

APPLYING MIRRORING IN THE CUSTOMER RELATIONS PROCESS OF AN ORGANIZATION

Ph.D. Iosif Cornel Marian

National Institute of Statistics, Romania, Suceava Branch
cornel.iosif.1@gmail.com

Abstract: *The process is managed in the organization with the help of CRM (customer relationship management). This process acts on two directions: interacting with the customer and collecting information on the customer. The mirroring technique in the neuro-linguistic programming tool (NLP) can improve the first direction of action of CRM – the interaction method with the clients of the organization. Mirroring through its two forms, physical and natural mirroring, allows the optimization of the communication process to improve the care offered by the organization to the customers. The better this NLP technique is used, the better the results are.*

JEL classification: M10, M21

Key words: mirroring, customer relations process, organization, neuro linguistic-programming

1. Introduction

NLP oferă o metodă de a privi dincolo de anumite comportamente, dar permite și translatarea procesului de gândire de la o persoană cu performanțe superioare la o alta cu performanțe medii. Sursa principală de informații o reprezintă experiența personală, atât la nivel conștient cât și inconștient (Ready & Burton, 2008, p.7).

NLP este o modalitate de a codifica și de a reproduce excelența. NLP este un proces de formare a tiparelor conștiente și inconștiente, tipare care sunt unice la nivel de individ, astfel încât permit atingerea potențialului maxim al unei persoane. NLP urmărește identificarea elementelor principale de limbaj și de comportament ale unei persoane precum și modul de codificare și reproducere a structurilor ce vizează excelența. NLP urmărește formarea unor tipare comportamentale atât conștiente cât și inconștiente pentru a atinge o eficiență cât mai crescută. De asemenea, NLP oferă atât instrumentele cât și aptitudinile pentru ca starea de excelență să poată fi atinsă. NLP, prin instrumentele de care dispune, permite identificarea structurii unui comportament și aplicarea procesului din cadrul acestuia în alt domeniu în scopul îmbunătățirii rezultatelor.

NLP mai este definit ca fiind o știință ce se ocupă atât cu studierea performanței cât și a modului în care aceasta poate fi copiată și transferată și adaptată de către alte persoane. Realitatea obiectivă pe care o percepe fiecare persoană se realizează prin credințe, valori, metaprograme, iar pe de altă parte sistemul senzorial culege informațiile din mediu cu ajutorul organelor de simț - vizual, auditiv, chinestezic, olfactiv, gustativ. NLP utilizează diferite tehnici pentru a crește rata de reacție a unei persoane față de anumiți factori interni sau externi (Vaknin, 2011, p.20). Un comportament eficace conduce pe de o parte la creșterea motivației, iar pe de altă parte la depășirea mai ușoară a diferitelor obstacole pe care o persoană le poate întâlni în atingerea unui anumit obiectiv. Astfel, comportamentul persoanei respective se îmbunătățește deoarece motivația de a face anumite schimbări crește și ea.

The assistance process of customer relations is important for the organization and helps to correctly manage both the data base and the customer relations. The process is managed in the organization with the help of CRM (customer relationship management). This

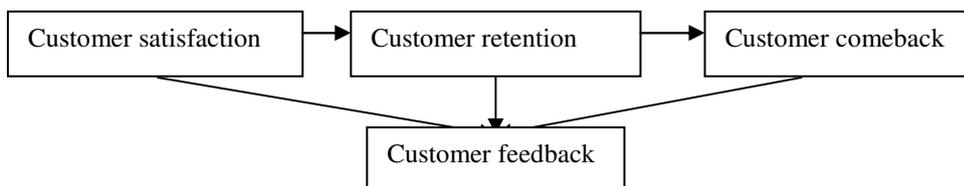
process acts on two directions: interacting with the customer and collecting information on the customer. The mirroring technique in the neuro-linguistic programming tool (NLP) can improve the first direction of action of CRM – the interaction method with the clients of the organization. This way the final goal of using mirroring is that of improving relations between customers and organization, of increasing the quality of feedback and of determining clients to come back and more often in the organization. Neuro-linguistic programming uses different techniques to increase the reaction rate of a certain person faced with certain internal or external factors (Vaknin, 2011, p.20). NLP is an analysis form both for experience and human communication (Bandler and Grinder, 1979, p.11).

The customer care process represents all the efforts from the production, marketing and sales department. If this process is not well administrated, then all the efforts of the company are not materialized in the way the company expects. The more the customer is unsatisfied the higher the probability is that he/she quits the services of the company.

2. The process of customer relations and the performances of the organization

The customer relations process is important to the organization because it allows it to adapt quicker and easier to the changes in the environment having as a final goal the better satisfaction of the needs that customers have. For this purpose, the customer relations care process considers three aspects: “building, maintaining, developing and optimizing customer relations (Căpățână, A., The management of customer relations, training support, p. 4)”, having as finality the identification and compensation of satisfying the customers’ needs.

