

General Electric, Marriott, and Toyota's Market Orientation

Firms such as General Electric, Marriott, and Toyota have achieved great success by putting huge effort into implementing the marketing concept, giving their firms what has been called a *market orientation*. An organization that has a **market orientation** focuses its efforts on (1) continuously collecting information about customers' needs, (2) sharing this information across departments, and (3) using it to create customer value. The result is today's "customer era," in which firms seek continuously to satisfy the high expectations of customers.

An important outgrowth of this focus on the customer is the recent attention placed on **customer relationship management (CRM)**, the process of identifying prospective buyers, understanding them intimately, and developing favorable long-term perceptions of the organization and its offerings so that buyers will choose them in the marketplace.

Companies can learn from GE, Marriott and Toyota to enable their market orientation strategies. This process requires the involvement and commitment of managers and employees throughout the organization and a growing application of information, communication, and Internet technology. Unfortunately, many expensive CRM computer systems have not provided the expected benefits because they failed to identify exactly which customer segments the company wanted to reach.

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