Discussion Guide
Thought Leadership Summit on Digital Strategies
Enabling a Customer-Focused Organization
September 9, 2003 – South Bend, IN

Topic Statement

With the economy showing new signs of life, the race is on to capture growth. Revenue growth requires expanding the customer base or increasing the revenue generated by each customer. In either case, customer loyalty is critical. Yet today, brand loyalty seems harder than ever to hold. The care and feeding of the customer is therefore of ongoing, indeed increasing, concern for all companies. Meeting this challenge requires a focus on the customer that comes from all areas of the enterprise, and an increased customer intimacy. At the same time, privacy and trust issues regarding customer data are emerging, along with concerns of the impact of any perceived "violations" on brand image. In this summit, we will examine what it means to have a customer-focused organization and how to enable that focus. Specifically, we will discuss what it means to be customer-focused, what are the biggest opportunities to move towards greater customer-centricity, and what the organizational and information technology changes needed to support this are.

Flow of the Day – Questions to Consider

First three sessions will be 1-1/2 hours each. The fourth will be 1 hour.

Session I: Defining Customer-Centricity

What does it mean to be customer-focused? What are the elements of customer-centricity? Have you created a customer-focused culture?

- How do you understand the needs of your customers? Are you "seeing" the customer? How do you *engage* the customer?
    - o Through what processes?
    - o Through what organization?
    - o Through what functions/people?
- How do you currently segment your customers and why?
- What information do you gather on your customers?
    - o How do you determine what is important to gather?
    - o How do you capture it?
- How do you currently organize and use that information?
- With whom do you share that information within your company?
    - o How do you share it – in what form is it made available?
- We hear more and more about privacy. How deep are the privacy concerns associated with gathering, sharing and using customer data? Is this purely a consumer concern, or also one for corporate customers? How do you address it?
- How do you look at this from the customer point-of-view? What can be learned from the information customers would or could choose to share in a self-selecting manner if they had the opportunity?
- On a scale of 1-5 how customer-focused would you rate your company?

Session II: Moving the Needle on the Customer-Focus Dial: Where are the Richest Opportunities?

Where do the biggest payoff opportunities lie? What processes, if changed, would enable the capturing of more value through increased customer-focus? How do you prioritize?

- In which areas would you benefit the most from an increased customer-focus?
    - Customer insight generation – gathering new knowledge on customers?
    - More agile, responsive product development?
    - Customer self-identification - facilitating customer personalization?
    - Customer segmentation - new approaches or micro-segmentation strategies?
    - Mass customization – delivering specific to each customer?
    - Others?
- Could you work better with the customer data/information/insights?
    - Better identification and collection of key customer data?
    - Better data management?
    - More focused effort on turning customer data into information into knowledge/insights? Do you have a way to combine non-structured inputs/data with structured data? How do you bring it all together to create a rich customer knowledge/insight environment?
    - Increased sharing of data/information/insights across the company?
    - Can you get the right knowledge into the right hands at just the right time? "Just-in-time knowledge" for the sales force, for instance…
- How do you measure success in moving the dial and what tangible results will it have? How do you measure ROI?

Session III: Retooling the Organization: Pursuing the Opportunities

What are the organizational and information technology changes that need to be made to support the process changes discussed? Who's responsible for the customer?

- How should you structure your organization to achieve customer focus?
- What are the organizational barriers that prevent better customer focus?
- How could you use IT to enable better customer focus in key processes?
- How do you incentivize customer focus in the various parts of the organization? What are appropriate customer-centric performance measures?
- In organizations with multiple major customer segments not aligned with products, how do you ensure good customer stewardship ("one face to the customer")?
- What tools, both IT and other, are successful in supporting alignment around the customer?
- How do you partner with other members of your value chain to see customer focus through to the consumer in the retail store or the corporate end-customer?

Session IV: Summary

We will identify as a group the takeaways, the key "portable" learnings from the day for each participant and the group (following focus areas suggested):

- Best practices
- Organizational impact
- Metrics, incentives and productivity
- Digital strategies opportunities
- Value chain collaboration opportunities