This diagram highlights the accent of the organization on the feedback as a measuring instrument of the satisfaction efforts of the customers’ needs. The better the feedback, the higher the retention and comeback rate of the customers. Feedback can be measured through questionnaires delivered to the customers at a certain interval from the moment they were in the organization.



Source: Diagram adapted from Căpățână, A., The management of customer relations, training support, p. 5

Img. no. 1 Approaching customers through the management of customer relations

Customer feedback = f (customer satisfaction, customer retention, customer comeback). The feedback is directly proportional to the variables calculated. If one of the variables is 0 than the feedback will be 0.

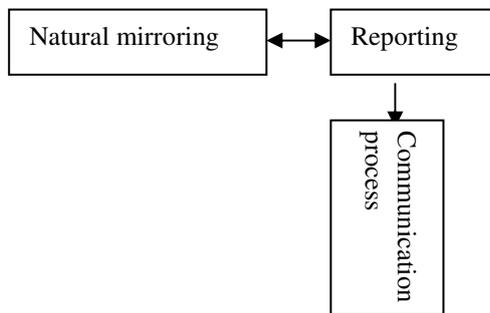
An efficient management of customer relations allows both the particularization of relations offered as well as building informal connections between organization and customers with the goal of increasing the number of retention customers because they represent the most important resource of an organization’s growth. The companies that are client oriented consider several aspects: bringing clients back in the organization, personalizing the relations between organization and customers, offering quality services, and using a proactive attitude of employees.

3. Using mirroring in the customer relations process of the organization

NLP, using the elements of the tool has the objective of identifying the processes based on elements of the VAK representative system, their combining method, language typology or behaviour. Certain strategies are created and used to reach a certain objective through programming.

Mirroring allows for certain elements of the behaviour of a person to be reflected in the exterior (Dilts and Lozier, 2000, p.119). Mirroring allows for certain experiences to be activated considering a certain particular context (Dilts, 1996, p.129). On the other hand, mirroring allows adapting the behaviour of two persons. Mirroring and reporting are in a directly conditionally relation – leading to the creation of an optimal communication relation between two persons. Mirroring can be natural or physical.

Natural mirroring allows a person to report himself/ herself to another based on: body posture, language, general manifestation.



Source: Prepared by the author

Img. no. 2 Mirroring - reporting relation in the communication process

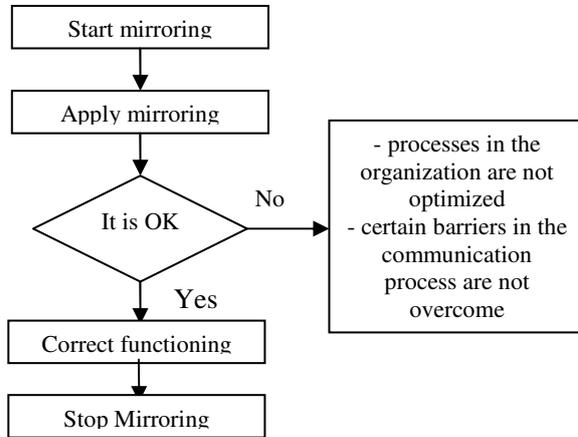
Natural mirroring is easy to use, its purpose being that of achieving a quick adaptation of the different behaviours to the changes in the environment and thus of allowing to quickly reach an assumed objective. Natural mirroring focuses on information transmitted through the body of that person – voice tone, body posture, speaking accent, all leading to the imitation of the other.

Physical mirroring finally represents a reaction of the person to what happens to another person. Compared to natural mirroring, physical mirroring acts directly on the persons involved creating connections between them. Physical mirroring focuses especially on the non-verbal language of the persons, a fact that leads to the appearance of a certain reaction towards another person. With the help of mirroring we can identify certain modifications in the behaviour of a person, being the best way to interpret information and to report to the changes in the environment.

Considering that mirroring through its actions first targets the unconscious, because in this way actions can be identified in a real manner, and also the states of the respective person and not those simulated on the outside through behaviour. Mirroring reflects in the behaviour any change at the level of the unconscious of a person. In order for mirroring to act efficiently it must be able to generate comfort, safety, and trust to the other person.

The customer care process especially targets to assure the best conditions of the relations with the customers, solving their demands, ensuring a friendly and relaxing environment.

In image no. 3 the mirroring functioning diagram is presented. Using the mirroring in the customer care process allows: to eliminate constructions that block communication, to build a familiar environment in the relation client – organization, to easily and correctly identify the non verbal language elements, to correctly identify communication structures, to identify non-verbal language elements and use them with maximum efficiency.



