

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we endeavor to give an outline of our research area and why we see it to be important in the specific context of the hotel sector at the Nhyiaeso and Ahodwo area.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The theory of demand and supply goes a long way to affect businesses; with more hotels opening up customers have more choice and therefore businesses must differentiate themselves from others. In Ghana, the hotel industry contributes much to the country's GDP.

There is evidence that the hotel industry is growing, and thereby the competition, in the Ashanti Region is increasing. According to the Ghana statistical service the number of accommodation establishments in the country increased from 580 in 1995 to 1,313 in 2004, registering 126.4 percent increase, at an average annual growth rate of 9.2 percent. Similarly, the number of accommodation rooms grew from 7,618 in 1995 to 18,022 in 2004, registering 136.6 percent increase, at an average annual growth rate of 7.7 percent.

Greater Accra region recorded the greatest number of accommodation establishment, rooms and bed-places during the period. It was followed by the Ashanti Region, Eastern Region, Central Region, Western Region, Brong-Ahafo, Volta Region, Northern Region, Upper East Region and Upper West Region. The fact that Ashanti region is ranked second makes it clear the level of competition among hotels in that region, and as such if hotels do not want to go out of business they must differentiate themselves more competitively. Marketing

competitively can be done in many different forms, but the real difference, we argue that, they must lay emphasis in the quality of service provided by the frontline employees.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Customers are becoming more demanding and in spite the fact that the hotels in Ghana have been employing the services of frontline employees; customers are still not being loyal to individual hotels. They easily move in to new and other hotels. The problem is that customers do not perceive as sufficient, services rendered by frontline employees.

1.3 PURPOSE

To research into the role of employees in service delivery thus, to focus on the employees in our search as a strategic Service Marketing (SM) tool in retaining customers.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will be useful to the reader in the following ways:

- Expose other areas which can be researched into
- Serve as a reference material for further studies

Hotels will understand frontline employees as a strategic marketing tool for retaining customers.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major limitation to this research was the time constraint. The researchers had little time on their side, this forced them to use few hotels for their study and fewer questionnaires were used. The research group could not raise enough funds for the research; this also had an impact in the number of questionnaires printed, and the number of prints we could make for

review before the final print. We believe if enough prints were made for other professionals other than our supervisor to read through we would have had extra information and suggestions for this research.

1.6 OBJECTIVES

- i. This study is to ascertain the importance of frontline employees in maintaining customers in the hotels.
- ii. To identify quality services delivered by the frontline employees.
- iii. To ascertain how these services contribute to customer satisfaction.
- iv. To recommend possible solutions to the challenges in using frontline employees in the hotel industry.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study will be focused on three hotels in Kumasi metropolis of which questionnaires will be designed for their managers, frontline employees and customers of the survey. The research narrowed the scope to only the above areas to ensure time and completion using the available scarce resources.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the roles of frontline employees in Hotel industry?
- ii. What services are delivered by the frontline employees?
- iii. What challenges are encountered by customers and employees in the service delivery process?

- iv. What are the possible solutions to the challenges in encountered in the service delivery process?

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one of the study contains the background of the research, its scope, objectives and research questions. The chapter two of this research covers the relevant literature in our area of study. Methodology for this research work will be discussed in the third chapter. Analysis of collected data will be done in the fourth chapter whiles the fifth chapter will contain the report of the research work.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In the literature review the reader will have the chance to get an overview of existing theories and earlier studies relevant for this research. These theories will be presented and discussed in relation to this study and their contribution to the study. The main areas of interest are Service Marketing, Service Culture, Internal Marketing, and Human Resource Management (HRM) which are well known areas within the business administration framework. This chapter will present the theories

2.1 SERVICE MARKETING

To define service marketing, one has to first be able to distinguish between goods and services. However, we will assume, as does (Vargo and Lusch 2004), that in today's world there is very little difference between the two. Under the traditional marketing mix banner for products there are the 4 P's:

- i. Product
- ii. Price
- iii. Place
- Iv. Promotion.

Whereas for the marketing of services there is an extension of the 4P's to 7, the other 3 are:

- i. People
- ii. Process
- iii. Physical Evidence (Zeithaml et al., 2006 p. 25-26).

Service Marketing can therefore be seen as the standard approach to marketing of a service firm rather than a product, where the traditional approach is the 4 P's (Zeithaml et al., 2006 p. 25-26). Marketing for a good and a service differ due to the following factors:

- i. Intangibility
- ii. Heterogeneity
- iii. Inseparability
- iv. Perishability.

Intangibility is seen as not being able to physically touch or see what is purchased, an example of this could be a seminar; the consumer is not given a physical object but rather sold an experience.

Heterogeneity is the assumption that no service is the same not even from the same person delivering it. Although service delivering businesses are trying to be consistent on their service provision it does not guarantee heterogeneity.

Inseparability is the belief that the service by definition cannot be taken home, it cannot be separated. Service is consumed as it is produced.

Perishability is where the service cannot be stored for future use. For instance, once seminar is over you cannot take the program home with you.

2.1.1 People

For the purposes of this study, the most important of the 7 P's are the People. A frontline employee will in this study refer to any worker who is in contact with the customer on a regular basis. They are often seen as:

- i. the service, especially in personal service situations
- ii. the firm in the customer's eyes
- iii. **“boundary spanners”** - first line between customers and company

Frontline service employees “provide a link between the external customer and environment and the internal operations of the organization.” (Zeithaml's et al. 2006 p. 258)

Service management involved operations management and human resource management, (Schneider b.2004) argues that most literature focuses on the delivery of services; the frontline staff's ability to deliver the service. He in order to assess Service Quality, it is important to consider the five dimensions of service delivery; reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles (Wilson et al., 2008). We can therefore see Service Quality as being a convincing key to competitive advantage in the given market. Therefore higher levels of Service Quality will inevitably return higher levels of customer satisfaction, leading customer loyalty and an increase in sales in return.

2.1.2 The service gap model

Zeithaml, Parasuraman et al introduced a conceptual model for service delivery in their process of throwing more light on service delivery. The Gap Model of Service Quality (Zeithaml et al., 2006 p. 33-43, 46) shows service delivery process in a structured and integrated manner. The model consists of five gaps.

- i. The Customer Gap: the difference between the expected service and the perceived service.
- ii. Provider Gap 1: Not knowing what the customer expects.
- iii. Provider Gap 2: Not selecting the right service design and standards.
- iv. Provider Gap 3: Not delivering to service designs and standards.
- v. Provider Gap 4: Not matching performance to promise

Each Gap identified influences the Service Quality; every customer is different it is very hard to know their expected level of service, this generates the customer gap. At least an adequate service or the right level of service should be delivered to reduce the gap. The gaps model helps businesses to evaluate their service quality and also to identify areas which are not meeting expectations or not following the norm.

2.1.3 Internal marketing

Culture, consequently, is the foundation of communication. And, when cultures vary, communication practices also vary (Hofstede, 2001, p. 24). (Wilson et al. 2008) mention that internal marketing communications must be managed so that information from the companies to employees is accurate, complete and consistent with what the customers are hearing or seeing. Various parts of the companies are responsible for different aspects of communication. The human resources department trains front-line employees for service interactions, and still another area is responsible for the customer service department.

A frontline employee will in this study refer to any worker who is in contact with the customer on a regular basis. They are:

- i. the service, especially in personal service situations

- ii. the firm in the customer's eyes
- iii. "boundary spanners" - first line between customers and company

Therefore if a company is to be successful in Service Marketing it must recognize the importance of Internal Marketing (Papadolomou and Vrontis, 2006).

Internal Marketing can be defined as; "A complex combination of strategies needed to ensure that service employees are willing and able to deliver quality service and that they stay motivated to perform in customer-oriented, service-minded ways" (Zeithaml et al., 2006 p. 366).

The popular view from some articles is that employees constitute an internal market in which labor is exchanged and paid for designated outputs. An extension to this is that employees are a discrete group of customers with whom management interacts (Piercy and Morgan, 1991), so that relational exchange can be maintained (developed)

Internal Marketing can therefore be seen as treating employees as customers, corporate vision and objectives should be sold to employees. Employees can be served through personal development, motivation, quality recruitment and good working conditions (Berry and Parasuraman, 1992). We argue that IM is a significant business instrument used in influencing the Service Quality and reducing the Customer Gap.

Service Marketing has significantly demonstrated the 4 P's as an outdated marketing theory. This therefore adds to our argumentation that people, or frontline-staff are just an aspect of the 7 P's, yet a major one, when marketing a business, specifically a hotel. Internal marketing and human resources management are components of service and are critical factors that affect employee activities.

