ROLE OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Employees are the most important factor in the success and failure of any organization. Employee's motivation towards their job plays a very important role in serving the customer's needs. This study focuses on the role of motivation in employee relationship. Results show that employee motivation has a significant positive influence on customer's satisfaction. Those employees who have direct interaction with customer satisfaction highly influence the customer satisfaction level. It is evident from results that customer plays key role in motivating employees towards their organizational goal of higher employee satisfaction. The paper then summarizes the results of Customers' roles in service experiences and studies that illustrate the role of customer participation and the Positive & Negative Effects of Employee Motivation that effects satisfaction with the service.

KEYWORDS: Employee motivation, Customer Experience, Employees Relationship, Customer Service and Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Service experiences are the outcomes of interactions between organizations, related systems, service employees and customers. Considerable research in marketing and management has examined customer satisfaction with service experiences, for example,

- Arnold and Price, 1993;
- Bitner, Booms and Mohr, 1994;
- Bitner, Booms and Tetreault, 1990;
- Keaveney, 1995;
- Ostrom and Iacobucci, 1995;
- Surprenant and Solomon, 1987;
- Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990.

Predominantly, the research has focused on the roles of service processes, employees and tangibles in creating quality service experiences for customers. However, in many services customers themselves have vital roles to play in creating service outcomes and ultimately enhancing or detracting from their own satisfaction and the value received. This is true whether the customer is an end consumer or a business. Customers themselves participate at some level in creating the service and ensuring their own satisfaction.

This manuscript focuses specifically on the roles of customers in creating quality and productivity in service understanding. Drawing on previous research two frameworks are first presented to aid managerial decision making and guide potential research related to customer participation in service. The first framework examines different levels of participation required of customers across a variety of service contexts while the second framework presents three major roles played by customers in service delivery.

ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP

A healthy employee relationship leads to an increased level of satisfaction among the employees and in turn an increased productivity. Workplace becomes a much happier place and employees tend to concentrate more on work rather than unproductive things.

Simple words like well done, great, should be used for motivating an individual. If any employee has done exceptionally well, do appreciate him. Give him a pat on his back. The employees feel contended at work and thus share a warm relationship with their superiors. They do not badmouth anyone in the office or speak ill of their organization. Higher motivation rate results in more satisfied employees. Every organization invests time and money to groom an individual and make him a corporate material. It is absolutely an organization's loss if it is not able to retain its employees. A motivated employee would stick to an organization for a longer duration and enjoy a healthy relationship with his colleagues and fellow workers. He would not be engaged in disputes and instead work hard to achieve his targets and in a way benefitting the organization.

Motivation plays an important role in a healthy employee relationship. A motivated employee works better and at a much faster rate as compared to others. Motivating the employee would in turn benefit the organization only. You need to charge your cell phone after sometime for it to operate well similarly a human being needs to be motivated from time to time to avoid a dip in his performance and for him to remain loyal towards the management. Motivation acts as a catalyst for organization's success and helps the individuals to remain productive and deliver better results every time.

A token of appreciation is a must. Cash prize, gift vouchers and shopping coupons help in motivating the employees to a great extent. Every individual tries hard to win the prize money and does not get time to fight or criticize others. They do not lose focus and instead take each help to accomplish their tasks within the stipulated time frame. They get a motive to work.

Motivate employees to work in a group rather than working alone. They must realize that working in a group means a better exchange of ideas and thoughts to come to a unique idea fruitful for them as well as the organization. Employees should be motivated to help each other and treat their team members as a part of their extended family. Individuals should complement each other at work but one should not forget his limit. Too much of a friendly nature again leads to problems and unrealistic expectations.

The employees must be motivated not to spread negativity around. They should be encouraged not to make issues out of small things and do not bring their personal tensions to work. They should be made to realize the importance of team work at the workplace and healthy relation with colleagues. No one should forget their purpose of coming to the organization.

Job rotations and promotions are also an important way to motivate the employees. The management must ensure that each one is happy with their work and monotony does not creep in to the team. When an individual does not enjoy his work he would always look for excuses to fight with his colleagues and spoil the environment. He would be indulged in lose talks and always blame others for his non performance leading to an unhealthy relation among employees.

Award ceremonies must be organized at the workplace every month or after every three months to acknowledge the top performers. Call them on the dais and honour them. Display their names on the company's main notice board so that every employee gets to know about it. Give the top performers badges for them to flaunt and do this activity in the presence of all. Don't do it separately as the other employee might get hurt and start fighting with his team members. These kinds of activities slightly give an upper edge to the employees who have worked hard and performed well. Others also feel inspired to perform better next time.

CUSTOMERS' ROLES IN SERVICE EXPERIENCES

Within the levels of participation just discussed customers can play a variety of roles. Through a review of literature which has contributed to our understanding of customer participation we have identified three of these:

(1) The customer as contributor to quality, satisfaction and value.

(2) The customer as productive resource.

(3) The customer as competitor to the service organization.

