



the hearts & minds client centric strategy

AN APPROACH TO ACHIEVING
SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GROWTH



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About this Book

Growth is not an option but an imperative now. Digitization and globalization have spurred competition in every sector, and clients have become very demanding.

Growth can mean different things to different people: YoY revenue growth, increasing EBITDA margin, increasing client base, increasing revenue from key accounts, increasing sales win rates, low customer churn, etc. Different strategies can help you achieve this growth. Now-a-days, "growth hacking strategies" are very popular. However, such growth is sporadic, exciting, but not sustainable. In fact, they create long-term stress in the system.

Is there a definitive way to achieve sustainable business growth? That is the question answered in this book.

Is this book for you?

There are several different approaches or strategies to accomplish this. Certainly, it depends on the various internal and external factors. For example, if a company is in deep financial debt and not able to fund its growth, the solution is to get access to the necessary funding.

In this book, we aren't talking about such specific interventions. Instead, the pursuit is to explore an all-weather growth strategy that is based on 'true assets' that every company possesses. The true assets of any company are not the items on its balance sheet, but rather the company's clients. Businesses exist because of their clients, and they grow by leveraging their 'clients'. When any business helps its clients' succeed, they succeed in their business, and such growth is sustainable and assured for the future. The "hearts & minds" client-centric strategy is based on this principle.

So, is this book for you?

If you fit into any of the following groups, then you will find it useful:

- Senior management professionals, especially in the B2B sector, who wish to implement a sustainable **long-term growth strategy** for their organization
- In particular, business development, marketing, customer service, and account management professionals who have frequent client interactions and who wish to **deliver results and progress in their career**

Genesis of this Book

Since 2007, I have been exploring the concept of a holistic framework for achieving sustainable growth using a client-centric framework that can apply to any type of organization, whether it is for-profit or non-profit, and is suitable for organisations of all sizes and scales. The result of this was the 7 Acts of Client Centricity.

Many of my clients and workshop participants have benefited and found these 7 Acts simple yet powerful. This approach helps businesses create value for their clients and build long-lasting relationships with them. By analyzing the behaviors and actions of successful businesses and how they prioritize the needs of their clients, these 7 Acts were created.

Later, I also introduced this concept in my book "The Client Centric Protagonist" as the "7 Acts of Client Centric Professionals", which is more helpful for individuals who want to implement this strategy on a stand-alone basis to deliver results in their roles and progress in their careers.

So there are at least 2 ways in which the "Hearts and Minds Client Centricity" strategy can be used.

What to expect from this Book

As you will see, the book will provide a lot of insights and interesting examples into how the hearts and minds client-centric strategy can be implemented. But before that, you will be able to appreciate how this approach to client centricity can be utilized as a business strategy. After all, there is much literature on client centricity.

The key difference with this approach is that it does not view client centricity as a feel-good factor that can be posterized on the walls and the websites and rolled out as training programs, but rather as a tool for business growth.

There are certainly several other advanced and delicate client-centric strategies that I use in my client engagements, but they are very specific and don't find universal applicability. However, this one, the hearts and minds client-centric strategy, is one that you can learn and deploy without much (or very little) professional help!

Complementary Access to Online Course

I also have a self-paced online course on "**7 Acts of Client Centric Professionals**" that dwells deeper into each of the 7 acts from an employee skilling perspective, so it can be a great resource for your employees. You will get complimentary access to that course. Look for the details in one of the later sections.

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Introduction

During the Roman Republic, Rome conquered many territories through military force. In conquered territories, Rome would often appoint local elites as magistrates or allow them to retain their positions of power. This gave the conquered people a sense of representation and helped to maintain order in the region. Rome also allowed conquered people to retain their local customs and religions, as long as they didn't challenge Roman authority. By incorporating local elites and allowing conquered people to retain some aspects of their culture, Rome was able to reduce resentment and rebellion among the conquered people. This helped to maintain Roman control over their territories for centuries. They also recognized the importance of winning over the hearts and minds of the conquered people.

"Hearts and Minds" Strategy

In war, this is called the "Hearts and Minds" strategy. It refers to an approach where a military force or government attempts to win the support and loyalty of the local population in order to gain an advantage over the enemy. This is done by building relationships with the community, providing humanitarian aid and support, and engaging in other activities that are designed to demonstrate empathy, respect, and understanding. The idea behind this strategy is that by winning over the hearts and minds of the local population, a military force can reduce the likelihood of opposition or resistance, and gain the support of the people. This can help in achieving the overall objectives of the military campaign or political agenda.



Figure 1 Image Credit [to studio4rt on Freepik](#)

In the recent past, during the Malayan Emergency in 1948, the British were fighting a communist insurgency in Malaya, which threatened their colonial rule of the region. The British realized that a purely military approach would not be enough to defeat the insurgents and win over the population.

The British focused on building relationships with the local population, providing them with basic needs such as food, water, and medical care, and addressing their grievances. The British also worked to gain the trust of the local leaders, including the sultans and the village chiefs. Additionally, the British employed a number of psychological tactics, such as using radio broadcasts to counter communist propaganda and offering rewards for information on the insurgents. They also set up "New Villages," where they relocated villagers to protect them from the insurgents

and provide them with basic services. Through these efforts, the British were able to win the support of the local population and isolate the insurgents. The Malayan Emergency lasted until 1960, but the British were ultimately successful in defeating the insurgency and preserving their control over Malaya. The hearts and minds strategy played a crucial role in their victory.

"Hearts and Minds" Strategy in Business

Patagonia is an outdoor clothing and gear company. Patagonia has been a leader in sustainability and environmental advocacy, and they have built their brand around a commitment to these values.

One way that Patagonia has won the hearts and minds of its customers is by taking a strong stance on environmental issues, such as climate change and protecting public lands. The company has launched campaigns to raise awareness of these issues and has even sued the US government over its decision to reduce the size of national monuments.

In addition to its advocacy work, Patagonia has also taken concrete steps to reduce its own environmental impact. For example, the company has committed to using only organic cotton in its products and has launched a program to repair and resell used Patagonia gear rather than throwing it away.

By taking a stand on important issues and demonstrating a commitment to sustainability, Patagonia has built a loyal customer base that is passionate about the brand and its values. This has allowed the company to grow and thrive even in a competitive industry and has helped it become a leading voice in the outdoor and environmental communities.

So, the "Hearts and Minds" strategy works beautifully well in business too. But how best can we put this to use in our business?

