

Increasing Customer Satisfaction Through
Employee Satisfaction in a Call Center Environment

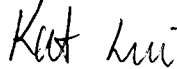
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ABSTRACT

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Customer satisfaction is the holy grail of success for businesses in the customer service industry. A vast array of measurements and tools are implemented to ensure and measure customer satisfaction. Many businesses fail to look to one of the key factors in achieving their customer satisfaction goals: the role of the service-providing employee.

This study examines the link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction, gathers measurements of employee satisfaction in one particular call center that has struggled with customer satisfaction, and then makes recommendations regarding how to impact employee satisfaction in this environment.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In a medium sized midwestern city, a modest sized company of approximately 150 employees has been quietly taking the lead in the veterinary practice management software industry for the past 20 years. As a small division of a large corporation that specializes in the animal science industry, Company A produces practice management software that is utilized by veterinarians.

A significant portion of the services provided by this company come from their technical support call center, which employs approximately 50 customer service representatives (CSRs) who provide technical software and hardware assistance to their veterinary clients via telephone. A recent bi-annual survey of veterinarians regarding veterinary practice management software products and companies compiled by an influential national veterinary organization, the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), reported that customers of Company A are less satisfied with the customer service they receive than are customers of their competitors (Berndt, 2004). Similar results were reported in the same survey conducted two years prior (Berndt, 2002). Despite recent and significant reorganization of the call center that was done in response to this key survey's results two years ago, these scores did not rise this year as expected.

The results of this survey are very influential in the veterinary industry. Veterinarians and their staff are becoming increasingly oriented toward delivering high quality health care to animals with the assistance of highly technical equipment and software. The vet clinic that does not have a computer system at the core of its operations is a rarity. These clinics are strongly lead by the guidance of AAHA in making decisions about which practice management software to purchase, which in-clinic lab equipment to install, and whose

laboratory services to use. For this reason, the results of this survey are a strong benchmark for success in the veterinary practice management industry.

Statement of Problem

In order to meet the increasingly complex demands of these customers, a customer relations training program has been implemented in the call center in effort to improve the quality of service being provided, and advanced technical training is provided regularly to increase technicians' problem solving abilities. This study will demonstrate that there are other significant factors influencing this call center's ability to meet the customer's needs, related to employee satisfaction. What is the status of key employee satisfaction measures in this call center environment, and how do these key factors affect customer satisfaction?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the link between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction and identify key factors in employee satisfaction. The study will proceed with survey measurement of these key factors in the call center at Company A. In its conclusion, this study will generate recommendations for future efforts toward employee satisfaction, aimed at achieving the goal of improved customer satisfaction.

Assumptions of the study

This study assumes that the employee satisfaction survey, which was conducted as a part of this study, reflects an employee's honest opinion about the current work environment and that issues related to employee satisfaction are similar enough in all customer service work environments so that the survey instrument used, which drew from other studies previously conducted, is relevant.

Limitations of the Study

Many unique environmental and cultural features exist in this call center that may not exist in others. The recent reorganization of the call center dramatically altered the culture, workflow, and reporting structure. Additionally, the services provided by this call center are a unique mixture of meeting customers basic service needs (answers to simple software usage questions) and resolving customers' technical issues (computer failure, installation of an entire network, or troubleshooting a network connectivity problem).

For these reasons, this study may serve only as a general reference point for application in other call center environments. A call center in which the culture had not undergone such extreme changes or one in which the service provided is less complex or more well defined may not be subject to the same types of employee satisfaction issues as those that are the focus of this study.

Methodology

Case study research methodology was employed utilizing a survey instrument. The survey comprised 93 questions from seven categories (job satisfaction, organizational support and commitment, confidence in leadership, empathy, customer orientation, technology/tools, and role clarity) all measured on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). The survey was distributed for voluntary completion to 47 customer service representatives within the call center.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Experts in the fields of marketing and service management have applied much science and measurement to the goal of customer satisfaction. At Company A, workflow reorganization, metrics, salary benchmarking, and surveys and training, in both technical services and customer relations, have been implemented toward achieving a goal of increased customer satisfaction without significant success. This literature review will 1) define the aspects of customer service unique to a call center environment, 2) report the correlation between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction, and 3) explore key factors related to employee satisfaction in a call center. The goal of the literature review is to identify areas of concern related to employee satisfaction in a call center environment that may have a direct impact on overall customer satisfaction.

Customer Service in a Call Center Environment

A call center is traditionally defined as a physical location where calls are placed or received in high volume for the purpose of sales, marketing, customer service, telemarketing, technical support, or other specialized business activity (Dawson, 1999). It is a complex environment that must effectively combine knowledge, technology, and workflow to provide quality customer service. A call center is a locus for customer satisfaction. When customers contact a call center, they expect the phone to be answered promptly and to be treated courteously by knowledgeable CSRs who can resolve their issue quickly (Miciak & Desmarais, 2001). Call centers are used in almost every industry imaginable, such as banking and financial services, technical support, order processing, telemarketing, claims processing, appointment setting and confirmation, membership solicitation or renewal, customer acquisition, customer care, and customer satisfaction surveying. According to D'Ausilio

(2000), more than 90% of customer contact takes place over the phone. In 1993, 41% of all companies in the U.S. utilized call centers. In 1995, the percentage had effectively doubled at 81%. In our culture today, it would be a rare individual who has not had interaction with a company through a call center.

The driving force behind call center management is the hundreds of metrics produced on a regular basis. Call center effectiveness is measured daily by such things as (Carlaw et al, 2003):

- Service level: the percentage of incoming calls answered within a given amount of time; a goal of usually around 20 seconds or less
- Available time: time spent by a CSR waiting for calls, e-mails, or chat sessions
- Average speed to answer: the average length of time a customer waits before having their call picked up by a CSR
- Abandon rate: the percentage of customer who hangs up before a CSR answers their call
- Average talk time: the average length of a telephone contact between the customer and the CSR
- Wrap time: the amount of time an agent spends completing tasks related to one call before becoming ready to take another
- The number of calls received per technician staffed

Vast arrays of technologies are available to provide this information, allowing micro-management and adjustment on a minute-by-minute basis. In each call center goals, are set around these metrics, and the success or failure at meeting those goals is communicated to CSRs with regular frequency by way of computer displays that show information accurate to

the second and reports distributed daily or weekly, among other methods. The success of the call center is pronounced or denounced on a regular basis depending upon its workers' abilities to meet these goals. However, "if the strategic advantage that call centers are supposed to afford business revolve around...customer satisfaction, the most common metrics stress many of the things that are counterproductive to these goals" (de Ruyter, p. 24). These indicators are effective measures of service speed or efficiency, but may or may not be true measure of service quality (Miciak and Desmarais, 2001).

