

# THE ROLE OF THE RETAILERS IN CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING: A REFERENCE TO THE SPANISH CASE

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# THE ROLE OF THE RETAILERS IN CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING: A REFERENCE TO THE SPANISH CASE

## ABSTRACT

Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) is one of the most relevant Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives nowadays. Its most important characteristic is that corporate donation is conditioned by sales, that is, CRM ultimately depends on consumer behavior.

In this paper, we focus on CRM programs and its application in a specific industry: the distribution sector. Thus, our aim is to understand the fundamental features or the practice of these programs in the distribution sector in Spain, to study the role played by retailers and their possible influence on the consumer behavior, so that companies can better design these campaigns and achieve greater success.

Hence, the paper is organized as follows. First, we review the CRM conceptual framework in which the theoretical development of this work is based. Secondly, from a list of companies associated with the National Association of Large Distribution Companies (ANGED), the most representative retail association in Spain, we observe the Spanish situation and analyze the main campaigns carried out by these retailers during the last years. This information was completed consulting each retailer's website, asking them for additional information by email, and with a general Internet search. After that, we present and discuss the main results, and summarize the most relevant conclusions, as well as the theoretical contribution and managerial implications. One of the most important findings shows the retailer's influence on consumer behavior and the key role of the retailers in the success of CRM programs. Finally, we also include possible limitations and further research.

**Keywords:** Cause-related marketing, retailers, consumer behavior, corporate social responsibility

## 1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a relevant topic in the new 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is a wide and complex concept that is evolving, and it has been defined in different ways. Thus, the European Commission (2011) defines CSR as “*the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society*”. Kotler and Lee (2005) define it as “*a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources*”. AMA (2015) establishes that “*CSR is seriously considering the impact of the company’s actions and operating in a way that balances short term profit needs with society’s long term needs, thus ensuring the company’s survival in a healthy environment*”.

There are several theories that support the CSR theoretical framework. Among them, two theories stand out (Galán et al., 2013a): the Stakeholder Theory and the Resource – Advantage Theory (Ferrell, 2010).

On the one hand, the Stakeholder Theory (developed by Freeman, in 1984) considers the firm as a wide and complex network of relationships. The corporate management is directly linked to this network of relationships. It tries to harmonize different stakeholders’ interests, which are often multiple, divergent and even opposite, to create sustainable welfare and wealth for all the stakeholders, and the society in general in the long term.

On the other hand, the Resource – Advantage Theory (developed by Hunt, in 1995) establishes that competitive advantage will come from firms that developed the best resources in a heterogeneous and changing environment. Thus, the defense of business ethics and CSR could help to get the resource advantage.

Thereby, CSR is a new way of thinking, a corporate culture based on ethical management as a channel to improve the competitiveness and corporate reputation (Forética, 2002: 13). To actually get a competitive advantage, CSR should be integrated into the corporate culture, strategy and mission (Galán et al., 2013a).

Consequently, CSR has become a transcendental intangible resource for all kind of organizations. Although in an early stage CSR was mainly driven by certain large corporations, nowadays CSR is applicable to any type of business, and in all sectors.

In this work, we focus on the commercial distribution sector. We have chosen this sector because of its importance and because it is not enough studied (research on this topic is still scarce). It is a highly concentrated sector, dominated by a small number of companies (and the concentration level continues to increase). This sector has undergone a major restructuring in the last years, because of the change of trend in consumer habits and the impact of the economic crisis (Núñez, 2014). In this context, CSR has gained greater relevance, and socially responsible actions in this sector are becoming more numerous and varied.

In the specific case of commercial distribution, CSR tends to focus on three streams (ANGED, 2013; Martín, 2013; Vázquez, 2013; Galán and Galera 2014):