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Achieve Sustainable Business Growth

In the world of business, growth is the ultimate goal of any company. However, achieving sustainable business growth is no easy task. There are many reasons why growth can hamper organizations, including lack of focus, poor financial management, the inability to adapt to change, and resistance to innovation, among others. Similar to war, growth requires a strategy that goes beyond just brute force and encompasses the hearts and minds of both internal and external stakeholders.

A powerful growth strategy, like the 'hearts and minds' strategy, involves putting the needs and preferences of the target audience at the centre of all decision-making and actions.

Let's take the example of Blockbuster, the video rental giant that dominated the market in the 1990s and early 2000s. Despite having a large customer base,



Blockbuster failed to keep up with changing consumer preferences and the shift towards digital streaming. The company was focused on maximizing revenue from late fees and failed to invest in new technology or improve the customer experience. As a result, Blockbuster lost customers to more customer-centric companies like Netflix and eventually filed for bankruptcy in 2010.

Business history is punctuated with many such examples. For instance, Kodak, a pioneer in the photography industry, failed to recognize the significance of digital photography and the shift away from traditional film. Despite developing early digital cameras, the company clung to its legacy business and failed to adapt quickly enough to changing market trends, leading to a decline in revenue and ultimately bankruptcy.

Sears is another example. Once a dominant player in the retail industry, Sears struggled to keep up with changing consumer preferences and the rise of online shopping. Despite early efforts to expand into e-commerce, Sears failed to keep pace with competitors like Amazon and Walmart, leading to a decline in sales and ultimately bankruptcy.

It is evident from the examples above that organizations that are not focused on the needs and interests of their customers are at risk of losing market share to competitors who are more customer-centric. Customers today have more options than ever before, and they are more empowered than ever to make informed buying decisions. If an organization is not able to provide a superior customer experience, it is likely to fall behind in the marketplace.

These examples highlight one of the most talked about but often conveniently neglected aspects of business growth: client centrality!

Failing organisations also embrace client centrality!

Nokia was a leading mobile phone manufacturer in the early 2000s with very high customer loyalty. It was the talk of the town then. At its height, Nokia commanded a

global market share in mobile phones of over 40 percent. Despite its strong reputation for quality and innovation, it failed. Initially, it struggled to compete with emerging players like Apple and Samsung; eventually, Nokia's market share and profits declined sharply, and the company was eventually sold to Microsoft in 2014. Even Nokia talked about customer centricity. But then, why did it fail?



It failed to keep up with the fast pace of technological innovation in the industry. While Symbian had given Nokia an early advantage, it was a device-centric operating system in what was becoming a platform- and application-centric world. Though this is widely attributed to Nokia's failure, the root cause is that it lost touch with its customers, failed to capture their changing needs and expectations, and ploughed them back into its business as a strategy. When it realized the fault, it was too late for the company to adopt new technologies, such as touchscreens and mobile apps, etc.

Today, every single business entity proclaims to be client-centric in their values, ethos, or mission statement. But there are many Nokias out there. One sole reason is the gap between 'saying' and 'doing'. In blunt words, they don't have a viable "client-centric strategy."

So, then, what is the difference between client centricity and client centric strategy?

Client Centricity vs Client Centric Strategy

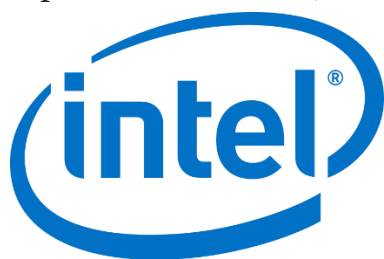
Client centricity refers to the mindset, culture, and philosophy of putting the customer at the center of all business decisions and operations. It can be considered an "ideal", a concept that everyone in principle agrees with but is difficult to achieve in reality due to various practical challenges and limitations.

On the other hand, client-centric strategy refers to the specific actions and plans that a company takes to implement a client-centric approach to its business operations. It

is not merely focusing on customer service and satisfaction but also understanding the customer's needs, preferences, and pain points, developing products and services that meet those needs, creating a detailed roadmap, designing processes and systems, and creating specific approaches or means to an end that will help the company's customers and, in turn, the company's business performance.

We learned about how Nokia failed due to a lack of a client-centric strategy, but now let's examine another company that pulled itself out of a similar situation with a viable client-centric strategy.

Let's take the example of Intel in the late 1970s, when it was caught in a dire situation similar to Nokia. It was the first company to launch a 16-bit processor in the market, the 8086, somewhere around the middle of '78. It just took 18 months for Intel to launch this product. The 8086 was unique in many ways. Its architecture took performance and flexibility to new heights. The 8086 was designed as a part of a larger system of capabilities, more or less like a solution that included hardware, software, and services. For example, there was a suite of supporting products and developmental tools for computer manufacturers to fully exploit the processor's capabilities. However, at that time, microprocessors were still a nascent industry,



and computer manufacturers didn't know the full potential of the 16-bit processors. The company was also heavily reliant on the Japanese market, with Japanese companies buying around 75% of Intel's memory chips.

Within a year, competition caught up, and Motorola launched its 16-bit processor, the 68000. Motorola was beating Intel hands-down in the market. Being an international brand, it posed a clear and present danger to Intel, whose survival was at stake, and they needed to take drastic measures to turn things around. Andy Grove was at the helm of affairs at Intel at the time. Intel needed to take swift and impactful measures. This is how Operation Crush, a strategic initiative with the goal of crushing their competition and becoming the market leader in microprocessors, was born.

This situation is very similar to that of Nokia: excellent product and high pre-existing customer loyalty.

What Intel found was that, in spite of delivering a powerful product with numerous capabilities that could do wonders for their clients, the clients were unprepared for or unaware of how to use it, like our smartphones today. There is so much to do with it, but we merely use a handful of features.

The objectives of Operation Crush were to explain to the market the strengths of the 8086, its capabilities, and what clients could do with them. I see this as a great example of a client-centric strategy in the B2B space.

The main goal was to land 2,000 design wins over the next year. A "design win" is a phrase used in the semiconductor and electronics industries to indicate that a company's component has been accepted by a client to be used in their product, and the client will compensate the vendor for any customization or development work.

There are two key client-centric business growth strategies that were used in Operation Crush: client education and client collaboration. Let's look at each of them in detail.

Client Education

Drawn up in December 1979 and executed largely over the course of 1980, Operation Crush set out to explain the strengths of the 8086—and Intel—in terms of what clients could do with them.

