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## CRM ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE “CARD OF ENJOY”

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### Abstract

The Styrian Spa Region and the Styrian Volcanic Region, located in south eastern Austria, are summer touristic regions and border with Hungary and Slovenia. In 2012 the two regions were joined together. The 41 communities count 125.000 inhabitants. About 9.000 employees work in tourism trade and about 83% of the companies have less than 10 employees. As a customer relationship tool a “Genusscard” was created. This “card of enjoy” allows a guest who spends at least one night within the region to visit 170 tourist attractions free of charge. This is quite a unique situation in Europe because the customer does not pay any fee for the card. The card is offered from the 1st March until the 31st October. In this way tourists are invited to explore the surroundings and it makes the region more attractive to customers. For this reasons customers might come again to the region more frequently.

The case study conducted in the Styrian Volcanic and Spa Region shows that customer relationship management requires sourcing, marketing and evaluation strategies. The purpose of this research is to identify the status of CRM of option. Furthermore, the influence within the region is researched. The study researched 100 enterprises (power partners, hosts and hotels) to investigate the stage of implementation. An analysis of 100 customers shows the positive influence of CRM on relationship quality, lifetime value and economy.

### Keywords

customer relationship management, retention, collaboration and marketing.

### JEL Classification

O10, M30

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### Introduction

Because of global competition many regions need to be more customers oriented. According to Schulze et al. (2000) the increasing individuality of the customers behavior and the decreasing loyalty of the customers and also the weaken difference of prices intends the competition of the globalized and liberal marketing.

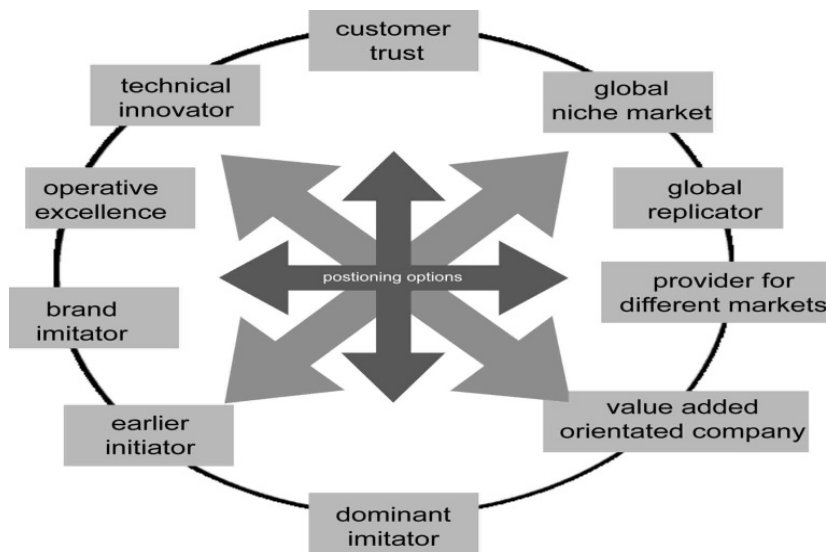
Since 2012 the card of enjoy has been a free admission card for 170 spots of excursions in the Styrian Volcanic Region and Styrian Thermal Region in Austria. According to Fritz (2017) from the association of the card of enjoy the guests get from the first overnight the “card of enjoy” at check in. Guests can get this card for free of charge at more than 100 hosts and hotels. The “card of enjoy” is valid during the residence inclusive arrival and departure day between the 1<sup>st</sup> of March and the 31<sup>st</sup> of October. It entitles free entry to all

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targets of excursion, possibilities of sport and culinary delights are included. A detailed list of companies is available at [www.genusscard.com](http://www.genusscard.com).

**Theoretical aspects**

Theories of positioning options are visualized according to Fritz (2017). The positioning of the “card of enjoy” is a part of the basic strategy in order to the implementation of customer relationship management. According to Musing et al. (2007) the identification of the value proposition for target segments is the key for the development of aims in reference to the customers. Besides of the choice of segments and also the choice of target customers is also the definition of the offer that we are able to do and furthermore the positioning is essential.



**Fig. no. 1 Positioning options**  
 Source: authors design based on Mussnig

Peters et al. (1982) developed as the new management “thinkers” the new idea of the so called soft elements that should bring the success to an enterprise. They followed the 7-S model which was developed by Pascal and Athos in co-operation with Mc Kinsey. Core of the system 7-S (Pascal et. al, 1981) is the consideration that the soft and the hard variables are to be differed at the management. The hard elements from the structure make the strategy. The soft elements are in the conceptions combined.