These roles are not mutually exclusive meaning an individual's co-productive behaviours in a specific situation may apply to more than one of the three roles. Elements of each role may be at play in a given service transaction. A description of these roles and their implications follows. Afterwards the discussion of two empirical research studies further illustrates customer participation levels and the roles customers can play in service delivery.

CUSTOMERS AS CONTRIBUTORS TO QUALITY, SATISFACTION AND VALUE

Another role that customers can play in services delivery is that of contributor to their own satisfaction and the ultimate quality of the services they receive. Customers may not care that they have increased the productivity of the organization through their participation but they probably do care a great deal about whether their needs are fulfilled. Effective customer participation can increase the likelihood that needs are met and that the benefits the customer is seeking are actually attained.

This is particularly apparent for services such as health care, education, personal fitness weight loss and others where the service outcome is highly dependent on customer participation. In these cases the customer is an integral part of the service and unless he performs his role effectively, the desired service outcome is not possible. The same is true for an organizational customer purchasing management consulting services. Unless the organization uses or implements the advice it has purchased it cannot expect to get the full value of the service. Recognizing this many management consultants now get involved in

teaching customers to use the information they provide. In addition to contributing to their own satisfaction by improving the quality of service delivered to them some customers simply enjoy participating in service delivery. These customers find the act of participating to be intrinsically attractive. They enjoy using the computer to obtain airline tickets or they may like to do all of their banking via ATMs and automated phone systems to interact with service providers through the Internet or to pump their own gasoline. In some cases there is a price discount advantage for self service but other times customers may be motivated by convenience a sense of greater control over the service outcome timing of delivery or simple enjoyment of the task. Because service customers must participate in service delivery, they frequently blame themselves when things go wrong. If customers believe they are partially to blame for the failure they will be less dissatisfied with the service provider than when they believe the provider is responsible and could have avoided the problem.

CUSTOMERS AS PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

For over a decade researchers have advocated that organizations view service customers as partial employees. This perception expands the boundaries of the service organization to incorporate service recipients as temporary members or participants. It recognizes that customers contribute inputs much like employees which impact the organization's productivity both via the quantity and quality of those inputs and the resulting quality of output generated. For example in contributing information and effort in the diagnoses of their ailments, patients of a healthcare organization are part of the service production process. If they provide accurate information in a timely fashion physicians will be more efficient and accurate in their diagnoses. Thus the quality of the information patients provide can ultimately affect the quality of the outcome. Furthermore in most cases if patients follow their physician's advice they will be less likely to return for follow-up treatment further increasing the healthcare organization's productivity. Customer participation in service production raises a number of issues for organizations. Because customers can influence both the quality and quantity of production some experts believe that the delivery system should be isolated as much as possible from customer inputs in order to reduce the uncertainty customers can bring into the production process.

This view reasons that the less direct contact there is between the customer and the service production system, the greater the potential for the system to operate at peak efficiency. The introduction of ATM machines and automated customer service telephone lines in the banking industry are both examples of ways to reduce direct customer contact in that industry resulting in greater efficiencies and reduced costs. Other experts believe that services can be delivered most efficiently if customers truly are viewed as partial employees and their participative roles are designed to maximize their contributions to the service creation process. The logic in this case is that organizational productivity can be increased if customers learn to perform service related activities more effectively. The extreme case would be full self-service where the customer produces the service for him or herself with very little intervention or support from the organization's employees. This case is similar to Bateson's 1983 full participator group uncovered in his empirical study of the self service customer.

THE CUSTOMER AS COMPETITOR TO THE SERVICE ORGANIZATION

A final role played by service customers is that of potential competitor. In many situations customers have the choice of purchasing services in the marketplace or producing the service themselves either fully or in part. Customers in a sense are competitors of the companies that supply the service. The decision whether to produce services for themselves versus have someone provide the service for them is a common decision for consumers. For example a car owner who needs maintenance on his car can choose to do all his own maintenance to have someone else does all the maintenance tasks or to do some tasks he while reserving more complex tasks for a car maintenance shop.

At one extreme the car owner does all of his own maintenance while at the other he pays to have someone do everything for him? Parallel examples can be imagined for child care landscaping home maintenance and other services needed by households. Bateson's 1983 full participator if he possesses the motivation and the needed skills can be regarded as a prime candidate to engage in internal exchange and produce the service without the aid of a service provider. Similar internal versus external exchange decisions are made by organizations.

Firms frequently choose to outsource service activities such as payroll data processing research accounting and maintenance and facilities management. They find that it is advantageous to focus on their core businesses and leave these essential support services to others with greater expertise.

POSITIVE & NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

In a big box retail environment it can be easy to let employee motivation techniques fall through the cracks. With hundreds of employees a supervisor may only have the window of a morning meeting to motivate employees corporately to perform their best. In a small business you have more opportunities to motivate your staff. Positive and negative effects of employee motivation need to be part of the picture as you attempt to drive revenue.