Call center metrics are a critical tool used to manage staffing levels and budgets, but these numbers do not tell the entire story of the call center's ability to meet the customers' needs. Roseanne D'Ausilio, president of Human Technologies Global, Inc., affirms the importance of measurements in managing a call center and the need to balance that with an understanding of the importance of the human element. "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. But, no matter how wonderful the technology, is you should not forget the people component. In the case of call centers, the most important resource is the people" (Franklin, 2003, p. 11).

As call centers increase in importance and prevalence as a means of customer contact, CSRs are becoming an increasingly important link between the company and their customers and are critical to the success of the company simply because, in ever increasing numbers every year, they are the only contact that many customers will have with a company. "Several survey-based studies of service satisfaction suggest that the human interaction component of service delivery is essential to the determination of satisfaction/dissatisfaction" (Bitner and Booms, 1990, p. 73). The human element in

customer interactions remains the most important resource in any customer service organization.

Correlation Between Customer and Employee Satisfaction

For the purpose of this study, we will define customer satisfaction as the degree to which a customer reflects a positive impression of services received. There are many different types of service encounters, and different elements create customer satisfaction in each scenario. Berry, et al (1990) identified some principal dimensions customers use to judge service: tangibles such as the physical appearance of the building, personnel, and materials; and intangibles such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. In a face-to-face customer service interaction, such as purchasing a meal at a restaurant, tangibles like the overall appearance of the service environment and employees and the quality of the product purchased, play the most significant a role in the customer's perception of the experience.

In a telephone interaction, all of the tangible aspects of service delivery are removed. The product being purchased is the service interaction. Thus, for call center customers the evaluation of a service depends on the evaluation of a service encounter with a contact employee (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004). Such intangibles as knowledge and accuracy, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy take on greater importance. These dimensions of the service encounter are directly influenced by the CSR. The quality of the service provider cannot be separated from the service offered as it can be during a face-to-face purchase of goods for example. For this reason, in a call center services encounter "the competencies of an agent are likely to have a particularly large influence on the customer's perception of service quality" (Pontes & Kelly, 2000, p. 42).

It is the discretionary behavior and actions on the part of the CSR during the call center service encounter that determines service quality perceptions and satisfaction (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004). Discretionary effort means the maximum effort an employee will make beyond the basic requirements of their job. These behaviors cannot be controlled by management or trained in a classroom setting. The motivation to “do the right thing” during these discretionary moments must come from an employee’s commitment to the organization, satisfaction with their job, and desire to provide excellent service. It is very difficult for unhappy and dissatisfied employees to deliver exceptional service (Rogers, et al, 1994). The organizational commitment of CSRs plays an important role in customer satisfaction.

Researchers in the marketing and human resources fields are paying increased attention to the outcomes of personal interactions between customers and employees (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004, p. 163). “It is generally observed that organizations pay insufficient attention to understanding the nature of the organizational commitment and job satisfaction of customer-contact employees who represent the organization to the customer and can directly influence customer satisfaction.” The degree of employee satisfaction largely determines the profits of the company achieved through customer satisfaction and retention. Satisfaction of internal customers is indispensable in achieving satisfaction of external customers (Kondo, 2001).

This link between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction can be effectively described through the “service-profit chain.” The links in the chain are as follows: Business success (profit) is stimulated by customer loyalty, which is a direct result of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is largely influenced by the quality of the service

provided. Employees who are satisfied, loyal, and productive provide high value customer service (Heskett, et al, 1994). Satisfied employees exist in an environment that provides support services and policies that assist them in dealing with customers. Value is created by these satisfied and loyal employees, who in turn create loyal and satisfied customers (Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000).

Years of research have firmly grounded the theory that customer satisfaction leads to business success in the form of such factors as positive referrals, loyalty, and repurchase intentions. One widely quoted statistic in business and marketing journals estimates that a 5% increase in customer loyalty could produce profit increases by as much as 85%. Customer loyalty has been described as customers repeatedly purchasing goods or services over time and holding a favorable attitude towards those goods, services, or the company providing them. (Wong & Sohal, 2003). Customer loyalty comes naturally from satisfied customers.

Rust, et al (1996) claim employees who recognize and appreciate relationships with customers provide better service. Customers who receive better service complain less and create fewer problems for employees. Employees react positively to an increase in these positive encounters, are more likely to provide better service, and satisfy more customers. Employee satisfaction among service personnel has the potential of increasing customer satisfaction, repeat purchases, and positive references to other potential customers (Rogers, et al, 1994).

The remainder of this literature review will examine key employee satisfaction factors in a call center environment.

Employee Satisfaction in a Call Center Environment

Employee satisfaction has been defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Certainly many factors have an impact on employee satisfaction. Many studies have been done on the impact of tangibles such as physical workspace, pay, and benefits in relation to employee satisfaction. This study chooses to focus on aspects of employee satisfaction such as a supportive work environment, customer orientation, empowerment, role conflict, and empathy; those issues more specifically related to the intangible aspects of emotion, culture, and morale in a call center environment.

The emotional quality of the call center environment plays a significant role in employee satisfaction. "Agent feelings and desires are perhaps the most forgotten aspect of call center management" (Coen, 2001, p.45). The internal quality of the working environment contributes most to employee satisfaction. The feelings that employees have toward their jobs, colleagues, the company, and the way that people within the organization "serve each other" are factors. (Heskett, et al, 1994). Agents are motivated through the recognition and utilization of their own emotions and the emotional impact made by their supervisors. A call center is unique as a work place where the emotions of motivation and excitement can have a huge impact on productivity and on job satisfaction. Agents report that the most satisfying part of the job is when the call ends in the customer's needs having been met. If the issue was a particularly challenging one, the emotional satisfaction of a job well done and a customer satisfied are factors that keep call center employees coming back for more of what can be a very stressful role. "Employee satisfaction of intrinsic and spiritual character is the source of excellent quality and customer satisfaction" (Kondo, 2001, p. 871).

Empathy, which can be described as one's ability to match another's emotional state and provide appropriate sympathy, has been identified as a key component in a satisfactory call center environment (Rogers, et al, 1994). The level of empathy expressed during a service encounter will have a strong impact on the quality of the service encounter and the attractiveness of the work climate. CSRs who are very empathetic will produce the highest quality service encounters and will experience the highest level of job satisfaction in a customer service role. In fact, research has supported the notion that "empathetic concern will have an inverse impact on job tension" (p.17).

