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The essence of Customer Relationship Management is to segment your customers as high value customers and low value customers, develop systems and procedures to take good care of the high value customers. 1/n

The belief is that 20% of the customers give 80% of the business and hence need to be nurtured.

Now where have I seen this philosophy being applied?

2/n

Let me roll the years back. I lived in a rural area. My father, being the local Executive Engineer in Electricity Board, was considered to be a mini VIP and in turn a high value customer. 3/n

We had nearby a tailor, named Aruchami. This guy had a small tailoring shop with a single sewing machine. He will make personal visit to 10 or 15 important clients in the area, take measurements at our houses, collect the materials and deliver the finished dresses in person 4/n

A kind of customized personal service. Our work used to get precedence over the other relatively non affluent working class people, whom he used to run around in circles to the extend of positively discouraging them. 5/n

When asked, he will say, "they take so much of my time, are never satisfied and don't pay on time".

He had a pigeon hole shop with one machine, with a wooden stool outside for his customer to sit. 6/n

As a teenager, I spent many hours sitting there and used to see his 'not so important customers beg, cajole, abuse him almost everyday 7/n

Next in the line was our family Jeweller Chakkappan.

He Managed a core clientele list comprising of around 10 families who were totally dependent on him as a solution provider to their Gold needs.

Remember, those days it was rare for someone to do retail shopping for gold 8/n

I remember him coming to the house, setting up his workplace, melting the old gold in front of our eyes, weighing it, showing the box containing the designs, taking the order and delivering the finished ornaments after a fortnight. 9/n

He used to visit us at lease once in a fortnight, sit and talk for an hour or so, drink Ammas Filter Coffee and leave. This is irrespective whether he got an order or not. Maintaining Relationships 10/n

Highly personalized service. He didn't even have a shop till much later in his career. He was essentially a service provider, the actual work being done by goldsmiths to whom he outsourced the work.

Again, note that he was concentrating only on high value customers. 11/n

The same was true of Ramachandran mama, who ran a modest car workshop, Bhargavi - our washerwoman and Dr.Sudevan - the family doctor (though he had a roaring practice where he concentrated on the underprivileged).
There were many others. 12/n

All of them were very focused on their high value customers, ensured that they developed a personal rapport with them and the ensuing relationship was a lifelong one. 13/n

They were the first to be invited for any family function and we in turn joined them in their moments of happiness and sorrow.

The relationship was built on quality service, understanding the needs and absolute trust.

14/n

Ultimate in relationship building and customer satisfaction, wont you say.

Most of them are no more. But their spirit and philosophy has survived & has made a comeback as CRM

" plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose“(The more things change, the more they remain the same) n/n