1. The commitment to the environment, with sustainable practices (e.g. environmental efficiency; energy saving; developing eco-efficient stores; redesigning the packaging of products to make them easier to recycle and less polluting – eco-design, use of more sustainable raw material, efficiency seals, ... -; reducing the use of plastic bags for single use; encouraging recycling, reuse, recovery and proper treatment of waste to avoid possible impacts on the environment; awareness campaigns to reduce waste; or the optimization of logistics processes – routes and supplies -).
2. The commitment to employees (e.g. maintenance of employment – job stability and security -; improving working conditions and the working environment in general; establishing measures to reconcile work and family life; equality plans; improving the employees’ skills with training and expertise courses, and internal promotion programs; offering job opportunities to various groups at risk of social exclusion; establishing internal codes of conduct; encouraging corporate volunteering; safety and prevention of occupational hazards, etc.).
3. The commitment to society, defending the consumers’ interests and taking care of customer service (e.g. commitment to saving – prices, product efficiency -; better access to purchases, facilitating credit; quality and product safety; service channels and customer information – campaigns about consumer education, responsible purchasing, and prevention of childhood obesity; consistently improving product offer-

ings to respond to new demands and putting attention to groups with specific consumer needs – low sodium products, sugar-free products, gluten-free products, lactose-free products, organic products, labeled in Braille, ... -; developing awareness campaigns on nutrition and consumption; improving accessibility to stores – removing barriers to physical and sensorial mobility -; signing cooperation agreements with various NGOs; making donations - monetary and / or in kind ones -; collaborating in humanitarian, aid and emergency campaigns; or developing sponsorship activities in different areas – cultural, artistic, sporting, or scientific ones).

In addition, also supporting suppliers, with commitment to all territories and local economies in which they operate; with the implementation of good practices in the processes of production, processing, and distribution; or with codes of conduct for contacts with suppliers.

In this paper, we will focus on this last stream. In particular, we will observe the frequent collaborations with different NGOs, which include donations of surplus food, assignment of space in the stores for the collection of products and / or funds for solidarity projects, sales of 'solidarity' products (e.g. Christmas cards from different NGOs), or awareness about certain causes.

Among the various CSR initiatives existing (see Table 1), we will focus on the so-called cause-related marketing programs, which refer to those campaigns where companies collaborate with nonprofit organizations making a contribution to a particular cause depending on the sales made (Kotler and Lee, 2005).

Our study, therefore, aims to add to knowledge in the domain of cause-related marketing (CRM), furthering the commercial distribution sector. To do this, and from a review of the extant literature to set the conceptual framework, we conducted a descriptive study of the major campaigns undertaken by retailers in Spain in recent years.

Our objective is to understand the fundamental features or the practice of these programs in the distribution sector in our country, to study the role played by retailers and their possible influence on the consumer behavior, so that companies can better design these campaigns and achieve greater success.

Hence, the paper is organized as follows. First, we review the conceptual framework in which the theoretical development of this work is based. Secondly, we describe the adopted research design and the methodology followed. After that, we present the main results, which are also brought under discussion. Finally, we summarize the most relevant conclusions that follow from the research findings, as well as the theoretical contribution and managerial implications. We also include possible limitations and further research.

**Table 1 Major CSR Initiatives**

| Initiatives                             | Main Focus   |
|---|--|
| Cause Promotions                        | Persuasive communications, to raise awareness or interest for a social cause. Emphasis on promotional strategies (focus on external communications). Target audiences, outside the organization. |
| Cause-Related Marketing                 | Contributions and support, linked to sales of the company's specific products. It depends on the action or consumer's response. It includes more communication (mainly advertising).             |
| Corporate Social Marketing              | Influence the individual's behavior changes (focus on behavior change).  |
| Corporate Philanthropy                  | 'Extending a check'. Direct contributions to a cause or a charity (cash donations and / or in kind). It is the most traditional of all corporate social initiatives.                             |
| Community Volunteering                  | Corporate volunteering service in the community (employees donate their time and talent).  |
| Socially Responsible Business Practices | Discretionary business practices and investments that support social causes to improve the community's welfare and to protect the environment.   |

Source: Adapted from Kotler and Lee (2005)

## 2. Conceptual Framework

The theoretical development of CRM is based on the evolution of the marketing concept to the social perspective (social dimension of marketing), the emergence of non-business marketing and corporate social responsibility, while other concepts used, as market orientation, marketing relationships, stakeholder orientation, holistic marketing orientation (Kotler et al, 2006) and towards sustainability (Crittenden et al., 2011; Hult, 2011; Hunt, 2011), have also encouraged the development and expansion of CRM - Galán et al. (2013a), Galán and Galera (2014).

