The Community in Business: Strategic Relationship Between Companies and Environment and Marketing

La Comunidad en Los Negocios: Relación Estratégica de las Organizaciones con el Medio y Marketing

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Community language is not unrelated to companies (Chaston & Mangles, 2001), which define their activities as a benefit for community through sales of products or services. They also use in the social responsibility activities (Kakabadse, Rozuel, & Lee-Davies, 2005; Korhonen, 2002) in the community-corporation involvement (Burke, 1999) that adds value to the latter ones (Rochlin, & Christoffer, 2000, p.1) in regards to the social marketing (Whitcombe, 2009) aiming to the elimination of barriers that hamper the implementation of social programs (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000a, 2000b), or, with a strategic view, in regards to the shared value that benefits community and companies at the same time (Porter & Kramer, 2011). There are, of course, many other ways to incorporate such language in companies.

Marketing activities constitute the interaction between the environment and the companies, which are self-centered during their operations. Such activities have had functional, transactional, competitive, mixed, integral, relational aspects, among others. The latter one is an example of the wide possibilities when making work a relationship beyond the commercial elements.

The relational marketing is characterized by the emphasis given to the maintenance and improvement of the relationship with the customer (Berry, 1995; Payne & Frow, 2006). It is an individual relation that foster brand fidelity and new interactions between the two parts. Nevertheless, as it is not possible to create personal bonds in a massive ways, relational marketing is surpassed by its own goals and became a systematized mechanism of products

promotion under the appearance of relation (see Juárez, 2011), where the basis is customer satisfaction; as it was a functional model (see Smalley & Fraedrich, 1995) but with a higher independence from the product.

Relational marketing limitations made individual emphasis became in a differentiation of the communications by means of information technology usage (see Curry & Curry, 2002) and other techniques (see Ospina & Sanabria, 2010; Slater & Narver, 1995), and the personal relation adopted a calculus-transactional way about what was the best option for the customers and the companies. This configured a calculated commitment (from de Ruyter, Moorman, & Lemmink, 2001) and an offensive marketing (Appiah-Adu, 1999) that is distant from the goals in which relational marketing is based on. In this way, it is necessary to reflect about the concept of relation and its implications, specially, when it is a link with community.

It is true that companies can use community activities to obtain a benefit, which can be not only a financial one (Juárez & Chacón, 2013b), and it is possible that companies incorporate multi-culture and multi-context aspects, policontexturality according to Günther (2004) terminology, in a strategy that try to be more global each time.

However, it is required, from a strategic point of view, something else than a language that includes references to the community, which is a term that has emotional repercussions. It is evident that companies cannot adopt a community strategy without this concept nor carry out activities inside community,

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without community strategies. Thus, resources, as the decisions taken about it, should flow towards companies and communities in order to allow development in both of them.

It is possible, indeed it is done, to carry out social activities to help community, which is a great benefit and contributes to the development of the latter one. Nevertheless, such activities, because of their unidirectional feature, lacks of a framework that allows involving community, which is still being an aim of the corporative action without being a part of it.

The surroundings of companies can be interpreted as competitive and full of opportunities, but they are also policontexturals (see Gunter, 2004). Even though the first two interpretation favor aspects related to earnings, innovation, new markets creation and agreements in a model of strategic game with mutual benefits, the second one favor aspects associated with recognition and introduction in diverse contexts, demanding a differentiation from the product under requirements of join progress. Thus, the development of ones is the development of everybody.

Companies are related to different agents such as suppliers, other companies that provide support or credit, customers, corporations used to obtain strategic alliance, business clusters, etc. With all of them is possible to create durable bonds that involve fidelity, commitment and development. However, it could not happen if there is not a participation in these communities; being another neighbor is required (Juarez, 2011) to obtain own activities connected to communities. That is why it is necessary recognition of them a suitable strategy, since communities are sensitive to the interaction ways.

Probably, shared value can be created between companies and community. However, interaction can be only partial if one of the parts is not included in the other (Juárez & Chacón, 2013a). Cultural aspects, values, beliefs, behaviors, interests, preferences, and others (see Etzioni, 1996) define communities. However, the life experience is the element that makes them remain as one; they have history (Cieza, 2010). Thus, experiential knowledge is necessary (Ellis, 2008); without participation in those experiences, how could be possible to interact from a point of view different to an assistance or transaction-based one? If participation lacks, it is maintained unidirectional verticality of the action that generates fragile mechanisms of dependence and lacking strong emotional bonds that provide support against market crisis, financial system falls or that foster development

and positioning of products as well as suitable strategic action implementation

Empowering, coalition creations (Butterfoss, Goodman, & Wandersman, 1993), networks (McColl-Kennedy, Sweeney, Soutar, & Amonini, 2008), generating innovative groups of learning or practice (Barrett, Ballantyne, Harrison, & Temmerman, 2009; Holland & Robinson, 2008; Kilpatrick, Field, & Falk, 2003), giving identity to communities (Barrett, et al. 2009), business cluster formation (Callarisa, Bigne, Moliner, & Sánchez, 2009; Bindroo, Mariadoss, & Pillai, 2012; Felzensztein, & Gimmon, 2009), and other relation ways are only formed when community see companies as a part of it. In fact, products development, prices strategies, the financial model, market analysis, companies participation in the solution of social conflicts, crisis or disasters, value chain design, or the very moment of entrepreneurship should be carry out with this sense of belonging to community.

It is necessary that companies have, as a development way, a higher proximity to communities. However, this is not constituted within a natural evolution and reflection of only the mechanism that of competitive advantage, even if they are a strong base, but within a strategic of relation between companies and the environment, or company-community strategy in which both terms are joined in an only one where corporation can be perceived as a member of the community.

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