

OPTIMIZATION OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT IN INDUSTRIAL (B2B) COMPANIES: A LITERATURE REVIEW AND MODEL PROPOSAL

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ABSTRACT

Marketing management in industrial B2B companies faces growing complexity due to digital transformation, long-term customer relationships, and sustainability demands. This paper identifies key factors affecting marketing management effectiveness through a structured review of literature published between 2015 and 2021. Findings show that existing studies focus on individual aspects—such as CRM, digitalization, value creation, or sustainability—without providing an integrated framework. To address this gap, a conceptual optimization model is proposed, combining strategic marketing alignment, digital tools and CRM, value proposition development, sustainability principles, and performance monitoring. The model offers both theoretical and practical contributions, providing a foundation for future empirical validation and managerial application in industrial B2B contexts.

Keywords: Marketing management, B2B marketing, Digitalization, CRM, Value proposition, Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing management in B2B industrial enterprises has evolved into a strategic function that goes beyond traditional support for sales. Contemporary challenges include complex customer decision-making, long-term business relationships, and the need to integrate marketing with production, logistics, and service functions. In this context, digitalization, CRM systems, and sustainability are recognized as key factors for achieving competitive advantage (Homburg et al., 2015; Webster et al., 2015; Morgan et al., 2019). The aim of this paper is to identify, through an analysis of relevant scientific literature, the key factors shaping marketing management effectiveness in B2B industrial enterprises, and to propose an optimization model that integrates digitalization, CRM systems, value proposition, and sustainability. The study is based on a systematic review of literature published between 2015 and 2021.

The research question addressed in this study is: How does the integration of digitalization, CRM systems, value proposition, and sustainability affect marketing management effectiveness in B2B industrial enterprises, and how can these factors be systematically combined through an optimization model? The original contribution of this paper lies in the proposal of an integrated marketing management model, developed based on identified gaps in existing research.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative literature analysis of relevant scientific publications from 2015 to 2021. The analysis follows approaches that emphasize the specific characteristics of B2B marketing and the need for systematic examination (Lilien, 2016; Brennan et al., 2018).

Literature selection was based on thematic relevance to B2B industrial marketing management, a clearly defined theoretical or empirical contribution, and availability in reputable scientific journals and databases. The research methodology comprised three main phases:

1. Identification and selection of publications – systematic searches in scientific databases and relevant journals.
2. Literature analysis and comparison – identification of key trends, challenges, and research gaps in existing studies.
3. Synthesis of findings and model development – formulation of a conceptual framework integrating digitalization, CRM systems, value proposition, and sustainability. The selected time frame covers a period of intensive development of digital tools and CRM systems in B2B contexts, providing insight into contemporary trends and the need for integrated marketing management approaches (Ritter & Pedersen, 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Table 1. presents a thematic overview of key scientific contributions in the field of marketing management in B2B industrial enterprises published between 2015 and 2021. The literature is grouped into four dominant dimensions: digitalization, CRM systems and customer relationships, value proposition, and sustainability/marketing strategy. This thematic approach allows the inclusion of all relevant studies while maintaining a compact conference-friendly format and enables a clear identification of research gaps related to the absence of integrated marketing management models.

Table 1: Review of the literature on marketing management in B2B enterprises (2015–2021)

Dimension	Included authors (2015–2021)	Main focus	Identified research gap
Digitalization	Järvinen & Taiminen (2016); Leeftang et al. (2019); Ritter & Pedersen (2020); Homburg et al. (2017)	Marketing automation, digital tools, customer experience management, and digital capabilities in B2B markets.	Digitalization is mainly analyzed independently, with limited integration with CRM systems, value proposition, and sustainability in a unified model.
CRM systems and customer relationships	Sheth (2017); Kumar & Reinartz (2018); Bakator et al. (2020); Bakator et al. (2021); Homburg et al. (2015); Webster et al. (2015)	Strategic role of marketing, customer relationship management, and long-term B2B relationships.	Lack of holistic and operational frameworks linking CRM systems with digital tools, value creation, and sustainability.
Value proposition and value creation	Kindström et al. (2019); Keränen & Jalkala (2019); Eggert et al. (2020); Lilien (2016)	Value-in-use, service-oriented business models, and B2B-specific value creation processes.	Insufficient empirical models connecting value creation with CRM systems and digitalization.
Sustainability and marketing strategy	Lindgreen et al. (2019); Morgan et al. (2019); Cortez & Johnston (2017); Brennan et al. (2018)	Strategic marketing, sustainability, and future directions of B2B marketing theory.	Sustainability and strategy are rarely integrated with operational marketing management tools in B2B industrial enterprises.

Although prior research has significantly advanced the understanding of individual dimensions of marketing management in B2B industrial enterprises, the reviewed studies predominantly address these dimensions in isolation. Digitalization, CRM systems, value proposition development, and sustainability are most often examined as separate research streams (Homburg et al., 2015; Lilien, 2016; Kumar & Reinartz, 2018; Lindgreen et al., 2019).

The absence of an integrated and practically applicable marketing management model that systematically combines these dimensions represents a key research gap. This gap serves as the foundation for the development of the proposed integrated marketing management optimization model, presented in the following section of the paper.

