

Navigating Economic Uncertainty: Leveraging Relationship Marketing Mechanisms to Foster Collaboration and Trust in Business-to-Business Relationships

- Relationship marketing (RM) can help businesses navigate economic uncertainty during a business cycle (BC) contraction and expansion.
- RM mechanisms such as communication openness, technical involvement, and customer value anticipation can foster collaboration, shared knowledge, and trust between buyers and sellers.
- During times of economic crisis, suppliers should focus on maintaining or increasing their performance by leveraging RM mechanisms that are differently influenced by the BC phase.
- Managing simultaneously communication openness, technical involvement, and customer value anticipation is crucial for companies to achieve their goals.
- A 2x3 matrix with six quadrants representing different combinations of these three mechanisms can help companies choose specific relationship management strategies for each quadrant.
- Companies should focus on the variable(s) they can most efficiently leverage, and CVA and TMC are recommended as primary mechanisms during times of recovery since they do not have a negative impact on other goals.
- The study extends the dialectical view on buyer-seller relationships by highlighting the importance of positively synthesizing the thesis and antithesis to achieve a win-win solution for both entities.
- The findings contribute to the extension of BC marketing literature outside of the often-used US environment and provide insights into B2B relationships in an emerging economy.
- Effective relationship management can transform the inherent tension created in a business contraction into effective learning for adapting the relationship during times of economic uncertainty.
- Large-sized market leaders can survive and thrive through effective relationship management mechanisms during economic swings.