

# Problems in the london zoo



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Zoological Society of London known as ZSL was founded by Stamford Raffles in 1826 and in 1828 it was opened to member of London Zoological Society for the study of animals, Zoo was on open to public until 1947 to get aid funding.

In 1926 there were major expansions to Zoo to accommodate new animals and to keep large animals into natural environment. As Zoo continues to progress and in 1931 it was world's first open zoological park. In 60s Institute of Zoology was established.

London Zoo has been known as national history and contribution to the zoological world. Despite the low visitor turn up and today it's a home of wonderful animals of more then 650 species and 130 animals are used breeding purposes. Not only that it's also recognized world's first reptile hose in late 40s and in 1852 worlds first aquarium.

Decimus Burton was the first architecture designer of the zoo who was also the designer of Marble Arch London and Colosseum Theater.

Q1: Identify and describe one of the problems that currently exist and explain how it is potentially harming the company.

## **Problems in London Zoo**

London Zoo since it's opened in 1828 has played vital role in the country scientific and entertainment activity of the society. London Zoo had grown rapidly from early start and continues expending but it ran into multiple problems in 1960s and 1970s due to various reasons.

One of the major problems which can be easily identified is the lack of strategy operation plan for London Zoo. Operation strategy involved keeping the routine operations in place despite the number of visitor to the Zoo. Marketing plan had work out in the past but it all goes into drain, if end of the day customers feel lost and are not entertained or managed well. Customer dissatisfaction can potentially lead to customer not returning to Zoo and as well as it can create bad impression which can harm new or returning visitors.

In these competitive era of entertainment; customer satisfaction is consider a key to success, which London Zoo has failed to provide effectively over the period of time. London Zoo has failed to delight its customer by not providing quality of service for customer processing which involved managing parking areas, queues, information desk, customer handling and information processing. Fail to achieve can lead to customer unhappiness, can create chaos and seriously damage the Zoo image.

Other problem can be related to Society attitude and behaviour towards the animals, today people are well more aware of animal warfare, rights and conservation. There have been questions and debate concerning “ what is the role of a Zoo in society”, “ should animal be kept in captivity or used for human entertainment”. People have become much more educated and are questioning the role of Zoo in the society.

Attracting number of visitors and applying capacity management operation to keep them organise have been crucial problems of London Zoo for long time. It has harmed company potentially as it has lead to various problems

which included cut down in development projects; number of large animals has been move to sister Zoo to cut down the cost, services quality has affected due to lack of funds. This may lead to people not returning to Zoo for next 3 to 6 years unless there has been major development or new attraction in Zoo to drag them back to Zoo.

Q2. Describe the evidence that support your claim that problem exists.

## **Problems Evidence**

The major problems of London Zoo as identified previously have come to know from various sources. The source has been various reviews, feedbacks and various studies have been conducted on London Zoo to identify these problems.

From past experience of the Zoo we have seen the whole operations crashed when more then expected visitor's attendance. Management announce save my Zoo campaign after it failed to meet the expenses. Campaign attracted 18000 visitors in a day which lead to complete chaos in Zoo; there were queues everywhere, restaurants run out of food, parking problems and visitors found them self lost.

There have been continues decline in number of visitors since 60s and 70s. Number of visitors have be fluctuating because of various reasons, There has been continues increment in number of leisure and attraction places in London only, there are around 130 major attractions in London. There have been numerous communications and travel invention has made easy to travel and trip around world which has made number of domestic visitor to decline.

As stated in case there has been no major development for last 30 years, but in last couple of years Zoo has done some development work to improve the visitor attendance level.

There have been animal welfare, rights, law and ethics awareness as it never been previously. Britain Govt created animal welfare advisory committee in 1967 which later became Farm Animal Welfare Council in 1979. It recommends animal freedoms and rights. There are 5 major freedoms which are promoted under this council which have been given in appendix. There have been debates in society in first half 20th century but its get intensified in 1980s to protect the ethics of animals. Due to continue awareness and debate in society has made people to think about the existence of the Zoo in society and their interest towards the Zoo.

Customer Quality satisfaction has been the main issue in zoo. As it's mentioned in case study, as Zoological society restructured is organisational departments to improve the operations and quality of service. After reviewing various unbiased reviews, the quality of service has been poor in London Zoo and as customer feedback shows there has been lack in operation management.

There have been number of issues with visitors which includes poor operations and Planning, Empty Cages, Low Food Quality, Queues Everywhere, Lack of Seating, Baby facility.

Few customer reviews have been attached in appendix with references.

Q3. Carry out a critical literature review to identify what is considered to be “Best-Practice” in the area of Operations Management related to the problem.

## **Literature Review and Best-Practice**

### **Introduction**

London is one of the major tourist attraction for visitors around the world, every year approximately 150m number of tourism day trips are made to London (source: The Countryside Commission website) and estimated total attendance 50m to London attractions during 2006 (Source: Visit London website). As a result of large number of visitors; attraction increases competition and importance to continuously improve the service quality to attract large chunk of visitors coming from domestically and internationally.