2.1.4 Employee Satisfaction, Customer Satisfaction and Profits

The service profit chain shows that the companies who offer superior internal service quality to their employees, and who treat their employees as customers, can achieve higher employee satisfaction. By enhancing employee's satisfaction good employees and improved employees productivity can be obtained. At the same time, *the satisfied employees make for satisfied even committed customers (and satisfied customers can, in turn, reinforce employees' sense of satisfaction in their jobs)* (Wilson et al., 2008, cited in J.L. Heskett et al., p.273). Ultimately, customer's satisfaction and customer's loyalty influence revenue growth and profits through increasing the volume of purchases and market share.

2.1.5 Internal Branding

Following Berry and Parasuraman (1992), more modern literature (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007) discusses the concepts of Corporate Branding and Internal Branding. IB is a tool within IM which relates to achieving consistency with the external brand and encourage brand commitment, including the internal communication in order to generate and sustain the internal brand (Mahnert and Torres, 2007). This new age of thinking has raised the crucial role that employees play in marketing a firm. Part of Corporate Branding concerns multiple stakeholders interacting within an organization and the attitudes and behaviors of employees in delivering the brand promise to external stakeholders. Therefore realizing the central role of the frontline employee and Internal Branding as the process by which behavior of employees is aligned with brand value (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007). The core objective of IB is the attainment of competitive advantage through people (Jacobs, 2003).

Frontline employees therefore are rapidly being realized as the essential part of a service to the customer, thus customers' perceptions of the brand/firm are being maintained and influenced by the Service Quality. The frontline-staff consequently embodies the service brand in the consumers' eyes, as the frontline employee is the point of contact for the consumer (Papazolomou and Vrontis, 2006). IM and IB has been the realization of the important role the employee has in the service sector. Thus by utilizing HRM a service firm can develop a more customer conscious employee giving better Service Quality (Papazolomou and Vrontis, 2006). In that it is no longer the 4 P's to which marketers should live by, but rather a combination of an *"interactive process in the social context where relationship building and management is a vital cornerstone."* And that Service Marketing has significantly demonstrated the 4 P's as an outdated marketing theory. This therefore gives credence to our argumentation that people, or frontline-staff are just one aspect, yet a major one, when marketing a business, specifically the hotel sector. Consequently we can distinguish the importance in Internal Marketing, Human Resource Management and Internal Branding as subdivision of Service Marketing and hence the effects on frontline employees.

2.1.6 Service Marketing theory conclusion

It is therefore clear that to overcome many of the issues involved in reducing The Customer Gap, it is necessary to set standards through training for the frontline employees. So that no matter who serves the customer or even if at a different site the standard of service is the same. We argue that this is most significant in impacting on the customer, thus realizing the importance of Marketing through frontline employees.

The Customer Gap, as shown from the theories discussed above, is an intensely complicated concept to overcome, with many different elements to transform the customer experience into

what they expect. Research however shows that trained, satisfied employees are more likely to deliver consistent Service Quality, which in turn is a significant influence on the customers' expectations and satisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 2006 p. 356; Berry and Parasuraman, 1992). However at a practical level there is only a modest amount of companies that have realized the potential role of HRM in strategic staff practices influencing the brand experience. Rather, that most firms reserve HR to communication support instead of the benefits of influencing the Corporate Culture and brand philosophy (Mosley, 2007).

2.1.7 Customer Relations and Retention

The concepts of relationship marketing and interactive marketing are receiving increasing attention as marketers focus on how to maintain and enhance customer relationships with existing customers rather than attract new customers. According to Gronroos 'the traditional view of marketing as a function for specialists planning and executing a marketing mix may not be altogether true where services are concerned.' The marketing mix approach is frequently too limited and does not cover all the activities that appear in customer relationships at various stages of the customer relationship lifecycle. Instead of this narrow transactional view of marketing, marketing is now increasingly seen as being concerned with relationships. Whilst some relationships do not involve any social relationship or interaction, other relationships may involve many interactions between customers and employees and evolve over long periods of time. Berry introduced the concept of relationship marketing to describe a longer-term approach to marketing. According to (Gummesson 1987) long-term relationships with customers are especially important in services, where relationships with customers can be more expensive to establish. The emphasis on relationships is also important in industrial markets. This does not mean that short-term sales are not desirable. In fact, they may be very profitable. However, if close and long-term relationships can be

achieved, this will lead to increased profitability for the company and reduced costs and make market entry or share gain difficult for competitors.

According to (Berry 1983): 'Relationship marketing is applicable when there is an ongoing and periodic desire for the service and when the customer controls the selection of a service supplier and has alternatives from which to choose.' Ibhaz Business Partner Resource Kit Page 2 Customer service is a key ingredient in relationship marketing and therefore in customer retention. However, (Lewis 1989) points out that emphasizing service is one thing; delivering it is another. In fact, he considers that emphasizing service is not the most appropriate approach to adopt. His basic idea is that emphasis should be placed on the customer and that focusing on the customer renders marketing and service inseparable. Thus management policies that enhance customer-based service often prove to be a firm's best marketing strategy. (Christopher, Payne and Ballantyne 1991) go further than this to describe a new synthesis between quality, customer service and marketing. They argue that quality is also a key linkage in the exchange relationship between the organization and its customer. They maintain that 'unless management can bring these activities together with new forms of collaboration and cross-functional coordination, there can be no sustainable competitive advantage.' Relationship marketing can therefore be seen as a focal point for integrating customer service and quality with a marketing orientation. Much of the literature on retention marketing draws on the philosophy of relationship marketing and focuses primarily on the impact of retention marketing on company profitability and various strategies and plans to improve customer retention rates. (Buchanan and Gillies 1980), (Dawkins and Reichheld 1990), (Berry 1983), (DeSouza 1992) and others argue that service firms devote most of their resources to attracting new customers, but few take equal trouble to retain existing customers. Bain and Co maintain that 'one of the key elements of business success and profitability is customer satisfaction, the more satisfied the customer, the more durable the relationship. And

the longer this lasts, the more money the company stands to make.’ The effect of longevity on profits can be explained by several factors:

Acquiring new customer costs more than retaining an existing one. The costs of acquiring a new customer are incurred only at the beginning of the relationship, thus the longer the relationship, the longer the amortized cost of acquisition. Retaining customers means that account maintenance costs as a percentage of income tend to decline over the life of the relationship leading to increased revenues. Long-time customers tend to be less price sensitive, permitting higher prices to be charged. Long-time, satisfied customers are likely to provide free, word of mouth advertising referrals Long-time customers are likely to purchase additional products/services Retaining customers makes it difficult for competitors to enter a market or increase share

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Regular customers tend to place frequent, consistent orders and therefore, usually cost less to serve Improved customer retention can also lead to an increased employee retention that feeds back into even greater customer longevity Bain and Co have developed approaches for measuring customer retention and linking it to company profitability. The customer retention rate is the rate at which customers are kept and is expressed as the percentage of customers at the beginning of the year that still remain at the end of the year. Therefore, the average life of a customer relationship doubles from five to ten years as a company’s retention rate goes from 80 to 90 per cent. Bain and Co has also quantified the potential impact of improving customer retention for several banks and many other service businesses. They conclude that a five point improvement in customer retention can lead to profit swings of 25 per cent to 80 per cent.

2.2 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

HRM is the function within an organization that is responsible for all dimensions regarding

employees. The aim of this organizational function is, according to (Bratton and Gold 2007 p. 19) *“to improve employee performance and to enhance the organizational effectiveness.”* A general definition of HRM, adopted by (Torbiörn Scullion and Linehan 2005 p. 51), is that it is a strategic approach to employment management aiming at getting the highest competitive advantage out of the workforce. (Gold and Bratton 2007 p. 49) define a four-task model representing the core activities for HRM. They include

- Making sure that the company has the right number of employees hiring.
- Keeping the right kind and best employees in the Company.
- That those employees hold the right skills and knowledge.
- That they act in accordance with the Corporate Culture.
- That they meet the organizational needs.

This is partly achieved through successful Internal Marketing (Grönroos, 2000 p. 342).

Similar to this characterization of the HR functions (Fombrun et al. 1984 p. 41) identifies four categories included in their responsibility; selection, appraisal, rewards and development.

The strategies used to implement the functions mentioned in the above paragraph are commonly divided into different models. One side of the spectrum sees people as capital and focuses on controlling and monitoring the workers. This view is often referred to as the human capital theory. The other softer side places more focus on utilizing and developing individual capabilities and strengths.

2.2.1 Corporate Culture as a competitive tool

Corporate Culture is commonly defined as the set of values, direction and purpose adopted within the firm. Or as (Bratton and Gold 2007 p. 18) expresses the concept: *“the basic set of*

shared beliefs, values and norms that represents the unique character of an organization”
that guides the management behavior.

As (Berry and Parasuraman 1992) explains that a strong corporate vision functions as guidelines for employees. In other words, a strong Corporate Culture enforces the employees to work towards the corporate vision and values. The CC is thereby an essential part of any business and should be well known by everyone within the company. Hence, the CC should be aligned with the internal and external brand.

