Customer service industry

Business, Marketing

The customer service industry has become a great point of focus due to the emergent market factors including liberalization, increase in competition, and the increased growth in population. The service industry commands a substantial share of the market though the value of the customers to the business is often overlooked. It is therefore essential to develop a real time customer intelligence so as to be able to capture the value that customers add to the profitability of the organization. This paper shall focus on the human resource management practices that are associated with customer service industry in the modern world.

The Customer Service Industry: Customer service is a very important aspect of any organization that is interested in retaining and attracting more customers. An effective customer service usually adds some value to the services being offered to customers. Customers prefer value for theirmoneyand that customer service is not customer satisfaction in itself but rather a means to achieve customer satisfaction. Customer service is equated to a brand and that it is what the customers perceive and remembers of the service that was rendered to them.

Customer service can be defined in terms of thecommunicationand/or interaction between the organization's representatives and the customers engaged in business with that organization. It is important to point out that the organization's success is dependant on the customers and therefore the ability of the organization to establish and retain a strong customer base plays a big role in its growth and survival (Weimer, 2010). Every organization aspires to maintain unmatched levels of customer satisfaction through the provision of value additions on the services rendered to their clientele.

This is designated to lead to high levels of satisfaction on the customers' side as they feel that their expectations are well catered for during the interaction. Generally, quality customer service is reflected the philosophical concept that " a happy customer is a repeat customer and a returning customer is a loyal consumer" (Weimer, 2010, para 2). Customer service is meant to achieve the designated end results. It can be described as providing all the necessary conditions that will leave the customers happy and willing to come back.

In essence, it is going above and beyond the expectations of the customers in an effort to persuade them to come back (Hodge, 2010). Customer service is found at all levels of communication between the organization and the customer in the past, present and futuristic transactions. The customers generally expect to receive exemplary client services from the organizational representatives. They usually expect to be addressed withrespectand in a professional manner when dealing with any issue that relates to their relationship with the organization (Weimer, 2010).

Customer service is a very crucial element in any business and therefore it is necessary that it part ofphilosophyof any organization that is interested in achieving success. Price reductions alone without proper customer service may not be enough to attract and retain clients as most customers would prefer paying an extra dollar for good service and quality. Customer service is aimed at making customers feel happy and satisfied and this works to retain them and/or attract others. Customer service is therefore the sure way of ensuring the survival of the organization.

Through the fair treatment of customers and with respect, the customers are destined to come back. An organization is deemed to have repeat customers through the provision of quality products and excellent service (Hodge, 2010). Human Resource Management: The human resource management refers to the effective management of the employees in an organization. The human resource management is shouldered with theresponsibilityof ensuring that the workers of any given organization are productive and satisfied in the performance of their duties. Therefore the human resource department is an essential aspect of any given organization.

Development of this department in any organization is of great consequence since it forms the foundation on which the future of the company depends. Human resource department therefore forms the heart of every organization. It must be noted that people are the ones who create an organization and nottechnologyas many would think. Human resource management is usually concerned with the management of human resources in the organization. This ensures effective utilization of employees in the organization for realization of objectives and mission of the organization (Kamoche, 2001).

Human resource management realizes that it is imperative to organize the activities of humans in any given organization. It also entails organizing the technological resources together with others such as the physical, financial, and skills of the workers in an effort to establish a successful and efficient managerial structure of the business. Human resource department performs the organizing function which emphasizes on division, coordinating and controlling tasks and information flow within an organization (Sims, 2002).

Managers also have the duty of distributing responsibilities and authority to employees as one aspect of the human resource department. The human resource department also functions to recruit and retain skilled and knowledgeable workforce so as to remain competitive in the market. The department has to ensure that the employees as important assets of an organization are well taken care of so as to carry their duties in the most effective manner. The employees are to be assured of their security so as to distract them from the uncertainties which negatively impacts on their productivity (Kamoche, 2001).

The human resource department performs numerous functions in an organization which include job analysis; human resource planning; training and development of the employees. There are however legal issues that the human resource has to adhere to which include safety, health& wellness of the employees; labor relations; and equal employment opportunity to all individuals amongst many other functions. The Equal opportunity legislations form the core of the legal issues surrounding the human resource.

These legislations refer to the requirement by the government that ensures that all individuals are presented with equal opportunity of employment irrespective of race, color, gender, nationality and religious affiliation. There are however other legislations governing the workenvironmentsuch as issues of sexual harassment and safety at the workplace (Sims, 2002). Employee Search Process: Human resource is actually more than maintenance of personal functions in an organization. For any business organization to remain competitive, the human resource department needs to be dynamic and inventive.