The majority of the authors consider the origin of CRM in the eighties, in the United States<sup>1</sup>, when a series of simultaneous events occur (Austin, 2000; Galán et al., 2004):

1. Appearance and greater visibility of the so-called 'responsible consumers,' those who observe the companies behind the products they consume. And the remarks, positively or negatively, influence their buying behavior. Indeed, some of these consumers are willing to reward companies that give back to society by paying more for their goods and services (Nielsen Global Research, 2014).
2. Adoption of social responsibility by companies. Enterprises increasingly recognize CSR as a key to success, because it improves their corporate image and reputation.
3. The need of new funding sources for nonprofit organizations (the reduction of the public funding and the growing number of NGOs increase the 'competition' in the nonprofit sector).

In Spain, CRM came in the nineties. Since then, it has experienced a rapid and intense growth to, virtually, all the sectors (Galán and Galera, 2014). Nowadays, its popularity is evident in the amount spent by companies on social causes showing yearly growth of 3.4%, and totaling to \$1.84b in the USA in 2014 (IEG Sponsorship Report, 2014).

Throughout these years, the CRM definition has evolved (Galán, 2012): first, CRM was considered as a type of sales promotion; then, as an element of corporate philanthropy; and, nowadays, it is described as a CSR initiative. From Santesmases (1999), and Kotler and Lee (2005), we can define CRM as "a CSR initiative that is an agreement between a company

and an NGO to work on a social cause and thus obtain a mutual benefit. The commitment of the company focuses on contributing (financially or in kind) to the cause in terms of sales or product use (therefore, the donation will depend on consumer behavior)" - Galán et al. (2013a). Normally, the campaign is carried out for a certain product, for a particular period and for a specific NGO.

The most crucial aspect of the CRM definition (which is what most distinguishes this initiative, according to Kotler and Lee, 2005) is that the donation depends on sales (or use) of a certain product, the link between donation and product selling (transaction). That is, the levels of corporate contribution depend on consumer action (Penelas et al., 2012). Therefore, its main goal is to positively affect consumer attitudes and buying behavior (Fries et al, 2009).

The most common type of CRM is one in which a company donates a portion or percentage of every purchase made by its customers (transaction-based promotions) to an NGO. However, there are some variations on this, and not all CRM campaigns channel money to the nonprofit organization (they may be in-kind contributions: food, equipment, services, etc.) -Galán and Galera (2014).

The supported causes and / or NGOs are also varied: from fighting against different diseases (e.g. cancer), to supporting child welfare and education, combating hunger, or environmental protection.

The degree of CRM incorporation into business strategy has also evolved (Galán et al., 2013a): from applying it to usual products, to modify the product linked to the campaign to be socially responsible, and even changing the corporate culture so that the cause (support to cause) is integrated in it. The most common types of product links and contribution agreements are summarized in Table 2.

According to various studies, a number of consequences for the company are caused by changes in consumer behavior (Galán and Galera, 2014): when price and quality are equal, solidarity becomes a decisive factor for individuals (purchases are increased); the testing of new products is also promoted, and the acceptance of existing ones is enhanced. In addition, consumer skepticism decreases, because NGOs have great credibility (their link with the campaigns 'calms' to potential buyers, who could think that the company only seeks to exploit a good cause to sell more, to achieve an image

**Table 2** *The most common types of product links and contribution agreements*

| TYPES   | EXAMPLES   |
|---|--|
| According to the donation type                      | A specific amount of money for each product sold                                       |
|   | A specific amount of product (good or service) for each application                    |
|   | A percentage of a product sales or transaction is donated to the NGO                   |
|   | A portion of an item sale will be donated to a charity (without specifying the amount) |
|   | The company adjusts the consumer contributions relating to the product                 |
| According to the number of firm's products involved | A specific product   |
|   | Some products  |
|   | All the products   |
| According to the duration of the campaign           | A specific period of time (short-term program)   |
|   | For an indefinite period (long-term program)   |
| According to the chosen cause                       | Health   |
|   | Childhood  |
|   | Basic needs (e.g. combating hunger)  |
|   | Environment  |
|   | Other causes   |
| According to the geographical scope of the cause    | Local scope  |
|   | Regional scope   |
|   | National scope   |
|   | International scope  |
|   | Global scope   |
| According to the number of NGOs involved            | One NGO  |
|   | Some NGOs  |
| According to who pays the cost of the campaign      | The company pays the cost  |
|   | Both consumer and company pay the cost   |
|   | Consumer pays the cost   |

Source: Adapted from Galán et al. (2013a)

washing', or to output low quality products). CSR is also increasingly important to the competitiveness of enterprises. It can bring benefits in terms of risk management, tax incentives, cost savings, access to capital (attracting good investors), stakeholder relationships (and customer relationships, in particular), human resource management (employee motivation, loyalty, commitment, and productivity), access to the media, and innovation capacity (Galán et al., 2013a; European Commission, 2015).