A well recognized Corporate Culture can create several competitive advantages. One advantage is working together for the same goal which will improve the process of reaching the aim and fulfilling the goals. Training is one distribution channel to put across these aims and values and is easier to achieve through good Internal Marketing. As described by (Fombrun et al. 1984 p. 206-216) high performance stems from a Corporate Culture which is supportive of and coherent and consistent with its internal, societal- and industrial context.

A firm that promotes Service Quality should advocate it in their Corporate Culture (Nilsson et al., 2001) since quality should be promoted in all actions, starting at general management level. As (Scheider a.2004) describes, to be able to deliver a high quality service it is crucial to give a good support to the service deliverers, i.e. the frontline employee. Similarly, but more extensively described by (Zeithaml et al. 2006), some HR strategies that can be used to deliver Service Quality is to hire the right people for the job and retaining the best staff. Other influences are to provide the workers with the support they need and to develop them to deliver Service Quality (Zeithaml et al., 2006 p. 367). Theories on CC imply that team working positively affects satisfaction, commitment and attitudes among employees (Bratton

and Gold, 2007 p. 159) which will ultimately have a positive effect on the internal Service Quality (Edvardsson and Gustavsson, 2003) and thereby customer satisfaction (Nilsson et al., 2001).

2.2.2 Service Quality in the HRM context

(Williford 2005) describes five basic steps in a restaurant visit that are similar in any restaurant. They are taking the order, providing the service, review the order or recover from a negative experience for the customer, up-sell if possible and collect the check. We have interpreted these steps into greeting the customer, taking the order, serving the customer, reviewing the order and possibly recover and collecting the bill.

The performance in executing these steps mentioned above is where the difference regarding the Service Quality between restaurants can be found (Williford, 2005). The first step of greeting and seating the customer would imply acknowledging the customer and meeting them with a smile, not letting the customer wait to be met. The second step, to take the order, would include product knowledge. Thirdly, serving the customer and presenting their order in a polite and professional way makes a small, but yet noticeable difference. Fourth is to review if everything is satisfactory and possibly recover if the customer has any inquiries or issues. This is a very important step where all the difference can be made; either you win the customer successfully or you fail by not being able to meet the customer expectation. The last step of collecting the bill requires attention to be given at the right moment.

According to (Nilsson et al. 2001) there are two dimensions of quality. Firstly, customization, i.e. meeting the customer demands. Secondly, reliability, as explained earlier; is being able to deliver these demands any time. Researchers such as (Zeithaml et al. 1988) and (Nilsson et al. 2001) all agree that both dimensions of quality are important within service businesses.

Furthermore, (Nilsson et al. 2001) state that one key internal quality practice in creating customer satisfaction, and also the starting point in improving the service process, is employee management. Employee management, i.e. HRM, incorporates any area or issue concerning human resources, among them training. Employee management is seen as a more important factor for service providers since in production firms the production process can be automated through mechanics, whereas the process of producing a service is inseparable from the consumption of it (Zeithaml et al., 2006). It therefore often requires an interaction between the frontline staff and the customer. The frontline employees should be able to provide reliable services maintaining certain standards which we consider can be accomplished through training.

2.2.3 Training as an HR tool

In Bratton and Gold's book Human Resource Management (2007 p. 323), a statement made by the prime minister in the UK in 2003 is quoted. It reads as follows:

“Skills help business achieve the productivity, innovation and profitability needed to compete. They help our public services provide the quality and choice that people want.”

The aim of this research is not to define whether customer needs and wants are met, but rather to investigate whether, according to the employees, training can improve the Internal Branding and Service Quality. According to Service Marketing theory this would ultimately lead to successful business. Since training contains the activities used to develop the competencies of workers (Scullion and Linehan, 2005 p. 72) it represents a crucial component in the HR function (Bratton and Gold, 2007 p. 328). The first step according to (Bratton and Gold 2007 p. 328) is to identify the areas where training is needed. According to (Scullion and Linehan 2005 p. 72) training should focus on individual deficiencies and could be a tool to close the gap between customers' expectations and customers' perception of a

service, i.e. The Customer Gap. We argue that even though individual deficiencies should be considered in the learning process, there could and should be some generalizations or standardizations in the training scheme. Such generalization should include standard procedures for how to act and react in any situation occurring in the everyday chores of frontline employees such as the steps previously mentioned.

Some aspect of the role of training is to motivate the worker and build confidence and self-esteem (Berry and Parasuraman, 1992). We further argue that employee empowerment is increased due to training. Empowerment is important since it provides the frontline employee to act immediately. (Zeithaml et al. 2006 p. 371) explains empowerment as “...*giving employees the desire, skills, tools and authority to serve customers*. Definition adopted in this research is that employee empowerment means providing the employees with desire, skills, incentives, authority and trust in the employee to meet customer needs in a way that satisfies the individual customer and should promote the businesses aims and values.

We are supporters of the latter view that empowered workers are beneficial for the business since they can meet customer requests quicker and show more confidence and security compared with a worker who does not know his/her limitations.

Empower employees

To reduce job-related stress, improve job satisfaction and truly accommodate the customer needs (Wilson et al., 2008), companies need to empower employees to make decisions and “*take action in a large number of potential problematic situations*” (Grönroos, 2000, p346).

(Wilson et al. 2008) suppose that “*empowerment means giving employees the desire, skills,*

tools and authority to serve the customer" (p.283). The importance of empowerment is that the employees know their responsibilities (Grönroos, 2000, p346) and are given authority to make decisions on the customer's behalf (Wilson et al., 2008).

Promote teamwork

Team working as a source of job satisfaction will enhance customer satisfaction in a service organization. Within teamwork environment, employees will feel supported and feel that they have a team backing them up as well as they can ease some frustrations and stresses so that they will be able to maintain their enthusiasm and be improved performance of quality service delivery (Wilson et al., 2008). Team working is aimed at help companies handle internal problems through allowing team members to study and solve the problems (Betty Conti & Brian H. Kleiner, 1997). By promoting teamwork, companies can improve productivity and create better adaptability and flexibility in the organization can enhance the employees' interpersonal skills (Porter, 1993; McCorkle et al., 1999) to deliver excellent service and the support from team can make employees' jobs easier and more pleasant (Wellins, R., Byham, C. and Wilson, J., 1991).

Provide needed support systems

In fact, without customer-oriented internal support and systems, proper conditions for delivering quality service do not exist (Wilson et al., 2008). (Grönroos 2000) puts forward that if the company requires their employees to take responsibility for customer but does not provide internal support systems aligned with their need (Wilson et al., 2008), they will feel ambiguity, frustration and anger. What's worse, they will probably make bad decisions. In other words, it is nearly impossible for employees to deliver quality service no matter how much they want to without supportive systems (Wilson et al., 2008, p. 285). The following

suggested strategies are aimed at ensuring customer-oriented internal support.

Measure internal service quality

The companies can more easily deliver quality customer-oriented service by ensuring the internal service quality. Measure and reward internal service is a key way to develop and support internal service relationship (Wilson et al., 2008, p. 285). Before companies begin to develop an internal service quality, they should measure customer perceptions of internal quality first by using the internal customer service audits (Wilson et al., 2008). In a word, measuring internal service quality would enable organizations to efficiently design the service delivery process.

Provide supportive technology and equipment

For delivery of service to be successful, companies need to invest adequate funding for the employees to have the needed tools including effective technology and technological support and equipment (i.e. phone, fax, computer, etc.). According to (Grönroos 2000, p.343), we can know that it is possible for the contact employees to deliver good quality service when the support peoples and systems provide the effective customer information databases, effective internal support and other service required for handling situation. On the contrary, employees can be easily frustrated in their desire to deliver quality service without the needed technology and equipment.

Develop service-oriented internal processes

Every section in the companies' internal process is interaction and interdependence with each others. In other words, the poor quality of sub processes will influence the final service quality delivery to customers. In many companies *"internal processes are driven by*

bureaucratic rules, tradition, cost efficiencies or the needs of internal employees" (Wilson et al., 2008, p.287). However, in order to best support front line employees in their service quality delivery and hence meet the customer' needs, companies' internal procedures should be based on the premise of customer value and customer satisfaction.

Retain the best people

Retaining the best people is an essential part of human resource management. Only hiring the suitable people for the company is not enough. One key to success for HRM is to attract, develop, and keep the best people. Companies that hire the right people, train and develop them to deliver service quality, and provide the needed support must also work to retain the people.

Include employees in the company's vision

Including employees in the company's vision benefits both the company and the employees themselves. To maintain the effort and motivation of employees in sticking with the organization's objects, they need to share an understanding of the organization's vision. To some extent, employees will be motivated by their pay, reward and other benefits, but the best employees will focus on whether they are committed to the company's vision and its goals.

Treat employees as customers

The company can attract and retain the best employees if the company takes care of their employees. Employees who feel they are treated fairly by their companies will treat their customer better, ultimately achieving greater customer satisfaction. In other words, satisfied employees make for satisfied customers. At the same time, companies should treat their

employees as internal customer and meet their needs hence enhancing the employee's loyalty.

