



**STRATEGIES FOR COMPANIES WHO ARE “GOING GLOBAL” TO RETAIN
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

By

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A THESIS

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**STRATEGIES FOR COMPANIES WHO ARE “GOING GLOBAL” TO RETAIN
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

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Finally, I am forever indebted to my husband for his understanding, patience, and encouragement when it was needed most.

Thanks for everything.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Paraskevi (Evi) Zacharia is an Economist and she is into the labor market for the past 10 years. After graduating from the Economic University of Athens, Evi worked as an accountant in a big cosmetic firm in Athens, Greece for 4 years.

Evi currently works as a Credit Officer for the ATEbank S.A. in Greece. She is responsible for mortgages and personal and business loans as far as their granting and liquidity management is concerned. The position includes numerous special interest decision making responsibilities, as each loan request is a unique case with unique communication challenges as we have increased customer interactions.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about customer satisfaction alongside with the methods, tools, and strategies organizations who are “Going Global” use and apply.

The globalization has caused distortions to the traditional business environment that eventually lead to business policy alterations and adaptations. The organizational quality culture should change so as to come to terms with the contemporary charges of the ever sophisticated, more price conscious, smarter, more demanding and less forgiving internal and external customers.

The author will conduct a research based on the bibliography, the periodicals, the electronic media and her personal experience as a professional in order to address the problem.

The most crucial areas of analysis will be the following:

1. The methods and tools companies use to retain and increase existing and potential customers’ satisfaction and delight.
2. Other factors that may have an impact on the main theme.
3. Corporate examples from successful strategic tools and methods application.
4. Cultivating Employee - Employer Relationships based on loyalty.
5. Customer Satisfaction and Project Management.

The results of this thesis will be a set of guidelines and recommendations to organizations that will help them deal with the problem of retention of customer satisfaction.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Nature of the Study

“Nothing is permanent except change.”

Heraclitus

The Greek philosopher’s aphorism is nowadays more than ever up to date. The only constant is change, and that is especially true in this era of mergers, acquisitions and consolidations. But while many people view change with some anxiety, it can also be a catalyst for reorganizing and moving forward. Retaining customers’ satisfaction in this continually evolving corporate environment constitutes one of the main factors that companies have to worry about.

Organizations are affected by globalization, deregulation, and convergence of industries, increasing competition, mature markets and ever demanding, smarter, more price conscious customers. Hence, attracting, retaining their customers satisfied and delighted and growing customers is one of the sources of profitable and sustainable revenue growth. This might lead to profit increase due to additional sales or more projects.

Despite the critical and serious attempts companies make in order to cultivate and implement quality policies regarding their customers in their corporate culture, other factors like the cost of quality or the competition make their attempts often ineffective. “There’s still a cultural challenge in most companies where the Princes don’t necessarily work and play well with teams. So you end up with lumpy delivery schedules, surprises for store

personnel, surprises for distribution center personnel, and financial surprises,” says Paula Rosenblum, director of retail research for Aberdeen Group, in Boston. This statement shows that the problem of the internal or external customers’ satisfaction is visible even though the companies try to solve or restrict it using various quality management tools.

The application of the principles of Project Management (PM) can have effective results in the relationship management in the aim of customer satisfaction for all industries whose companies venture worldwide.

Customer management is about effectively maneuvering interactive relationships among stakeholders. We cannot conceive it as a project but most likely as a business strategy that aims to conceptualize, foresee and manage the requirements of organization existing and potential customers. Relationship management is an approach to building and maintaining unbolt and effectual communication involving an organization and its customers. This kind of management requires developing ongoing two-way connections with internal and external customers which means building loyalty through involvement, quality project performance and adopting win-back strategies.

For organizations who are “Going Global” retaining customers satisfaction and loyalty may mean charity work; employees’ rights protection and cultural respect (e.g. General Motors); personal manner with direct communication with “VIP” customers by providing special goods and services (e.g. Four Seasons, SAS); political and legislation alliance; or strategic business alliances (e.g. Boeing and American Airlines).

There are many issues disputed concerning customer management like the measurement of customer satisfaction and the rationale behind any strategies used or methods adopted. Is it so vital to have the most competent ones dealing with it? Is a

satisfied customer going to increase business revenue? Does effective relationship management have any correlation with repeat purchase or patronage, customer retention or profitability?

Organizations who are “Going Global” find essential to formalize the management of customer relations. Many organizations have appointed relationship managers whose responsibility is to act as the link between customer and the various services provided by the organizations. Some organizations use the concept of Project Management in the aim of generating substantial relationships both with customers (external) and employees (internal) of the organization.

The importance of the concept of customer treatment was found to be critically important for a customer’s total satisfaction. The importance of the after - sales phase in the total customer process was found to increase as the customer relationship matures.

Different services offer different characteristics and challenges, while for many customers, their satisfaction - loyalty relationship with a provider tends to be non-linear. The relation between customer needs, satisfaction, and loyalty, and how these ultimately relate to a providing organization’s profitability, were seen to be linked in complex ways.