Intel started a campaign that was driven by an understanding of what customers really wanted. By January 1980, Crush teams were sent to field offices around the globe. They met with clients, design engineers, and managers to understand and communicate the capabilities of the 8086. They learned that clients wanted solutions with a minimum level of inconvenience. Over a thousand employees were involved, working on committees, seminars, technical articles, new sales aids, and new sales incentive programs.

The emphasis shifted from product specs and performance numbers to how the product will help clients and end users. So the shift was from positioning 8086 as a technical marvel to a comprehensive solution to customers' problems.

Intel also allocated \$2 million for an ad campaign promoting the benefits and capabilities of the 8086. This was a substantial investment for Intel, considering that they never spent beyond a few hundred thousand on ads. The campaign was called "the future has arrived".

Client Co-creation and Collaboration

IBM was one of Intel's most important customers during the 1980s and 1990s, and it played a significant role in the development of the IBM PC, which used Intel's microprocessors. The future of personal computing changed forever with the launch of the Intel-powered IBM PC on August 12, 1981.

Intel worked closely with IBM to ensure that its microprocessors met the needs of IBM's customers and to develop new products that would be suitable for use in IBM's computer systems. For example, the 8088—a variant of the 8086—served as the central processing unit for the revolutionary platform, laying the groundwork for Intel to chart the course of personal computing for decades to come.

This collaboration was a turning point for both Intel and IBM's success. However, neither Intel nor IBM anticipated how their collaboration would positively impact the development of personal computers and other digital devices, which have become ubiquitous in our lives today. Intel and IBM continue to collaborate to this day.

As a result of Operation Crush, Intel landed nearly 2,500 contracts, including one for the IBM PC. It was destined to go down in the annals of business history.

Operation Crush demonstrated Intel's willingness to provide ongoing product support and how a solution worked together to offer clients a holistic solution to their problems. Operation Crush was also significant for its impact on the semiconductor industry as a whole.

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Client-Centricity: A Business Strategy

A good client-centric strategy can be used as a business growth strategy, provided it leverages the true assets of any organization. By this, I mean not the items on the balance sheet, but a company's clients. Businesses exist because of their clients, and they grow by leveraging their 'clients'.

This means the organization's success is tied to the success of its clients. This translates into sustainable business growth with YoY revenue growth, increasing EBITDA margin, increasing client base, increasing revenue from key accounts, increasing sales win rates, low customer churn, etc.

Client-centric strategy can become a business strategy when integrated into every aspect of the organization, from research and development to customer service, and by fostering a culture of client centricity across the organization. It requires a long-term commitment from leadership and dedication from all employees to prioritize the needs and preferences of clients.

By now, it is obvious that client-centric organizations are also more likely to be agile, innovative, and adaptable. They are able to respond quickly to changing customer demands and preferences and are more likely to be able to identify new opportunities for growth and expansion. By focusing on the needs and interests of clients, these organizations are able to create a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, which can drive long-term growth and success.

In conclusion, all I can state is that client-centric strategy is a business strategy and a critical factor for organizations looking to overcome growth-hindering factors and achieve long-term success in the marketplace.

What client-centric strategy will suit you?

Different client-centric strategies can be applied, depending on the business model and situation. One such strategy is 'collaborative innovation'. For example, IBM has been engaging in collaborative innovation for many years through its IBM Innovation Centers, which are located around the world. These centres are designed to bring together IBM experts, clients, and partners to collaborate on developing new solutions that address complex business challenges.



For example, in 2011, IBM collaborated with the City of Rio de Janeiro to develop a real-time dashboard to monitor and manage the city's operations during the World Cup and the Olympics. The dashboard provided real-time information on traffic, public transportation, security, and other key areas, allowing city officials to respond quickly to any issues that arose.

Through collaborative innovation, IBM was able to leverage its expertise and resources to create a solution that met the specific needs of the City of Rio de Janeiro

while also providing a valuable showcase for its capabilities. This helped to establish IBM as a trusted partner for innovative solutions in the B2B space.

As mentioned earlier, client collaboration and client education strategies used by IBM and Intel may or may not work for every organization depending on various conditions. Moreover, these are not the only approaches to becoming client-centric. There are several different strategies available for B2B organizations.

So, we come back to the original question: What client-centric strategy will suit your organization?

One strategy that you cannot go wrong with is the "Hearts and Minds Client Centric" strategy. Well, a flawed implementation can always scramble any great strategy, and that is applicable to this one too.

What I mean is that the "Hearts and Minds Client Centric" strategy is universally applicable across large, midsize, and small organizations, across sectors, across business models, and in fact, across roles.

So, it's like a broad-spectrum antibiotic, except that its long-term use causes only good!

It's powerful because it's backed by psychology. When you examine the following points, you will agree that the "Hearts and Minds Client Centric" strategy will surely drive business results because it will change the attitude and behavior of the client towards you and your organization.

Here are a few psychological principles and laws that are at play:

- **Reciprocity:** By consistently delivering on promises, taking ownership of client needs, and serving with passion, your organisation demonstrates a willingness to go above and beyond for their clients. This creates a sense of reciprocity in the client, increasing the likelihood that they will want to reciprocate the positive treatment and do business with your company.
- **Social proof:** By establishing fair, transparent, scalable, agile, and sustainable processes and continuously improving things for clients, your

company demonstrates a commitment to providing high-quality services. This creates social proof, which is the tendency for people to conform to the actions of others in an attempt to reflect correct behavior. Seeing others choose to do business with your company can increase the likelihood that potential clients will do the same.

- **Empathy:** By understanding clients with empathy, your company can build a strong relationship with the client. This increases the likelihood of repeat business and referrals due to the emotional connection and trust that have been established.
- **Authority:** By collaborating internally and externally, your company can leverage the expertise and knowledge of others to provide the best service possible. This creates an aura of authority and expertise around your employees and the company, increasing the likelihood that potential clients will choose to do business with you.

You should be mindful that for each of the above principles to work, merely possessing the qualities isn't sufficient.

In the next section, you will learn in depth about the 7-step process through which the "Hearts and Minds Client Centric" strategy can be implemented in your company. You will also appreciate how, by following them, businesses can create a positive image in the minds of clients and potential clients. This can lead to increased trust, loyalty, and, ultimately, business growth.

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Hearts & Minds Client Centric Strategy

Client centricity and the hearts and minds war strategy share a common principle: winning the hearts and minds of the people. So in the world of business, client centricity can be thought of as a "hearts and minds" strategy that emphasizes building strong relationships with clients and earning their loyalty through positive experiences and exceptional service.