Just as an employee who expresses empathy to a customer reduces tension and increases service satisfaction, so does empathy expressed by management to employees decrease tension and increase job satisfaction. (Rogers, et al, 1994) A work environment where employees feel supported leads to their satisfaction, which leads to customer satisfaction (Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000). Research has shown that CSRs tend to treat customers the way they are treated by management. Both immediate supervisor support and team member support have a direct positive relationship on employee satisfaction. In this sense employees are similar to customers in that their satisfaction and retention are essential for business success. A business must be customer oriented with attention paid to both external and internal customers.

Customer orientation is defined as the emphasis placed on meeting customer needs and expectations (Dean, 2004). "Previous literature has consistently suggested that if the business wants to satisfy the needs of its customers, it must first satisfy the needs of its employees" (Hoffman and Ingram, 1992). Businesses who are customer oriented expend time and energy to ensure the employees have the tools and support necessary to complete

their jobs. They recognize that CSRs are uniquely aware of the needs of the customer and should be consulted regularly regarding how to meet those needs. They also seek employee input regarding their needs and provide honest and open communication on a regular basis. Employee satisfaction is increased through supportive services and effective policies.

Employees who are customer oriented engage in empathetic behaviors that result in greater customer satisfaction. A customer-oriented employee seeks to assess the customers' needs and help them make good decisions, offers additional services or information, and provides honest answers and opinions. A study done by Hoffman and Ingram (1992) determined a significant positive correlation between overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with work, co-workers and supervisors, and customer orientation. This customer-oriented behavior is yet another example of the importance of the human element of call center service satisfaction.

The ability of the CSR to manage the customer relationship and communicate effectively is a key component of a satisfactory customer service interaction. Customer relationship management competencies include the ability to personalize the interaction, allow the customer to speak without interruption (occasionally inserting verbal nods such as uh-huh, yes, I see), show appropriate empathy to upset customers, respond in a non-defensive manner, offer additional services, and thank the customer for calling. Oral communication competencies are the ability to speak at an appropriate volume, use appropriate words, pace, tone and grammar, avoid vocalized pauses (um, ah), and the ability to speak confidently (Pontes & Kelly, 2000). "An agent's customer relationship management and oral communication competencies are likely to have a significant influence on a caller's evaluation of the service"(p.42).

The basis for effective communication is empathy, the ability to understand, and predict how others might respond in a given circumstance. This empathetic ability is essential in both internal (management to employee) and external (employee to customer) communications. Without effective communication, employee satisfaction suffers, as does the quality of the service provided and therefore customer satisfaction. A lack of effective communication can be linked to several key components of employee satisfaction: an increase in role conflict, a decrease in role clarity, an increase in job tension and a decrease in overall job satisfaction (de Ruyter et al, 2001; Rogers et al, 1994). As role conflict increases, role clarity decreases and job tension increases, thereby reducing job satisfaction.

Role conflict occurs when an employee is the recipient of contradictory demands such as the demands of the organization (its policies, etc) and those of the customer. An additional source of role conflict can come from the unique tension that exists in a call center environment between the CSR's desire to provide quality customer service and the need to meet the goals enforced by management for the previously discussed metrics such as service levels, abandon rate, and talk time. The conflict between these common call center metrics, which focus on speed and efficiency, and the need to provide high quality service that satisfies the customer can create significant role stress for CSRs (de Ruyter et al, 2001). Employees with high customer contact experience higher job tension and role conflict if their jobs are not clearly defined. Role conflict and the stress it creates have been found to have a negative impact on job satisfaction and commitment.

Role clarity is the degree to which employees understand their role and responsibilities and receive the information necessary to successfully fulfill their role. Role ambiguity may occur when a CSR is uncertain about supervisory expectations. Clear job

roles minimize internal conflict among employees and with management, and external conflict with customers. Frustration is created for both employees and customers when employees are unclear as to their role in the organization and their scope of allowable behavior. The role of a CSR is complex in its need to empathize with the customer, determine how to best meet their needs, and, in the case of the call center at Company A, provide highly technical assistance. It should not be further complicated by doubts and questioning on the employee's part regarding their level of empowerment in making decisions to meet the customer's needs.

Job tension is the extent to which employees are bothered by work-related matters. A high volume of irate, angry, or irrational callers makes working in a call center one of the 10 most stressful jobs in the country (D'Ausilio, 2000). Proper training provides CSRs with the ability to handle both technical and customer relations issues effectively and can help to reduce job stress. Employees must have clearly set roles and expectations and the tools and empowerment to handle challenging situations as key components of job satisfaction in a call center services environment.

Employees must be empowered to take whatever action necessary and proper in a given situation to ensure customer satisfaction. Not having the power to achieve a resolution to the customer's problem or answer their question is clearly stressful. Employee empowerment is another of the key factors in determining employee satisfaction and ultimately customer satisfaction, and must be supported by management behaviors.

"Empowerment, competence, and leadership have been found to directly affect role stress" (de Ruyter, 2001, p.25). Empowerment and autonomy, the ability to make the right decisions

independently to meet the customer's needs, have been found to have a direct and positive impact on role stress and increasing job satisfaction.

Summary

In a customer service role, the key duty of an employee is to provide satisfactory customer service. Failure to do so not only leaves the customer displeased but also results in disappointment and frustration on the part of the service provider. The desire to succeed at ones job is a core need of humanity. In one study, those employees who felt they met the customer's needs registered job satisfaction ratings nearly twice as high as those who felt they were not meeting customers' needs (Heskett et al, 1994). Increasing job satisfaction among service personnel is likely to increase customer satisfaction.

The review of current literature validates the link between the satisfaction of an employee and customer satisfaction in a service environment. Job satisfaction of CSRs can be increased by training and encouraging employees toward empathetic behavior, by providing an emotionally responsive and fulfilling environment, by providing clear job descriptions with team and management support, and by empowering employees to make decisions that are in the best interest of the customers' needs. Service quality and components related to customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction are well researched and discussed in the literature and from this research can be gained the tools needed to measure the key factors in employee satisfaction.

The case study research contained herein extends from this body of knowledge to provide a sharper look at that state of these intangible employee satisfaction factors in the call center at Company A, allowing for future actions aimed at the larger goal of improving of customer satisfaction.