Thus, consumers identify themselves with the company, considering that it offers social and ethical values (the company is recognized as a socially responsible organization, involved with society), thus promoting trust and, consequently, generating greater satisfaction (individuals feel better when they buy these products, and because participation in a good cause is easy and little effort is required). Thus, an emotional link is created between the company and its consumers, by sharing values. In turn, this leads to an increasing number of customers:



attracting new customer segments, fostering purchase repetition, and leading to greater customer loyalty to the brand or company (Galán and Galera, 2014).

In the particular case of the retailers, CRM also promotes cooperation and commitment among channel members, improving long-term relationships. Sometimes, what is known as a “domino effect” also occurs: when a retailer adopts a socially responsible activity, other retailers copy and imitate that activity to remain competitive and not to be out of the market.

And, in the specific case of the supermarkets, they can increase the number of visitors and, consequently, their sales: because new consumers enter these establishments looking for the solidarity product, as do the regular customers. All of them usually buy other products besides the “solidarity” product or the product that supports a specific cause (Galán and Galera, 2014).

### **3. Research Design, Methodology, and Results**

#### **3.1 Research Design and Methodology**

Our research aims to review the situation in Spain and analyze the main CRM campaigns carried out by the commercial distribution companies in recent years. We also study the role of retailers in such programs and consider how they can affect the consumer behavior. To do this, we consulted the National Association of Large Distribution Companies’ (ANGED2) website to obtain a list of organizations associated.

ANGED is the most representative retailing association, in Spain. It offers the widest and most complete range of retail formats, products and brands in all categories: food, home, electronics, textiles, leisure, culture and services. Moreover, companies associated with ANGED have assumed a firm CSR commitment.

After we consulted each retailer’s website to see what CRM campaigns they had carried out in the last years, we also sent them emails to complete the information about the campaigns. Finally, we searched for more information about these campaigns on the Internet (Google, specifically).

Finally, we analyzed the total of 17 companies which were ANGED members in 2014. We found 23 CRM

campaigns that had been carried out since 2007 by some of these organizations (see Table 3).

#### **3.2 Results**

Analyzing the information collected, we obtained the following results:

- Virtually all the companies carry out CSR activities, although we only found 6 retailers that explicitly expressed that they have developed CRM campaigns. So CRM is not the most used CSR activity by distribution organizations in Spain.

This result coincides with Diaz’s (2013) results, which neither highlight CRM as the main CSR activity in Spain. Instead, the development of awareness campaigns (e.g. about nutrition, consumption, environment, etc.), and cooperation in humanitarian aid or emergency campaigns stand out as main CSR actions.

- Out of the 23 analyzed CRM campaigns, 15 belonged to Carrefour. Therefore, we can say that Carrefour is the leading retailer in this type of CSR initiatives in Spain.
- Some companies develop CRM campaigns directly, while others, such as Carrefour and Ikea, prefer to do them through their own Foundations.
- NGOs that collaborate with retailers in Spain are varied. They range from local NGOs to international NGOs, although the ones that operate nationwide stand out. The most requested NGO was the Food Bank.

This is coherent, because there is a close relationship between the company (e.g. a supermarket), the cause (e.g. avoiding malnutrition), the donation (e.g. food for people in need), and the NGO (e.g. Food Bank).

- Companies maintain a long-term relationship with some NGOs, developing several campaigns during the year, or repeating these campaigns in successive years (e.g. the Food Bank, the Spanish Red Cross ...).
- Causes are also varied. The most outstanding ones are those related to diseases (e.g. autism, cerebral palsy, rare diseases, etc.) and food (providing food to people in need). Unlike other