In war, winning the hearts and minds of the people is essential to gaining their support and loyalty. Similarly, in business, customer support and loyalty are critical to achieving sustainable business growth. By prioritizing the needs and desires of the customers, companies can build a strong bond with their customer base, which in turn can lead to increased sales, profits, and market share. Thus, this strategy can be seen as a growth strategy that mirrors the hearts and minds strategy in its focus on building strong relationships with people to achieve success.

Seeing through a similar lens, in business, this involves several key acts: understanding the client's needs and preferences, communicating transparently and honestly, being responsive and proactive in addressing issues, demonstrating empathy and compassion, prioritizing quality over speed or profit, fostering a culture of collaboration and teamwork, and continually striving to improve and innovate. By developing this culture, companies can win over the hearts and minds of their clients and create a competitive advantage that is difficult for others to replicate.

Being a relationship-based strategy, "Hearts and Minds Client Centric" strategy leverages the power of human capital and channels it for business growth.

Human capital as a lever

Human capital, or employees, play a critical role in business growth, particularly in the context of client centricity. Employees are often the face of the company, interacting directly with clients, and therefore have a significant impact on the client experience. They are responsible for delivering on the promises made by the company to its clients, and as such, their behavior, attitude, and skills are crucial in building and maintaining strong client relationships.



In order to create a truly client-centric organization, it is essential to prioritize the mechanisms by which each employee interacts with clients. Even for non-client-facing employees, it is important as to how they participate and contribute in the end to make the client successful. Even small things can make a big difference. When employees are empowered and engaged, they are more likely to go above and beyond for clients, resulting in increased client satisfaction and loyalty.

Is it merely training the employees? No. Do not misunderstand this as another run-of-the mill training program on client centricity. It is a business strategy. Let's find out how to put the Hearts and Minds Client Centric strategy to work for us.

Employee Behaviors influencing Business Growth

Are there specific behaviors of each employee that can drive business growth? After all, they are the ones who interact directly with customers and are responsible for delivering products and services that meet their needs.

Employees who take the time to understand their clients' needs, preferences, and pain points are better positioned to deliver products and services that meet those needs, resulting in higher customer satisfaction and loyalty. Further, those who take ownership of their clients' needs and are proactive in finding solutions to their problems can help to build trust and loyalty, resulting in increased customer retention and repeat business.

In order to deliver services or products, employees who are focused on creating processes that are fair, transparent, scalable, agile and sustainable can help to ensure that the organization is able to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of its customers, resulting in increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. In today's connected world, without the openness to appreciate interdependencies and the willingness to collaborate with colleagues and external partners, it is impossible to find new solutions to customer needs. Such collaboration also helps to drive innovation and growth, resulting in new business opportunities and increased market share.

Customer retention and repeat business are nothing but outcomes of the trust built over time. This can only be achieved by employees consistently delivering on their promises and commitments. In doing so, there will be several situations that require employees to question existing systems and processes that were passionately created. By constantly challenging and continuously improving the products, services, and

processes that are provided to customers, employees drive growth, resulting in increased market share and profitability.

Employees who are passionate about their work and committed to delivering exceptional customer service can help build strong and lasting relationships with customers, resulting in increased customer loyalty and referrals.

Unfortunately, most organizations only focus on "serving with passion" when it comes to driving client centricity.

5

7 Steps Approach

I have named the 7 steps to implement the "Hearts and Minds Client Centricity" strategy as the 7 Acts of Client Centricity and they are:

- 1. Understanding clients with empathy*
- 2. Take ownership for client needs.*
- 3. Establish a fair, transparent, scalable, agile, and sustainable process*
- 4. Collaborate internally and externally.*
- 5. Consistently deliver on promises.*
- 6. Continuously improve things for clients.*

7. Serve with Passion.

There is more information in subsequent sections.

How to use the 7 Acts of Client-Centricity

Since 2007, I have been exploring the concept of a holistic framework for a client-focused approach that can apply to an individual, an employee working in any industry, and any type of organization, whether it is for-profit or non-profit. This framework is also suitable for organizations of all sizes and scales. In addition, it should be a strategy that contributes directly to business growth. The result was the "7 Acts of Client-Centricity".

Many of my clients and workshop participants have benefited and found these 7 Acts simple yet powerful. This approach helps businesses create value for their clients and build long-lasting relationships with them. The 7 Acts were created by analyzing the behaviors and actions of successful businesses that prioritize the needs of their clients.

Later, I also introduced this concept in my book "The Client Centric Protagonist" as the "7 Acts of Client Centric Professionals", which is more helpful for individuals who want to implement this strategy on a stand-alone basis.

So there are at least 2 ways in which the "Hearts and Minds Client Centricity" strategy can be used.

As a behavioural guideline: 7 Acts of Client Centric Professional

The 7 Acts of Client Centricity are a set of valuable guidelines for employees because they provide a clear and concise set of behaviors that can be followed by anyone to ensure that clients, internal customers, and key stakeholders are at the center of

everything they do. By consistently applying these behaviors, employees can build strong and lasting relationships with clients, which can lead to increased loyalty, repeat business, and positive referrals.

The gig economy has been growing rapidly in recent years, and it is estimated that in the United States alone, there are approximately 60 million gig workers. As per the BCG report, India's gig workforce comprises 15 million workers, and it's growing. This number includes freelancers, independent contractors, and temporary or part-time workers. The gig economy has disrupted traditional employment models and created new opportunities for both workers and businesses. However, it has also created new challenges for the gig workforce, one of which is demonstrating strong client orientation in all engagements.

The 7 Acts can be instrumental in addressing this challenge and in creating a successful gig economy business. By understanding clients with empathy and taking ownership of their needs, gig workers can ensure they are providing services that meet the client's expectations. By establishing fair, transparent, scalable, agile and sustainable processes, gig businesses can provide a consistent and reliable experience for clients. Collaborating internally and externally can help ensure that gig workers are working efficiently and effectively. Consistently delivering on promises, continuously improving services, and serving with passion can all help build a strong reputation and a loyal customer base.

So whether you are a gig worker or an employee of a large corporation, the 7 Acts of Client Centricity can help you achieve personal satisfaction and career success.

As a business strategy: 7 Acts of Client Centricity

At the same time, these 7 acts can also be used as a "Hearts and Minds" Client-Centric strategy for any company because they not only provide a framework for creating a culture of client-centricity but a detailed approach to aligning the entire organization towards a common purpose of making the client successful, like in the case of Intel and IBM. In due course, it will be clear as to how this can be

orchestrated as a business strategy, far beyond generating happiness and satisfied clients!