Performance

Motivated employees perform better. If you offer commission to a salesperson she typically tries harder to sell more. If you thank an employee for good customer service she will likely strive to duplicate it since she feels appreciated. Similarly if you motivate by threatening to reduce the hours of an underperforming employee she may also try harder to prevent the negative consequence of the motivation. This carrot and stick approach to motivation is common in many realms.

Job Satisfaction

An employee rightly motivated by a supervisor should perform better in his specific job role provided the supervisor understands the role and provides clear coaching. Your small business mission statement should point an employee to a definition of success. For example if you motivate your employee by clearly stating that success in his position means detailing every car in the lot every other day and you reward him when he does it he understands what is expected.

Dishonesty

If you motivate wrongly you may teach staff to be dishonest. Commission sales not by definition but in special cases can lead to integrity failure. If you do not tie customer satisfaction in with sales statistics when you motivate your employee you by default are

endorsing sales at any cost. This may lead to bait and switch techniques employee quarrelling over sales and over customers and fabricating statistics. The resulting reduction in customer and employee satisfaction may be costly.

Turnover

If your attempts at motivation are flawed poorly executed or unrealistic they may lead to increased turnover. This may come in the form of dismissals or attrition. Employees may see others being rewarded for good performance and feel slighted. Employees that do not understand the rationale for motivation or what is expected of them sometimes do not communicate this trouble they merely stop trying or resign. Staff turnover is expensive and time-consuming, especially for a small business.

EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Impact of employee motivation on customer experience an often misunderstood factor in customer experience is employee motivation.The enthusiasm of highly motivated employees reflects onto customers in a contagious way. Enthusiastic employees make enthusiastic customers.

Beginning of Employee motivation

As important as first impressions are for customer experience as important they are during the very first contact with employees the job interview. Managers in the process of hiring new people understand very well the importance of the first impression the interviewee makes very often however they forget that first impressions work both ways. Job interviews that are a great experience for both parties are the basis for employee motivation and lead to long lasting working relationships. After a good start employee motivation is a high priority continuing process which should be an important part of the company culture.

Following strategies help creating a culture of highly motivated employees who constantly care about the Customer Experience.

Authorize your employees to take resolution

Move some of the decision making with respect to Customer Experience to the front line. New ideas which are not implemented top down but come from the front line are much more likely to be successful. Changes are adopted much easier when employees are fully behind them and believe in them when it's their own idea this is out of the question. The role for management in this process is to facilitate the decision making and to evaluate and prioritize the front line suggestions.

Customer Centric thoughts

Make sure employees are aware of the importance of Customer Experience for the success of the company. Learn them to adopt customer centric thinking, let them see through the eyes of the customer. Let your employees walk a mile in your customer's shoes. Create continuing education programs for your employees to further develop their customer handling skills.

Facilitating for applying employee implication

When a decision to implement a change has been taken management should provide full support in order to implement it as soon as possible. Provide resources make the necessary procedural changes. When employees are empowered to take decisions it is important that management moves away all obstacles that could prevent the implementation of new ideas.

Encouragement

There is a lot of argument on whether incentives are the right way to motivate employees or not. Either way it is a fact of life that incentives can help directing employees. To increase the impact of incentives employees can be involved in the determination of the incentive types.

Giving feedback

Continuous open feedback is an important factor in employee motivation especially when employees are empowered for decision making. Both internal and external feedback is equally important. Make sure both types of feedback are gathered and transmitted to the

employees in a direct and open manner. This will make employees aware of the impact of their actions and allows them to continually adjust and optimize their day to day work.

Offer wherewithal

Support your employees in achieving a great Customer Experience by making the right resources readily available. Whether it's funding, technology or any other resource required in the execution of their day to day work.

All strategies listed above allow you to keep employees motivated and enthusiastic while constant customer focus is part of the company culture. Bottom line Employee Motivation and Customer Experience go hand in hand in fact they constantly fuel each other.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

These contexts described here the different levels of customer participation and a specific application of customers' roles in employee motivation. Apparent in both studies are the benefits of customer education effective and realistic expectation setting and other efforts by providers to facilitate customers in their roles. These studies exemplify the fact that the issue of customer participation in service delivery raises highly relevant and complex questions for both management practice and research. Thinking of its customers in these ways will lead the organization to ask what types of information and education it may need to share with its customers and how it might develop approaches for training and rewarding its customers for effective participation.

Approaches for monitoring the quality of customer contributions providing feedback to guide improvement or offer encouragement and rewarding customers for effective participation can be implemented. Researchers can also use the frameworks to motivate questions relevant to the different levels of participation and the participative roles customers play. Additional research which examines and compares the methods by which service firms might foster the development of realistic customer expectations, would contribute to our understanding of the usefulness of the partial employee perspective. Also an extension of the earlier work of

Bateson and Langeard would provide insights into the effects of customers' willingness to participate on providers' desired levels of client and employee motivation.

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