

RELATIONSHIP MARKETING: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS OF CHANNEL AND LOGISTICAL INTEGRATION INTERFACES

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ABSTRACT

The integration of global channel and logistical relationships is an especially important contemporary topic for marketers. The marketing of exchange relationships between a company and its external customers, internal customers, and supplier partners can be an important and synergistic source of lasting competitive advantage. The present research compares the channel relationship marketing and logistical practices used by approximately two thousand firms from the United States, Japan, Korea, and Australia.

In terms of marketing relationship approaches, Korea was found to show the greatest tendency to internal relationship marketing which stresses the internal customers and internal exchanges of the organization. In turn, Japan shows the greatest tendency to external relationship marketing which stresses the external customers and external supply partners of the firm. Specifically, the external marketing approach used by Japan involves technical and operational network planning, the greater use of traditional channel power, and increased organizational loyalty. It is interesting to note that for Japan, traditional channel power is consistent with greater organizational loyalty and that both appear to support technical network planning.

Both the U.S. and Australian firms are similar in using an external relationship approach which also emphasizes external customers and external partners. However, the emphasis is on relational and behavioral aspects of the channel relationship. Examples include corporate executives visiting key customers and suppliers and sharing information with them. Similarly, both the U.S. and Australian firms view relationship marketing and strategic alliances as more important than do Japanese or Korean firms. In total, different countries employ different channel relationship integration strategies.

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