Measure and reward strong service performers

Reward does not simply compensate employees for their effort but also influence the recruitment and retention of strongest service performers (Alan Price, 2004). Therefore, it is necessary for companies to reward and promote their employees if they want the talented employees to stay with their companies. The reward system need to be aligned to motivate employee performance that is consistent with the firm's strategy, attract and retain people with the knowledge, skills and abilities required to realize the firm's strategic goals, and create a supportive culture and structure.

2.2.4 Managing Emotional Labor

Screening for emotional labor abilities

(Wilson et al. 2008) state that many firms recruit and select the most suitable employees to meet the emotional labor requirements of the job. Companies put prospective employees through the practices (e.g., simulated customer contact exercise) to seek for the employees whose values, experience and personalities match the job's emotional labor requirements (Ibid).

2.2.5 Emotional management skills and appropriate behavior

Most companies teach their customer-contact employees need to be friendly and courteous to customers. However, customers have no obligation to return empathy or courtesy. Therefore, employees haven't the status as equal as the customers who have the privilege of 'the customer is always right'. In this situation, employees face real challenges because they

cannot express their true feelings. Companies may encourage employees to engage in deep-acting strategies such as imagining that the client is a friend and expressing the real feelings to them. Companies also may train employees in how to avoid absorbing a customer's bad mood (Wilson et al., 2008)

Carefully constructing the physical work environment

The environment of service delivery can have an impact on employee behavior and emotions (Wilson et al., 2008). Companies can provide the comfortable environment, such as available rest room and sport room, to relief employees' stress and reduce the boredom.

Allowing employees to air their views

Allowing employees to air their views lets them get rid of their dissatisfaction and frustrations (Wilson et al., 2008). (Bitner M. J. et al. 2008) suppose that firms can provide emotional support and encouragement to employees through setting a venting to share frustrations and 'let off steam'. Through this venting, employees can see that others are experiencing the same problems and they are not alone. At the same time, they can feel their *emotional contribution* are recognized and can feel their company much care about them (Gremmler D. D et al., 2008, p. 277).

2.2.6 Strategies for Delivering Service Quality through People

(Wilson et al. 2008) state that:

"A complex combination of strategies is needed to ensure that service employees are willing and able to deliver quality services and that they stay motivated to perform in customer-oriented, service-minded ways." (p. 280)

If the human resource decisions and strategies in companies are aimed at motivating and enabling employees to deliver customer-oriented promises successfully, they will move towards delivering service quality through their people (Wilson et al., 2008). Wilson et al. also state that:

"To build a customer-oriented, service-minded workforce, companies must (1) hire the right people, (2) develop people to deliver service quality, (3) provide the needed support systems, and (4) retain the best people." (p.280)

Hire the right people

A central concern of human resource management is recruitment and retention of valued employees (Davenport, 2000). Therefore, in order to deliver service quality effectively, companies should pay more attention to recruiting and hiring suitable service employees (Wilson et al., 2008). Figure 3.2 shows a number of ways to go about hiring the right people.

Compete for the best people

Competing for the best people is a first essential part of recruiting procedure in the companies. A company has to identify the suitable people and compete with other companies in order to hire the best man (Wilson et al., 2008, p.281). (Leonard Berry and A. Parasuraman 1991) suggest that firms act as marketers and use their marketing expertise in competing with other organizations to pursuing the best employees.

Hire for service competencies and service inclination

Companies need to attract new employees who will contribute to the company through their abilities and values (Armstrong, 1995). Companies require their service employees to have

two complementary capacities: service competencies and service inclination (Wilson et al., 2008).

Wilson et al. (2008) state that "*service competencies are the skills and knowledge necessary to do the job*" (p.282). In many cases, job applicants validate competencies, such as attaining the particular degrees and relevant professional qualifications (Wilson et al., 2008) can determine whether he or she has the necessary technical or professional competencies to perform well on the job. But sometimes, service competencies may be related to *basic intelligence* or *physical requirements* rather than relevant degree (Wilson et al., 2008, p. 282). (Wilson et al. 2008) state that: "*Service employees not only must be screened for more than their service competencies, but also be screened for service inclination - their interest in doing service-related work - which is reflected in their attitudes towards service and orientation toward serving customers.*" (p.282)

Be the preferred employer

One new approach to gain a competitive position to attract and retain the best human resources is to be the preferred employer in a particular industry or in a particular location (Wilson et al., 2008, p. 282). Preferred employers are those organizations that outperform their competition in effectively attracting, motivating, and retaining talented employees (Sutherland et al., 2002). They achieve this reputation through innovative and compelling HR practices - "*extensive training, career and advancement opportunities, excellent internal support, attractive incentives*" (Wilson et al., 2008, p.282) - that benefit both employees and their organizations, ultimately lead to sustained competitive advantage (Lado & Wilson, 1994; Pfeffer, 1994; Turban & Greening, 1997). And if the company fail to fulfill the promise to the customers and fail to live up to its employer brand promises, its employees will also leave (Alan Price, 2004).

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2.2.7 Human Resource Management theory conclusion

To put the theory into the context of our study a fictitious example will be provided and further reflected upon in the discussion chapter. A situation where a waiter receives a customer complaint regarding the food being served cold could be a common incident for a waiter. If the waiter has received appropriate training he or she would know intuitively that the standard procedure is to genuinely apologize and offer the customer a new warm meal. The waiter would feel empowered to be able to make that decision as opposed to a waiter not having the appropriate training, in accordance with the developmental humanistic approach. By acting systematically and immediately the relationship with the customer can be retained or even improved. Acting in such a manner constitutes a good service recovery and requires individual initiatives to correct the mistake. The scenario is also referred to as "The Recovery Paradox" by (Zeithaml et al. 2006 p. 217) where a negative service experience can be turned into a positive one.

Not all misfortunes can be recovered from, but the best precondition to preclude such an event is to have trained frontline employees who can act fast on their own initiative (Hart et al., 1990). We argue that this highlights the importance of training and employee empowerment; to provide the frontline employees with the desire, skills, tools and authority to provide Service Quality to the customers and to be able to make a good recovery.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we considered the target population, sample size and method, types and sources of data, research instrument, and method of data collection, data analysis, reliability and the limitations of the study. This chapter was organized to present the above issues and formed the headings for the chapter.

3.1 TARGET POPULATION

A target population is the entire population of interest in a particular list. This will help this research to be generalized to fit the entire population since the research will be conducted on a sample based on the target group. The population size is 1440. The population consists of managers, frontline employees and the customers of the hotels in Ahodwo-Nhyiaeso area. Defining the target population is essential to produce results to satisfy the objectives of this study.

3.2 SAMPLING SIZE AND METHOD

The population of the customers for the Hotels in Ahodwo-Nhyiaeso Area is infinite as the most of the hotels do not have effective data base and no information was had from Ghana statistical service and the tourist board. The sample criteria for this study were based on department, rank, and experience with the hotels.

Quota and purposive sampling techniques were employed in the sampling process. The population was divided into strata in order to have a sample that represents the target population

The strata involved in this study were managers, staff and clients. Sample sizes of three hundred (300) respondents were considered in this research. The breakdown of the sample size is as follows: 218 customers, 15 managers, 67 frontline employees. These were chosen based on their availability and time constraints.

3.3 TYPES AND SOURCES OF DATA

This research combined qualitative and quantitative approach, the mixed approach. Data that were gathered were customer complains, training programs, communication channels, and manager's perception of frontline employees.

The research used primary and secondary as its source of data.

3.3.1 PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

Primary data will be collected via:

- i. Structured interview was used to gather data from managers.
 - ii. Questionnaires were designed to go by the closed and the open ended format.
- Information on customer and employees' perception and evaluation of service delivery process and administrative support would be considered under the primary data collection.

3.3.2 SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

Our secondary data will be sourced from:

- i. Journals
- ii. Internet
- iii. Other relevant research works
- iv. The library

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Structured interview was used to collect data from managers. The interview was structured in order to neither to miss any question nor to ask irrelevant questions to the study. Questionnaires were the main tool used to collect data from the frontline employees and the customers as well. The questionnaires were usually close ended, except for some few questions which were open ended thus, a mixed of closed and open ended questions were used in the questionnaires. The following tools were then to gather data for this study: questionnaires and structured interviews.

3.5 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Letters were sent to hotel management to grant us the permission to administer our questionnaire on their premises. Questionnaires and interview were then conducted to gather relevant data to the study. The findings from the study were then tabulated based on collected data. This helps us to present data in an organized and summarized form.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected were edited, coded and analyzed. This study will employ the use of tables, pie charts and bar charts to interpret and to help analyze collected data. Relevant questions will be treated in the fore mentioned data analysis tools to help solve the research questions developed in this study.

