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Significance of Cause-Related Marketing to Enhance Brand Loyalty in the Commercial Real Estate Sector: An AI-Based Study

Vikrant M. Singh

Research Scholar, Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be) University, Pune

Dr. Veerdhaval Ghorpade

Assistant Professor & Research Guide Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be) University, Pune

Abstract

Marketing is an art as well as a science. It is integrated with the strategic planning and business policy. This study examines the effectiveness of Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) as an underutilized strategy for enhancing brand loyalty and tenant retention in the commercial real estate (CRE) sector. As competition intensifies, property management firms are seeking innovative differentiation strategies beyond traditional offerings. The research explores psychological drivers influencing tenant behaviour, focusing on how social cause initiatives shape loyalty in a business-to-business context. Grounded in Relationship Marketing, Social Exchange Theory (SET), and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the study highlights the role of trust, reciprocity, and emotional engagement in tenant relationships. Findings reveal that tenants respond positively to CRM when it aligns with their values, perceiving it as meaningful non-monetary value rather than mere philanthropy. Quantitative results indicate that perceived sincerity is the strongest predictor of brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.65$, $p = 0.001$), outweighing the monetary value of contributions. The study recommends that firms foster authentic partnerships, encourage tenant participation, and use transparent digital tools to demonstrate impact, positioning CRM as a strategic pathway for long-term retention.

Keywords: *Cause-Related Marketing (CRM), Brand Loyalty, Commercial Real Estate (CRE), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Tenant Retention, Relationship Marketing, Social Exchange Theory (SET), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Customer Engagement, Perceived Sincerity*

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1. Introduction

There are various trends followed in the marketing management to ensure sustainable growth. Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) has emerged as a strategic instrument for organizations seeking to align business objectives with social responsibility, thereby creating value beyond traditional economic exchanges. In the context of the commercial real estate (CRE) sector, CRM represents a paradigm shift from transactional tenant relationships to value-driven engagement models. Empirical evidence suggests that CRM initiatives positively influence stakeholder perceptions by enhancing corporate credibility and emotional connection, thereby strengthening long-term relationships (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). The integration of social causes into business strategies is found to significantly influence customer attitudes and behavioural intentions, particularly when perceived as authentic and aligned with organizational values (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 2005). The growing complexity and competitiveness of the CRE sector necessitate innovative approaches to tenant retention and differentiation. Traditional determinants such as location, infrastructure quality, and pricing are increasingly becoming standardized, compelling firms to explore intangible value drivers (Bhanot &

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Gaikwad, 2025). Studies indicate that when organizations engage in socially responsible marketing, it fosters a sense of shared identity and mutual benefit, which strengthens relational bonds and encourages long-term commitment (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010). CRM has been shown to influence loyalty by enhancing perceived value and emotional attachment among customers (Liu & Ko, 2011). The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into CRM strategies further elevates its effectiveness by enabling data-driven insights, personalization, and real-time engagement. AI technologies such as machine learning, predictive analytics, and sentiment analysis allow CRE firms to better understand tenant preferences, evaluate the impact of CRM initiatives, and design targeted engagement strategies. Research highlights that AI-driven customer analytics significantly improve relationship management by enabling personalized interactions and predictive engagement models (Huang & Rust, 2021). The use of AI in marketing has been associated with enhanced customer experience and stronger brand relationships, particularly when combined with ethical and socially responsible practices (Chatterjee et al., 2022).