Customer relations though, should be more than progress tracking and customer treatment. However, it is essential to point out the relationship marketing which is the forerunner of relationship management.

Relationship marketing is a philosophy of doing business, a strategic orientation that focuses on keeping and improving relationships with current customers rather than on acquiring new customers. It is the use of the wide range of marketing, sales,

communication and customer after - sales techniques and processes to identify your named individual customers create a relationship between your company and these customers.

Relationship Marketing serves therefore as an actionable tool for developing durable long-term (and hence more lucrative) rapport with customers.

1.2 Needs Assessment

Stakeholders for findings of this thesis include a wide spectrum of interested parties that care to evaluate bottom line results. This thesis will provide stakeholders with a view of:

- **The definition of Customer satisfaction and delight,**
- **The methods companies use to retain and increase existing and potential customers' satisfaction and delight,**
- **Other factors that may have an impact on the main theme,**
- **Corporate examples from successful strategic tools and methods application,**
- **The Cultivation Employee - Employer Relationships based on loyalty,**
- **Customer Satisfaction and Project Management.**

These findings and the author recommendations will provide the stakeholders with keys for improving their success with customer satisfaction and retention. The author will use the bottom line results from this thesis in her workplace as the Bank she works for, intends on launching an aggressive entry into emerging global markets.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Since customer satisfaction is a goal embedded in the organizational culture and one of the most crucial parameters which ensure every organization's survival, the author anticipates that the results of this thesis will be very useful to those companies which want to apply customers' management strategies.

The research conducted for this thesis records and evaluates the most prevailing quality methods regarding the customers and the customer management policies. Based on the research and the evaluation of data, the author expects to, produce a set of guidelines that will help companies structure and implement their quality strategies.

Since the needs of the customers (internal and external) most of the times affect the organization's policy and lead to strategic decision – making regarding quality policies, there is interest in finding out organization's responding timelines. The ability to understand and even anticipate customer's perceptions provides useful business applications on how to balance and prioritise services.

Customer relationship and customers' opinions on customer satisfaction cannot be explained simply descriptive; customers' relationship is more complex. The customers' relationship is quite dynamic since being affected by a large number of stimuli and the ever changing global business environment.

Considering the abovementioned, the issue of building loyalty rises. Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty have been the focus of several researchers in the 90's.

According to Vavra (1995), relationship marketing and relationship management are highlighted, as a means to keep customers loyal. In relationship management, there is preconception that some persons are more important for internal organization than others.

1.4 Significance to the Workplace

The thesis results will help the author develop critical thinking about how the ATEbank S.A. can choose the best strategy for its customers in order to successfully integrate its business with the emerging markets of Southeastern Europe.

Upon the completion of this thesis the author will crystallize the significance of choosing the most effective quality strategy coupled with the appropriate Project Management principles in relation to the customers.

In addition she will be able to apply the bottom line results in her workplace in order to excel in this particular field, especially since the ATEbank S.A. hasn't developed any Project Management Department yet.

1.5 Relation to the Program of Study

The courses PM512 (The Customer in the Project Process) and PM511 (Project Quality Management) are relevant to the author endeavor.

Since many Organizations are already customer-focused and customer-driven, it would be very interesting for the author to examine how customers already behave and perform in the global environment.

The author believes that the Project Management processes and the related tools can help organizations handle various problems they face with customers. Customer satisfaction is a goal every healthy organization stretches to reach, as the customer is the one who can ensure its success and future.

Chapter 2- Problem Statement

Companies that venture worldwide find difficulty in keeping their internal and external customers satisfied and delighted.

2.1 Rationale

Globalization is the new trend in the world of business. It refers to economic, social, and cultural connectivity of people in other parts of the world. Companies that expand their activities or undertake projects worldwide must connect and successfully coordinate geographically dispersed segments in order to serve global customers.

In the global environment that companies venture into, we find multicultural and multinational societies. Globalization influences many types of projects as well as the projects' stakeholders in various ways.

On the one hand, we have a global pool of Experts and Professionals as well as easy access to know-how; we have broader horizons of projects; and we potentially have new career opportunities and increased profitability.

On the other hand we may have some negative influences like reduced job security, increased work load and employers' rigidity, negative environmental impacts and cultural distortions.

The above mentioned factors that influence companies which venture globally tend to influence customers' loyalty as well.

Many times customers, internal and external, face situations of inconvenience that may lead to project failure due to scope-time-cost-performance constraints violations. Furthermore, it is difficult for stakeholders to cooperate and achieve common goals as most of the time they live in different countries and work in different time zones. In addition the time schedule is never sufficient for preparatory work or research about the domestic culture of each country where a company does business.

The author was motivated to undertake this thesis research because of some real-life cases of the Greek companies that made strenuous efforts to keep their customers satisfied in order to deliver successful projects, to minister high quality services alongside with high quality products.

The rhythms of work, the corporate culture, the suppliers' payment habits, the domestic culture, the legislation, the virtual teams, the limited time in which projects often have to be delivered, and the geographic distance that stands in between the stakeholders are some of the factors that make customer satisfaction a difficult task.