7 Acts of Client Centricity as used in the Hearts and Minds Client-Centric strategy directly addresses some of the top signs of a poor client-centric business strategy, such as:

- **Lack of understanding:** Some organizations may not have a clear understanding of what clients need. This lack of understanding can lead to misguided efforts that do not address clients' actual needs. The very first act of the 7 acts is about understanding client needs with empathy.
- **Lack of accountability:** Leaders who are not held accountable for their client-centric goals may not prioritize them as much as they should. This is addressed by two acts, namely, "Take ownership of client needs" and "Serve with passion".
- **Lack of alignment:** Many organizations fail to align their actions and strategies with their client-centric goals. They may claim to prioritize clients, but their internal processes and structures may not reflect this priority. This is what "Establish a fair, transparent, scalable, agile, and sustainable process" will solve.
- **Lack of commitment:** Client centricity requires a true commitment, and some organizations may not be willing to invest the time, resources, and effort required to truly prioritize clients. They drift off to other business priorities. Two of the acts, namely "Consistently deliver on promises" and "Take ownership of client needs" address this issue.
- **Failure to innovate:** Client needs and preferences are constantly evolving, and organizations that do not innovate and adapt to changing needs may fail to meet their clients' expectations. The 6th act of "Continuously improve things for the clients" is aimed at addressing this failure.
- **Ineffective communication:** Client centricity requires effective communication with clients to understand their needs and preferences. If organizations fail to communicate effectively with their clients, they may not be able to deliver solutions that meet their needs. As a result, the 4th act is about "Collaborate internally and externally".

Overall, achieving the Hearts and Minds Client Centric strategy is a sound approach, and the 7 Acts of Client Centricity are nothing but a set of prescriptive steps to gain a deep understanding of clients' needs and demonstrate a willingness to adapt and innovate to meet those needs. And that is how a true client-centric strategy helps an organization succeed in the marketplace.

When viewed as a set of behaviors and adopted as core values and principles, a company can create a customer-focused culture that is ingrained in everything they do. By truly committing to client-centricity, it can have a positive impact on all areas of the business, including sales, marketing, customer service, product development, and more. This can help to differentiate the company from competitors, enhance the customer experience, and ultimately drive business growth.

6

7 Acts of Client Centric Organizations

Here's how some of the global brands have built their business strategies and customer engagement frameworks around the 7 Acts of Client Centricity. I explored their purpose and mission statements and established a link to their customer-centric strategy, and how these strategies have fared is clear from the performance of these brands.



Look at Microsoft's mission: "Empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more". It communicates how *passionate they are* about delivering

experiences that enable their customers to achieve more, and they are relentless in their pursuit of excellence and high-quality service.

Now check out Amazon. Their career site carries the statement, "We're a company of pioneers. It's our job to make bold bets, and we get our energy from inventing on behalf of customers." Clearly, this *demonstrates their ownership of and focus* on making their customers' lives easier, and they're *constantly looking for ways to innovate and improve* customer experience. As a customer of Amazon, none of us can deny this, especially their ownership when it comes to returns.



GE Aviation

GE Aviation's mission statement is "We innovate and operate at the speed of aviation to help our customers win."

They have partnered with Boeing to develop new airplane engines, with the US Department of Defense to create new defense technologies, and with leading universities to conduct research on emerging technologies. GE's "Open Innovation" program also encourages *collaboration* with startups and small businesses to develop innovative solutions for its customers. Through these collaborative efforts, GE has been able to stay at the forefront of technological innovation and provide its customers with cutting-edge solutions.

Schlumberger is an oil field services company, and their mission statement is "finding and producing oil and gas more



efficiently and safely than ever before." They place a strong emphasis on *collaboration with their clients* to achieve this goal. They work closely with their clients to understand their needs and develop tailored solutions to meet those needs, often through joint development projects and partnerships. Additionally, Schlumberger has established a network of technology centers around the world, where they collaborate with industry partners, academia, and research institutions to develop innovative technologies for the oil and gas industry.



When it comes to Unilever, their mission of "Making sustainable living commonplace" is a commitment to making a positive impact on the world through their business practices, from reducing their environmental footprint to ensuring that their suppliers meet their high ethical standards. For a FMCG company, rather than stressing the consumer's choice of variety and cost-effective products, they took a bold step to establish a *fair, transparent and sustainable process*. With the complex network of suppliers, this isn't easy.

With Apple, it's "Think Different" and Apple never fails to impress you. They are pushing the boundaries of what's possible and delivering products that exceed customers' expectations. Their innovation stands out for how they *continuously improve things for clients*.



Take, for example, FedEx. Their mission statement includes a focus on reliability, stating that their aim is to "operate independently, compete collectively and manage collaboratively, delivering industry-leading results."

Additionally, FedEx emphasizes *consistently delivering on their promises on-time*, reliable service to their customers through their well-established *fair, transparent, scalable, agile and sustainable processes*.

Philips Healthcare's mission statement is "Improving people's lives through meaningful innovation" and they focus on developing innovative healthcare solutions that address the needs of their clients and ultimately improve patient outcomes. They work closely with healthcare providers to understand their challenges and *co-create solutions* that meet their specific needs. Through their



research and development efforts, they *continuously strive to improve* the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of healthcare.



Nucor Corporation is a global steel and steel products manufacturing company based in the United States. Nucor emphasizes a unique business model that prioritizes *operational efficiency, continuous improvement, and customer-centricity*. They are known for their decentralized management structure, which allows each division to operate autonomously and make decisions based on local market needs. Nucor's mission statement is "to take care of our customers by being the safest, highest quality, lowest cost, most productive, and most profitable steel and steel products company in the world." This mission statement highlights the company's focus on customer-centricity, quality, safety, and efficiency.

Now Zappos is all about "Delivering Happiness".

It started as a book by Tony Hsieh. Zappos

customer-centric strategy is to provide

customers with the best possible experience,

from the products they sell to the way they communicate, which is evident in their

service. For example, Zappos offers free shipping and product returns to make

transactions easier, so customers can try on several pairs of shoes free of charge until

they find the one they like. This highlights their *passion for service* and

understanding the customers through the lens of empathy.



Pillars of a successful Hearts and Minds Client-Centric strategy

From these examples, I have listed 3 important organizational pillars needed for a successful orchestration and execution of the Hearts and Minds Client Centric Strategy for achieving sustainable business growth:

- Companies need to focus on building strong relationships with their customers, employees, partners, and communities. This involves cultivating a culture where employees are empowered to go above and beyond in serving customers and building trust.
- Leadership plays a crucial role in this process, as they are responsible for creating and maintaining a culture of client centricity. This includes providing the necessary resources and training to enable employees to deliver exceptional customer experiences, and holding them accountable for delivering on that promise.
- Processes are also critical components of sustainable growth, as they ensure that the company can efficiently and effectively deliver its products and services to customers. As the company grows, it will leverage on these processes to reduce cost, improve efficiency, increase productivity, and improve customer satisfaction.