Chapter III: Methodology

The link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction has been strongly validated and many factors key to employee satisfaction have been presented. Soft skills and technical training can only provide the tools necessary for technicians to do their jobs. The motivation to provide service in a manner that makes a lasting, positive impression on the customer must come from something other than skill sets or aptitude. A successful customer-oriented work environment must empower employees to do the right thing for the customer, provide emotional enjoyment, value and satisfaction for the workers, be free of role conflict and tension, encourage empathy, and provide a supportive team and managerial structure. What is the status of these key employee satisfaction measures in the call center at Company A?

This section will include a description of the population being studied, a discussion of the instrument used and the sources utilized in putting the survey together, description of how the data was collected and analyzed, and limitations identified during this process.

Subject Selection and Description

This survey was distributed for voluntary completion to all of the CSRs in the call center at Company A that had been with the company 3 months or longer. This population consists of 25 females and 22 males. More than 75% of these technicians hold at least a bachelor's or associate degree, most of which are in the computer technology field. All but one of the technicians works full time, a minimum of 40 hours per week.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument (see Appendix) was developed utilizing questions from a variety of previously conducted studies. The primary sources for the questions were Sergeant

and Frenkel's (2000) research on the variables that impact an employee's ability to satisfy a customer, and Rogers, Clow, and Kash's (1994) work aimed at identifying the key factors in job satisfaction of service personnel. Out of these pieces of research came the topics that are the main categories of the survey: job satisfaction, organizational support and commitment, confidence in leadership, empathy, customer orientation, technology/tools, and role clarity. Two variables were included in the instrument; team (Team 1 are those employees who are members of the Response Team, Team 2 are members of either the Resolution or the Resource teams) and length of employment (less than 1 year, 1 to 2 years, 3 to 5 years, and more than 5 years).

Data Collection Procedures

A 93-item survey was administered to 47 of the CSRs in the call center. The survey was handed to them in hard copy and they were given one week to complete and return it. An informational statement was included at the top of the survey stressing the confidentiality and purpose of the survey. The statement also emphasized support for the project by Human Resources and call center management. Twenty-eight CSRs (60%) chose to respond to the voluntary survey.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the results of the survey for central tendency and variation. The two variables included in the instrument, team association and length of employment, were used for cross-tabulation. Results for each of the survey items were analyzed through the use of SPSS. The researcher provided interpretation of this data.

Limitations

The following limitations are inherent in this study:

- There are undoubtedly job satisfaction measures not included in this survey that could be critical to employees, especially given the variation in ages and life stages of these call center employees. For example, those who are married and/or have children and for whom this call center job is their family's primary income, an issue such as wages or benefits might play a significant role in that employee's job satisfaction. Those types of job satisfaction issues were not measured in this survey.
- It is assumed that the survey responses are the honest opinions of the CSRs. There are many factors outside the auspices of this study that could have an impact on the degree of honesty of the respondents.
- The respondents were male and female. Gender differences were not taken into consideration during data analysis.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this research was to identify areas of concern related to employee satisfaction in the call center at Company A. A 93-question survey instrument was distributed to all CSRs in the call center and the results were collected and analyzed.

Results are reported by the seven categories (job satisfaction, technology and tools, confidence in leadership, organizational support and commitment, role clarity, customer orientation, and empathy). Data in table format will be provided for those items showing unusual response patterns or statistical significance.

Trends

Of the 47 employees surveyed, 28 choose to participate, a 60% response rate. A slightly higher percentage of Team 2 members (65%) choose to participate compared to a response rate of 50% for Team 1 members. One respondent did not indicate length of employment.

While analyzing the survey results, it became clear there were several consistent factors regarding the relationship of the variables (length of employment and team) as well as a few other response trends. Those will be discussed here and then not again during item analysis.

A slight majority of respondents from Team 1 (67%) reported lengths of employment in the first two categories (<1 yr, or 1 to 2 years). The large majority of respondents from Team 2 (84%) reported lengths of employment of greater than 3 years (see Table 1). Of the 28 total respondents, only 5 (18%) step outside of this trend, therefore, the reporting of the statistics will be primarily framed around the team variable, with reference to lengths of employment only when a significant variance occurs.

Table 1
Lengths of Employment

Length		Respondents		Total population	
		Team 1	Team 2	Team 1	Team 2
< 1 yr	Count	5		9	
	%	56%		19%	
1-2 yrs	Count	1	2	2	2
	%	11%	11%	4%	4%
3-5 yrs	Count	2	10	6	13
	%	22%	53%	13%	28%
>5 yrs	Count	1	6	1	13
	%	11%	31%	2%	28%
None specified	Count		1		1
	%		5%		2%
Total	Count	9	19	18	29
	%	32%	68%	38%	62%

Few instances of the “strongly disagree” response were found within the survey results. Therefore, reporting of the results will be along the “disagree” or “agree” lines, (combining “agree” with “strongly agree”; and “disagree” with “strongly disagree”). Instances where any significant numbers of “strongly disagree” responses appeared will be specifically noted.

When evaluating responses on items referencing supervision or management, it is important to note that the teams are cleanly divided by supervisor. There are three supervisors in the call center. Team 1 members all report to Supervisor A and Team 2 members all report to either Supervisor B or Supervisor C.

One additional trend was observed and deemed worth reporting. As the length of employment increased so did the likelihood for a negative response. Negative responses for Team 1 or those employed 2 or fewer years were much less likely than for members of Team 2, or those employed 3 years or longer.

Item analysis – Job Satisfaction

Items in this category addressed such things as opportunities for advancement or promotion, ability to influence own goals and objectives, a sense of accomplishment and challenge, whether self or others view their job as important or having value, clarity of job descriptions, and performance measurement.

Respondents rated the following five items with a greater than 70% positive rating: “my job allows me to set goals and objectives”, “my job provides me with a sense of accomplishment”, “my job is challenging”, “I work on things that are of value”, and “my job provides me with the opportunity to grow and utilize a wide range of my skills”. Although responses to this last item were positively skewed there were other interesting variances (see Table 2).

Table 2

Item 2. My job provides me with the opportunity to grow and utilize a wide range of my skills.

		Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	4	5	9
	%	44%	56%	100%
Team 2	Count	2	17	19
	%	11%	89%	100%
Total	Count	6	22	28
	%	21%	79%	100%

While 79% of all respondents agreed with this statement, there is significant variance between teams that is atypical of the overall patterns of these survey results. Individuals on Team 1 responded more negatively than did members of Team 2.