2.2 Hypothesis/Objectives

Understanding the primary factors that lead to customer satisfaction, and evaluating the methods companies use to overcome the barriers to customer satisfaction in the corporate environment will generate new recommendations for achieving the goal of delighting and retaining clientele.

Project management being the case study for this thesis, it has given the author the theoretical knowledge about what is obtainable in projects, the risks inherent and ways to minimize them by securing profit for the stakeholders.

Chapter 3 - Review of Literature

The literature highlights the incentives the author had for undertaking this thesis research. The literature review reveals some aspects of the thesis topic.

3.1 Identification of the customers and their needs.

Concerning the customers and their needs, Barley and Saylor (2001) have extensively referred to customers and to customer-driven teams and their needs.

In the PMBOK Guide we can also find definitions of the customer or the stakeholders. Customer is the person or organization that will use the project's product or service or result. Stakeholder are the persons and organizations such as customers, sponsors, performing organizations and the public, that are actively involved in the project, or whose interests may be positively or negatively affected by execution or completion of the project. They may also exert influence over the project and its deliverables.

McShane and Von Glinow (2005) cite the correlation between job satisfaction and customer satisfaction. In the Project Delivery System (2001) we can identify the customers' needs as relating to their satisfaction and delight.

In the article, "Driving down Expenses," Logue (2005) hosts the interview of the manager of MasterCard's Stephen Orfei who says, "Our role at MasterCard is to help create innovative solutions that banks can take to market. With our solutions, we must address

both the needs of our financial institutions and the needs of their corporate customers” (p. 23).

In the article, “Connecting with Customers,” Bob Adler (2007) hosts the interview of the president of Oracle Safra Catz who says, “When people buy our products, they’re not buying something that is disposable. It’s really a commitment to the future. Buying our products it’s the beginning, not the end, of the relationship. The view we take is that once you purchase a product from us, our responsibility increases dramatically and it is really our job to make you successful, because we can’t be successful unless that happens. Whatever it is that our customers need to be successful, we’re going to try to make available to them” (p. 23).

3.2 Customer satisfaction and delight.

Kotler (1997) defines customer satisfaction as follows: Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations.

Brown (1992) defines customer satisfaction as: The state in which customer needs, wants and expectations throughout the product or service's life are met or exceeded resulting in repeat purchase, loyalty and favorable worth-of mouth.

The importance of delight has additionally been recognized in the area of quality by Deming (1986), who encourages companies to do more than merely satisfy customers.

Delighting the customer can be a profitable business practice. The meaning of product and service features to consumers is divided into product attributes, satisfiers, and delights.

Product attributes are vital to the basic feature of the product and they only cause dissatisfaction as the consumer expects their presence. Satisfiers are satisfying in the sense that high levels of such attributes have the potential for further satisfaction beyond that provided by the basic function of the product or service. Delights are unexpected and enjoyable.

There are two types of delights: those that raise customer expectations and those that are appreciated on a onetime basis and may be sought again. In cases of assimilated delight, it is likely to raise customers' expectations. In this case if the loyalty effect or a customer attraction can be improved, the delighting feature could be considered. In the case of transitory delight, the organization only minimally benefits as the delight is soon forgotten. Expectations are likely to be raised after delight, and delighting the customer will be more difficult in the future (Farson, 1997, Rust and Oliver, 2000).

A customer is delighted (Friday and Cotts, 1995) once the service that is delivered exceeds the customer's expectations. Even if a customer's demands or expectations are unrealistic or inappropriate, the customer makes the buying decisions.

Despite efforts to engender customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction levels mainly remain unaltered. This may be partly because the expectations of customers have risen or companies have not predicted customers' anticipations. Companies need to discover what dissatisfies the customers.

3.3 The virtual teams and the global corporate environment.

Regarding virtual teams and the global corporate environment, McShane and Von Glinow (2005) report the results of a massive investigation which was conducted for the Project GLOBE, and suggest that some features of leadership are universal and some differ across cultures. Considering the above it is obvious that corporate culture is impacted by the multinational and multicultural societies including their customers' management.

Since globalization has become a necessity for many organizations, "Virtual teams are now a reality," says Frank Waltmann, head of learning at pharmaceuticals company Novartis.

Coordinating virtual teams requires, among others, the instrumentality of technology. Parasuraman and Grewal (2000b) predict that technology will be a major force in the future shaping of the buyer-seller relationships.

According to Hoefling (2003) the key to successful virtual teams is the clear understanding of the skills needed for bonding individuals into cohesive high performance teams across distances and differences.

3.4 The quality strategies based on project management principles.

For Quality Strategies based on the project management principles, Quality is defined by Stonebraker and Leong (1994) in the following terms: Product or service quality requires a total system, which identifies customer requirements, which designs the product /

service to those requirements, and which establishes a production or service delivery system to produce in conformance with the specifications.

According to Woodruff (1997), customer value is: A customer's perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations.