So, sustainable business growth requires a strategic approach that goes beyond brute force and encompasses the hearts and minds of all stakeholders. By focusing on client centricity, strong leadership, and processes, companies can build a strong foundation for sustainable growth and long-term success.

Action Plan to Deploy 7 Acts of Client Centricity

Here are some actions for leadership to deploy the 7 Acts of Client Centricity across the organization:

1. **Understand clients with empathy:** Establish processes to gather clients' pain points, feedback, and challenges. Though a structured VOC program is a good start, it isn't enough. Go beyond this to understand the clients' business model, priorities, internal dynamics and identify unarticulated needs and requirements through regular interactions. Establish mechanisms for such information to be captured and shared internally, encourage and train employees to put themselves in the customers' shoes, and understand their needs and pain points.
2. **Take ownership for client needs:** Establish clear ownership and accountability for client relationships and ensure that employees understand the importance of meeting client needs. Align job descriptions, structures, KRIs and KPIs.
3. **Establish fair, transparent, scalable, agile, and sustainable processes:** Create and document standardized yet flexible processes for interacting with clients, and ensure that they are consistently applied across the organization. Create mechanisms to build agility and flexibility to accommodate client situations. One of the important aspects is the enablement of the processes, which goes beyond documentation.
4. **Collaborate internally and externally:** Foster a culture of collaboration within the organization and encourage employees to work together to solve client problems. Look for mechanisms that encourage collaboration as a natural option, such as challenging the functional silos, improving reporting structures, etc. Also, build partnerships with external stakeholders such as suppliers, vendors, and other businesses to enhance the client experience.
5. **Consistently deliver on promises:** Focus on a data- or fact-based mindset and mechanisms that provide transparency on the performance levels of the end-to-end delivery process on client deliverables. Ensure that employees understand the importance of meeting deadlines and delivering on commitments, and link them to performance. Set realistic expectations with clients and make sure that the organization is capable of delivering on those promises.
6. **Continuously improve things for clients:** Encourage a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within the organization. Empower employees to identify areas for improvement and make changes to enhance

the client experience. Go to the root of the problems and fix them permanently.

7. **Serve with passion:** Foster a culture of passion for serving clients and ensure that employees feel valued for the work they do to support clients. Provide regular feedback and recognition to employees for their client-centric behavior.

Relevance of the 7 Acts of Client Centricity to B2B

As you would have noticed through examples and other citations, I have emphasized how the 7 Acts of Client Centricity are applicable to the B2B sector. There are endless examples of its application in B2C. Moreover, my focus is on how such client-centric strategies can help B2B companies achieve sustainable growth.

The impact of client-centric behaviors on B2B companies can be different from that on B2C companies due to differences in their structure, revenue model, dependency, automation level, and other factors. Here are some ways in which these behaviors can impact B2B companies more than B2C companies:



- **Relationship-building:** B2B companies typically rely on building long-term relationships with their clients to drive revenue growth, whereas B2C companies tend to focus more on transactional sales. As a result, behaviors such as understanding clients with empathy, taking ownership of client needs, and serving with passion can be more critical for B2B companies in building and maintaining strong relationships with their clients.

- **Complex sales cycles:** B2B sales cycles are often more complex than B2C sales cycles, involving multiple decision-makers and longer periods of negotiation. Behaviors such as collaborating internally and externally and establishing fair and transparent processes can be more critical for B2B companies in navigating these complex sales cycles and ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned.
- **Revenue model:** B2B companies typically have higher revenue per client than B2C companies, but also fewer clients overall. This means that client retention is more critical for B2B companies, and behaviors such as consistently delivering on promises and continuously improving things for clients can be more important for driving revenue growth.
- **Dependency:** B2B companies often have a higher level of dependency on their clients than B2C companies, with key clients accounting for a significant portion of their revenue. Many times, the quality of their delivery is also dependent on the client's processes. The network of partners or vendors also creates additional dependencies. This means that behaviors such as taking ownership of client needs, consistently delivering on promises, and a willingness to continuously improve things for the clients can be more critical for maintaining these key client relationships and avoiding churn.
- **Automation level:** B2B companies often have a lower level of automation in their sales and customer service processes than B2C companies, lacking personalization and dehumanising the client experience. Behaviors such as understanding clients with empathy and serving with passion can help to counterbalance this effect of automation and create a more human-centric approach to client engagement.

In summary, while client-centric behaviors are important for both B2B and B2C companies, the impact of these behaviors can be more critical for B2B companies due to their focus on long-term relationship-building, complex sales cycles, high client dependency, revenue model, and automation level. By emphasizing these behaviors, B2B companies can create a more client-centric culture that drives revenue growth and success in the marketplace.

7

7 Acts of Client-Centric Professionals

This section will provide prescriptive ideas that you can share with your employees and influence them to develop behaviors that drive sustainable business growth for the company.

In order to become a truly client-centric professional, the same seven key behaviors, called "7 Acts of Client Centric Professional" , must be adopted and integrated into one's daily work routine. These are exactly the same as the ones shared in earlier sections, but now I wish to cite some examples of how they are relevant to professionals and not entities.

These 7 acts can be applied to turn around a sore client relationship or strengthen a new client relationship. In my book "The Client Centric Protagonist", a narrative about a veteran who, without any technical qualification, joins an ailing specialty chemicals company as account manager and turns around the entire business using the 7 Acts sequentially, may be of interest to you.

I'm going to give you a real-life example of one of my clients' employees who demonstrated these qualities.

The client is a software development company that has been working with a client for several years. However, the client had recently become dissatisfied with the level of service they were receiving from the software development company and had expressed their concerns to the account manager. The account manager had recently joined the company from a competitor. The client to which she was assigned is one of the largest tech equipment companies.

The account manager recognized that the relationship with the client was in trouble and decided to take action to turn things around. Here's how she applied each of the seven key behaviors to do so:

Understand clients with

empathy: The account manager started by meeting with the client to gain a better understanding of their concerns and to demonstrate empathy. They listened carefully to the client's feedback and acknowledged the impact that the issues were having on their business. In this process, she



understood that internal dynamics within the client's organization were at play. There were few key stakeholders who weren't detractors of her company. She tried to connect with them in person to understand their perspective. With certain difficulty, she was able to make her way. Some new concerns surfaced. Some were tangible areas for improvement, but others were perception-based. Instead of confronting this, she listened with empathy and grasped the sensitivities.