Table 3 Main CRM campaigns carried out by retailers in Spain

| Company                            | NGO   | Campaign  | Comments   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Lidl                               | SOS Children  | 'Solidarity Turrón <sup>3</sup> ' (2011)  | LIDL donated 5 cents to SOS Children per each DOR 'turrón' sold.   |
|                                    | Food Bank   | 'Solidarity Turrón' (2012)  | LIDL donated 100 g. of food to the Food Bank per each DOR 'turrón' sold.   |
| Carrefour<br>(Foundation)          | Spanish Federation of Food Banks  | 'Kilo Operation' (2 times per year)   | Per each kilo donated by consumers, Carrefour donated another one.   |
|                                    | Local Food Banks  | 'The Solidarity Kilometer' (2013)   | For each kilometer cycled by citizens (Carrefour installed bicycles at various points), Carrefour donated 1 kilo of food. Thus, if they manage to finish a fictitious 3 km. stage, Carrefour made an additional contribution (10 kilos of food). |
|                                    | ASPACE (Confederation of care entities to cerebral palsy in Spain)                | 'Solidarity Dinner Service' (2008 & 2009)   | By selling an exclusive dinner set, 4 Euros (from selling price) were for the project; and by selling a breakfast set or a kit of glasses and cups, 2 Euros.   |
|                                    | Different local NGOs  | 'We create illusions together'  | Sale of adhesives and bright hangings to personalize mobile phones   |
|                                    | Confederation Autism Spain & Spanish Federation of Parents of Persons with Autism | 'Get on Board for Autism' (2007, 2008 & 2009)   | Selling a collection of 155 Mortadelo & Filemon's comics (1 Euro from the sale of each copy was to the project).   |
|                                    | Spanish Federation of Neuromuscular Disease                                       | Preparation and publication of the Guide about Neuro-muscular Disease: information and support to families (2008) | By purchasing 2 paperbacks (of any Edition), the citizen could buy a 'solidarity' book for 1 Euro more.  |
|                                    | Spanish Federation of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Associations                 | 'Spina Bifida in School' (2008 & 2009)  | By purchasing any children's movie, customers could acquire one of the 'solidarity' Lunnis for 1.5 Euros more.   |
|                                    |   | 'A book for a dream' (since 2009)   | Sale of an exclusive collection of 30 Disney titles (1 Euro from sale price was allocated to the project).   |
|                                    | Spanish Red Cross   | 'Solidarity back to school' (September, since 2009)   | Carrefour donated the same amount of school supplies that customers had given.   |
|                                    | Make-a-Wish*Ilusiones Spain Foundation  | 'Make a wish' (2010)  | By selling each 'Solidarity' Walt Disney DVD, 1 Euro was allocated to the project.   |
| Spanish Association Against Cancer | 'Link to life' (2010)   | By purchasing 2 paperbacks, Carrefour donated 1 Euro to the program.  |  |



|                   |                                       |   |   |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
|                   | Spanish Federation of Cystic Fibrosis | 'Give them air' (2011)  | By purchasing 2 paperbacks, Carrefour donated 1 Euro to the program.                                  |
|                   | Down Spain                            | 'Do Tic Down' (since November 2012)   | By the sale of the Sunrise Solidarity bracelet, 1 Euro was allocated to the program.                  |
|                   | Bocalan Foundation                    | 'Solidarity Footprints' (2013)  | Bear puppies for sale.  |
|                   | Spanish Federation of Rare Diseases   | A Nuco, a Hope' (2013)  | By purchasing a Nuco (a Teddy from Famosa), the profit (1 Euro) was allocated to this initiative.     |
| El Corte Ingles   | Spanish Federation of Food Banks      | 'Who says books do not feed'  | A percentage of the paperback sales was allocated for the NGO.  |
|                   |                                       | National Campaign of the Food Banks (November 29-30, 2013; several times in 2014) | Collection of food purchased by its customers.  |
| Cortefiel Group   | Children's Hearts                     | 'Congenital Heart Disease Conference' (2013)                                      | Profits from sales of children's books (Tina's books, by Araceli Segarra) were allocated to the NGO.  |
| Eroski            | Food Bank / Unicef / Intermon Oxfam   | 'Solidarity Reusable Bag'   | The entire profits from the sale of this bag (1 Euro) were allocated among three charitable projects. |
| Ikea (Foundation) | Save the Children / Unicef            | 'Soft toys for education' (November – December, since 2003)                       | 1 Euro for every soft toy sold, for these NGOs.   |
|                   | UNHCR                                 | 'LED light bulbs' (February 3 – March 29, 2014)                                   | For each LED bulb sold, Ikea Foundation would donate 1 Euro to the NGO.                               |

Source: Research results

- sectors (e.g. cosmetics – see Galán et al., 2004), the cancer does not appear as the main disease in such campaigns.
- The most common product linked to these campaigns is food (this is a specific feature of this sector). It is followed by toys, books and DVDs.
  - With regard to the available information, Carrefour has been the company that has provided the most complete information, both through its website and via email. However, other companies did not provide any information.
- Anyway, more information could have been provided in all cases. This is a key to transparency and, in turn, to the success of the CRM campaign.