Barley and Saylor (2001), among others, report all these as quality issues: customer satisfaction, customer feedback, the development of customer requirements, and, as an internal customer, team performance. They also report as an embedded quality strategy placing project stakeholders in immediate and effective contact with any aspect of a project, from technical issues to policy and resource decisions, at any time and in any phase of the project.

Especially, in businesses where services are part of the business, the services are visible to the customer. Therefore, it would be quite natural that such services would have a major impact on the customer satisfaction, loyalty and commitment. Service can be used to distinguish the product and it is much more difficult for competitors to imitate (Rothschild, 1984, Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000b). The cost of supplying high quality service is likely to continue rising. Therefore, service must utilize technical developments. Suppliers need to demonstrate to customers' added value, as there will be pressure on the margins.

Krackhardt and Hanson (1993) propose that the informal organization needs attention and that these social links can help managers harness the real power in their companies. Therefore, it is accepted to assume that this relationship management thinking may hold an answer to the complex issue of customer satisfaction. Identifying the "right"

persons and their roles in the organization could provide an insight about how to satisfy customer.

An organization should connect with the internal and external customers so as to form its strategy regarding its services, products, human resources policy and every organizational aspect in general. Simply, by listening to customers describe their needs, a company can improve the competitiveness of its existing services and identify opportunities for developing new services.

Maister (1997) makes the observation that companies concentrate on those activities that generate opportunities with new customers and courting, i.e., on trying to gain new customers. This may be because companies take it for granted that nurturing, gold - plating, and listening take place automatically, but this assumption is incorrect.

For most customers, gold plating brings the highest Return On Investment (ROI). The most successful growth strategy is one whereby existing customers buy existing products. This is supported by research conducted at the Strategic Planning Institute and at General Electric (GE) in the Profit Impact of Market Strategy (PIMS) database (Maister, 1997). Growth through penetration is appropriate for companies with a broad range of product lines. It creates both incremental sales and strengthens customer relationship.

3.5 Summary.

From the literature review we can conclude that the customers are the bottom line of any company; and since the globalization has affected many industries the methods to be

used in order to retain or gain customers' satisfaction should be thoroughly checked and selected before being applied.

The author believes that applying Project Management methods, principles and tools could help those companies which venture globally to retain customer dissatisfaction and to avoid quality methods pitfalls.

Chapter 4 - Methodologies & Procedures Used in the Study

This thesis research will not be limited to a certain type of organizations that undertake a specific kind of projects. The collection of the data, and their evaluation, will be drawn from a wide spectrum of companies worldwide. Moreover the author will refer to practices some big companies that are involved in Quality have to share.

The author using the bibliography, the periodicals and the electronic media cited at the end of the thesis, as well as her personal experience will emphasize on the following areas:

- **The methods and tools companies use to retain and increase existing and potential customers' satisfaction and delight.**

There will be a report of the most prevailing methods and tools that lead to customer satisfaction.

- **Other factors that may have an impact on the main theme.**

There will be a report of the issues relevant to Globalization as well as the customer satisfaction surveys.

- **Corporate examples from successful strategic tools and methods application.**

There will be a report of some corporate examples.

- **Cultivating Employee - Employer Relationships based on loyalty.**

There will be a report of the issues relevant to employee turnover and loyalty.

- **Customer Satisfaction and Project Management.**

There will be a general reference to Project Management.

Chapter 5 – Results

In this chapter the author presents the results of the thesis, which are the following:

5.1 The methods and tools companies use to retain and increase existing and potential customers' satisfaction and delight.

Dealing with customers' satisfaction issues is equivalent with dealing with quality issues. Quality is ultimately defined by the customer and represents how close the project and deliverables come to meeting the customer's requirements and expectations.

The old adage about quality being in the eyes of the beholder is true - quality is ultimately measured by the customer. Every organization's goal is to understand the customer's requirements and expectations - and then meet those expectations.

Simultaneously, the purpose of quality management is to first understand customer's expectations in terms of quality and then put a proactive plan in place to meet those expectations.

Since quality is defined by the customer, it may seem that it is completely subjective. However, there is a lot about quality that can be made objective. This requires first breaking down the generic term of 'quality' into the specific aspects of quality that are important to the customer. Then, the organization looks at each of the individual aspects and determines one or more metrics that can be collected to measure the characteristic. For

instance, one of the features of a quality solution may be that it has a minimum amount of errors. This characteristic can be measured by counting errors and defects after the solution goes live.

In addition to understanding the customer's definition of quality, it is important to recognize other stakeholder's interests as well. Depending on the roles of the stakeholders, they may have other quality requirements that need to be satisfied. For instance:

- The organization – The solution meets strategic goals,
- Buyers - The solution meets specifications,
- End users – The solution helps them do their job better, faster and easier,
- Information Technology (IT) supports the organization – The solution is stable, has few bugs, is understandable and can be modified easily.

For large projects, collecting metrics is vital to make the quality management process work. If the organization wants to do a good job managing quality, it needs to be measuring. If the organization chooses not capturing metrics, it will be hard to improve processes through a quality management initiative.