A second grouping of items, with which greater than 61% of respondents were in agreement, included “other people outside our organization view my job as important”, “I am satisfied with my workload”, “I am clear on the scope and responsibilities of my job”, and “I

am aware of opportunities for advancement or promotion that exist for me”. There were no significant variations found for team or length of employment for these items.

A third grouping of items, for which the ratings were fairly evenly distributed by all respondents, included “my job provides me with the opportunity to prepare myself for future advancement in the organization” (54% agreement), “my job description is clear” (57% agreement), “my job allows me to utilize the full range of my educational training and previous work experience” (46% agreement), “I feel I am fairly compensated for my work” (54% agreement), “my job is viewed as important by employees working in other areas within this organization” (50% agreement), and “I am satisfied with the way my job performance is measured” (43% agreement). These last two items display significant variance in the number of “strongly disagree” responses (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

Item 3. My job is viewed as important by employees working in other areas within this organization.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	2	1	6	9
	%	22%	11%	67%	100%
Team 2	Count	4	7	8	19
	%	21%	37%	42%	100%
Total	Count	6	8	14	28
	%	21%	29%	50%	100%

Although the responses to Item 3 were evenly divided, the number of respondents who strongly disagreed with this statement was unusually high, especially among members of Team 2. All individuals who strongly disagreed with this statement are in the 3 or more years of employment categories.

Table 4

Item 14. I am satisfied with the way my job performance is measured.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	1	3	5	9
	%	11%	33%	56%	100%
Team 2	Count	4	8	7	19
	%	21%	42%	37%	100%
Total	Count	5	11	12	28
	%	18%	39%	43%	100%

Although the responses to Item 14 were fairly evenly divided, the number of respondents who strongly disagreed with this statement was unusually high, especially among members of Team 2. The majority of individuals (3 of the 5) who strongly disagreed with this statement are in the 5+ years employment length category.

The two remaining items in this job satisfaction category were rated significantly negative and are discussed individually (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5

Item 10. I am satisfied with the promotional prospects of my job.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	1	4	4	9
	%	11%	44%	44%	100%
Team 2	Count	7	7	5	19
	%	37%	37%	26%	100%
Total	Count	8	11	9	28
	%	29%	39%	32%	100%

Sixty-eight percent of all respondents indicated disagreement with this statement, with only a slightly higher negative response on Team 2. Of significance is the fact that eight of the respondents who indicated disagreement selected the "strongly disagree" response. The majority of these respondents (6 of 8) are in the 3+ years employment length categories.

Table 6

Item 13. I am satisfied with the influence I have over decisions that affect my job.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	1	4	4	9
	%	11%	44%	44%	100%
Team 2	Count	5	11	3	19
	%	26%	58%	16%	100%
Total	Count	6	15	7	28
	%	21%	54%	25%	100%

Seventy-five percent of all respondents indicate disagreement with this statement. Six of these individuals selected the “strongly disagree” response. The majority of those respondents (5 of 6) are in the 3+ years of employment categories.

Item analysis – Technology and Tools

Items in this category addressed such things as understanding and valuing the measurements used to access call center success, availability of adequate resources and usefulness and flexibility of technology. The items “the technology I work with is user friendly” and “the technology I work with is flexible enough for me to make adjustments to suit my needs” were rated significantly positive, with greater than 70% agreement ratings. Although respondents rated these two technology oriented questions quite high (79% and 71% respectively), they gave Item 21, “the technology I work with enables me to do my job effectively,” only a 50/50 rating, split evenly across team and employment length variables, with three “strongly disagree” respondents.

Similarly, Item 20, “I receive assignments with adequate resources and materials to execute them,” received a slightly negatively skewed rating (54% disagreement), with an interesting cross-team pattern (see Table 7).

Table 7

Item 20. I receive assignments with adequate resources and materials to execute them.

		Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	2	7	9
	%	22%	78%	100%
Team 2	Count	13	6	19
	%	68%	32%	100%
Total	Count	15	13	28
	%	54%	46%	100%

While 78% of Team 1 responses to this item were positive, 68% of Team 2 responded negatively, all of who are from the 3+ years employment length category.

A similar item referring to the availability of resources and tools, Item 24 was rated the lowest of all items in this technology and tools category (see Table 8).

Table 8

Item 24. I have all the tools I need to perform my job effectively.

		Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	4	5	9
	%	44%	56%	100%
Team 2	Count	15	4	19
	%	79%	21%	100%
Total	Count	19	9	28
	%	68%	32%	100%

While Team 1 was fairly evenly split in their responses, Team 2 indicated only a 21% agreement with this statement.

Two questions within this technology and tools category which were related to the measurements used to assess call center success rated quite differently. Item 18, "I understand the measurements that are used to assess call center success," was rated the most positively in this category, with a 92% agreement rating, but its partner question, Item 19, depicts a different feeling (see Table 9).

Table 9

Item 19. I see the value in the measurements that are used to assess call center success.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	1	3	5	9
	%	11%	33%	56%	100%
Team 2	Count	5	4	10	19
	%	26%	21%	53%	100%
Total	Count	6	7	15	28
	%	21%	25%	54%	100%

Although the majority of respondents agreed with this statement, 46% of those who disagreed (6 of 13) selected the “strongly disagree” response. The majority of these individuals (5 of 6) are from the 3+ years employment categories.

Item analysis – Confidence in leadership

Items in this category addressed such things as confidence in management decisions, open communication with management, clear goals and vision, understanding and valuing of performance evaluation, and trust and confidence of supervisor.

A large number of items from this category received a 70% or higher positive rating. Those items were “my company hires people who are qualified to do their jobs”, “I feel that ICS has clear goals and vision”, “I understand the goals and vision of ICS”, “my supervisor is good at his or her own job”, “my supervisor gives recognition for a job well done”, “my supervisor keeps me informed”, “my supervisor encourages me to participate in important decisions”, “I trust my supervisor”, and “I am satisfied with how my supervisor evaluates my performance”.

Two additional performance oriented items rated only slightly lower, with 68% and 64% positive responses respectively: “I understand the value of the measurements that are part of my performance evaluation”, and “I am satisfied with how often I am made aware of

what my supervisor thinks of my performance”. As with most items in the survey, these items received a more positive rating from Team 1 than from Team 2.

Several items were rated relatively equally, from 50/50 to 43/57, across team and length of employment variables. “I have confidence in the leadership management is providing” (50% agreement), “I believe we have open communication between personnel and leadership in this company” (54% agreement), “leadership listens to me and helps me resolve issues” (57% agreement), and “my supervisor helps me develop my skills” (54% agreement). This last item displays an interesting cross-team variation (see Table 10).