3.7 RELIABILITY

In this study, the data has been collected by questionnaires which will help the study achieve its objective. In order to have reliable and valid data, the questionnaires were close ended which helped to avoid bias on the part of the data collectors. The employees sent the answers

to us individually in order to get the information from the employees to be as reliable and valid as possible.

The information of this study was gathered from qualitative and quantitative data. We believe that the method of this study has high reliability and validity.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the analyses of collected data from respondents. Pie charts and bar charts were used in the presentation and analysis of data obtained from interviews and questionnaires data will be discussed in this chapter as they are analyzed.

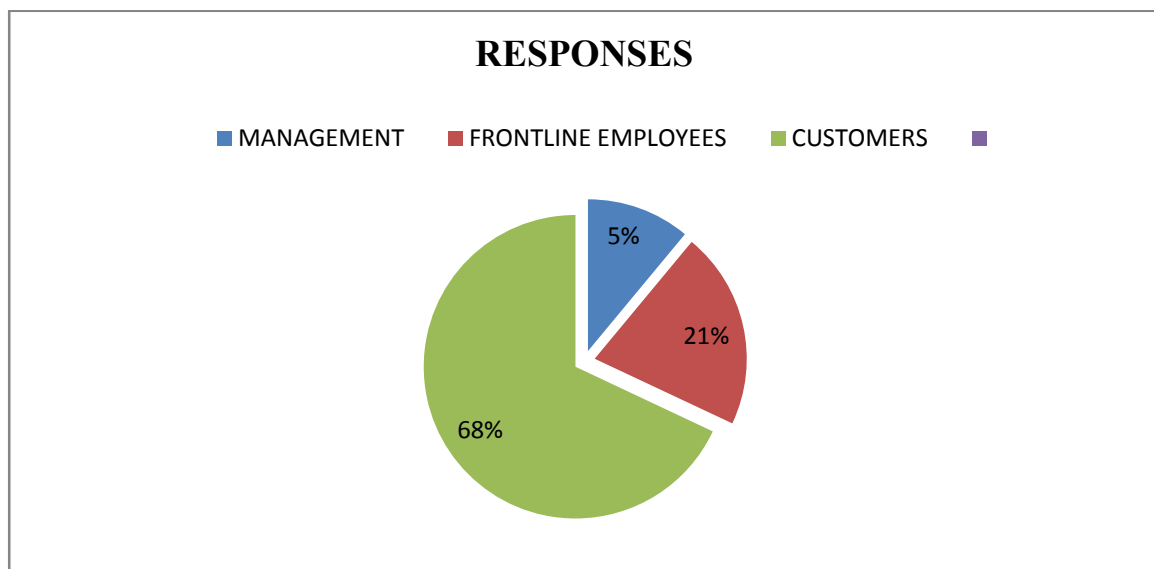
4.1 TOTAL RESPONSE

4.1.1 Table 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS FOR THE STUDY.

| Source | Number of responses | Percentages (%) |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Management | 15 | 5 |
| Frontline employees | 67 | 21 |
| Customers | 218 | 68 |
| Total | 300 | 100 |

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (2011)

FIG 1: A PIE CHART REPRESENTING DATA IN TABLE 1



The diagrams above (table 1 and Fig 1) indicate responses for the study. 68% representing two hundred and eighteen customers' responses were considered, 5% representing personal interviews conducted on thirty five management members and 21% representing sixty seven responses collected via questionnaires from employees.

4.2 RESPONSES

4.2.1 Table 2: RESPONDENTS AGE PROFILE

| RESPONDENT | 18-25 | 26-35 | 36 and above | Total |
|------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Managers | 7% | 40% | 53% | 100% |
| Employees | 57% | 31% | 12% | 100% |
| Customers | 21% | 47% | 32% | 100% |

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (2011)

Table 2 represents the age profile of the various strata developed in this study. The age frequencies were represented in percentage and were recorded as follows.

17% of the managers ranged between the ages of 18-25 years, 40% ranged between 26-35 years whilst 53% which was recorded as the highest ranged between 36 and above. Employees of the hotels of which data were collected had 57% of them ranging between ages of 18-25, 31% ranging between the ages of 26-35 with 12% of them ranging between the ages of 36 and above.

From the table above we realized the ages of 18-25 years to have the minimum percentage. This we believe is because of the requirement of such positions. Due to the experience requirement for such positions it will take one on an average a minimum of 28 years to acquire such experiences. From the table, it was realized that most of the managers we interviewed were old enough to have the requirement of the industry. The frontline

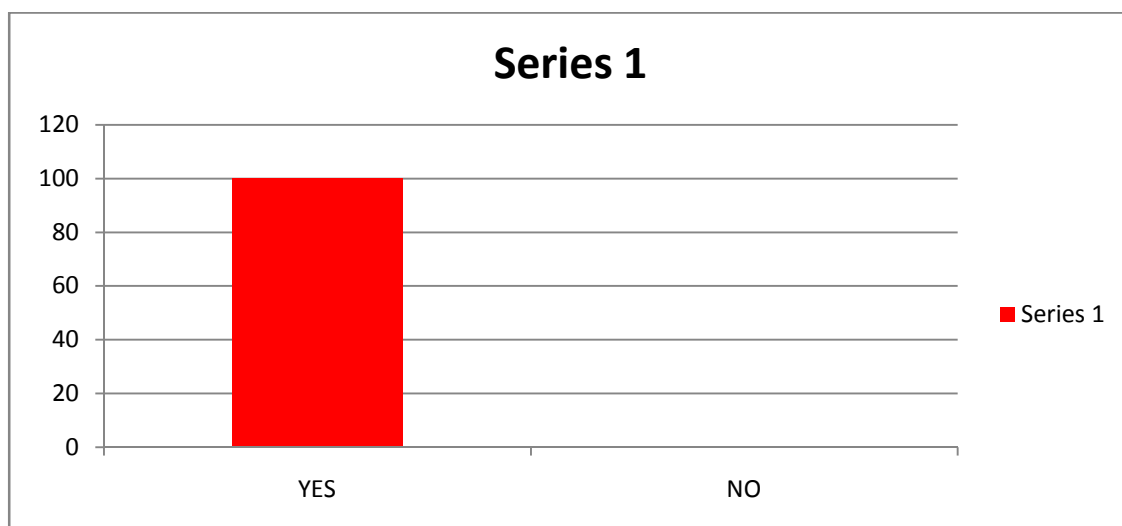
employees have most of its population ranging between the ages of 18-25years. We believe this is because of the need for smartness, and some other physical requirement of the position as a frontline employee. These age groups we believe are energetic and smart enough for the job. We realized the percentages for the other age range decreased as they increased. This is so, we believe because of the nature of the job and task the frontline employees undertake in the hotel industry. The hotel keeps little of the grown personnel for supervision purposes and heading working due to their experiences with the hotels however, most of them are laid off as their age increase.

4.3 MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Responses gathered from interview conducted with managers of various case studies reveals vital information relevant for this study.

4.3.1 IMPORTANCE OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES

Fig 2: IMPORTANCE OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES.



SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (2011)

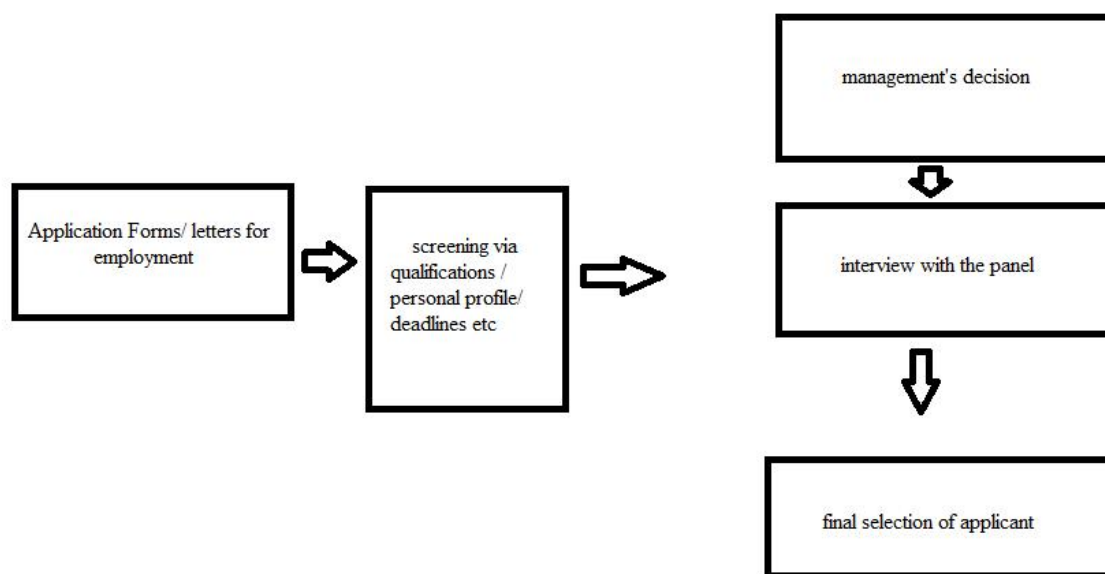
From the fig above, 100% of managers responded that frontline line employees are important to the service delivery process. This represented 15 managers we interviewed out of fifteen.