**Fig. no. 2 The 7-S Model**  
 Source: authors` design based on Pascale and Athos

According to Kotler et al. (1995) the diagram no. 4/7 provides a general view of the marketing process and the factors of influence on the marketing strategy. The customers are the core on which enterprises are concentrating their efforts for the satisfaction of a specific market. Because the dirigible elements of formation like product, prize, distribution and sales promotion the enterprises decide their marketing mix. It uses for four systems: A marketing information system, a marketing planning system, a marketing organization system and an executive system, further a marketing control system and a stirring system. With these systems the enterprise examines the marketing environment and adept itself to it. But it has to accomplish not only the micro environment consisting of the world of business, providers, competitors and different groups of interest but also of the macro environment consisting of a demographic, economic-political lawful technological and political-environmental and socio-cultural factors of influence.

According to Fritz (2017) the region has to commit all its forces and factors of influence of the marketing environment to a development of a marketing strategy and an effective offer of value. Organization, execution and steering of the marketing activities are influenced by culture and norms of the region. The factors of influence are visualized according to Kotler et al. (1995)

#### **The four dimensions of CRM implementations:**

Focusing on key customers: According to Peppers (1993) only a reward oriented system with a customer concentrated structure can strive for a successfully implementation of CRM. All interactions with key customers should reflect the company wide CRM focus. The main goal is to obtain an intensive customer relationship which leads to a certain indispensability with regard to most profitable customers. By offering more personalized products and services and internal support for key customer relationships can also produce and cultivate long term customers.

A very exact definition of customer satisfaction was given by Homburg et al. (2001). Customer satisfaction is the cognitive and emotional evaluation of all experiences with a certain offer and of his products or rendering services.

#### **Customer retention**

According to Meyer et al. (1995) retention comprises not only the behavior so far but also the intension of behavior in relation to the offer and his product. To the behavior so far counts the real shown behavior and the behavior of further recommendation. The intension of behavior should be marked by the intention of recommendation, repurchases and cross-selling. From the perspective of demanding customer motives are often very different. Psychological facts mean a customer with a special brand. Situation concerned facts mean that the customer can obtain the desired products very easy. The lawful facts provide a contract within a period of time between customer and the “card of enjoy”. According to Brown (2000) economical facts means that the cost of a product is lower, compared with a comparable product of competition. Technological facts mean the usage of software which benefits the requirements of the customer.

Organizations are enabled to more efficiency and effectiveness by continuous advances in IT. According to Butler et al. (2000) they are able to direct their CRM efforts at retaining customers. CRM based technology is able to respond to the changing requirements of customers with customized offerings. This personalization of products and services produce long-term relationships to customers switching costs. By organizing their CRM operation around customer groups companies can assign direct accountability

**Methodology**

The aim of the empirical part was to increase the quality. Methods used were questionnaires, interviews, content analysis, observations and non-reactive procedures. Five interviews were conducted with the “card of enjoy” organization. In October 2017 telephone interviews with questionnaire were made with 100 companies and power partners. Furthermore 100 customers and guests were researched through questionnaires in August and September 2017. The aim was to find out the relation between CRM and relationship quality concerning satisfaction, trust, purchase intention, loyalty and quality of the “card of enjoy”. The study has developed factors which affect the enterprises and the “card of enjoy” implementation.

**Case study “Card of enjoy” implementation within the Styrian Thermal and Volcanic Region**

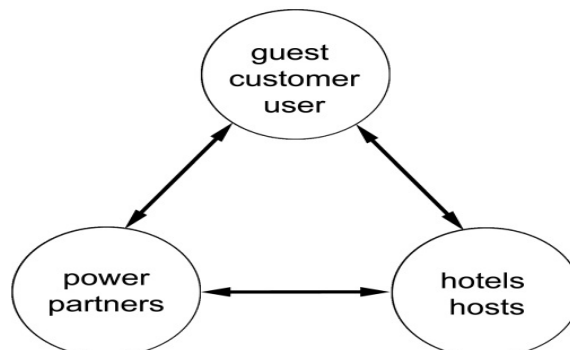
The Styrian Volcanic and Thermal Region is a border region between Austria, Slovenia and Hungary and have 125.000 inhabitants. According to Ober (2016) regional management has been implemented in the year 1995. Strategies, marketing and engagement of stakeholders brought the Styrian Volcanic Region to a high economic standard. Furthermore, the usage and knowledge of the resources of the region were important. 83 % of the enterprises have less than 10 employees. The unemployment rate is with 8 % lower than in Styria (8,3%) and Austria (9,1%). 9.000 persons are employed in tourism trade. Innovation, organization, marketing activities and transition management took place. The “card of enjoy” is a service card. 60,1 % of the guests are from Austria and they stay 2 to 3 nights.