Table 10

Item 37. My supervisor helps me develop my skills.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	1		8	9
	%	11%		89%	100%
Team 2	Count	3	9	7	19
	%	16%	47%	37%	100%
Total	Count	4	9	15	28
	%	14%	32%	54%	100%

For Item 37, Team 1 responses were strongly positively skewed, while Team 2 responses were somewhat negatively skewed. One respondent on Team 1 and 3 from Team 2 strongly disagreed with this statement. All individuals who indicated strong disagreement are in the 3+ years length of employment categories.

The items “I believe leadership considers the needs of the employees in my department carefully before implementing new policies” and “I believe leadership support my efforts to make this a fun and fulfilling place to work”, received ratings indicating strong disagreement (see Tables 11 and 12).

Table 11

Item 25. I believe leadership considers the needs of the employees in my department carefully before implementing new policies.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	2	2	5	9
	%	22%	22%	56%	100%
Team 2	Count	7	8	4	19
	%	37%	42%	21%	100%
Total	Count	9	10	9	28
	%	32%	36%	32%	100%

A large majority of respondents (78%) disagreed with this statement, with Team 1 respondents rating the item slightly positive and Team 2 respondents somewhat negative. The number of individuals who strongly disagreed with this statement is quite high. All but one of these strongly disagreeing respondents is from the 3+ years employment length categories.

Table 12

Item 32. I believe leadership support my efforts to make this a fun and fulfilling place to work.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	1	1	7	9
	%	11%	11%	78%	100%
Team 2	Count	7	8	4	19
	%	37%	42%	21%	100%
Total	Count	8	9	11	28
	%	29%	32%	39%	100%

Of primary significance here is the contrast between the teams. Team 1 respondents agreed with the statement, while the majority of Team 2 respondents disagreed. Also of significance is the large number of respondents who indicated they strongly disagreed. Seven of eight of these respondents are in the 3+ years employment length categories.

Item analysis – Organizational support and commitment

Items in this category included reflections on changes made in the past year, a feeling of importance to the company and their work team, a sense of cooperation, trust and reliability within the work team, and a sense of pride in and commitment to the company. The majority of these items were rated quite high.

The respondents unanimously agreed with the following items: “I feel a sense of responsibility to help my fellow employees do their jobs well” and “I feel that I am an important member of my work team.”

Item 47, “I feel I am an important member of this company”, reflects that respondents’ feelings of value to the company, as opposed to the previously mentioned item regarding their work team, is somewhat less clear or positive. Twelve respondents (43%) indicated disagreement, indicating they did not feel they were an important member of the company. This figure is significant only in contrast to the unanimously positive rating given the partner question regarding an individual’s importance within their work team.

The following items scored positive ratings of 82% or higher: “I believe that my performance in providing customer service has an impact on the success of ICS”, “my fellow employees and I cooperate more than we compete”, “I look forward to working with my team members every day”, “my team is effective at helping everyone to do his or her job well”, “my team is effective at developing new team members”, “if I need assistance at work, I can trust other people in this company to help me”, and “I am proud to tell others that I work for this company.”

A few additional items were scored positively but with slightly lower agreement ratings. Those items were: “everyone in my department contributes to a team effort in serving customers” (64% agreement), “I can rely on other people in this company to perform

high quality work” (64% agreement), and “I am willing to work harder than I have in order to help this company succeed” (71% agreement). There were no significant variations on these items for team or length of employment variables.

Items 52 and 57 were rated very similarly, with greater than 50% of respondents disagreeing with these statements: “I receive adequate training to succeed at my job” and “I would turn down a job offer of comparable pay and prospects in another company to stay with this company.” Ratings for both of these items displayed an interesting cross-team relationship, with 67% agreement from Team 1 and 63-67% disagreement from Team 2.

The most significant item in this organizational support and commitment category is Item 42, “I feel changes made in the past year or so are positive for the long-term success of the call center” (see Table 13).

Table 13

Item 42. I feel changes made in the past year or so are positive for the long-term success of the call center.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	1		8	9
	%	11%		89%	100%
Team 2	Count	6	5	8	19
	%	32%	26%	42%	100%
Total	Count	7	5	16	28
	%	25%	18%	57%	100%

While only 43% of respondents disagreed with this statement, there is a significant presence of “strongly disagree” responses. Greater than 50% of those who disagreed with this statement strongly disagreed. The one respondent from Team 1 and six respondents from Team 2 who selected the “strongly disagree” response were all in the 3+ years of employment length categories. Additionally, Team 1 responses were strongly positively skewed and Team 2 responses were somewhat negatively skewed.

Item analysis – Role Clarity

Items in this category included clear and consist expectations, demands and policies, access to necessary information, manageable workload, freedom to use their own judgment, and confidence that quality plays a higher priority than meeting goals.

Although there were no items rated unanimously positive in this category, the majority received a 71% or greater rating of agreement. Those items included: “I know what the people I work with expect of me”, “ I am rarely asked to do things on the job that are against my better judgment”, “I am clear about the limits of my authority”, “I am as clear as I would like to be about what I have to do on the job”, “ I feel the policies, rules, procedures, and regulations of the company that affect my job are clearly defined”, “I feel that the rules, policies and procedures of my department are clearly defined”, “ I rarely have to violate a rule or policy in order to carry out a work assignment”, and “ I receive consistent feedback from the various people I work with”.

A few additional items were also rated positively, but by a smaller number of respondents. Those items include” “satisfying conflicting demands from various people I work with is rarely an issue” (63% agreement), “I have access to the information needed to carry out my job (60% agreement), “the amount of work I do rarely interferes with how well its gets done” (64% agreement), and “I am as clear as I would like to be about how I am supposed to do things on the job” (64% agreement). There are no significant trends related to the team or length of employment variables for these items.

The one remaining item in this role clarity category stands out in contrast to the others due to its strongly negative rating and the presence of many “strongly disagree” selections (see Table 14).

Table 14

Item 70. We will not sacrifice the quality of our products or services in order to meet goals.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count	2	2	5	9
	%	22%	22%	56%	100%
Team 2	Count	5	12	2	19
	%	26%	63%	11%	100%
Total	Count	7	14	7	28
	%	25%	50%	25%	100%

A significant majority of all respondents (75%) disagreed with the statement. Team 1 is fairly evenly split on this issue while Team 2 respondents issued resounding disagreement. The seven individuals who selected the “strongly disagree” response were all from the 3+ years employment length categories.