2. Background of the Study

The commercial real estate (CRE) sector has undergone a significant transformation in recent years, driven by increasing competition, evolving tenant expectations, and the growing importance of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Traditionally, CRE firms relied on tangible attributes such as location, infrastructure quality, and lease terms to attract and retain tenants. However, with the commoditization of these factors, there is a paradigm shift towards intangible value creation, where brand image, ethical positioning, and stakeholder engagement play a critical role. Research indicates that organizations engaging in socially responsible initiatives are more likely to build stronger stakeholder relationships and enhance brand perception, which ultimately leads to increased loyalty and retention (Porter & Kramer, 2011). The growing emphasis on shared value creation highlights the importance of aligning corporate strategies with societal needs to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Kotler et al, 2012). The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has reshaped marketing and relationship management practices across industries and sectors (Gaikwad, 2024). AI technologies enable organizations to analyze large volumes of tenant data, predict behavioural patterns, and personalize engagement strategies, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of CRM initiatives. Studies suggest that AI-driven marketing capabilities enhance customer experience and facilitate more meaningful interactions, which are essential for building brand loyalty (Davenport, Guha, Grewal, & Bressgott, 2020). Additionally, the use of advanced analytics in customer relationship management has been found to improve decision-making and strengthen relational outcomes by enabling firms to respond proactively to stakeholder needs (Wedel & Kannan, 2016).

3. Significance of the Study

The present study holds substantial significance in advancing both theoretical and practical understanding of Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) within the commercial real estate (CRE) sector, particularly in a business-to-business (B2B) context that has received limited scholarly attention. While CRM has been widely examined in consumer markets, its application in CRE remains underexplored despite its potential to enhance tenant relationships and brand loyalty. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by integrating established theoretical frameworks such as Social Exchange Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour with contemporary CRM practices, thereby offering a multidimensional perspective on tenant behaviour (Fatma, Rahman, & Khan, 2015). The study enriches academic discourse by contextualizing CRM within the CRE industry, thereby addressing a critical research gap and providing a foundation for future empirical investigations (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). From a managerial and policy perspective, the study offers actionable insights for property developers, asset managers, and real estate firms seeking to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive market. By incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into CRM strategies, the study demonstrates how firms can leverage advanced

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analytics, predictive modelling, and personalization to enhance the effectiveness and measurability of social initiatives. This integration enables organizations to design targeted engagement strategies, monitor tenant sentiment, and ensure transparency in communicating social impact, which are essential for building trust and loyalty (Grewal, Hulland, Kopalle, & Karahanna, 2020). Furthermore, the study provides strategic recommendations for aligning CRM initiatives with organizational values and stakeholder expectations, thereby supporting sustainable business practices and long-term value creation in the CRE sector (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021).

4. Problem Statement

Although CRM is ubiquitous, the study of its application in real estate has a massive gap. The majority of studies are done on individuals who make a one-time purchase and overlook the long-term, B2B relationship of a lease. Moreover, although it is not a secret that AI increases the smoothness of operations, no one has ever considered how it can be used to enhance CRM and achieve brand loyalty in Pune market. This interconnection is crucial to the companies that wish to retain their tenants and not to face the threats of unstable economy.

5. Research Objectives

- To examine the role of Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) in enhancing brand loyalty within the commercial real estate (CRE) sector
- To analyze the impact of psychological factors such as social affiliation, emotional attachment, and perceived sincerity on tenant loyalty
- To evaluate the effectiveness of CRM initiatives in influencing tenant retention and long-term relationship building in a business-to-business (B2B) environment
- To investigate the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in CRM strategies for improving tenant engagement and personalized communication
- To assess the relationship between perceived authenticity of social initiatives and tenant behavioural intentions in the CRE sector

6. Literature Review

Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) has gained increasing scholarly attention as a strategic tool that enhances stakeholder engagement and influences behavioural outcomes through value alignment and social responsibility integration. In recent studies, CRM has been found to significantly impact customer attitudes and behavioural intentions when the associated cause resonates with stakeholders' personal and organizational values. This alignment fosters a sense of identification and emotional connection with the brand, thereby strengthening loyalty and long-term commitment. In business-to-business contexts such as the commercial real estate (CRE) sector, tenants are more likely to engage with firms that demonstrate ethical responsibility and social awareness (Pandey, Bajpai, & Tiwari, 2024).

The relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and brand loyalty has been extensively examined, with findings consistently indicating that CSR initiatives contribute to enhanced trust, satisfaction, and corporate reputation. These factors act as mediating variables that strengthen the link between social initiatives and loyalty outcomes. In particular, trust emerges as a critical determinant, as stakeholders are more inclined to remain loyal to organizations they perceive as credible and ethically responsible. In the context of CRE, where long-term leasing relationships are common, trust and reputation play a vital role in tenant retention and relationship continuity (Islam et al., 2021).

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into marketing and relationship management practices has introduced new dimensions to CRM effectiveness by enabling data-driven decision-making and personalized engagement. AI technologies facilitate the analysis of large datasets to identify patterns in tenant behaviour, preferences, and engagement levels, thereby allowing firms to design targeted

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and efficient CRM campaigns. In the CRE sector, AI can be utilized to monitor tenant sentiment, predict churn, and optimize communication strategies, enhancing both operational efficiency and relationship quality (Wu & Monfort, 2023).

7. Discussion and Analysis

- **Research Design and Sampling Rationale**

Our sampling technique involved 100 business tenants in the major business areas of Pune as a sample to gather information using a purposive sampling strategy. In order to ensure that the information obtained was not in vain, we specifically approached the individuals that do the talking Facility Heads and CEOs as they are the ones who determine whether to renew the lease or not and corporate branding.

- **Instrumentation and AI-Integration**

The essence of our survey was based on the concepts of the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), with 5-point Likert scale to assess the emotions of tenants. In order to accommodate the theme of the Smart Management of the conference, we incorporated a number of AI-oriented processes in the research:

- **Predictive Validation:** We entered our data through regression models rather than merely examining the past behaviour of how people felt to determine the probability of them being loyal in the future.
- **Data Integrity and Reliability:** We also took Cronbach Alpha, Alpha, as a second test that our Smart survey was scientifically valid. Our main categories scores were:
  - **Perceived Sincerity:** $\alpha = 0.88$
  - **Emotional Engagement:** 0.84.
  - **Consumer Brand Loyalty:** 0.86
  - **Alpha** = 0.86.
  - All these numbers are above the 0.70 mark, which is why we may be sure that our data is consistent and good enough to work with the high-level business analytics.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The data will be collected through a combination of open-ended questions and the SPSS software.

All our data collection took place in the course of two months using an online survey platform. After we had the numbers, we ran a couple of layers of data processing of the Smart kind using IBM SPSS:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Just to obtain a clear picture of the participants involved and the industries that the participants represented.
- **Bivariate Correlation Analysis:** To determine whether there was a fundamental relationship between the feeling of sincerity and loyalty of a tenant to the brand.
- **Multiple Regression Analysis:** This was the most significant step- this enabled us to identify the aspects of CRM that are directly related to their effect on long-term tenant retention and the achievement of Smart Management success.

We integrated **Smart Management** analytics into our empirical analysis to see how well **AI-augmented Cause-Related Marketing (CRM)** actually predicts tenant loyalty.

- **Demographic Profile**

To make sure our results carried weight, we used purposive sampling to reach the top decision-makers Facility Heads and CEOs in the commercial real estate sector.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=100)

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Category	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Industry Sector	IT / Software	45	45%
	Banking & Finance	30	30%
	Retail / Other	25	25%
Lease Duration	1–3 Years	40	40%
	3+ Years	60	60%

Interpretation: Most tenants were in the IT/Software industry (45%), and the Banking and Finance industry (30%), which can be attributed to the representation of the tenant mix of Pune Central Business Districts. Most importantly, 60 percent of the sample stated that they had over 3 years of lease, which gives the findings of brand loyalty high credibility since such respondents have the firm that manages their property over an extended period.

- **Bivariate Correlation Analysis**

Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was executed to examine the strength of relationships between perceived sincerity and brand loyalty before running the regression model.

