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Management Summary

At the time this thesis is being written the customers are flooded from promotions and different possibilities to buy goods and services. With this abundance of choices, the customers become less loyal towards their suppliers and aren't afraid to change. On the other hand, the products become generic. One answer to fill the gap between the decrease of the customers' loyalty and the generalization of the products is to improve the service to the customers.

The omnichannel is nowadays one way of improving this service and to have a competitive advantage towards the competitors. In order to offer a high quality level of service to the customers in the new omnichannel context, the retailers need to know their customers and leverage all the information about them. For this purpose, the CRM plays a crucial role but its implementation is a challenge for the retailers and even more for a conservative and regulated business like the pharmacies.

The goal of this thesis is to answer the following questions:

Q1) Which methodology should be used by a retail company to conduct the centralization of its customer data in a CRM?

Q2) Which are the aspects to take in consideration for an omnichannel strategy?

Q3) Is a CRM a requirement for the omnichannel?

This thesis explains the strategy shift of the Swiss pharmacy retailing industry towards an omnichannel environment and the need of a CRM system in such a transformation. The literature review enabled to understand the role of the CRM and to define the CRM methodology. This methodology has been applied to the case of GaleniCare, the largest pharmacy chain of Switzerland. During this case study interviews were conducted with nine key stakeholders of GaleniCare in charge of the customer relationships in order to validate the methodology and to elaborate the answers of the thesis:

A1) The methodology proposed in this thesis is based on the CRM-Iris methodology of Chalmeta (2006) and on the technochange management strategy of Markus (2004). This methodology includes 11 activities and focuses first on the business needs (customer strategy and processes of interactions with the customers) before talking about the CRM IT system. With its methodic top down approach and its consideration for all the processes involving the customer, this strategy is well suited for the centralization of the customer data for the omnichannel retailing.

A2) The information about the customer has to follow him on his journey over the channels. The omnichannel doesn't require much more information as the classical offline business except these two specific information: the different addresses of the customers and the tracking of the customers among the different channels. The quality and the integration of the information about the customers is a key success factor.

A3) One of the main prerequisites for the omnichannel is the knowledge of the customers and the integration and the leverage of this information among all channels; the customer has to be uniquely defined and its information should be useable for any activities or analysis independently of the channels. As the core functions of the CRM – centralization of the customer data and of integrated marketing tools – allow to answer these needs we can argue that an integrated CRM linked with all the channels is a requirement for the omnichannel.

How to centralize the customer data for the omnichannel retailing? The case of a pharmacy chain
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Furthermore this thesis points out the need for the introduction of a CRM at GaleniCare in order to link the customer information between its 300 pharmacies and its e-commerce platforms. The purpose would be to have a 360° view of the customer independently of the channels.

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