

# Effective management of service processes tourism essay

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## **Introduction**

In this assignment I will be critically evaluating how the effective management of service processes, service people and resource capacity/resource utilisation can potentially contribute to the success of a business. I will also look at the ways in which the management of these service areas can potentially contribute to the success of this organisation. The service business I will be focusing on is Easyjet, the airline service which offers customers affordable and cheap flights to majority of the biggest cities in Europe in order to sustain a success service, EasyJet must ensure that their management of service processes, service people and resource capacity/resource utilisation is imbedded effectively throughout the organisation in order to maintain their leading market position.

## **Service processes**

The service process is the mechanism that creates the customer's experience and results in the service outcomes. Many service processes are deemed to be quite complex, due to the involvement of many interrelated processes, departments, people, decisions and activities. The importance of service processes and the management of service process efficiency is stressed throughout Fliess, S., Kleinaltenkamp, M., (2004) research paper who strongly acknowledge that the service provider is dependent on the customers participation, but only up to a certain extent. EasyJet's on time performance remains the core of their operational focus. Improvements have

been delivered through: new leadership; a reorganisation of ground operations and the operational control centre to ensure the right people are in the right place at the right time; daily performance reviews, and through the EasyJet turn programme which has delivered tangible improvements since its introduction in November 2011. On time performance has been further strengthened by the reduction in disruption year on year following the benign winter weather. EasyJet has also improved its processes for managing disruption resulting in reduced cancellations. EasyJet Plc, 2012. Case example 6. 1 in R. Johnston, 2012, p 185, shows that a service process comprises many interrelated processes, some of which predominantly process customers, other information and others material. This can take place in both the front and back office. Therefore tasks and activities undertaken in an organisation can sometimes take place in the presence of the customer or remotely away from them. Together, these processes- in an appropriate sequence- create the customer experience and deliver the service outcomes.

## **Front Office**

Tasks or activities that are taken place in the presence of the customer are known as the Front office processes. These front office processes may be performed in a number of locations such a customer's own home. As front office deal directly with customers, this means that customers play a vital role in front office processes and is an operational resource. In relation to Easyjets front office, they offer a service to book flights through their website [www. easyjet. com](http://www.easyjet.com). Interactions through technology are one of the main front office processes. As technology is increasing, this process is one of the

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further increasing processes to be used by many organisations. This type of front office benefits Easyjet because it reduces costs for the organisation but it also benefits the customers as they have greater time and effort on to choose the flights. As a result Easyjets website makes it easier for customers and the company to communicate in simple way in order for both parties to be happy. Easyjets pilots and cabin crew are the 'visible' faces of the business, they are there to make life easier for customers on board. The cabin crew members will warn customers about health and safety and also make it as comfortable as possible for all passengers on board. They will provide meals and entertainment if necessary. Customers will reflect on their Easyjet experience by knowing how well they have been served by the cabin crew members as they are the people who are interacting with customers throughout the journeys. Moreover, check-in staffs are also visible when it comes to dealing with customers, as a result they are the first Easyjet staff any customers communicate with as bookings etc are done online. So it is vital for check-in staff to be well mannered and to make sure the customers come first at all times.

## **Back Office**

Back office processes operate at a distance from customers and are largely invisible to them. As a result, back office processes are frequently more efficient due to not having the complication of the customer's presence. In relation to Easyjets back office processes, according to Easyjet. com, they focus on three different sections in the back office processes:

## **EasyJet's 'on time performance' (OTP)**

Getting our passengers to their destinations on time is a key focus for Easyjet. Every three months we will update this page with our most recent punctuality numbers.

### **How do we measure our OTP?**

The time of each arrival is recorded automatically via the ACARS system in the aircraft and sent directly to our operational control centre. Some other airlines have alternative methods to measure OTP including manual inputting which can be subject to inaccuracies and even abuse. The automatic system Easyjet has in place ensures that we can correctly measure the time our passengers arrive at their destination.