Another method we meet as a business practice that serves the main purpose of this thesis is the Customer Profiling Theory. Many people think using customer data is about creating a customer "profile".

Profiles can be demographically or behaviorally based, and the difference is very important to organizations. The first type of profile concerns customer characteristics like the marital status, the age, the place the customer lives, the income levels and so on. The

second type of customer profile is about action and behavior. Customer behavior is a much stronger predictor of the future relationship with a customer than demographic information ever will be. Customer behavior profiling is critical to a company interested in keeping customers and increasing their value.

Generating a demographic or a behavior-based customer profile is quite important in their own ways depending on the kind of organization.

The difference between a Profile and a Model is the element of time, making models more powerful predictors of behavior.

Marketers who use customer data often talk about "customer modeling" instead of customer profiling. Modeling is kind of like profiling, but it is action oriented. Models are not about a static state, like "The Customer is 50 years old." Models are about action over time, like "If this customer does not make a purchase in the next 30 days, they are unlikely to come back and make any further purchases with our company."

This kind of model sounds so mystical, and it is. To see a mathematical model predict customer behavior is astonishing, to say the least. The model says, "Do this to these people and they will likely do this." The marketer goes out and does what the model says, and a good bunch of the customers do exactly what the model said they would.

The model simply looks at customers who are engaging in a certain behavior and tries to find a commonality in them.

Moreover a method used is the Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM highlights the importance of using Information Technology (IT) in creating, maintaining and enhancing customer relationships. The goal with CRM is to maximize company profits by maximizing the value of interaction with the customers. In order to do this, companies

have to become customer focused and customer centered due to renaissance of process-oriented organizations.

In addition a prevailing method for retaining or acquiring reasonable levels of customers' satisfaction is the promotion of benchmarking as an improvement process. Benchmarking is the process of identifying "best practice" in relation to both products and services (including) and the processes by which those products are created and delivered and the services are ministered. The search for "best practice" can take place both inside a particular industry, and also in other industries.

The objective of benchmarking is to understand and evaluate the current position of a business or organization in relation to "best practice" and to identify areas and means of performance improvement.

Benchmarking involves looking outward (outside a particular business, organization, industry, region or country) to examine how others achieve their performance levels and to understand the processes they use. In this way benchmarking helps explain the processes behind excellent performance. When the lessons learnt from a benchmarking exercise are applied appropriately, they facilitate improved performance in critical functions within an organization or in key areas of the business environment.

Barkley and Saylor (2001) present the Quality Function Deployment (QFD). QFD is a tool for transforming the customer requirements into product development requirements. Quality Function Deployment has four phases which are the following:

- Product planning,
- Parts deployment,

- Process planning and
- Production planning.

The output of each phase is the input for the next one.

In the Product planning phase, customer's requirements are transformed into product planning. In this phase is essential to collect answers for questions such as, what are the customer's requirements, how we will adjust them to design requirements, and how many inputs are needed in order to determine the target values.

In the parts deployment phase, the design requirements that are also customer's requirements are implemented into the concept design.

In the process planning phase, which is the third phase of the Quality Function Deployment, the concept design determines among others the most suitable development process.

Finally in the production planning phase, the development process which is the manufacturing operations look at making capable production processes.

Simply by applying Quality Function Deployment we can identify the gaps and the waste. That is very important because we economize time, budget and resources while we focus only to what the customer wants to get.

Subsequently, there is another quality tool known as SIPOC. The SIPOC is the acronym of Supplier, Inputs, Process, Outputs and Customer. A SIPOC diagram is a tool used to identify all relevant elements of a process improvement project before work begins.

To be more precise, it helps to determine the input supplier of the process, the specification of the processes' inputs, who the customer is and their participation into the project and the design of product according to the customer requirements.

The SIPOC tool helps the project teams define the project concerning its processes inputs and outputs, the net result of the system's processes and identify the customer's wants, needs and expectations (Kano's model) in order to adapt them into the design of the project. Also with the SIPOC tool is important to have a supplier from a complete supply chain and establish effective relationships in order to avoid waste and resource delays, which can create setbacks in the project processes.

Barkley and Saylor (2001) analyze the Statistical Process Control (SPC). SPC is a method of monitoring, controlling and improving a process through statistical analysis. Its four basic steps include:

- Measuring the process,
- Eliminating variances in the process to make it consistent,
- Monitoring the process and
- Improving the process to its best target value.

The Statistical Process Control is helpful so as to discover significant changes that have been made to the product development. Furthermore, it makes it easy to measure the product's progress in order to predict or identify potential variances in the process from the standard specifications which have a severe impact in the customer's satisfaction. What is more the data from the Statistical Process Control can be used as a feedback for the lessons learnt in the future projects.

Kernzer (2003) presents the method first illustrated by Kurt Lewin that is called Force Field Analysis. Force Field Analysis is a tool for analyzing the opposing forces involved in a project. It is a method for listing, discussing, and evaluating the various forces at any level (personal, team, organizational) to identify the forces that may work against one another. It helps organizations look at the big picture, weight the pros and cons and develop strategies to reduce the impact of the opposing forces and strengthen the supporting.