- Generally, the website is the preferred means by businesses to provide information about CRM campaigns they carry out. The information provided at the point of sale (posters, volunteers) is also important.
- In these campaigns, the donation has been sometimes monetary and sometimes in kind (for example, when food is donated to Food Banks). For monetary donations, the amount ranges from 5 cents (Lidl) to 4 Euros (Carrefour). But the most repeated amount is 1 Euro.
- A particular time does not stand out to carry out these campaigns, although November and December are the most repeated months.

This is also a difference from other sectors, which are especially focused on the Christmas period (Galán et al., 2004).

- It is usual for consumers to assume, partially or entirely, the cost of the campaign. For example, individuals are usually those who pay an additional amount for the cause, or who buy food for the Food Bank.

This is not so common in other sectors (e.g. the financial sector), where companies usually pay the donation to the cause.

#### 4. Conclusions

Throughout these three decades of existence, CRM has grown rapidly. It has experienced a great diversification, reaching almost all sectors and incorporating new technologies (e.g. SMS, websites, social networks, etc.). Its influence on consumer perceptions and buying habits can provide a competitive advantage (based on differentiation).

Our descriptive study has revealed that CSR, in general, and CRM, in particular, are becoming a usual strategy for retailers. Carrefour, through its own foundation, is the distribution company that has carried out the most CRM campaigns in Spain. Information about CRM initiatives is usually offered on retailers' websites, and also at the point of sale. It is common for consumers to pay the cost of the campaign (partially or entirely) in this sector. Different NGOs collaborate with retailers in Spain. The most outstanding causes are related to diseases and food for people in need. In addition, donation is sometimes monetary, and sometimes in kind.

Some considerations and managerial implications for these companies are derived from these findings. As the corporate motives can be questioned, CRM programs should be credible. Credibility can be achieved by ensuring consumers that the company has not increased the product price or has not reduced the product quality. Also, showing that the program is not an image 'washing', there is a long-term commitment, and codes of conduct are observed. And, of course, transparency, that is, providing complete information about CRM campaigns.

The creation of their own foundations by businesses has been sometimes criticized. Firms are accused of creating them to develop socially responsible actions themselves without having to submit to the NGOs' demands (Galán, 2013). Consequently, retailers that have their own foundations should take

care of this aspect and demonstrate that their goal is not to avoid the external control of NGOs.

The retailer role is critical in many CRM campaigns. Retailers must take special care to promote the campaigns at the point of sale, offering specific and sufficient information about the current CRM programs. They have to complement and highlight the information that should already appear on the packaging and / or labeling of the solidarity products, and reinforce the generally favorable consumer attitudes toward CRM.

Although the majority of companies could develop and implement a CRM initiative, according to different authors (see, for example, Kotler and Lee, 2005), those that have a greater chance of success are those products with large mass markets, with large customer bases, and large and well established channels. Hence the distribution companies are one of the best positioned to participate in these programs.

Other studies (e.g. Galán and Galera, 2014) showed that companies can choose among a wide range of causes, but it is important that the cause be consistent with the company, the NGO, and the product linked to the CRM program. Again, causes chosen by retailers are usually coherent (e.g. food = Carrefour + Food Bank).

Consequently, CRM should be considered by companies for the numerous associated benefits: it can influence consumer attitudes and behavior, enhance the image and corporate reputation, increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, increase sales and benefit society at the same time. Then, CRM should become indispensable in the current competitive environment, as an important source of competitive advantage.

Finally, we consider that the collaboration and involvement of retailers in CRM campaigns are essential to be a success. For example, in the case of large stores or supermarkets, information, promotion and attractive presentations of the CRM campaigns at the point of sales (e.g. with posters, volunteers, ...), the availability of the solidarity product in the stores (with sufficient stocks to satisfy the demand), visibility, space and place on the shelves, close to the cash desk, etc. could be decisive to encourage consumer participation in the CRM campaign, by allowing the possibility to work with a particular NGO, and even participating in different initiatives simultaneously. Moreover, retailers sometimes take

the initiative, participating directly in such campaigns with their own brands (store brands).