This requires the human resource department to integrate the human resource functions with the human resource policies and strategies, with the business strategies & management teams bringing all the stakeholders on board. Organizations need to have proactive policies for attracting and retaining the best people to their business. Management of employees takes a greater role in the human resource issues especially in the ever-changing and unpredictable economic climate that characterizes the world today (Kamoche, 2001).

The main process of human resource management begins with employee search process. This refers to the initial stage in the selection of the organization's work force. The employee search process needs to be based on the equal opportunity legislation and at the same time any vacancies should be filled through a competitive search (Eastridge InfoTech, 2010). The employee search process should be comprehensive so as to ensure that employees with a higher performance are selected for the vacant positions.

There are various employee search strategies that are often employed to ensure that an organization comes up with the best candidates for the job. Job definition and description is an essential stage in the employee search process. There is need to have a refined job description which precisely reflects on requirement and keys aspects to the success of the respective role that the employees shall perform in the organization. A good employee search criteria should reflect on the customer orientation to ensure that the prospective candidates are a good match for the organization.

The candidates for the job have tocareerobjectives that can relate to both the long term and short termgoalsof the organization. It is therefore

important to conduct a market research so as to be in a position to identify the suitable sources for the potential candidates (Eastridge InfoTech, 2010). There are also other aspects of the employee search process that are equally important. The pre-screening methods are essential as they provide an opportunity for the organization to have more background information from the possible candidates in an effort to come up with the best match.

This is important as it eliminates the guesswork that is usually associated with the employee search process. Refined screening procedures ensure that attitudes and characters of the job seekers are well known so as to be able to meet the requirement as be able to blend well with the organizationalculture. The screening procedures may be referred to as the ' inner view procedures' for they bring out the information that can not be obtained from reading resumes.

Such information that may be uncovered during the screening include motivational level; creativity and innovativeness; communication skills; oral and written presentation; interpersonal skills; professionalism; and thought processing speed among others (Eastridge InfoTech, 2010). Employee Selection-making process: The employee selection process has been defined by R. D. Gatewood and H. S. Field as the " process of collecting and evaluating information about an individual in order to extend an offer of employment" (Gatewood and Field, 2001, p 13).

The employee selection process forms part of the staffing process in any given organization which also includes the Human resource planning, recruitment, and retention activities. Through human resource planning, the organization is able to project the likely demand for employees with specific

knowledge, skills, and abilities and this is then compared to the anticipated availability of the employees in the labor market. During recruitment, the organization is engaged in reaching out to the potential recruits. The employee selection process starts when a pool of application has been generated by the recruitment efforts of the organization.

It is during the selection process that the organization is able to decide on who among the recruited individuals shall be offered the job (Gatewood and Field, 2001). Effective employee selection process is critical to the success of the organization. Employee performance plays a vital role in the success of the organization. Job performance is usually measured by the ability of an employee to perform particular duties and the effort that the employee is willing to inject in the performance of his/her duties.

By conducting an effective employee selection process, the organization has the potential to increase the possibility that its new recruits shall bear the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the duties that they were hired for. Therefore employee selection serves as one of the main means that organizations ensure that the employees posses the abilities to perform the duties that they were hired for. The other way to ensure this is through the orientation and the training process.

Employee selection also provides the foundation for other human resource practices which includes job design, goal setting, and compensation which acts asmotivationfor the employees to put in the necessary effort for effective performance (Gatewood and Field, 2001). Essentially, there are differences amongst the job applicants that are depicted in the educational levels and working experience, character, and natural ability and

motivational levels. The employee selection process begins upon the realization that some of the variations in the applicants can be matched with specific jobs.

It is therefore necessary for employee selection to be guided by two principles. The first one is for the process to determine the appropriate differences in knowledge, skills, and abilities that are required for the job and secondly to be able to identify and make use of the selection methods which shall be vital in assessing the extent to which the applicants possess the required knowledge, skills and abilities. The organization however has to achieve these tasks in a manner that do not has discriminatory overtones to the job applicant in respect to gender, race, religion, nationality or any physical disability.

Validity and reliability is very crucial in the selection process. This means that the process needs to be appropriate, meaningful, and useful in regard to the inferences that are made about the applicants. The closer the match between the expectations placed on the applicant and the actual job performance by the applicant, the higher the validity of the selection process. The selection models can not be said to be accurate unless they have a higher degree of validity and reliability (Gatewood and Field, 2001).

Evaluation of methods of Personnel Development: The qualities of employees and their development through training andeducationforms a salient factor in the determination of long-term profitability of the organization. Hiring and keeping of good employees alone is not enough to realize success and therefore it becomes necessary to invest in the development of their skills in

an effort to raise their efficiency. There are various reasons that have been advanced for development of the personnel in any organization.