Take ownership of client needs: Many of the concerns raised by the client weren't directly under the control of the account manager. However, she took full

ownership of the client's needs and committed to doing whatever it took to address their concerns. She assured the client that she would be their primary point of contact and that she would work tirelessly to restore their confidence in the software development company.

Establish fair, transparent, scalable, agile, and sustainable processes:

The account manager quickly figured out that some of the issues pointed out by clients were related to a lack of clarity on the process, timelines, and budgets. For example, when a client asked for certain changes that were covered in an existing contract, the development team deprioritized it and escalated it to the delivery head. The delivery head didn't loop in the account director or manager, instead promising to deliver it only by quarter end. Many similar issues were identified that contributed to the current pain. The account manager involved the key stakeholders across functions, persuaded them to facilitate the establishment of a new set of processes and procedures, and shared those with the client.

Collaborate internally and externally: The account manager worked closely with the software development team to address the client's concerns and ensure that their needs were being met. These accounted for corrective actions. But preventive actions included enablement of the new processes and procedures that were created. They also reached out to the client's internal stakeholders to ensure that everyone was aligned and working towards the same goals. She established regular check-ins. A backlog of open items was listed that needed to be resolved with priority. The team committed to deadlines for resolving these issues permanently.

Consistently deliver on promises: Based on the deadlines agreed upon internally, the account manager committed to delivering on all of their promises to the client and communicated regularly with them to keep them informed of progress. There were frequent roadblocks, but the account manager was transparent about any challenges or issues that arose and worked proactively to address them.

Continuously improve things for clients: The account manager sought feedback from the client on a regular basis and used this to identify areas for

improvement. She established a formal quarterly feedback process for all key stakeholders in the client organization. This provided clarity on the priority of action items. By measuring customer experience and performance metrics, the team identified and implemented changes to enhance the client experience. She ensured these were duly communicated to the client to demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement.

Serve with passion: Finally, the account manager served the client with passion, enthusiasm, and positivity. She made it a point to put the interests of the client ahead of her career priorities and organizational dynamics. She believed her success and her organization's success were tied to the success of their clients. As an organization, they went above and beyond to ensure that the client's needs were being met, and consistently demonstrated their commitment to the client's success.

As a result of these efforts, the relationship between the software development company and the client was turned around. The client's satisfaction levels increased, and they became a loyal and long-term customer of the software development company. By applying the seven key behaviors of client-centricity, the account manager was able to not only salvage the relationship but also create a fruitful and mutually beneficial partnership.

This whole process had taken her nearly 8–12 months. Though it's an on-going affair, the sore relationship had a turnaround within a year.

It is always not possible to encounter an opportunity to apply the 7 Acts in sequence, as I had narrated earlier. Instead, each of these acts can be ingrained into our daily interactions and actions. I have put together a few common scenarios that I have come across that involve the 7 behaviors. With these examples, I hope to inspire you to start using these 7 acts in as many situations as possible, especially with clients.

If you happen to like the below scenarios, you can learn more about the 7 Acts of Client-Centric Professional with industry examples and dos and don'ts in my self-paced online course "7 Acts of Client-Centric Professional". You can access it for free by dropping a one-liner to business-support@collaborat.com with the subject "Coupon Code for 7 Acts of Client Centric Professional Course".

Scenario 1

You are in the middle of a family get-together when you receive a call from a client. What would you do?

A client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- The professional will put themselves in the shoes of the client and try to relate to the urgency of making the call at odd hours. This depicts their use of empathy in business interactions. They may choose to leave a short message to understand the urgency and find out if the conversation can be delayed until working hours. This gives an option to the client and, at the same time, informs the client of your situation.
- The professional will take the call with enthusiasm, showing the client that they value their business and are willing to assist them.

A non-client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- Don't pick up the call; just ignore it. Instead, show frustration or annoyance for being interrupted during their family time.
- Attend the call, but quickly end it without addressing the client's concerns or showing any empathy.
- Show disinterest or a lack of passion for serving the customer.

Scenario 2

When a client is unaware of a certain benefit of your service, what is the best thing that you can do?

A client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- Take the opportunity to educate the client about the benefit they may not be aware of. They would explain the benefit in a clear and concise manner, and make sure the client fully understands the value it brings to them. By doing so, the professional is exhibiting the act of continuously improving things for clients, as they are helping the customer gain a better understanding of the service and its benefits.
- It demonstrates the willingness to go the extra mile, which in turn reflects on their passion for service.

A non-client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- They may not take the initiative to inform the client of the benefit they are missing out on.
- If the client isn't explicitly asking for it, they will not explain it. (For a moment, imagine if your tour guide did this to you.)
- They may assume that the client already knows everything they need to know about the service, or they may simply not care enough to make the effort to educate the customer.
- If the unavailed benefit results in cost savings for their company, they may claim credit for the cost savings.
- At best, they inform their superiors about this gap and leave it to them to decide the next course of action.
- This lack of effort demonstrates a lack of empathy and ownership for the customer's needs, which are important acts of a client-centric professional.

Scenario 3

A client wants a one-time service, but your company will incur some cost to do so. How would you go about this situation?

A client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- Listen to the client's needs and concerns and analyze why this one-time service will be valuable to the client.
- Acknowledge the request for a one-time service.
- Keeping in mind the long-term relationship and customer lifetime value, consider absorbing the cost fully or partially.
- Explain the cost and resources required to perform the service and offer alternative solutions that may better suit the client's needs and budget.
- By doing so, the professional is exhibiting the acts of "Understand clients with empathy", "Take ownership of client needs", and "Serve with passion".

A non-client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- In the first instance, dismiss the customer's request for a one-time service as something that cannot be fulfilled.
- Disregard the client's concerns and needs.
- Do not offer any alternative solutions.
- Focus on short-term profits rather than building a long-term relationship with the customer.
- By doing so, the professional is not exhibiting any of the 7 acts of a client-centric professional.

Scenario 4

A client explains a problem to you that, according to him, is very unique. But you have been in this business for a long time and have heard many such problems.

What is the best thing that you can do?

A client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- Listen attentively and empathize with the customer's frustration about the problem, even if it's not unique.
- Use their experience and expertise to provide possible solutions or insights that may help solve the problem.