All research studies have boundaries and limitations, and this study does as well. Although our data collection methodology is appropriate for our study, and ANGED is the most important and representative retail association in Spain, this is not enough. We need to continue looking for other associations to complete our list, because there are many SMEs that do not belong to ANGED and they have adopted CSR activities.

It was by definition not a random sample; that is, each member of the population did not have an equal probability of being asked to participate in our study. The generalization of our findings, then, are limited to the extent that our sample is unrepresentative of the general population with respect to characteristics that would have moderating effects on our findings.

To conclude, we propose the development of new studies and other research related to CRM. For example, we believe it would be interesting to repeat

the study at the international level, making a comparison among countries. We could compare CRM applied by Spanish retailers with CRM applied by others (mainly, in Anglo-Saxon countries, or in other European ones) to observe the possible cultural influence (e.g. contrasting individualistic and collectivist cultures, because cultural values can influence consumer attitudes toward CRM and subsequent behavior).

Thus, future research is needed to better understand CRM campaigns in the retail sector. We hope, therefore, that future research will build upon this study and further expand our knowledge in this sector. As studies that analyze the role of commercial distribution companies in CRM are still scarce, we specifically propose to study such campaigns more in depth and along two streams: (1) retailers as key partners in successful CRM campaigns (from a relationship marketing approach), and (2) retailers as companies that take the initiative and lead CRM campaigns (a more comprehensive analysis of the CRM programs carried out in Spain, including other companies that do not belong to ANGED).

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## (ENDNOTES)

- 1 In 1983, the American Express campaign to collaborate in the Statue of Liberty restoration (donating one cent for every transaction made with the credit card anywhere in the country, and one dollar for every new credit card issued) was the first to be called 'cause-related marketing'. However, a year earlier, the company had already made a similar campaign to extend the use of the credit card, but only in San Francisco (the donations were made to various local arts organizations).
- 2 ANGED is the Spanish acronym.
- 3 'Turrón' is a typical Spanish Christmas sweet. DOR is a LIDL's brand store.

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## **ULOGA TRGOVACA NA MALO U MARKETINGU OPĆE DOBROBITI: OSVRT NA ŠPANJOLSKI SLUČAJ**

### **SAŽETAK**

Marketing opće dobrobiti (cause-related marketing - CRM) danas je jedna od najvažnijih inicijativa društveno odgovornoga poslovanja (corporate social responsibility - CSR). Njegova najvažnija karakteristika je to da je korporativna donacija uvjetovana prodajom, odnosno da CRM u konačnici ovisi o ponašanju potrošača.

U ovome radu usredotočit ćemo se na programe i primjenu CRM-a u određenoj gospodarskoj grani: sektoru distribucije. Cilj nam je razumjeti temeljne značajke ili praksu tih programa u sektoru distribucije u Španjolskoj, istražiti ulogu trgovaca na malo i njihov mogući utjecaj na ponašanje potrošača kako bi poduzeća mogla unaprijediti te kampanje i poboljšati svoj uspjeh.

Rad je organiziran na sljedeći način. Na početku rada razmatra se konceptualni okvir CRM-a na kojemu se temelji teorijski dio ovoga rada. Potom se na osnovi popisa poduzeća udruženih u najreprezentativnije maloprodajno udruženje u Španjolskoj - Nacionalno udruženje velikih distribucijskih poduzeća (National Association of Large Distribution Companies - ANGED), promatramo situaciju u Španjolskoj i analiziramo glavne kampanje trgovaca tijekom posljednjih godina. Informacije su prikupljene s mrežnih stranica svakoga od tih poduzeća, traženjem dodatnih objašnjenja putem e-pošte te pretraživanjem interneta. Nakon toga slijedi prezentacija i rasprava o glavnim rezultatima, sažetak najvažnijih zaključaka, kao i teorijska razmatranja i implikacije na upravljanje. Jedan od najvažnijih zaključaka ukazuje na utjecaj trgovaca na malo na ponašanje potrošača i njihovu ključnu ulogu u uspjehu programa CRM-a. Na kraju rada navode se moguća ograničenja istraživanja i ističe potreba za daljnjim istraživanjem.

**Ključne riječi:** marketing opće dobrobiti, trgovci na malo, ponašanje potrošača, društveno odgovorno poslovanje