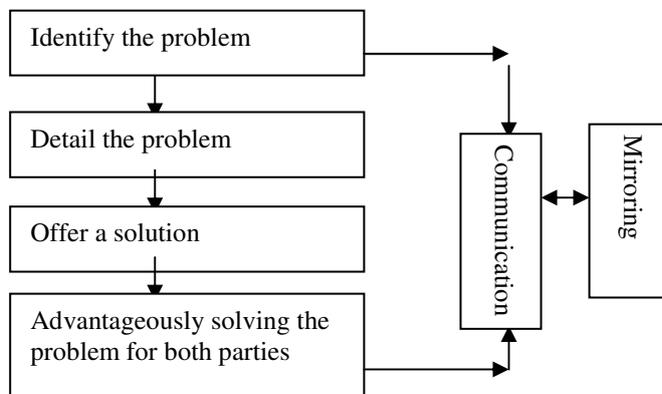
Source: Iosif, C., *The competitive advantages regarding the use of neuro linguistic programming in the management of the company*, Doctoral Dissertation, Iasi, 2012 p.87

Img. no. 3 Logical functioning diagram of mirroring

So, the better mirroring is used and adapted to the client, the better the results are and the closer they are to what to the organization desires, because mirroring first targets the non-verbal communication part, that is the unconscious and mostly sends correct information regarding the services of the organization as a whole.

4. Improvements that mirroring brings in the customer relations process

Considering that mirroring accesses the unconscious of a person, it accentuates the gathering of non-verbal information and interprets them in a way that is as correctly and as fast as possible in order not to damage information (Iosif and Socaciu, 2012, page 4) but also in order not to get old. Mirroring helps the communication process of client care because in the stage of detailing the problem it allows the identification of the best solution to solve the problem and it allows offering a particularized solution regarding the customer’s needs, his/her expectations and his/her own value system, thus eliminating many of the unsafe elements that appear in his/her behaviour.



Source: Prepared by the author

Img. no. 1 Applying the customer care process in the client communication process

This way in the customer care process “a positive attitude is manifested, respect towards the customer and most importantly a tendency to keep the customer (Rujoiu, M., *Customer care: How to efficiently approach customer care*, document accessed at the address, <http://www.traininguri.ro/customer-care-cum-acordam-eficient-asistenta-clientilor>, document accessed on 07.08.2013).” This way, the communication processes is optimized, the solutions offered are quickest and closest to the client’s needs, and mirroring offers the necessary support to achieve these things.

The mirroring technique was applied in an organization dealing with clothing trade. Two stages were undergone: during the first stage the satisfaction of customers was evaluated based on traditional techniques, then elements of mirroring technique were introduced in the company and customer satisfaction was re-evaluated reported to the same organization. The number of respondents in both cases was constant. The questionnaire in annex 1 was applied to 50 customers of a clothing trade company in order to evaluate customer satisfaction through traditional methods.

Statistics

		Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent
N	Valid	7	7	7	7	7
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		10,8571	23,2857	25,4286	20,4286	20,0000
Std. Deviation		2,79455	3,45033	3,86683	3,99404	2,58199

It can be noticed that there is a big difference between the average and the standard deviation, which means that to the data was not significant and the answers were scattered compared to the average.

After applying mirroring in the company, the questionnaire was again applied to 50 persons in the same shop and the results were:

Statistics

		Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent
N	Valid	7	7	7	7	7
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		10,4286	21,4286	24,2857	22,4286	21,4286
Std. Deviation		2,50713	3,25869	3,25137	3,35942	3,73529

It can be noticed that there is a big difference between the average and the standard deviation which means that the data is not significant and the answers are scattered compared to the average.

It can be noticed that in the table Statistics four out of five values of the standard deviation are smaller when using mirroring in the customer care process then when using traditional variants.

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46,857	4	11,714	4436446386173533,000	,000(a)
	Residual	,000	2	,000		
	Total	46,857	6			

a Predictors: (Constant), Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, Very good

b Dependent Variable: Unsatisfactory

From the ANOVA analysis, the sum of squares, the regression degree, the F test and the significance mark, the result is that there are significant differences between the variables,

regarding their use in the company, $F(2,4)= 4436446386173533,000$ and $\text{sig}<0,05$.

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	37,714	4	9,429	1662318110634364,000	,000(a)
	Residual	,000	2	,000		
	Total	37,714	6			

a Predictors: (Constant), Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, Very good

b Dependent Variable: Unsatisfactory

From the ANOVA analysis, the sum of squares, the regression degree, the F test and the significance mark, the result is that there are significant differences between the variables, regarding their use in the company, $F(2,4)= 1662318110634364,000$ and $\text{sig}<0,05$.