Item analysis – Customer Orientation

Items in this category included the importance of truth, listening to complaints and making a personal connection when communicating with customers, value of providing accurate information, and the focus on company goals versus customer needs. Respondents rated most items in this category significantly positive.

Respondents were unanimous in their agreement with “I try to give customers an accurate expectation of what we can do for them, even if it will make them unhappy” and “I try to achieve my goals by satisfying customers”. They were nearly unanimous in their agreement with “I like to make a personal connection with the customer” (93% agreement), “I encourage customers to share their complaints with me” (96% agreement), and “a good customer service rep is primarily focused on meeting the customer’s needs” (93% agreement).

The responses to three items are worth noting. Forty-seven percent of all respondents disagreed with Item 71, “I believe that we should be brief and concise in our communication with customers” and 75% of all respondents disagreed with Item 75, “ A good customer service rep is primarily focused on the company’s goals.” Although these responses appear concerning, they indicate that respondents feel they should take their time and be thorough in their communication with customers and that they should not be focused on company goals when meeting customer needs.

The third item worth noting received a 50/50 rating overall, but stands out in contrast to the almost overwhelming agreement with most other statements within this category (see Table 15).

Table 15
Item 77. Speed is rarely emphasized over satisfying the customers.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Total
Team 1	Count		4	5	9
	%		44%	56%	100%
Team 2	Count	4	6	9	19
	%	21%	32%	47%	100%
Total	Count	4	10	14	28
	%	14%	36%	50%	100%

In addition to being more negatively rated than the other items in this customer orientation category, there were 4 “strongly disagree” responses to this item from members of Team 2.

Item analysis – Empathy

Items in this category included having the means, freedom and ability to satisfy the customers needs, building confidence and relationships with customers, expressing empathy, and the role of politeness and technical accuracy in satisfying customers.

Respondents rated most items in the empathy category significantly positive. The following items were all rated unanimously positive by all respondents: “I make customers happy most of the time”, “I believe that building the confidence of a customer is an important part of my job”, “when I see someone struggling it bothers me”, “I believe that taking time to connect with customers is an important part of my job”.

Items such as “I feel our company has a service-oriented culture; we are here primarily to assist the customers and each other”, “I am encouraged to respond effectively to customer’ problems”, “I am confident in my ability to satisfy customers”, “making customers happy is the most satisfying part of my job”, “I believe that building a relationship with the customer is an important part of my job”, “I am given the means to respond effectively to a customer’s problem”, and “I think that expressing empathy to upset customers is an important part of my job” were all rated positively by greater than 78% of the respondents.

Those items more negatively skewed in this category were still rated positively by 54% or greater of respondents. “I have the freedom in my job to truly satisfy my customer’s needs” (60% agreement), “I believe that the satisfaction of our customer relies primarily on whether or not I am polite to them” (54% agreement), and “I feel most employees are treated fairly” (57% agreement). Disagreement with these statements was spread fairly evenly throughout all length of employment and team variables.

Item Analysis – Additional Comments

Five individuals chose to write additional comments on the last page of the survey (see Table 16). The survey number referred to in this table is the sequential number assigned to each completed survey as they were turned in.

Table 16. Additional Comments

Survey #	Team	Length of Employment	Comment
2	2	3-5	“I feel appreciation from customers and other employees but not from management or others departments.”
13	2	5+	<p>“It may sound flaky, but I had a higher opinion/idea of job satisfaction here until I took this survey. Having answered honestly, I have had to take a step back and reevaluate my responses and must conclude that they are accurate.</p> <p>IMHO, those things that I disagreed with is the result of our company culture, the obsession with quantity over quality. I feel that the “powers that be” and I shall continue to agree to disagree on that topic. From a young age, I was impressed with the pursuit of excellence and shall continue to pursue it. Perhaps it might be a difference in background, life experience, or education, but I remain firm in my conviction that helping solve a client’s problem in a polite, professional manner is more desirable than quickly answering the calls/questions of 10 clients w/a shrug of my shoulders. We are the people in the front lines, actually doing the work and making it happen and our opinions, concerns, whatever are routinely dismissed by our superiors as though we are a bunch of uneducated rubes who don’t know what we’re talking about because we can’t couch our discussion in the latest buzz words. I will, of course, continue to pursue excellence and do my job to the best of my abilities, but I am convinced that, with the proper tools and support from those who are our “leaders”, I could be even more effective. Just a dream...”</p>

20	2	3-5	"I believe the focus of this company has shifted from customer service to numbers, numbers, numbers and more numbers, and the employees do not matter—only the numbers do." [Sue, make these corrections ONLY if you decide to alter quoted material.]
25	2	5+	"We're losing or have lost the overall purpose of Customer Support. We should be monitoring satisfaction levels, not service levels."
15	1	3-5	Wrote in a question number 30.5 "I agree with goals and vision of ICS" and rated it "strongly disagree"

Chapter V. Discussion

The purpose of this project was to examine the link between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction, identify key factors related to employee satisfaction in a call center environment and then measure employee satisfaction in the call center at Company A. The outcomes of the statistical analysis are the following recommendations or observations related to employee satisfaction in the call center at Company A.

Limitations

There were certain limitations inherent in this study. There are undoubtedly job satisfaction measures not included in this survey that could be critical to employees, especially given the variation in ages and life stages of these call center employees. Additionally, while a Likert scale questionnaire provides a valuable glimpse of the overall dynamic of a group related to a particular topic or item, it cannot glean the reasons behind significantly negative or positive responses.

Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, it is assumed the responses are the honest opinions of the CSRs. There are many factors outside the auspices of this study that could have an impact on the degree of honesty of the respondents.

There were several variables that may have had an impact on the choice of response that were not included in the survey variables, such as: gender, primary product focus, specific role or job, and direct supervisor. Additionally, some of the questions were not worded specifically enough (on things like leadership; call center vs. overall organizational leadership) to provide clear distinction.

This study was tailored to the call center at Company A due to its history of low customer satisfaction scores and significant reorganization of the call center and its failure to positively

impact customer satisfaction, as reported by the AAHA survey. The link between customer and employee satisfaction is universal and could be applied to other call center or customer service environments. The remainder of the results and conclusions of this study are limited in their relevance to customer service environments outside of Company A.