In order to proceed to a force field analysis we have to follow all the essential steps as they are described below:

1. State the current situation,
2. Describe the ideal situation,
3. Identify where the current situation will go if no action is taken,
4. List all the forces driving toward the ideal situation,
5. List all the forces resisting toward the ideal situation,
6. Analyze all of the forces,
7. Allocate a score to each of the forces using a numerical scale e.g. (1) extremely weak (10) extremely strong,
8. Chart the forces by listing (to strength scale) the driving forces on the left and restraining forces on the right. The chart allows one to visualize the forces at work and determine whether change is viable and progress can occur.

The six sigma institute presents the Total Quality Management (TQM) method. TQM, is a method by which management and employees can become involved in the continuous improvement of the production of goods and services. It is a combination of

quality and management tools aimed at increasing business and reducing losses due to wasteful practices.

The key principles of TQM are as following:

- Management Commitment (Plan, Do, Check, Act),
- Employee Empowerment (Training, Suggestion scheme, Measurement and recognition, Excellence teams),
- Fact Based Decision Making
- Continuous Improvement
- Customer Focus (Supplier partnership, Service relationship with internal customers, Never compromise quality, Customer driven standards)

5.2 Other factors that may have an impact on the main theme.

Organizations and therefore projects are becoming because of the Globalization more culturally diverse. Customers represent many nationalities, languages and cultures. In addition different backgrounds, values, norms and perspectives add value to organizations who are “Going Global” but also add complexity. Different cultures deal with issues like motivation, conflict, competition, quality standards and other issues beyond economic data in a completely different way.

Most managers assume that there is a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and customer buying behavior. This correlation does not seem to be confirmed; increased satisfaction levels do not necessarily result in more sales and higher margins.

According to the Juran Institute, in more than 70 percent of business cases, price ranked among the most important factors that customers were not satisfied with. Regarding customers who changed supplier to a competitor, only 10 percent of those interviewed had changed supplier because of the price (Griffin, 1995).

Griffin (1995) found that, even when people claim to be satisfied in customer satisfaction surveys, 85 percent of them are still willing to change supplier. One of the reasons could be the difficulty to accurately and reliably measure customer satisfaction.

The customers typically participate in the customer satisfaction surveys. There are several ways of influencing customer satisfaction scaling, including questionnaire types, timing of the measurement, and the statistical sample. Since customers tend to overrate their satisfaction in these surveys, the trustworthiness of satisfaction surveys as predictors of patronage or turnover can be doubted.

5.3 Corporate examples from successful strategic tools and methods application.

A customer touch point is any occasion on which a customer encounters the brand and product - from actual experience to personal or mass communications to casual observation. For a hotel, the touch point include reservations, check - in and check - out, frequent stay programs, room service, business service, extra facilities and accommodation. For instance, the Four Seasons relies on personal touches, such as a staff that always

addresses guests by name, high powered employees who understand the needs of sophisticated business travelers, and at least one best-in-region facility, such as premier restaurant or spa.

Some companies think they are getting a sense of customer satisfaction by tallying complaints, but 96 percent of dissatisfied customers don't complain; they just stop buying. The best thing a company can do is to make it easy for the customer to complain. Suggestion forms, toll-free numbers, Web sites, and e-mail addresses allow for a quick, two-way communication. The 3M Company claims that over two thirds of its product improvement ideas come from listening to customer complaints. Listening is not enough, however; the company must respond quickly and constructively to any complaint.

Dell Computer corp. quickly yanked its corporate PC tech support out of India and placed it in a domestic call center when its U.S.-based customers complained about the quality of help they received: rigid, "by-the-book" technicians who wasted their time wading through fixes they had already tried, problems with poor phone connections, and strongly accented English that was hard to understand.

Companies are also recognizing the importance of the personal component to Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and what happens once customers make actual contact. As Stanford's business guru Jeffrey Pfeffer put's it, "the best companies build cultures in which front – line people are empowered to do what's needed to take care of the customer." He cites examples of firms like (SAS), the Scandinavian airline, which engineered a turnaround in part based on the insight that a customer's impressions of a company are formed through a myriad of small interactions-checking in, boarding the plane, eating a meal and so on.

EFG Bank takes cultural heritage seriously. If local affinities are important to customers, they'll have a Client Relationship Officer who lives where the customer lives, speaks customer language, shares customer time zone, and understands customer commitment to the local products customer is loyal to. Locally and globally, EFG can make customers feel at ease in the financial world. EFG's entrepreneurial Client Relationship Officers, who are personally responsible for customers' financial success, and therefore uniquely motivated to deliver it.

Some of the companies who have implemented Total Quality Management include Ford Motor Company, Phillips Semiconductor, SGL Carbon, Motorola, Toyota Motor Company and ATEbank. S.A.

5.4 Cultivating Employee - Employer Relationships based on loyalty.

The cultivation of internal customer (employee) loyalty is a critical factor that directly affects employee turnover and therefore operational costs. It is very important for an organization to accurately estimate its employee turnover, as each employer – organization counts on the employee base.

