

## **Strategic Customer Experience Management: A Qualitative Cross-Industry Study**

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In recent decades, society and, therefore also the economy went from a service-oriented economy towards an experience-oriented economy. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999:2) this transformation demands companies, to personally engage with their customers to achieve sustainable customer loyalty (Pavlis, 2011:2). One major reason for the occurrence of experiential marketing is the exchangeability of brands (Schmitt, 1999:3). Thus, it becomes increasingly crucial for marketers to differentiate their brand from their competition. According to Schmitt and Mangold (2004), this differentiation can be done by generating holistic customer experiences through so-called experience drivers. The management of these drivers is called Customer Experience Management (Schmitt, 2003).

For this research, 38 German managers from different industries were interviewed about the importance of customer experiences for their company. The interviews covered experimental drivers and assessed success factors of customer experience management. Furthermore, the importance of emotions and the company's strategic approach were also inquired about. The results show that many companies have not yet realised the potential of customer experience management and still do not plan customer experiences strategically. In the end, the paper concludes with managerial implications.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, customer experience, strategic management, marketing, interviews, emotions

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