### **About EasyJet's network**

Easyjet flies between more primary airports on more popular routes across Europe than any other airline. These airports offer our passengers a greater connectivity across Europe, however they tend to be busier and more subject to slot constraints and curfews than smaller airfields located further away from Europe's main cities. Nonetheless, we do everything we can to get passengers to their destination on time. These three section in Easyjets back office process deals with the timing of flights, making flights as quick as possible with less disruptions and also to EasyJet's network with airports, they work with different airports around Europe to find slot times for landings but are more likely to be busier in major cities so they tend to use smaller airfields located further away from Europe's main cities. Furthermore EasyJet's back office also deals with meticulous planning, support,

marketing, safety, staffing, engineering and thousands of operational activities. These are done remotely away from customers in order to be more efficient and get more done. Processes, whether front office or back office, whether they process customers, material or information, need to be 'engineered' and controlled. To do this effectively we need to understand the nature of service processes, we can do this by looking at how much service product variety does the process have to deal with. A runner is a product or product family having sufficient volume to justify dedicated facilities or manufacturing cells. Easyjets service variety process is most likely to be related to being a runner, this is due to Easyjet being in a competitive and busy environment every day, they are found in high volume operations. As runners lend themselves to efficient operations through tight process control or automation, Easyjet relate to this as they need to be very efficient due to the high demand they receive from their website. They are working in a tight schedule everyday dealing with arrivals and departures along with delays and other working day problems. So in terms of being more simple and efficient, a runner most likely relates to Easyjet. On the other hand the problem is that all three service variety processes can and sometimes do exist within the same organisations. In relation to Easyjet, as a runner, they will be doing passenger check-in; baggage handling; in-flight service and maintenance scheduling. As a repeater, Easyjet relate to having the aircraft being overdue or replacement required and serious customer complaints. Finally as a stranger, Easyjet might need special charter for VIPs. The volume and variety of an operation's activities are particularly influential in determining the way it thinks about its performance objectives. In terms of

what type of business service process Easyjet relates to, it could be argued that they relate to both commodity and capability. Commodity links with runners, even though I see Easyjet as more of a runner, they don't relate to all factors for commodity. Commodity processes are exemplified by high-volume consumer services, this relates to Easyjet as they have a very high demand in flight bookings online. But on the other hand Easyjet try to ensure customers are satisfied with their experience throughout the service, from booking online to arriving back from a destination, sometimes managers would need to change a few things such as demands for leg room, in-flight entertainment, meals during flights and also travel insurance. Easyjet will need to be prepared to deal with these demands even though most customers are satisfied with their Easyjet experience. The front and back office of Easyjet are working effectively to ensure a good service process by communicating daily through results of demands of flights, arrivals, departures, time slots etc. If these two processes weren't working together then there would be a huge problem with the business in terms of its service and efficiency of it as communication is the key in this circumstance due to the importance of the information needed to be passed between the two processes. Furthermore the cabin crew will need to know how many people are on board in order to prepare meals etc, if this wasn't the case then it would cause problems during the flight as some customers who paid for meals may not get what they wanted. According to Easyjets business review 2012, there was overall satisfaction which has improved to 85%, the likelihood to recommend is comparable to BA and double that of Ryan air. This shows the operational resilience underpinning increased satisfaction for

Easyjet customers. In order to improve further, I would recommend Easy jet to have a pre-travel checklist and information to make it easy for families in order for them to know what they need for their holidays and the basics about their destination. I would also recommend have allocated seats, as this might be very successful in a busy environment, sometimes customers can maybe choose where want to be sitting as this might make customers more comfortable with the Easyjet service. There also room for improved deals on flights and packages in order to persuade more customers in booking online at easyjet. com.

## **Service people**

‘ Clients of service organizations have important roles to perform in creating services. Yet, comparatively little attention has been directed at the participation of clients in complex and demanding client performance domains’ Peter K. Mills, James H. Morris, clients..., 1986. From a customer perspective, the difference between a mediocre and excellent experience lies more often than not with the person who serves them- their immediate point of contact. Service providers ultimately have a very challenging role especially in large organisations where communication between management, employees and customers can become fragmented at various functions.’ All staff work in accordance with company and regulatory policies and procedures demonstrating total commitment to ensuring Easyjet remains Europe’s preferred short haul airline delivering market-leading returns’. Easyjet, cabin crew, 2013. According to EasyJet’s engineering courses, anyone who wants to apply will need to have the following:-