From the data collected we can conclude that frontline employees are very important in the hotel service delivery and thus special measures should be put in place to manage them towards the achievement of the achievement organisation goal. Managers, we believe after accepting that employees are essential to their service delivery should consider them as an organisational asset and a tool to help achieve organisational objectives.

4.3.2 HIRE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

A DIAGRAM SHOWING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF THE THREE HOTELS

Fig 3: RECRUITMENT MODEL



Source: field survey (2011)

From the diagram above which was constructed based on the answers supplied in the questionnaire by managers, we have four major steps in the recruitment process. The first step we discover out of the response generated to question 9 of the managers' questionnaire is a person's intent to work with the hotel. This is done through writing application letters and filling application forms. The next step is the screening process where unqualified personnel

are taken out of the lot applied. This is based on the personal profile and working profile of the applicant. The third step is the interview; this helps managers to identify certain hidden traits of the applicant, and one should note that every decision taken at this stage should reflect the CEO or the General managers' directives. A final selection is then made.

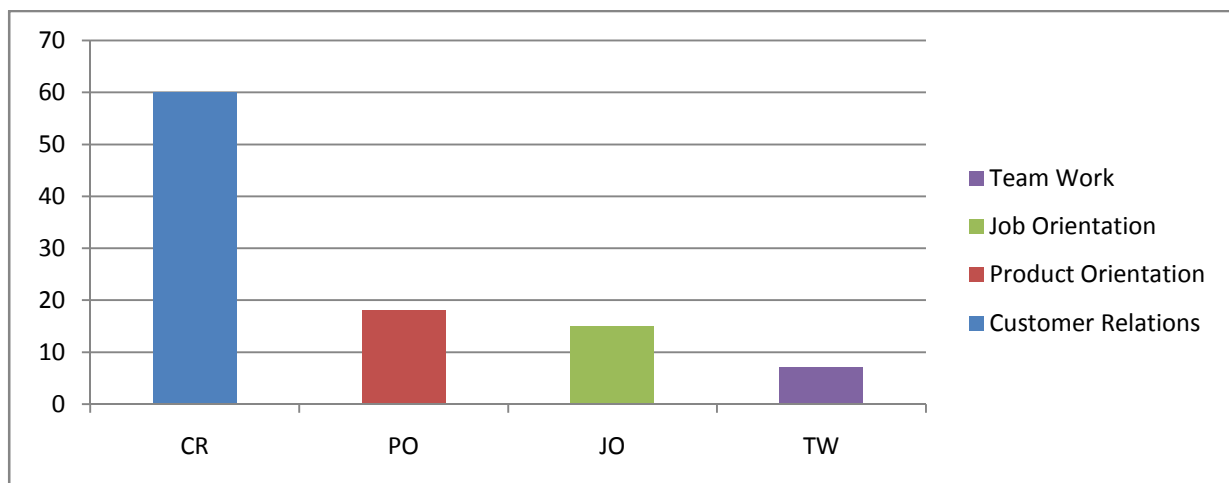
4.3.3 Table 3: TRAINING TYPES THAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED UPON

| Type of training | First priority |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Customer relation | 60% |
| Product orientation | 18% |
| Job orientation | 15% |
| Team work | 7% |

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (2011)

The above data was collected via our interview with the managers. 60% of the managers we interviewed preferred customer relations training to the other training programs which were provided in the interview. However, a significant number of managers chose product orientation to be their first priority. This had a total percentage of 18 out of a 100% followed by job orientation and team work which had 15% and 7% respectively.

Fig 4: A BAR CHART REPRESENTING THE DATA PRESENTED IN TABLE 3



4.3.4 PROVIDE BETTER WORKING ENVIRONMENT

4.3.4.1 Table 4: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK PLACE ENVIRONMENT

| ANSWER | NUMBER IN PERCENTAGE |
|--------|----------------------|
| YES | 94% |
| NO | 6% |

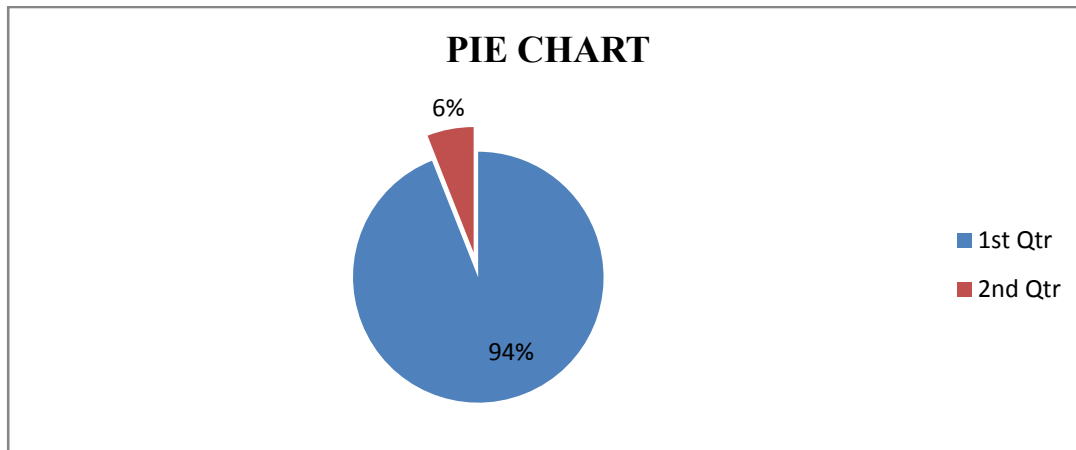
SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (2011)

From the table above 94% of the managers we interviewed suggested a better working environment is essential to their employees' performances. 6% on the other hand opposed that belief.

We can strongly state that the majority of the managers we covered in our study attest to the fact that the working environment is a means of improving their workers performances.

The environment of service delivery can have an impact on employee behavior and emotions (Wilson et al., 2008). Companies can provide the comfortable environment, such as available rest room and sport room, to relief employees' stress and reduce the boredom.

Fig 5: A PIE CHART REPRESENTING DATA PRESENTED IN TABLE 4



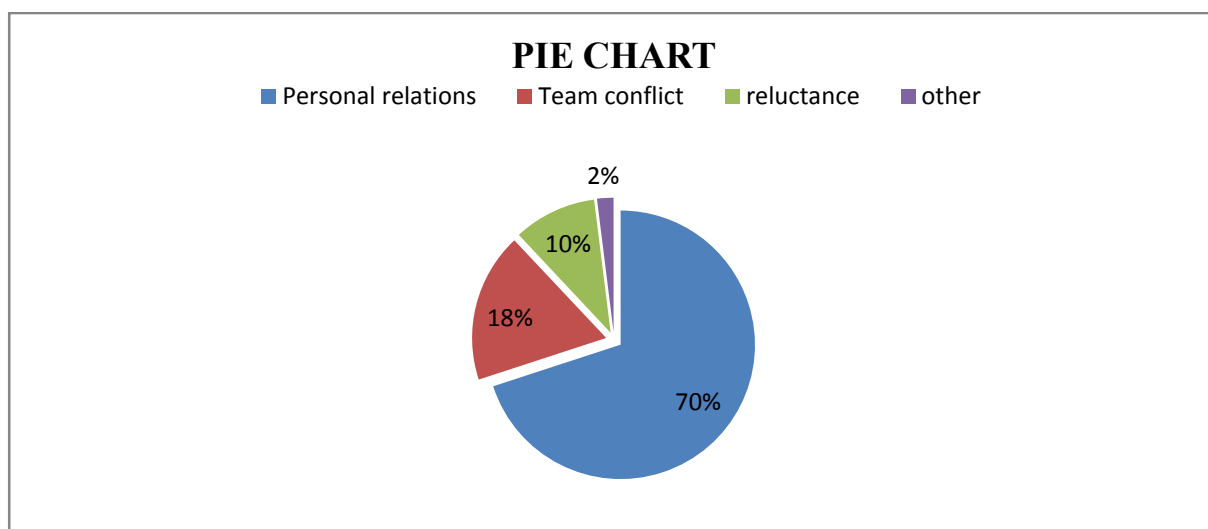
4.3.5 Table 5: CHALLENGES FACING HOTELS IN USING FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES

| Type of Challenge | percentage |
|--------------------|------------|
| Personal relations | 70 |
| Team conflict | 18 |
| Reluctance | 10 |
| Other | 2 |

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (2011)

Despite the numerous advantages of using frontline employees, most managers mentioned it cannot be enjoyed without encountering any problems not even under the best human resource management. From the above table, most managers which formed 70% of the responses agreed that a personal relation was the greatest challenge they encounter. Team conflict, employee reluctance and others had 18%, 10% and 2% of the total responses generated respectively. The other were mainly salaries, attracting and maintaining frontline employees.