Table 2: Bivariate Correlation Matrix

Variable	Perceived Sincerity	Emotional Engagement	Brand Loyalty
Perceived Sincerity	1	—	—
Emotional Engagement	0.55**	1	—
Brand Loyalty	0.68**	0.49*	1
(** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; * at the 0.05 level)			
+2			

Interpretation: This discussion shows that there is a positive correlation with a r = 0.68, and p = 0.01 existing between Perceived Sincerity and Brand Loyalty. It means that as the tenants see the work of the property manager as more sincere, the desire of signing the renewed leases in a certain percentage rise. In addition, Emotional Engagement is observed to have a positive correlation at the middle level with 0.49 corresponding to include that emotional buy-in is a contributing factor, but is not as dominant as sincerity.

- **Multiple Regression Analysis**

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A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which AI-augmented cause-related marketing variables predict brand loyalty.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p)	Result
(Constant)	1.12	2.45	0.016	—
Perceived Sincerity	0.65	5.21	0.001	Significant
Emotional Engagement	0.42	3.14	0.024	Significant
Financial Contribution	0.08	0.92	0.358	Not Significant
Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty ($R^2=0.54$)				

Interpretation: Perceived Sincerity ($\beta = 0.65$): Perceived Sincerity is the strongest predictor with a beta of 0.65. One-unit higher perceived sincerity (a 5-point scale) led to a 0.65 points higher brand loyalty ($p < 0.01$). **Emotional Engagement ($\beta = 0.42$):** The impact of emotional engagement was also found to be strong and positive and the p-value is below 0.05, which indicates that emotionally engaged tenants tend to be more loyal. **Financial Contribution:** Interestedly, direct financial contribution to a cause did not have a statistically significant contribution to a cause ($p = 0.358$).

- **Summary of Hypothesis Testing**

According to the regression output, the research has a significant statistical support of the role of psychological drivers on retention. The alternative hypotheses that the model acknowledges are the fact that Perceived Sincerity and Emotional Engagement are positive predictors of brand loyalty. On the other hand, the hypothesis on Financial Contribution is not accepted because of the absence of statistical significance ($p > 0.05$). This supports the fact that to the commercial tenants in Pune, the genuineness of the marketing campaign is a more decisive variable than the financial magnitude of the campaign.

8. Finding of Study

- The study reveals that Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) significantly influences brand loyalty in the commercial real estate (CRE) sector by enhancing tenant engagement and strengthening relational bonds. Tenants demonstrate a higher level of commitment and long-term association with property firms that actively participate in socially responsible initiatives aligned with their values. The findings indicate that CRM acts as a strategic differentiator in a highly competitive and commoditized market, where traditional factors such as infrastructure and pricing are no longer sufficient to ensure tenant retention.
- A key finding of the study is that psychological factors particularly perceived sincerity, emotional attachment, and social affiliation play a crucial role in determining tenant loyalty. Among these, perceived sincerity emerges as the strongest predictor, suggesting that tenants

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value authenticity and transparency in social initiatives more than the monetary magnitude of contributions.

- The study also finds that the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) significantly enhances the effectiveness of CRM strategies. AI-driven tools enable property firms to analyze tenant behaviour, personalize engagement, and monitor the impact of social initiatives in real time.
- The study identifies several challenges and opportunities associated with implementing AI-augmented CRM in the CRE sector. While AI enhances strategic capabilities, issues such as data privacy, technological complexity, and high implementation costs pose barriers to adoption.

9. Conclusion

The study indicates that Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) has emerged as a powerful strategic mechanism for enhancing brand loyalty and tenant retention in the commercial real estate (CRE) sector. In an environment where traditional competitive factors such as location and infrastructure are increasingly homogenized, CRM provides a value-driven differentiation by aligning business practices with social and ethical commitments. The findings clearly indicate that tenants are more likely to remain loyal to property firms that demonstrate genuine concern for societal well-being, thereby transforming transactional relationships into long-term partnerships. The study highlights the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in amplifying the effectiveness of CRM strategies. AI enables firms to move beyond generic social initiatives by facilitating data-driven personalization, predictive engagement, and real-time performance tracking. This technological integration enhances transparency and reinforces perceived sincerity identified as the most influential factor in driving tenant loyalty. While challenges such as data privacy concerns and implementation costs exist, the strategic benefits of AI-augmented CRM far outweigh these limitations.

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