From the ANOVA data analysis we can see an improvement of the customer relations process in the organization after introducing certain concepts of the mirroring technique in the organization.

Dina analiza datelor se poate observa o îmbunătățire a procesului de relații cu clienții în cadrul organizației după ce au fost introduse în anumite concepte ale tehnicii oglindirii în cadrul organizației. Se observă că în tabelul Statistics patru din cinci valori ale abaterii standard sunt mai mici în cazul utilizării oglindirii în procesul de asistență a clienților decât în cazul utilizării variantelor tradiționale. Strategiile de contact sunt multi canal – internet, social media, e-mail sms, etc., activitățile sunt planificate foarte atent, se urmărește îmbunătățirea continuă a proceselor, contactele sunt gestionate și monitorizate în timp real. Pe de altă, odată cu folosirea oglindirii s-a observat o îmbunătățire a procesului de asistență a clienților în sensul că, acest instrument permite crearea unui mediu familiar consumatorilor, eliminând astfel multe dintre barierele de comunicare.

Conclusions

Mirroring through its two forms, physical and natural mirroring, allows the optimization of the communication process to improve the care offered by the organization to the customers. The better this NLP technique is used, the better the results are. From the SPSS data analysis, we can see an improvement of the customer care process after introducing elements from the mirroring technique.

Procesul de asistență a clienților urmărește îmbunătățirea relației organizației cu mediul extern, punând accent în primul rând pe factorul uman. Acesta trebuie să identifice nevoile de comunicare ale clienților, mijloacele optime de a comunica cu aceștia, să compună cel mai eficient mesaj, să îl transmită și să obțină de la ei un feedback pozitiv. Oglindirea având la bază elemente ce permit atât stabilirea de legături cu alte persoane cât și decodarea relativ rapidă a limbajului non verbal permite atât o comunicare eficientă pe baza mesajelor transmise către subconștient cât și la nivel conștient prin reconstruirea anumitor tipare, situații, familiare clientului, astfel încât feedback-ul dat de client să fie rapid și bun.

Oglindirea nu vine să înlocuiască procesul de asistență a clienților, deoarece nu are mijloacele ei de a comunica - internet, social media, e-mail sms, ci are drept principal scop îmbunătățirea rezultatelor pe care acest proces îl obține în cadrul organizației.

Folosirea oglindire în procesul de asistență a clienților conduce la îmbunătățirea următoarelor aspecte ale procesului: ajută la rezolvarea problemelor în timp real, oferind soluții pentru aproape toate situațiile cu care se confruntă organizația, ameliorează percepția organizației în rândul consumatorilor prin micșorarea timpilor de răspuns și de reacție, rezolvă în mod operativ problemele apărute în cadrul procesului de comunicare dintre clienții efectivi, potențiali și organizație.

Aceste îmbunătățiri de procese au la bază următoarele elemente: o relație bună în ceea ce privește așteptările clienților în raport cu organizația, realizarea unei relații între client și organizație, bazată pe valoare și beneficiu. Rezolvarea aspectelor negative semnalate de către clienți într-o perioadă de timp rezonabilă.

Procesul de asistență clienți este cel care face legătura dintre organizație ca entitate și mediul extern. Cu cât organizația în interiorul ei funcționează mai bine, cu atât relația asistență clienți organizație funcționează mai eficient, deoarece angajații care interacționează cu clienții potențiali și efectivi se identifică atât cu imaginea cât și cu modul general de funcționare al organizației. De cele mai multe ori, clienții identifică și etichetează o organizație în funcție de comportamentul unor angajați din cadrul procesului de asistență a clienților. Astfel, oglindirea ajută procesul de asistență a clienților să răspundă atât așteptărilor clienților cât și să conducă la o optimizare a acestui proces.

So, the more elements of the mirroring technique that are introduced in the customer care process the more it becomes improved, more efficient and generates a smaller number of failures in the relation with the customer. This way the customer relations processes using traditional methods are improved and better adapted to the customer requirements.

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ANNEX 1

Customer satisfaction evaluation questionnaire

Filling in this questionnaire is done by marking “x” in the corresponding box for the qualification and filling in the categories, where necessary.

No.	Quality the mode in which you perceived the received services	unsatisfactory	satisfactory	good	very good	excellent
1	How do you appreciate the general quality of the service rendered?					
2	How do you appreciate the time it took to supply the required service?					
3	How do you appreciate the report quality/price for the supplied service?					
4	Were your expectations confirmed by the rendered services?					
5	How were the complaints regarding rendered services treated?					
6	How do you appreciate the communication with our organization?					
7	How do you appreciate the degree of professionalism of our staff?					

Source: Questionnaire adapted from www.rna.ro/servicii/Secretariat/Chestionar.doc site accessed on 8.08.2013