B2B MARKETING MANAGEMENT IN INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES

Marketing management in B2B industrial enterprises has specific characteristics distinguishing it from the B2C sector, mainly due to complex decision-making processes, long-term customer relationships, and a limited number of strategically important clients. In this context, marketing assumes a strategic role, encompassing market and customer needs analysis, management of product and service portfolios, development of communication strategies, and coordination with production, logistics, and after-sales service. Lack of such functional integration often leads to misaligned activities, weaker value propositions, and reduced effectiveness. Digitalization and automation enable more accurate monitoring of customer behavior, improved segmentation, and personalized offerings, while sustainability principles contribute to trust, corporate reputation, and long-term competitive advantage (Homburg et al., 2015; Webster et al., 2015; Morgan et al., 2019).

Literature Analysis

Analysis of relevant literature highlights three dominant trends. First, strategic integration of marketing with production, logistics, and after-sales service ensures synergy between market demands and operational efficiency. Fragmented marketing reduces responsiveness to customer needs, while customer experience management reinforces the need for integration with digital tools and CRM systems (Homburg et al., 2017). Second, digitalization of marketing and adoption of CRM systems improve monitoring, segmentation, and personalization, but few integrated solutions link CRM with value proposition and overall strategy (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016; Leeflang et al., 2019; Ritter & Pedersen, 2020; Bakator et al., 2021). Third, value proposition and sustainability are recognized as key competitive factors, yet empirically grounded models connecting these dimensions with marketing performance are scarce (Kindström et al., 2019; Eggert et al., 2020; Lindgreen et al., 2019; Keränen & Jalkala, 2019). The key research gap is the absence of an integrated, empirically tested model combining strategic integration, digitalization and CRM, value proposition, sustainability, and performance monitoring.

Proposed Marketing Management Optimization Model

Based on the identified trends, this study proposes an integrated marketing management model with four interconnected components. The first component ensures strategic integration of marketing with production, logistics, and after-sales service. The second component focuses on digitalization and CRM systems for performance monitoring, customer relationship management, segmentation, and personalization. The third component addresses value proposition development and sustainability through innovative, high-quality, and responsible practices. The fourth component involves continuous monitoring and adaptation of marketing strategies to market changes and customer needs. The model is illustrated in Figure 1, emphasizing the interconnected and integrated nature of these components.

Opportunities for Empirical Testing of the Proposed Model

The model provides a foundation for future empirical research in B2B industrial enterprises. Strategic integration can be operationalized through collaboration between marketing, production, logistics, and after-sales service and marketing involvement in strategic decisions (Homburg et al., 2015; Webster et al., 2015). Digitalization and CRM adoption can be measured through marketing automation, CRM use in managing relationships, and application of data analytics (Bakator et al., 2020; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016; Kumar & Reinartz, 2018; Bakator et al., 2021). Value proposition and sustainability can be examined via industrial customers' perception of value, innovativeness, and sustainable practices (Kindström et al., 2019; Eggert et al., 2020; Lindgreen et al., 2019). Quantitative methods such as surveys and SEM, or qualitative case studies, could empirically validate the model and assess its impact on marketing performance and overall business outcomes (Sheth, 2017; Ritter & Pedersen, 2020; Cortez & Johnston, 2017; Brennan et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2019).



Figure 1: Proposed B2B Marketing Management Optimization Model

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting its results. The research is based on a qualitative analysis and systematization of existing literature, without conducting empirical studies in specific industrial enterprises. While this approach allows for the identification of key trends and research gaps, it does not provide direct empirical validation of the proposed model. The literature review is limited to the period from 2015 to 2021 and to articles published in selected international journals, which may affect the scope of theoretical and practical approaches analyzed. Furthermore, the study focuses primarily on B2B industrial enterprises, so the results and conclusions cannot be directly generalized to other sectors, such as B2C or service industries.

Future research could focus on empirical validation of the proposed model through quantitative studies across different industrial sectors, as well as comparative analyses of enterprises of varying sizes and levels of digital maturity. In particular, examining the impact of individual model components on key performance indicators, such as productivity, market competitiveness, and long-term business sustainability, would be valuable. Additionally, a longitudinal approach is recommended to monitor the effects of model implementation over time, along with the integration of additional variables such as organizational culture, innovation capacity, and knowledge management. This would allow the proposed model to be further refined and adapted to the complex requirements of modern B2B industrial environments.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of relevant literature shows that marketing management in B2B industrial enterprises is a multidimensional and highly strategic function, whose effectiveness depends on the coordinated integration of multiple interconnected factors. The digitalization of marketing processes, the implementation of CRM systems, systematic development of the value proposition, and the inclusion of sustainability principles have been identified as key sources of long-term competitive advantage in modern industrial environments. The conducted literature review enabled the identification of a clear research gap, reflected in the lack of integrated and empirically grounded marketing management models tailored to the specificities of B2B industrial enterprises. In response to this gap, the study proposes an integrated marketing management optimization model that combines strategic integration

of the marketing function, digitalization and CRM systems, value proposition, sustainability, and continuous performance monitoring into a single, logically connected framework.

The contribution of this study lies primarily in the development of a conceptual model with potential for practical application in industrial enterprises, as well as for empirical validation in future research. The proposed model provides a foundation for future empirical studies and practical implementation in B2B industrial enterprises.

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