According to Fritz (2017) from the card of enjoy association the customer and tourist is always the most important person in enterprises. The management within organizations or enterprises should never fall in a dispute with the customer because this dispute will be always won by the customer. The main aim of the “card of enjoy” is to communicate the wishes and desires of the customer. At last it must execute the desires to the customer’s satisfaction.

**Results**

Five years ago the card of enjoy was presented for the first time. The “card of enjoy” is the first card that allows a guest to visit 170 spots and tourist attractions for free. The “card of enjoy” was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012. Since then every customer receives the “card of enjoy” on their arrival and gets, as already mentioned, free entrance to cultural attraction, sports facilities and can enjoy even culinary delights.

The implementation of the “card of enjoy” is a technology-driven business process which includes a three pillar model.

**Fig. no. 3 Results of research***Source: authors*

Partner hotels pay net € 2.82 per day and person to the “card of enjoy” association. Hotels and hosts are the card exhibitors at the check-in process. Every year they include in advance the fee in their room calculation. The association of the “card of enjoy” gets at the end of every month the accounting according to the receipts. The “card of enjoy” association has a strict controlling system concerning finance and quality management. Entrepreneurs and power partners participate in the “card of enjoy” program are providers of culinary delights, regional products and tourist attractions. Every month they get their expenses back from the association of “card of enjoy”. A computer program for bookings and reservations is provided by the association and is the basis for the accounting. Guests and customers are the users and they do not have to pay any additional fees for the service of the “card of enjoy”. Following marketing activities were set out during 2017: participation at fairs like the International Tourism Board in Berlin, 55.000 pieces of the card of enjoy brochures, 4.000 guides of card of enjoy registry, 40.000 pieces of brochures of Styrian Spa Region, 50.000 brochures of goals of excursion of eastern Styria, 10.000 folders of advertisement, 15.000 travel guides. Social media like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Flickr and Google are used for permanent marketing activities. Newsletter of the card of enjoy are send to 16.500 addresses of the Styrian Spa Region and twice a month to 15.000 addresses in Europe. The strategy success lies obviously in the implementation of the soft elements like staff, skills, style which is conform to the 7-S by Pascal. 107.433 cards of enjoy were transmitted to the guests in 2017. The research shows an increasing using of the “card of enjoy” from 2012 until 2017.

**Table no. 1** Statistic of “card of enjoy” nights, cards and user

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Nights	201.332	262.028	282.458	261.872	284.197	308.832
Cards	69.426	90.916	97.120	99.461	108.522	107.433
User	105.894	146.714	150.228	148.999	167.782	169.817

Source: authors

**Table no. 2** Statistic of arrivals compared to given out cards

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Arrivals	636.976	646.788	664.861	681.475	711.574	731.238
Cards	69.426	90.916	97.120	99.461	108.522	107.433
% cards / arrivals	10,90%	14,00%	14,60%	14,60%	15,20%	14,70%

Source: authors

**Table no. 3** Statistic of overnight stays compared to given out cards

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
regional overnight stays	2.166.720	2.164.553	2.185.169	2.177.301	2.260.771	2.292.112
card overnight stays	201.332	262.028	282.458	261.872	284.197	308.832
%	9,30%	12,10%	12,90%	12,00%	12,57%	13,50%

Source: authors

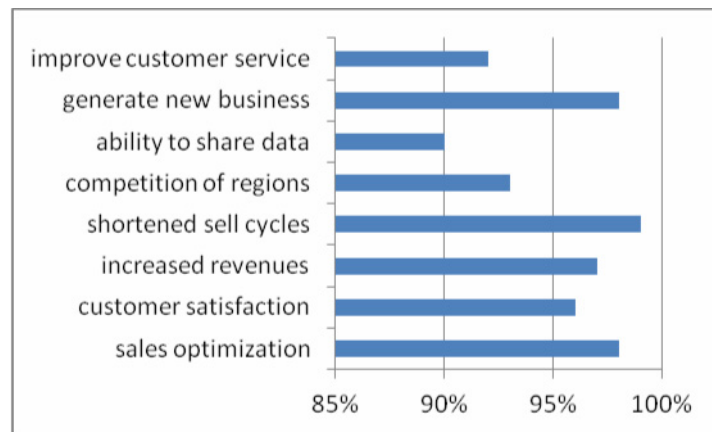
TOP 5 - In 2017 these are the most visited places of the card of enjoy:

