 2012). Its distributors and warehouses are able to accurately track inventory levels, and fill order shipments. This lowers the overall operating costs. Computerization has led to lower product costs and automated manufacturing has improved efficiencies in Coca-Cola operations.

When required, Coca-Cola has trimmed its work force and has remained competitive in the soft drinks segment. There are instances when Coca-Cola Company’s adaptability has been questioned. To satisfy inflexible revenue targets Coca-Cola has been found to indulge in channel stuffing. In 2008, the company compromised to pay $137.5 million to settle a shareholder lawsuit. It had been found forcing some bottlers to purchase hundreds of millions of dollars of unnecessary beverage concentrate to make revenues higher (Business and Climate Change Adaptation, 2012). Coca-Cola has also been accused of bribing American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Coca-Cola is so un-adoptable that it does not want dentists to say that children should not drink Coca-Cola. It has also been non-adaptable in persuading waiters at restaurants to persuade customers not to order tap water drinks at restaurants.

**Data Management**

Now a days each and every company using Data management tools to manage large amount of data. It is a very important part of every organization. The steps we can use to design a database to manage our data: Create business requirements, simplify into identify nouns and sentences, group nouns and apply data types, apply constraints and Define relationships.

Coca cola can enhance its marketing strategies by making best possible use of data analytics/Big data generated by its marketing research teams across the globe. The CRM tools used by the company contains extensive data about consumer's buying pattern, preferences as well as other details about consumer behavior and sales of the company (Rijmenam, 2013).

**Database Requirements**

The data management strategy of Coca Cola focused on stitching together the huge data stored over myriad of different systems into a unified platform to conduct data analytics in a more efficient manner. Database solutions should enable Coca Cola to gather data from its global locations at any point of time, thus saving enormous time in collecting data from different locations as well as allowing decision makers to formulate strategies for different markets or product groups in an effective manner (Coca-Cola, 2015).

Coca Cola’s product is chosen more than a billion times a day by its customer base, but the main requirement of coca cola is to have data base of suppliers and retailers location wise. More than 100 million cases of classic coca cola were sold in 2013 over the 2012 numbers (Gaille, 2015). Company has more than 800 million core customers, though America is experiencing fall in sales of soft drinks, market of Asia pacific and Latin America is witnessing exponential growth. To handle the big data of customers and suppliers, company should implement Hadoop database solution. The tools of Hadoop will help in producing every kind of marketing report and business solutions.

**Database Solutions**

The database should be accessible to end users at any point of time from across the globe via web based interface. In other words, the database solution should be centralized and available over a shared platform for all the end users in the organization (Coca-Cola overcomes challenges, 2013).

Below is the comparison of three database solutions (Belken, 2014):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Hadoop** | **Teradata** | **Oracle** |
| **Storage/Speed** | 25 Gb/s | 34 Gb/s | 18 Gb/s |
| **Performance** | Endless scalability. Sufficient tools | Each server can compute its own part. | Big batch of tools make business processing fast. |
| **Limitation** | Ad-hoc queries are difficult, requires double redundancy of data, commodity servers hold more space. | Very less tools to operate. | No such limitation discovered. |
| **Market** | Moderate market. | Very few clients, costly operational cost | Largest market. |

For Coca Cola I would suggest Hadoop, as it has sufficient tools for business processing and data mining, which will provide analytical reports to for business solutions. Company should purchase the hardware to implement Hadoop as the tools supports the analytical features like benchmark monitoring, custom reporting, performance reporting, etc.

Programmers always get so focused on the problem-solving, they approach the project by using only one hemisphere of their brain and focus on the business needs to which the project is supposed to solve. The DBS has the knowledge, experience and skill to analyze the project plan and scope a solution that achieves the criteria, despite the fact that never losing focus of end result. We will call it the Whole Brain Thinking.

**Data Mining Strategies**

Data mining strategies can be used to create more targeted marketing strategies for different categories of products sold in different markets across the world. Coca-Cola can gather data from not only point of sales, but also other medium such as social media as well as via primary research surveys. Such large scale data analysis will help Coca Cola to continuously update its market intelligence team about the latest trends in the market. Data mining is also critical for managing strategic risks faced by Coca Cola. The company can harness the benefits of big data analytics to effectively tackle emerging risks faced by the company in today's extremely dynamic and competitive business world ( Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, 2013).

In its simplest type, data mining automates the detection of relevant patterns in an exceedingly info, exploitation outlined approaches and algorithms to appear into current and historical knowledge that may then be analyzed to predict future trends. As a result of data processing tools predict future trends and behaviors by reading through databases for hidden patterns, they permit organizations to create proactive, knowledge-driven selections and answer queries (Application of data mining techniques, 2008).

Coca Cola should harness the relationship of data mining and customer relationship. It will help the company in understanding the nature of customer within a short time frame. Which means company can reduce the price of soft drinks or can change them, knowing the market trend of next few months. According to me, company should implement the strategy of capturing the data (data mining) from non-transactional means and feed it to Customer Relationship Management, which will work on an automated process of interacting directly with customers. The implementation cost will vary for the company depending upon the installation and licensing fee of the vendor. The whole process will require licensing, hardware and maintenance, data collection, data preparation and personal development which will contribute to few million dollars. The certain benefits will be increase in customer loyalty, discovery of hidden profitability and reduced client churn. (Microsoft, 2009)

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