### **Literature Review**

As previously discussed London Zoo has number of problems from which one of the major problem is to address the issue of service quality and customer satisfaction. There are various academic studies has been conducted to address the issues related to customer satisfaction, service quality and behavioural intent.

Different model present different method of measuring the service quality some author describe as gap between customer expectation and perception, alternate author believe assessing the perceive quality by customer is a component to measure quality.

A literature overview of different models can be found in Cauchick Miguel and Salomi (2004) presented in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Proposed models for measuring service quality

(adapted from Cauchick Miguel and Salomi, 2004).

As it can be concluded from the diagram there is no best practice to be adapted to measure the quality service. SERVQUAL has been centre of debate for most researchers but there have been critics of its accuracy, validity and implication on all kind of service industry.

There has been intense use of SERVQUAL model in different service industry like banking, fast-food restaurant, call centre and other various industries despite huge criticism of the model. As oppose to SERVQUAL other model was developed as a result of criticism, SERVPERF is comparatively less used in industries like hotels, public services, cell phones services and various other. SERVPERF critics believed it's only applicable in developed countries.

### **SERVPERF Model**

One of the strong critics SERVQUAL model were Cronin and Taylor (1992) and they developed their own new model based on the original model, they argued that quality service can be measured based performance only.

SERVPERF model is single item scale and developed based on performance satisfaction as oppose to performance and expectation in SERVQUAL.

### **SERVQUAL Model**

The SERVQUAL model is a technique that can be used to measure a gap and perform analysis of an organization between customer “ expectation for the service and their perceptions of the providers”. It can also be used internally to perform the gab analysis of the employees and employers.

It was initially based on 10 aspects of measuring the service quality of an organisation and later refined by author to five dimensions which are reliability, assurances, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness.

SERVQUAL requires conduction a detailed survey or questioner to analysis the gaps between what was expected by the customer and what currently offered by the organisation. It involves relevant important of each question and measurement of perceived service and measurement of quality service provided.

## **Conclusion**

From the brief literature review we can conclude that best practice can be SERVQUAL Model as its widely used in for service quality measurement model. SERVQUAL can be useful but it's not as intensely studied and reviewed by researches and practitioners.

SERVQUAL Gap Model Diagram illustrated

Available at: [http://www.gccrm.com/eng/content\\_details.jsp?contentid=2068&jectid=101](http://www.gccrm.com/eng/content_details.jsp?contentid=2068&jectid=101) [Accessed 8 November 2009]

Q4. From the conclusions drawn from your literature review and your findings within the case study create a proposal for the changes you would like to see introduced to solve the selected problem.

## **Finding and Change Proposal**

A conclusion can be drawn from research, evidence and literature review that Zoo has number of problems which can be addresses by following these steps.

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## Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

### Development Work

### Animal Captivity and welfare Issues

## **Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction**

As previously found the customer satisfaction and quality of service score was low. Furthermore the finding of review of different customer at various review sites shows that London Zoo operations have poor performance which includes poor operations and planning, empty cages, low quality food and queues everywhere. This shows there is a gap between customer perception and service provided.

As suggested from literature review that customer satisfaction and perception can be achieved and that can be used to improve the services. After gathering the results from SERVQUAL model, these issues should be addressed operation management tools.

## **Development Works**

There has been greater decline towards the visitors attendance due to lack of attraction and facility provided by London Zoo. The new development like “ African Bird Safari” in 2005, In 2006 “ Meet the Monkeys” opening and walkthroughs “ Into Africa” “ Butterfly Paradise” and “ Gorilla Kingdom” and “ Clore Rainforest Lookout” in the year 2007 by the London Zoo were encouraging and right steps towards creating more attractions, But as analysis shows its only mange to increase visitors at smaller scale and

reviews shows customer were not satisfy with the new Gorilla Kingdom as their expectation were much higher then the what the got.

There should be continue development in providing support facilities like baby facility, seating facility, parking, extra counters to reduce queues and journey planner for Zoo to walk through the Zoo to give complete and entertaining day out in Zoo.

## **Animal Captivity and welfare Issues**

One of the major concerns by animal rights and welfare society were to address the issues related to animal facility and welfare in society. London Zoo management should work towards the captivity and happiness of animals. London Zoo should work to provide natural environment for animals so there happiness are confirmed with the entertaining of the visitors.

Animal breeding and preservation research work should be launched by zoological society and should raise awareness about the work been done but zoological society, so in this way instead of become party against all the animal rights and welfare organisation ZSL can actually work with hand to hand to address these issues and develop a positive society attitude.

## **Conclusion**

The above mentioned points can clearly address the basic and major problems currently faced by London Zoo. It can certainly create positive and healthy attraction and attitude of the society and which can lead to new visitors and as long as returning visitors as well.

Q5. Additional task: If you were appointed as a Management Consultant of London Zoo and you were requested to conduct a competitive analysis of your park versus those offered in: 1) Bristol zoo and 2) Chester zoo in order to improve your competitive edge and attract more customers; which operations manage tools/models would you use to do so and why? After so doing, what set of reasonable improvements would you suggest to the London Zoo director.