FIG 6: A PIE CHART SHOWING DATA PRESENTED IN TABLE 5



4.3.6 MANAGERS VIEW OF OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

From the responses collected from the managers of the three hotels, the research team was able to come by ways to overcome the challenges identified in using frontline employees in service deliver. However, this suggested solution is a compilation of what most managers suggested to be done and has been stated below.

- Training:
- Change in Leadership style
- Better recruitment procedures
- Better human resource policies

4.4 THE SERVICE PERSONNEL'S PERSPECTIVE

4.4.1 TABLE 6: THE EFFECT OF TRAINING ON SERVICE DELIVERY

| ANSWER | PERCENTAGE | NUMBER |
|--------|------------|--------|
| YES | 86% | 58 |
| NO | 14% | 9 |

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (2011)

From the above diagram 86% of employees attest to training as a service quality improvement tool for Hotel service providers, however, 14 % do not follow or share the same opinion.

Most of the employees believe that training can help boost their performance and the fact that they believe so will make training very fruitful since most the employees believe in the relationship between training and their performance.

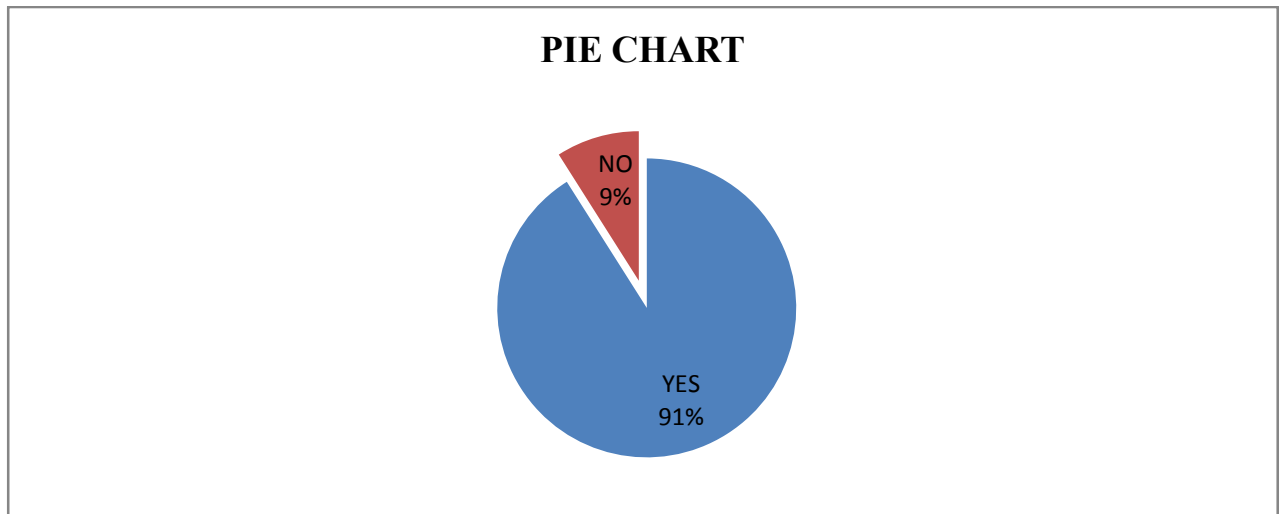
4.4.2 Table 7: EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF HOW IMPORTANT THEY ARE CONSIDERED TO BE.

| ANSWERS | PERCENTAGE | FREQUENCY |
|---------|------------|-----------|
| YES | 84% | 56 |
| NO | 16% | 11 |

SOURCE: SURVEY FIELD (2011)

The essence of finding out how employees feel they are being treated is to provide an insight into how motivated they are. We believe the relationship between managers and employees are very crucial to employee's performance. In order not to put the question straight on manager's relationship with employees whom we believe would have been less successful due to the fear of losing their jobs, the research group decided to disguise the question.

Fig 7: A PIE REPRESENTING DATA SHOWN IN TABLE 7



4.4.3 Table 8: EMPLOYEE TURNOVER RATE

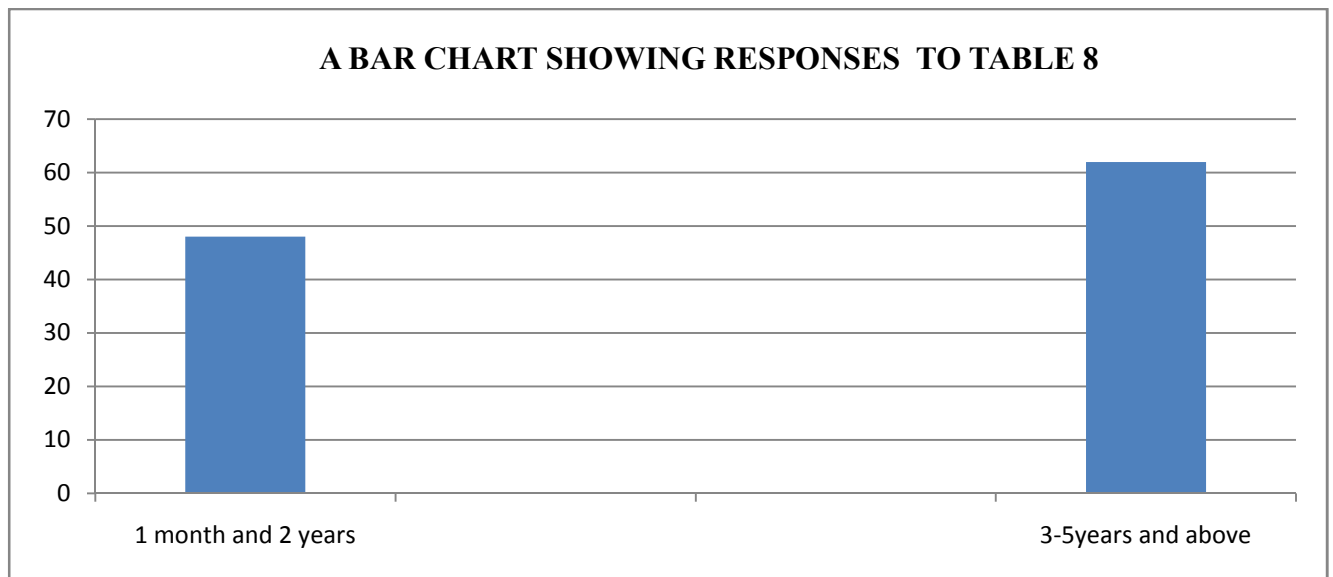
| Responses | Percentage | Frequency |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 1-12months and 1-2 years | 48% | 32 |
| 3-4 years | 30% | 20 |
| 4-5 years | 22% | 15 |
| Total | 100% | 67 |

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (2011)

48% represents workers who have not worked for long in the industry. Whereas 62% have worked for at least three years in their respective Hotels.

Alan Price (2004) suggests that rewards do not simply compensate employees for their effort but also influence the recruitment and retention of strongest service performers. Therefore, it is very effective to retain the best staff through rewarding them when they have a good performance. The 48% who hadn't worked for long means there is a higher employee turnover and a low accumulation of experience among service personnel.

Fig 8



4.5 CUSTOMERS RESPONSES TO THEIR CHALLENGES WITH THE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES

To the customer the service provider is the service and product, and the company. The employee's action therefore affects the Hotel not only in terms of its revenue but its image as well.

4.5.1 Table 9: CUSTOMERS EXPERIENCE WITH THE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES

| ANSWER | PERCENTAGE |
|--------|------------|
| NO | 72% |
| YES | 28% |

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (2011)

72% of the customers we administered the questionnaire on answered that they have not encountered any challenge with any frontline employees. 28% answered they were or are encountering challenges with a frontline employee. This explains and highlights employees'

satisfaction level at these hotels. This calls for an early action to be taking in order to stop customers from switching to other hotels

4.6 SERVICES PROVIDED BY FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES

Services provided by frontline employees

The Waitress

Check patrons' identification in order to ensure that they meet minimum age requirements for consumption of alcoholic beverages. They escort customers to their tables and check with customers to ensure that they are enjoying their meals and take action to correct any problems. They explain how various menu items are prepared, describing ingredients and cooking methods. They Inform customers of daily specials, prepare checks that itemize and total meal costs and sales taxes, present menus to patrons and answer questions about menu items, making recommendations upon request and remove dishes and glasses from tables or counters, and take them to kitchen for cleaning.

Security

The Security position will encompass aspects of both the Night Audit and Front Desk positions as well as overseeing the safety and security of the hotel and guests throughout the evening hours. Additional responsibilities include: conducting security walks throughout the hotel property and responding to guest requests and any noise complaints.

Room Attendant

Room Attendants are responsible for the cleanliness of guest rooms, hallways, and

public areas in the hotel. Responsibilities include: servicing guest rooms daily in accordance with hotel procedures, stocking cart with room supplies, and replacing bed linens and replenishing guest room supplies.