The cost of personnel recruiting, the cost of preparatory seminars for the basic training, the time cost and the payroll differences based on how experienced or not the newly hired employee is, represent according to the author the cost of personnel replacement. The personnel replacement cost also involves non monetary costs like the psychological cost, the cost of adaptation, the cost of acquaintance and the cost of organizational culture consciousness.

An organization that ventures worldwide faces many critical issues concerning personnel recruiting and personnel turnover. First of all, the organization has to conduct research on the new market desires to enter. The Managers and the Director should be recruited from the local market while should be trained on the organization's headquarters. This recommendation is quite important for the stakeholders because the Executives acquire elements of the organizational culture, policy and vision while the organization train executives that are privy of the national and business environment and culture. Such a combination would possibly offer benefits to stakeholders.

Though we understand the importance of the abovementioned business practice, we should also consider the tough competition that might not allow the organization to spare time for the application of that practice. In that situation, the organization may draft Executives and highly competent employees from their existing personnel base, to undertake the new business. This organizational decision some times leads to dissatisfaction and inconvenience.

On the other hand we have the Human Resources business policy that ensures loyal employee – employer relationships prior to employee – employer satisfaction. The issues the organization should see very thoroughly are the appraisal methods, the reward methods, the racism, the continuous training, the career paths, the working environment and the security.

The appraisal methods should be based on meritocracy. In most cases the employees apprehend the new employer with hesitance, especially after aggressive acquisition or merger. The organization should promote meritocracy so as to dilute any

doubts or hesitation in order to gain employees trust and therefore make them perform at their best.

The reward method is another element that helps organizations retain the employees satisfied. The employees could maximize their performance once they know that the organization they work offer them rewards for their work or spurs of greater productivity. The reward system often leads to broader career paths that are also very important for ambitious and competent employees.

The organizations often are in a bind to deal with cases of racism. Any organization should have in mind that except from the legal penalty charges that might face, racist conduct at any levels may lead to closure due to customer non - acceptance. Women most likely are the “victims” of the racist conduct. In order to be objective we should emphasize, that many organizations worldwide have already broken the “glass ceiling” and have women holding upper management positions.

Last but not least another important element to employee satisfaction and therefore to employee loyalty is the business environment. The pleasant and healthy working environment is very crucial for the employees, who spend many hours in the work. As some periods the rhythms of work may be exhausting, the balance between professional and personal life is determinant.

5.5 Customer Satisfaction and Project Management

Project Management is the discipline of organizing and managing resources (i.e. people) in such a way that the project is completed within defined scope, quality, time and

cost constraints. A project is a temporary and one-time endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service, that brings about beneficial change or added value. This property of being a temporary and a one-time undertaking contrasts with processes, or operations, which are permanent or semi-permanent ongoing functional work to create the same product or service over and over again. The management of these two systems is often very different and requires varying technical skills and philosophy, hence requiring the development of project management.

Organizations undertake projects all over the world in the aim of delivering successful projects either for them or for their customers. Those organizations have the proper infrastructure and specialized personnel to analyze, work and deliver a project that is in rapport with the customer's desire.

The stakeholders work in coordination so as to visualize at first the project. The customer sets the constraints and the project team members organize the delivery of the project within those constraints. The final product, though sometimes may not be successful, is the fruit of a common work and attempt.

The organizations that deal with project management need the aid of the cutting edge technology. Information Technology (IT) is the tool for the quick, timely and complete channel of information.

The proper and effectual communication works preventive for mistakes and project pitfalls. As the customer needs information for the project's progress, the company should be able to provide that service. The Project Management offers many tools and techniques for successful project delivery and satisfied customers.

Another issue that has to be dealt from the companies that venture globally is the enormous economic burden of operations. That cost is very difficult to be controlled and constrained once the organization “works alone”. Organizations in order to overcome this barrier cooperate with each other and undertake certain parts of the project restraining the cost. The cooperation or affiliation of organizations worldwide provides reduced cost for the customer and timely services.

Chapter 6 - Discussion, Recommendations, Conclusions.

6.1 Discussion.

As we have already mentioned above, one of the most difficult tasks an organization that is “Going Global” needs to deal, is the maintenance of the levels of internal and external customer satisfaction and loyalty according to the organizational culture.

The organizational culture regarding quality aims at both internal customer (employee) satisfaction and external customer satisfaction and consequently to customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is being increasingly viewed as an issue of strategic significance. The rationale is based on notions like the loyal customers are more profitable (one way or another) than newly acquired customers and retaining customer through close, long term, cooperative relationships can add a competitive advantage to the organization or supplier of service. Organizations that do not develop solid (internal and external) customer relationships are more likely to experience rejection.

Considering the above we could infer that, the satisfaction leads to loyalty and commitment. The employees have the tendency to weigh the pleasant business environment more than the economic criteria. A satisfied and delighted employee comes in rapport with the organizational goal and vision and serves it perfectly. Therefore, the organizations have the absolute interest to employ loyal personnel.