Excellent interpersonal skills and be a strong team player;- Previous

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experience with mechanical, electrical or electronic equipment that can be -- demonstrated would be desirable;- Applicants will be required to sit and pass aptitude tests prior to selection for interview This shows that all Easyjet staff are required to have the necessary experience and qualification in order to work in the organisation. It show that not anyone can just apply for this business but people with relative experience in certain industries, in relation to this engineering course, previous experience with mechanical would be desirable along with interpersonal and team skills. All service providers face two difficult pressures; organisational and customer pressures Johnston & Clarke (2008). In relation to Easyjet, all staff are well prepared to face any pressures due to the fact that Easyjet employ people with strong leadership and skills along with people skills. So therefore they should expect to maybe face certain pressure from customers and also the organisation. But certain staff members will be feeling the pressure more than others for example, check-in staff are the first people in person to interact with Easyjet customers and they will be dealing with problems such as large number of customers queues, Customer complaints, baggage problems, leg room etc. The staff will be feeling the pressure from these types of problems but they are all experienced enough to get through these problems in order to make it easier for the customer and also themselves. Furthermore, in relation to organisation pressures, EasyJet wants an efficient and smooth service at all times and expects staff to be well up to the task of any pressure. This can put more pressure on employees such as cabin crew members, as they will be the ones who will interact closely with customers throughout a certain journey, knowing they will need to be on their job as customers would have

high expectations of them. As stated before the overall customer satisfaction has improved, so therefore there isn't any major improvements needed for Easyjet employees, but there can be room for more improvement and in order for that, they can maybe have better training facilities or more incentives to keep up the staff morale and keep them motivated.

## **Resource capacity/ utilisation**

Managers are highly concerned in making the most out of their fixed resources in order to reduce costs, anticipate levels of customer demand and improve efficiency. Resource capacity and utilisation plays a vital role in businesses and operations. Resource utilisation is making the most effective and optimal use of operational resources, these include materials, staff, equipment and process technology. Ensuring high resource utilisation increases efficiency, decreases costs and improves customer satisfaction. Capacity management deals with putting a plan into place that will make the best use of resources in response to forecasted demand for services (creating a balance between too little & too much resource utilisation). In relation to Easyjet, they have been using the resources to great effect from online improvements to aircraft fuel changes. Easyjet have the resources to be able to deal with high customer numbers and demands as they boast over 200 aircrafts, 600 routes, operating from 130 airports, this shows that they are in direct competition with other airlines such as BA and are to compete with any airlines due to the huge number of interest they receive along with the resources they have to adapt to that interest. In

reference to the limitations of resource capacity/utilisation, the impact of location is a factor that can be applied to Easyjet, this is because as they are

online based, all the focus is online and processed in a system that shows all bookings made which management deal with in the back office. But if they were to locate in airports, they may find this beneficial as more customers might find it easier to book it in person while they talk to Easyjet employees about booking information.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Easyjet has demonstrated its focus on customers and affordable prices. This resulted in improved customer satisfaction ratings which means Easyjet are heading in the right direction to expanding their business. Back office proactively ensure that customers receive the services they expect and demand and so the organisations service processes, service people and resource capacity/utilisation can be viewed optimistically. The back office works well with the front office in order to have a successful service for the customer and to ensure all goes to plan. From an overall view, Easyjet are expanding and getting more and more popular as they are receiving good feedback from customers meaning there will be an increase in customers in Easyjet flights and bookings.

## **Appendix**

Overview of Easyjet Easyjet was established in March 1995, it all started in a small office at Luton Airport - shared with the airport spectators club. Easyjet advertised their first low-cost flights from London's Luton Airport to Glasgow and Edinburgh in Scotland. The flights were full, and the demand for low-cost flights grew rapidly throughout the whole country. Since then, Easyjet was concentrated on expanding itself and raised additional finance to invest in

additional aircrafts. Easyjet are Europe's leading, the business can boast over 200 aircrafts, 600 routes, operating from 130 airports, 30 countries and 22 bases. Annually Easyjet look after over 50 million passengers and oversee the safe arrival of thousands of departures daily. As of September 2012, it employs 8, 446 people, based throughout Europe but mainly in the UK