Front Office Manager

The Front Office Manager is responsible for all duties of the front desk operation which includes: staff training, inter-department communications, and staff scheduling. The FOM usually works a regularly scheduled front desk shift and must be available to work any shift as needed.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Important issues raised and dealt with in this study are captured under the study. Whereas the opinions formed by the researchers based on the study are presented under conclusion. Perhaps the significance aspect of this structured is the recommendation provided to help all stake holders involved, play their role effectively.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the questionnaires and interviews made, the following results / findings were deduced from the research that:

- Insufficient knowledge of product they deliver
- Some frontline employees are very reluctant in delivering service
- Some also do not keep confidentiality of customers
- They also have little knowledge about their job description
- Some customers complain about employees demanding tips from them
- Some customers complain of late in service delivery
- They also complain that some of the employees' are not receptive
- Some also complain about the hotel's physical evidence is not attractive
- Also, misunderstandings between some customers and the frontline employees were identified since each of them wanted to prove their points of rudeness right.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Frontline employees will be used as far as the hotel industry is concerned. The hotel industry

will have to build relationships with their customers other than just serving them foods and giving them places to sleep. A customer can make several decisions due to his/her relationship with a particular employee in the hotel. Front liners should not be underestimated since they help reach the customer just like the other marketing pieces and should be treated and managed as such.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the important role frontline employees play in the producing satisfied customers we recommend that proper human resource and internal marketing strategies be incorporated to get a positive impact of the people factor and to help improve on the performance of the frontline employees.

Getting the Best Performance out of Your Employees and reducing challenges we recommend proper customer service training and other capacity enhancement workshops be organized for frontline employees in order to deliver quality service to the customers.

We recommend that management should avoid the use of dictator style of leadership, as this can affect the psychological mindset of frontline employees.

We recommend that employers should create a work environment that encourages growth, creativity and efficiency in their employees to deliver their best.

5.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- If time is on their side, they should increase the case study coverage that is to increase the number of hotels to use a case study.
- More interviews should be conducted in order to increase the reliability of the study since this is more of a qualitative research than quantitative.

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<http://www.makeuseof.com>

APPENDIX

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Questionnaire for Managers

Department of Business Administration

ROGOK RESEARCH GROUP

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important to our study. This survey is anonymous and your responses will be held in the strictest confidence. We thank you for your thoughtful feedback.

1. Name:
2. Gender, please tick appropriately.
Male ☐ ☐
Female ☐ ☐
3. Age (in years): 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 35 and above ☐
4. Educational background:
 - i. Diploma
 - ii. First Degree
 - iii. Masters Degree
 - iv. None of the above
5. What position do you have within the company?
 - i. Manager
 - ii. Supervisor
 - iii. Caretaker
6. What are your responsibilities in the present position?
.....
.....
7. How many years have you worked in this hotel?
 - i. 6 months-2 years
 - ii. 3-5 years
 - iii. 5 years and above
8. How do u see the role of frontline employees in the hotel's service delivery?
.....
.....

9. Describe the recruitment procedure for employing frontline employees in the hotel (in brief)?.....

10. Are frontline employees important in your service delivery process?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

11. What are the services provided by your frontline employees?

12. Does your company have any training programs?

- i. No
- ii. Yes (specify the type of training)

13. How important is training to the role of frontline employees?

- i. Very important
- ii. Important
- iii. Not important
- iv. Other (specify).....

14. What area of training do you think should be improved? (order of importance i.e. 1,2,3,4)

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| i. Customer Relations | |
| ii. Product Orientation | |
| iii. Job Orientation | |
| iv. Team Work | |

15. What challenges do you face in using frontline employees?

- i. Poor customer relations
- ii. Team conflict
- iii. Reluctance
- iv. Other (specify).....

16. What do you think should be done to overcome this challenge?

- i. Training
 - ii. Change in leadership style
 - iii. Better recruitment procedures
 - iv. Other (specify).....
17. Do you have any complaints from the employees?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
18. What kind of complaints is the most common among the employees?
- i. Customer misconduct
 - ii. Leadership style
 - iii. Other (specify).....
19. How do you deal with the complaints?
-
-
20. Which channels does your hotel use to improve communication between managers and employees?
- i. Meeting
 - ii. Problem discussion
 - iii. Other
(specify).....
21. How do you evaluate the employee's contribution to operational goals, working achievement, activity in business planning process?
-
-
22. . Do you think the workplace environment is important for employees?
- i. No
 - ii. Yes
23. What efforts does your hotel offer in improving the working environment?
-
-

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Questionnaire for Frontline Employees

Department of Business Administration

ROGOK RESEARCH GROUP

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important to our study. This survey is anonymous and your responses will be held in the strictest confidence. We thank you for your thoughtful feedback.

1. Gender, please tick appropriately.

Male []

Female []

2. Age (in years): 18-25 [] 26-35[] 35 and above []

3. Educational background:

i. JHS

ii. SHS

iii. Diploma

iv. Other (specify)

4. How long have you had this position?

i. 6 months-2 years

ii. 3-5 years

iii. 5 years and above

5. What is your role in the hotel's service delivery process?

i. Security

ii. Receptionist

iii. Waiter

iv. Other (specify)

6. What services do you provide to customers?.....

.....
.....

7. Do you face any challenges in providing your services?

i. Yes

ii. No

iii. Specify if any

.....
.....

8.

9. Do you feel that your presence is considered important in the hotel?

i. Yes

ii. No

10. Give reasons for the answer provided above.

.....
.....

11. Have you received any type of training from your employer?

i. Yes

ii. No

12. Does training affect your contribution to the hotel's activities?

i. Yes

ii. No

13. Give reasons for the answer above.

.....
.....

14. What kind of training do you suggest your employers should provide?

i. Customers relations

ii. Product orientation

iii. Job orientation

iv. Team Work

15. What do you think management should do to help you overcome this challenge?

.....
.....

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Questionnaire for Customers

Department of Business Administration

ROGOK RESEARCH GROUP

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important to our study. This survey is anonymous and your responses will be held in the strictest confidence. We thank you for your thoughtful feedback.

1. Gender, please tick appropriately.

Male ☐ ☐

Female ☐ ☐

2. Age (in years): 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 35 and above ☐

3. Educational background:

i. Diploma

ii. First Degree

iii. Masters Degree

iv. None of the above

4. How long have you been a customer to this Hotel?

a. 1-12 months

b. 1-2 years

c. 3-4 years

d. 5 and above

5. What services do you receive from the frontline employees?

.....
.....

6. How would you describe the role of frontline employees (receptionist, security, waiters etc) in service delivery?

a. Receptive

b. Not receptive

c. Other (specify)

7. Do you encounter any challenges with the service personnel here?

a. No

b. Yes

(specify).....

.....

8. What do think are the possible ways to increase productivity of frontline employees in this Hotel?

**THE ROLE OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES IN CUSTOMER
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BY

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OSEI POKU JUNIOR

REBECCA ACHEAMPOMAA ASUAMAH

OSEI MENSAH JOSEPH

KUSI PEPRAH JUSTICE

JUNE 2011

A project work presented to the Business Studies Department of Christian Service University College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Business Administration

SUPERVISOR

MR. FREDRICK SANTUOH

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

We have read and understood the University regulations relating to plagiarism and certify that this research report is our own work and does not contain any unacknowledged work from any other source. We also declare we have been under supervision for this report herein submitted.

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Supervisor

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Date

Certified by

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**Head of Business
Department**

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Signature

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Date

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DEDICATION

We dedicate this research work to the Almighty God for the strength and life he has given us through our academic year in pursuing our academic degree and also to our families for the support and assistance to us.

ABSTRACT

In the past years, the competition in the hotel industry in Ghana has been increasing. There are alternatives for the customers and thereby these hotels have to stand out to attract customers. One way is to Market their businesses differently. In this research we are studying one way of diversifying Service Marketing, namely through people. Thus, improving the skills of the internal customer (employees) through training, external customers' needs and organizational goals will be met.

This research investigates Georgia Hotel, Royal Park Hotel and Royal Lamerta Hotel as multiple case studies to assess the role of employees in delivering quality services and customer retention. Primary and secondary method of data collection will be used as well as a mixed approach to research. The contribution of this research is that training is very important in delivering services; so is employee empowerment which can be achieved through internal marketing. Data for analysis was from questionnaires to managers, frontline employees and customers of the three hotels and other literary works.

Front-line employees and those supporting them are critical to the success of any service organization. Training, financial incentives and non-financial incentives can be used as ways to improve upon service quality. Customers sometimes do encounter some challenges with service personnel in the process of service delivery, thus in order to reduce this incident hotels should focus considerable attention on hiring and recruiting service personnel.

This research reveals how the how the employees service delivery capacity can be enhanced to retain customers.

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CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

KUMASI

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