This thesis also presents the prevalent tools and techniques that help organizations to overcome the barriers to internal and external customer satisfaction and loyalty. By

reading the analysis we acquire a better understanding of the way those strategies and tools work for every organization and every single phase of Project Management.

By presenting the Project Management quality tools, we understand that each one of them produce results once it's been used to specific project phases. A project as we know is more likely to be successful once every phase of it finishes successfully. The customer may not know or understand the partial use of every tool but a successful project surely will ensure customer satisfaction.

By presenting the prevailing Customer Satisfaction Strategies, we can better estimate the essence of quality relevant to the main theme of this thesis. Sometimes there is a tendency to think that 'quality' means the best material, the best equipment and absolutely zero defects.

However, in most cases, the customer does not expect, and cannot afford, a perfect solution. If there are a few bumps in the project or a few defects in the deliverable, the customer may still say that the solution was delivered with a high level of quality. On the other hand, a flawlessly designed, defect-free solution that does not meet the customer's needs is not considered high quality.

The organizations most of the time find difficulty in accurately focusing on the wants of their customers or on the customer satisfaction measurement. While organizations spend a profuse amount of money on developing strategies to retain their clientele, customers still defect which means that they were not satisfied. The reason for this is the informational void about the wide range of stakeholders interactions and interrelationships.

Customer Complaints evaluation or Customer satisfaction Surveys are some of the methods used for covering the abovementioned informational deficit. As for the first

method, simply listening to customer complaints is not enough, however; the organization must respond quickly and constructively to any complaint. If the organization lacks of quick response mechanisms then it is more likely to suffer the consequences of customer defection. As for the Customer satisfaction Surveys, the organizations should seriously take in mind the issues that affect the results of the surveys so as to ensure an unbiased inference.

Another issue regarding customer satisfaction that floats to the surface is the economic cost of quality. Globalization “demands” direct cooperation or even benchmarking in order to promote and acquire customer satisfaction, delight and loyalty. Though we have seen organizations cooperate in a global level with enormous results on their margins we should also consider the tough competition that pushes the organizations to cross the tolerance limits. There are litigations concerning antitrust laws and regulating competition like the Toys “R” Us Incorporation (TRU Inc.) versus The Federal Trade Commission.

Another aspect that increases the cost of quality is the over-use or the over-investment on the cutting edge technology or more commonly on the Information Technology. It is imperative to understand that though the unhampered communication is the key to successful project delivery, the over - persistence to technology will not produce the desirable results if the human wisdom is absent. It is critical to realize that technology should work only as an enabler to turn strategy into business results. After all successful Management is about taking personal initiative and exploiting the market’s voids and commands. This practice cannot be coded and algorithmically presented.

6.2 Recommendations.

As a result of this study, it is recommended that organizations review the following guidelines for retaining their global customers' satisfaction.

6.2.1. Guidelines

1. Learn who your customers are.

It is very important to know who an organization's customers are so as to adopt the proper customer satisfaction strategy and to use the most suitable tools.

2. Learn to listen to your customers.

Never improvise about your customer wants unless you have been told to. You should learn to visualize the project and adapt it to the real needs of the customer.

3. Learn about their needs.

Organizations should generate mechanisms of receiving the accurate messages about the customers' needs. Moreover they should be capable to timely and accurately respond to these needs.

4. Learn about the local markets you are going to venture.

Conduct surveys and gather sufficient information about all the elements synthesize the new economy you enter into.

5. Spend on quality as you have budgeted.

It would be unrealistic though sometimes happens, an organization to raise the cost of quality more than it can afford. Considering that the quality is in the eyes of the beholder it would be wise to poll about the essence of quality so as to avoid exaggerations. A possible remedy to quality achievement would be the prudent use of technology.

6. Consider your employees as assets.

Emphasize on developing a loyal employee base.

7. Use your wisdom instead of your software.

Never exclusively depend on technology setting aside the personal experience and intelligence. Envisage the goal and use the technology to capture it.

8. Use the appropriate tools and techniques.

Some tools or techniques may produce better results than other regarding the type of industry.

9. Align with the antitrust legislation.

Enterprise according to the rules or the economic burden is impossible to lift.

Perceive the situation as if you faced “prisoner’s dilemma” before you act.

10. Use Project Management principles.

11. Never stop to “excel”.

In the global business environment with the tough competition organizations should never rely on their existing clientele, even if that clientele is sufficient. If we consider that there are no accurate methods to measure customer satisfaction and that the customers may buy but still may not be satisfied, then the organizations should stay “up and running”.

6.3 Conclusions.

The research conducted for this thesis recorded the most prevailing quality methods, and tools regarding customer satisfaction issues. The author’s expectations met as this thesis produced a set of guidelines and recommendations that will help companies compose and execute their quality strategies.

This research will help the reader acquire a better understanding of the main theme of this thesis in the aim of overcoming the barriers to customer satisfaction in the corporate environment and achieving the goal of delighting and retaining clientele.

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