1. lake Stubenberg
2. animal Zoo Herberstein
3. summer toboggan run of Koglhof
4. edible animal garden Zotter
5. outdoor pool Fürstenfeld

**Fig. no. 4 Top 5**

*Source: authors*

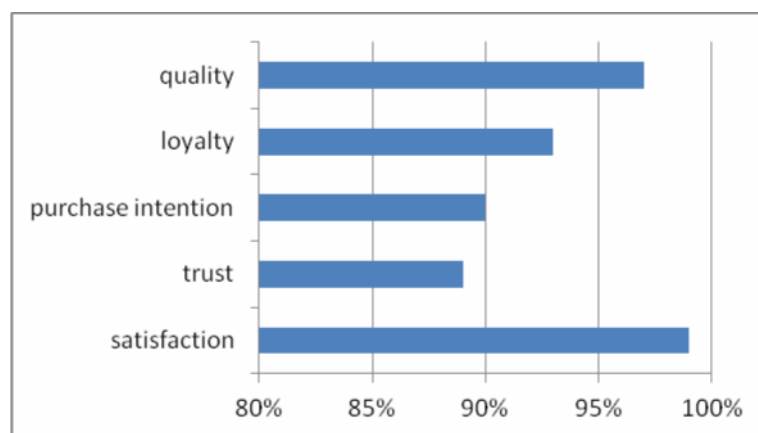
The research results of 100 companies (power partners and hotels) in the Styrian Volcanic Region and Styrian Thermal Region showing the reasons why companies implemented the “card of enjoy” as a CRM tool.



**Fig. no. 5 Analysis of power partners and hotels –**

*Source: authors*

100 customers and guests were interviewed through questionnaires in August and September 2017 to find out the relation between CRM and relationship quality concerning satisfaction, trust, purchase intention, loyalty and quality of the “card of enjoy”.



**Fig. no. 6 Analysis of customers and guests**

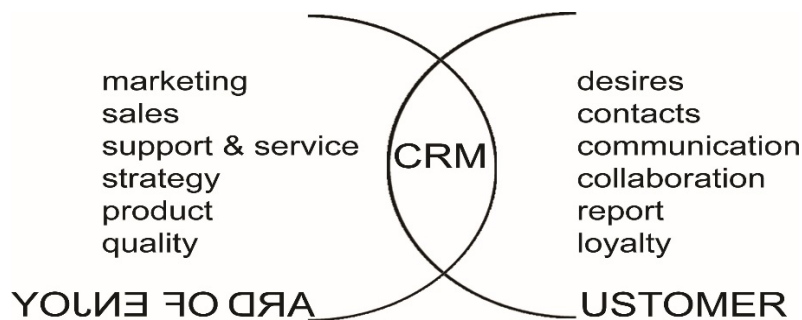
*Source: authors*

The study found out that customer’s need for CRM attraction, trust in service and quality. The relationship between customer, hotels and power partners depends on a high level of satisfaction. With the introduction of the “card of enjoy” the aim was the customers retention into the region to bind customer to the regional charm of the landscape and to induce them to frequent visits.

According to Fritz (2017) the competition between regions is very high. For this reason CRM, relationship quality and lifetime value became important. The “card of enjoy” is improving steadily to satisfy the needs of customers, power partners and hotels. The aim is to develop a stronger network of the regional touristic offer. To increase also the interest of tourists from bigger distances to convince them with an abundant an interesting offer.

**Conclusions**

The expression supply and demand fulfills in the Styrian Spa and Volcanic Region its meaning. The 170 offers with their possibilities of overnights and encouragements in different ways in Europe because the card is free of charge for the tourist. The relationship between customer and “card of enjoy” according to the research of 100 companies and 100 guests shows:



**Fig. no.7 Relationship “card of enjoy” and customer**

Source: authors

The rates of overnight stays in the region could be increased considerably. According to Riener (2017) the value added of the region is at the moment 350 million Euros and the vision for the region until 2030 is 500 million Euros.

The research shows that the implementation of CRM could improve customer’s satisfaction and retention rate. The framework is based on marketing and market share. Customer satisfaction is linked to individual relationships with customers, distribution and suppliers. Fritz (2017) refers to maximizing “lifetime customer share” through customer retention and customer profitability. According to the Harvard Business Review (2001) for a CRM program a customer strategy is needed. Within the Styrian Spa and Volcanic Region a business process and an individual CRM culture is established. Different integration challenges contributed to build customer relationships and a successful implementation of the “card of enjoy”.

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