Chapter 25

Customer Relationship Management and Interface Redesign:
A Study on the Website Design on the eBay Websites on Cultural Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This study is focused on the cross-cultural issues in the post-adoption phases of customer relationship management (CRM) for an international electronic marketplace, which operates in more than 30 countries. In particular, the authors focus on how the electronic marketplace modifies its interface redesign for addressing the different tastes of users from different cultural backgrounds. The authors hope this study can address to how cultural and language differences affect the interface redesign of CRM, which is part of the enterprise system, in the multinational and global context through a qualitative study.

INTRODUCTION

Nearly all the major players in Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-business are equipped with an enterprise system, which provides various types of services for the companies (Chang et al., 2010). The services provided include enterprise resources planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), supply chain management (SCM), etc., which can be generally grouped into enterprise systems (ES). In this study, we are in particular interested in the CRM issue as it is the key component of the B2C E-business operations, which helps to retain online customers. Thus, extensive studies have been conducted in this inter-disciplinary area between information systems and marketing (Gefen & Ridings, 2002).

This study reports a case study on eBay (http://www.ebay.com), which is the major electronic marketplace providing a gateway for small and medium enterprises and individuals to conduct E-business online. As at April 2013, eBay has a network of 38 Websites, which are designated to serve the users from different nations. Through analyzing the interface redesign of Websites of the eBay family, we can gain a better understand on how culture and languages affect the design of the portal a multinational enterprise, which is the first Web page that helps to establish the image of the company, as well as to establish its relationship with the customers.

This paper is developed as follows. We first review the literature related to enterprise systems, customer relationship management, and the impacts of culture on information systems, and then we review the background of eBay. Afterwards, we discuss how eBay modifies its Website designs across culture. Lastly, we conclude the paper with the discussion on how we can draw the lesson learned from eBay for applying in multinational enterprises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Enterprise Systems

Enterprise systems (ES) are large-scale organizational systems that built around with enterprise system software (ESS) packages. These packages comprise sets of application software modules with integrated architectures that facilitate data, processes and information technologies integration, and are often used by organizations as their primary engine in supporting business functions (Shang & Seddon, 2002). Common modules of ESS include enterprise resources planning (ERP) systems, supply chain management (SCM) systems, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, product life cycle Management (PLM) systems, and e-Procurement Systems.

According to the existing practitioner and academic literature, ES is one of an important technology investment options for organizations over the last two decades for their potential to improve business performances (Akkermans et al., 1999; Davenport, 1998). Benefits brought by the use of ES in business are multidimensional, ranging from support for strategic goals to operational improvements through decision-making enhancement (Ross & Vitale, 2000).

Information integration is also one of the key benefits brought by ES. As it can be used for replacing the former functionally oriented and the often poorly connected legacy software packages, intensive cost savings in infrastructure supports can be achieved. The integration of the operational processes through ES applications has also brought positive impacts to firm performances. The vigorous business values that ES has brought upon have then become the reason why enterprises are eager to invest on further ES developments (Davenport, 2000).

ERP, CRM and SCM systems are commonly integrated in an ES. ERP application suites exploit the integrative capacity of the corporate communication network to link traditional business functions, such as finance, accounting, operations, production, warehousing, and sales into a single system, employing a shared database, eliminating multiple data entry and ensuring, for example, that current stock availability and customer account details are available when processing an incoming order. With the ERP serves as the system's backbone, SCM and CRM then extend data exchange to supplier and partner organizations, and customer, often via the internet with a Web interface (Chang, 2006). Figure 1 represents the extension of ERP to SCM and CRM within an ES.

Customer Relationship Management

Along with increased global competition in the past decade, many organizations have identified the needs to be more customer-oriented in order

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