## **Competitive Analysis**

To evaluate the strength of competition is the key to gain competitive edge on your competitors. The competitive environment provides opportunity to analysis the own organization and competitor as well, to achieve this edge various tools and models are available which are widely used in different industry sectors.

There are different methods and techniques available to conduct a competitive analysis of different organization in similar industry. Popular models include

Porter's Five Competitive Forces

SWOT Analysis

Competitive Benchmarking

## **Porter's Five Competitive Forces**

Michael Porter model provides the framework to gain competitive edge by analysing the industry context in which firm operates. The competitive model is identifying the 5 basic competitive forces:

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Entry of competitors

Threat of substitutes

Bargaining Power of buyers

Bargaining Power of suppliers

Rivalry among the existing players

Critics believe that this model is too analysis individual business strategies and extra care is required to not to underestimate current organization strength and weakness.

## **SWOT Analysis**

SWOT analysis is used to analyze the competitor and identify their strengths, weaknesses; opportunities and threats which help determine the target market, competitive edge, customer services and forecasting.

### **Strengths**

This is use to identify the strength, potential strategy, marketing strength, customer services and positive tangible, intangibles.

### **Weaknesses**

Weaknesses involve evaluating the culture, organization structure, operation efficiency, operation capacity, market share and position on experience curve.

## **Opportunities**

An opportunity is consider as a chance to introduce new product or service.

Opportunity can arise due to external factors and can increase the chance of high return.

## **Threats**

Similar to opportunity these may lead to potential threat, it can be social changes, customer, competitor, new technology, economic or political and regularity changes.

## **Benchmarking**

Benchmarking is a process to identify performance of organizational processes and activity are best-practice. The objective of benchmarking is to evaluate business unit, division, and organisation performance as compared to similar industry.

There are 5 types of benchmarking

Internal Benchmarking

Competitive Benchmarking

Functional Benchmarking

Generic Benchmarking

Collaborative Benchmarking

In this scenario competitive analysis should be performed using “performance or Competitive Benchmarking”.

## **Competitive Benchmarking**

Competitive Benchmarking is used to identify and compare the company performance with a competitor. Comparison can be all dimension of a business it can range from finance, product and services, technology, development and personal polices.

To increase Zoo competitiveness, it helps to understand how your operations and business processes compare to that your competitors. It allows to examination of current processes and weaknesses which help to change and improve with experience and practice. While conduction benchmarking it should be clearly define and data information shared. Wrong comparison and less information may lead to meaningless comparison.

Process of benchmarking can be elaborate using following diagram.

Benchmarking process [online]

Available at [www. pcimag. com](http://www.pcimag.com) [Accessed 17 November 2009]

## **Improvement Recommendations**

Would like to suggest following recommendations:

Strengthen the competitive edge and try to come over weakness identified while doing competitive analysis.

Improve Quality of service and customer satisfaction

Provide support facilities like baby facility, seating areas and information desk

Improve daily operation task effectively

Increase the big animals which can increase the competitive edge

Provide animals with closer to nature living facilities

Take measures to cater the animal happiness and welfare issues.

## **Appendix**

### Customer Reviews

#### **London Zoo, not great!**

“ On a 3 day trip to London and unfortunately was part of a day I felt could have been spent somewhere else! It is one of the worst Zoo’s I have ever been to! Most of the cages were empty and to be honest I have been to much better zoos!!” by gooseuk7 [online]

Available at: [http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186338-d187553-r48182591-London\\_Zoo-London\\_England.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186338-d187553-r48182591-London_Zoo-London_England.html) [Accessed 9 November 2009]

#### **London Zoo – An expensive waste of time**

“ Costly admission prices to a zoo with few interesting animals and many sections and stalls empty.

The admission prices are already expensive at £13 per adult, £10 per child, but then the ticket sellers force you to pay an extra £1. 50 ‘ optional donation’. It’s hard to stand up to them to avoid this ‘ donation’. Car parking is expensive at £9.

There were no elephants. This has been the case for a while, and has been mentioned by other reviewers, but seems a shocking omission.

- There were no gorillas – the whole section is boarded off and under development.
- The bugs area was also under development.
- There are none of the exotic animals like pandas any more.
- Many of the animals that were present stayed out of view.
- The food was pricey like the admission (but this is normal for such places).”  
by yood [online]

Available at: <http://www.dooyoo.co.uk/theme-parks-zoos-national/london-zoo/1034722/> [Accessed 8 November 2009]

## **Disappointing**

“ I’ve been many times and this time was the most disappointing.

Too many areas seemed to be in the middle of refurbishment.

Night zone was too dark – couldn’t see anything.

I like meerkats, but they seemed to be everywhere.

The outback was dismal showing a lack of ideas.

As I’ve said I’ve been before and those visits were much better, I would still go again in the hope that things improve.



To be honest – Chester zoo is better.” By munslowl [Online]

Available at: [http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186338-d187553-r36778432-London\\_Zoo-London\\_England.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186338-d187553-r36778432-London_Zoo-London_England.html) [Accessed 8 November 2009]