Some of these reasons include the need for creation of a workforce that provides for readily available and adequate replacement for the individuals who may reach a decision of leaving the organization or moving up within the same organization. Development of the personnel also enhances the organization's ability to adopt and make use of technological advancement by availing a sufficiently knowledgeable staff to the organization. It also ensures that there is an efficient, effective and highly motivated workforce that encourages the organization's competitive position and at the same time improving the employee morale.

The development of personnel also ensures that adequate human resource is available which can be deployed in expansion missions of the organization. The personnel development process results in employees developing a great sense of self-worth, dignity and well-being since they become more valuable to the organization and the society in general. The employees are set to receive a greater share of the material gains emanating from their increase in productivity. These factors lead to the feeling of satisfaction as they are able to achieve both the individual and organizational goals (Weight, 2009).

Personnel development is a crucial aspect in the ever-changing business world considering that the people are an important asset to the organization. Human development can be explained by different models which include the humanistic theories, neuro-linguistic theories, and the energypsychology. All in all, the personal development process ensures that people are in a position to achieve critical personal changes necessary for updating their

individual identities, attitudes, values and beliefs; increasing congruency and contentment; and also in releasing impediments that have been thwarting efforts to realize the personal potential.

Human development encompasses the ' nature and nurture' concepts which are vital for who we are and what we do. Human development has been identified as a life-long process that begins with nature at birth. After we are born, the nurturing process then begins. Nature refers to the biological attributes that humans are born with whereas the nurture refers to the environmental influences on human behavior. Nature and nurture are therefore interactive in the developmental process (Weight, 2009). Humanistic theories of personal development focus on the inner capability for growth and self-fulfillment and puts emphasis on the human potential.

Early humanistic theories defined humans as having been set up or pre-programmed to achieve growth and development unless the environment played to inhibit the growth. The humanistic theorists assert that positive self-conceptual is essential for individualhappinessand accomplishment in life. They also observed that acceptance and empathy were crucial in nurturing positive feelings about ourselves as a consequence; we are able to develop the capability to extend the positive feelings to others. Essentially, the humanists believe that individuals are basically good and capable of self-improvement (Weight, 2009).

The neuro-linguistic programming on the other hand has been referred to as a study of individual experience and human distinction. Emphasis is placed on the rapport which entails mutual trust and sensitivity. According to this model; the greater the mental, physical, and emotional rapport with one's

self the greater his/her healthy well-being and inner peace. An individual is in turn able to relate to and influence the others. The energy psychology model is a collective term that is used to refer to a number of approaches that focuses on the relationship between the mind and the body.

This model is based on the assumption that psychological and physical problems may be addressed via the body's meridian system together with the other systems found in the body. This can be found in the traditional practices as those employed by the ancient Chinese medicine like the acupuncture. According to this model, any disturbance in the energy or meridian system shall have a physical manifestation which shall be reflected in impaired thinking and physical health. However, once the disturbance has been cleared, the harmony shall be restored (Weight, 2009).

The elements of an effective appraisal and evaluation system: Appraisal of employee performance is one of the most crucial functions that are performed by managers and at the same time it has been one of the most controversial aspects of management that has been dogged with dissatisfaction for both the employees and the managers. However, an effective performance and evaluation system in any organization has been identified to play a crucial role in the organization's quest to gain a competitive advantage over its competitors.

There are several elements that can be attributed to an effective employee appraisal and evaluation systems (Peter, 1994). The appraisal system needs to be tailored to the specific needs of the organization and that the rating factors need to be as objective and concrete as possible. The appraisal and evaluation system also need to be free from any prejudice and that the

procedures and administration of the systems have to be standardized. The systems have to be easily operational and the results from the appraisals and evaluations should be used in making decisions.

To ensure that fairness is upheld, the systems need to provide for review and appeals procedures which act as a safety valve reducing complaints and strengthening employee confidence in the systems. The systems also have to be acceptable to users and at the same time it should be economical to operate. It is also essential that the top management support the evaluation and appraisal system being used in the organization (Peter, 1994). Conclusion: The customer service industry is an essential aspect of any business in the modern world where cut-throat competition is the main characteristic of any business.

The need to attract and maintain customers should be the top most priority of any organization. The human resource department is therefore to engage in practices that will ensure customer retention by emphasizing on practices that will encourage the employees to provide quality service to the esteemed customers. Employees are the main heart of the organization as they hold the potential for the success orfailureof the organization. Customers on the other hand are the pillar to the organization and therefore it is important to strike a balance between the two.

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