- Explain to the customer that they have encountered similar problems before and highlight how they were able to solve them.
- Work internally to find out how such problems can be avoided in the future for other clients.
- Exhibit the acts of "Understand clients with empathy", "Collaborate internally" and "Continuously improve things for clients" by actively listening and providing helpful solutions.

A non-client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- Dismiss the customer's problem and explain that they have heard similar problems before and that it's not unique.
- Not provide any helpful solutions or insights to the customer.
- Exhibit a lack of empathy and customer service skills by not actively listening to the customer.
- Blame the client's organization for not developing sufficient understanding about your products and services.
- Show a lack of ownership and responsibility for client needs.

Scenario 5

When a client is consistently happy with your services, what is the best thing you can do?

A client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- Express gratitude and thank the customer for their continued business.
- Ask for feedback on how to further improve their experience with the company.
- Find out ways to further push the needle on quality and delivery.
- Provide suggestions for additional services or products that might be of interest to the customer.

- Exhibit the act of "continuously improving things for clients" by seeking feedback and offering new services.

A non-client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- Take the customer for granted and do not acknowledge their loyalty.
- Assume the customer is always happy and does not need any further attention.
- Treat it as a mission accomplished, celebrate, and follow up with no further action.
- Exhibit a lack of concern for further improving the customer's experience and needs.

Scenario 6

A particular client is unhappy with your services. What is the best thing you would do?

A client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- Make a genuine effort to understand the customer's complaints with empathy.
- Take ownership of the issue, even if the problem doesn't fall in your area of responsibility.
- Collaborate internally with other stakeholders to resolve the problem in due course using a fair and transparent process.
- Follow up with the customer to ensure that the problem has been resolved to their satisfaction.
- By doing so, the client-centric professional is exhibiting the acts of "Take ownership of client needs," "Establish fair, transparent, scalable, agile, and sustainable process," and "Collaborate internally".

A non-client-centric professional is likely to do the following:

- Dismiss the customer's complaints or make excuses for the problem.

- Blame the customer for the problem or shift responsibility to someone else.
- Provide a solution that only benefits the company, not the customer.
- Don't make any promise of resolution or don't commit on time to resolve.
- Do not follow up with the customer or address the root cause of the problem.

Through these scenarios, you might have appreciated how different situations that occur every day, can be handled differently with a client-centric mindset. When this becomes a habit or an accepted practise across the organization, clients will feel the change. No marketing or packaging will be required.

To summarize, consider the following:

- **Understand clients with empathy:** This involves putting oneself in the client's shoes and understanding their needs, challenges, and pain points. The main point here is 'empathy'. It allows the professional to build trust with the client and develop solutions that truly meet their needs.
- **Take Ownership for Client Needs:** This means taking responsibility for the success of the client's project or engagement and doing whatever it takes to ensure that their needs are met. It also involves being proactive and anticipating the client's needs before they even ask.
- **Establish Fair, Transparent, Scalable, Agile, and Sustainable Processes:** Clients value consistency and reliability, and having processes in place that are fair, transparent, scalable, agile and sustainable can help build trust and confidence in the professional's ability to deliver.
- **Collaborate Internally and Externally:** This means working closely with colleagues and other stakeholders to deliver the best possible outcomes for the client. It also means building strong relationships with external partners and vendors, and leveraging their expertise to deliver value to the client.
- **Consistently Deliver on Promises:** Clients expect professionals to deliver on their commitments, and failing to do so can erode trust and damage the relationship. Delivering on promises requires strong project management skills, attention to detail, and effective communication.

- **Continuously Improve Things for Clients:** This means constantly seeking feedback from clients, analyzing data to identify areas for improvement, and implementing changes to enhance the client experience. Continuous improvement is key to maintaining a competitive edge and staying relevant in a rapidly changing business environment.
- **Serve with Passion:** Serving clients with passion means genuinely caring about their success and going above and beyond to ensure that they achieve their goals. It means being enthusiastic, positive, and responsive, and always striving to exceed expectations.

Thus, becoming a client-centric professional involves adopting a mindset that prioritizes the needs and satisfaction of the client above all else. This requires a set of behaviors that include understanding clients with empathy, taking ownership of client needs, establishing fair and transparent processes, collaborating internally and externally, consistently delivering on promises, continuously improving things for clients, and serving with passion. By adopting these behaviors, professionals can build strong and lasting relationships with clients, drive business growth, and differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace.

"Hearts and Minds" Strategy: Downsides

The hearts and minds strategy can be viewed as manipulative by some people as it seeks to influence and persuade individuals to support a particular cause or organization. However, it is not inherently manipulative, as the strategy can be executed in a genuine and honest way with the aim of building long-term relationships with customers and employees based on mutual respect, trust, and value creation.

When executed with authenticity and transparency, the hearts and minds strategy can have significant benefits for businesses in the long run. By prioritizing the needs and preferences of customers, businesses can build stronger relationships and increase loyalty, leading to increased retention and advocacy. Similarly, by investing in the well-being and development of employees, businesses can enhance

engagement and motivation, resulting in better productivity and innovation.

However, there are potential downsides to the hearts and minds strategy. One risk is that businesses may become too focused on pleasing customers and employees at the expense of profitability and sustainability. Additionally, the strategy may not be effective in all contexts or for all types of customers, and businesses may need to adapt their approach based on the unique needs and expectations of different segments.

Overall, the hearts and minds strategy is a all-weather approach for businesses that prioritize long-term relationships and value creation. However, it requires careful planning and execution to avoid potential pitfalls and ensure that the strategy is aligned with broader business goals and objectives.

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About Nilakantasrinivasan

Nilakantasrinivasan is the author of 3 Books – “The Client Centric Protagonist”, “The Little Book on Customer Experience” & “The Master Book for Lean Six Sigma”.

In the last 25 years, he worked as a SVP at HSBC, Bank of America, Standard Chartered, Whirlpool, and TVS Motor, and currently, he manages Canopus Business Management Group.

To know more about Neil, [click here](#).

About Canopus Business Management Group

Canopus Business Management Group helps B2B organizations achieve *Sustainable Business Growth* through Client Centric Strategies.

Typical business growth problems that we help our clients in BFSI, Industrial & Manufacturing, Technology & Telecom, IT & ITES and Services, include the following:

- Poor Account Growth
- High Client Churn
- Low Sales Wins
- Poor NPS, Client Experience and Service Levels
- Low EBITDA Margin

Engagements include strategic workshops, implementation & co-creation, client research, data based insights, training and mentoring.

For small business owners, additionally a virtual coaching program to help in growth is offered.

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