Conclusions

The most significant overall trend was the tendency toward negative responses by those who had been employed in the call center 3 or more years. This trend may be at least partially explained by the fact that the majority of the respondents (68%) have been employed at this company since prior to the major call center reorganization that took place in August of 2003. Further study should be done to determine if the type of response pattern seen in this study (as employment length increases so does the tendency toward negative survey responses) is typical in employee satisfaction surveys or if it can be attributed to other factors specific to this call center, its culture, and perhaps the reorganization.

Survey responses demonstrate that employees of the call center at Company A have a strong sense of empathy and customer orientation, two key traits in successful customer service representatives. They feel confident and valued as customer service providers and understand the importance of building customer relationships and responding effectively and appropriately to customers. They feel they have the freedom and the skills to meet customer needs, and enjoy doing so. Employees indicated conflict between these values and the speed with which they are expected to do their jobs. Perhaps this is simply the natural tension that exists in a call center between the primary needs of the customer, that of quick access and of accuracy. Further study should be done to determine the meaning, extent, and impact of this tension between speed and quality.

Employees indicated a strong sense of commitment and support for and from their fellow employees and pride in their customer service efforts. They demonstrated value and pride in their work; trust in their team members and overall commitment to working harder to help the organization succeed. They indicated feeling valued as a member of their work team but conversely, they reflected feelings of not being valued as a member of the company. Further investigation into this lack of feeling valued by other departments is recommended to determine the scope and cause of this experience.

Employees indicated satisfaction with the level of challenge and sense of accomplishment in their jobs, the value of what they do, the use of their skills, level of compensation, and overall workload, giving the impression that they are challenged, valued, and satisfied with what they do on a day-to-day basis. They indicated strong agreement with most items in the role clarity category, reflecting comfort with job expectations, understanding of policies and procedures, and procedural tasks that are not in conflict with customer needs and demands. Most employees indicated they have access to the information necessary to carry out their jobs.

Although most questions related to supervisory support and trust were rated positively, a significant number of members of Team 2 felt their supervisor did not help them develop their skills. Significant dissatisfaction was also indicated regarding how their job performance is measured, the promotional aspects of the job, and the amount of influence they have over decisions that affect their job. Further qualitative investigation into these items is recommended.

The item rated most negatively of the 93 survey questions indicates that call center employees do not feel that leadership considers the needs of employees before implementing

new policies. The responses to this item mirror that of disagreement with the amount of influence they feel they have over decisions affecting their job. This question does not make a distinction between the leadership of the organization and the leadership of the call center, which leaves an uncertain impression. Do the respondents feel the leadership of the call center does not consider their needs before implementing new policies, or is it the overall leadership of the organization making decisions that impact the call center employees without consideration to their needs? An additional clarification might be useful between needs and wants. For example, a technician may want or prefer to have more time between calls, but is this truly a business need? Management must determine the cost of balancing the customer service needs and the wants of employees.

The second most significant item in the survey was a strong negative response to feeling that leadership does not support employees' efforts to make it a fun and fulfilling place to work. Employees are affected by changes made outside of their control and hindered in their ability to impact things within their control. Again, this question does not make a distinction between the leadership of the organization and the leadership of the call center.

An additional item of significant disagreement reflects doubt or frustration regarding the changes made in the past year or so and the impact those changes will have on the long-term success of the call center. With the major reorganization of the call center only one and one-half years in the past, it seems likely these are the changes respondents reflected upon while answering this question. Although the number of individuals in disagreement with this statement is not high, their feelings are strong. It appears their concerns with these changes have not yet been reconciled in a manner that will help them move forward.

Employees indicated they feel the company sacrifices the quality of service or product in order to meet goals. Two distinct departments within this company are responsible for producing the product (veterinary practice management software) and providing the service (call center technical support). This question does not provide clarity regarding whether respondents feel it is the quality of the product (the software) that is compromised to meet goals or if it is the quality of the customer service provided. However, by comparing this response to those of the items related to role clarity and confidence in the service they provide, it may be safe to assume they are referring to the products, which they have no direct influence over, versus service, which they do. Since they must represent and work with the product during each interaction with the customer, they would be in a position to be highly aware of a poor quality product or one that does not meet the customer's needs. This awareness should be seen as a valuable resource to the company and could be used in determining improvements made to the products.

Individuals from Team 2, in particular, indicated a lack of adequate tools, resources, materials, and training necessary to do their jobs. Further examination, in the form of a needs analysis, should be done to determine what is it about the role of Team 2 members that varies from that of Team 1, and what tools, resources, and training they need.

Team 2 members indicated an interest in moving to another company if a job of adequate pay and prospects came along. This is not an unexpected response, given the overall impression of frustration and dissatisfaction with the recent changes made in the call center, their lack of confidence in leadership, inability to make it a fun place to work, and lack of training and skill development; their general tendency was to rate items on this survey negatively. The overall impact to the call center should these individuals act on their desires

to leave the company must be taken into consideration when determining whether or not to proceed with further study.

The overall impression created by the responses to this survey item is one of employees who generally like what they do and who they work with, and they feel confident in their role. However, the more seasoned individuals in the call center feel theirs is a work environment where measurements and policies are implemented without input from them, they do not receive the support they desire in developing their skills, they feel uncertain about the long-term impact of changes that have been made, and they do not feel allowed or encouraged to create a fun and fulfilling place to work.

Further qualitative research into each of the items, in the form of focus groups or individual interviews is recommended to identify the critical components behind these negative factors. It is recommended that the majority of participants in these further studies include all members of Team 2, since they are the group with the most diverse opinions, and individuals with 3 or more years of employment. Either individual interviews or focus group methodology would serve to gather more detail surrounding the employee's dissatisfaction regarding the key items. If the chosen method of study becomes a focus group, careful planning is necessary to provide participants, both those with positive and negative opinions, a safe environment for open and honest discussion, and that discussion be carefully designed with the intent to gain further insight into the issues.

Closing

The link between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction has been strongly supported by the literature review presented in this paper. Results of the survey revealed significant negative ratings on several key employee satisfaction factors. It is believed that

implementing measures to address these areas of significance will improve not only employee satisfaction but also overall customer satisfaction.

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Appendix

Employee Satisfaction Survey

As the final step in earning my Master's Degree in Training and Development, I am completing a thesis project entitled "Employee satisfaction in a call center environment". This project has researched the link between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction, and defined key factors in employee satisfaction in a call center environment. As a culmination to this research I developed this survey instrument to measure the state of these key employee satisfaction factors in our call center here at ICS to determine areas of need or concern. This survey instrument has been shared with Jan Vasile and Becky Blanchard, who have supported me in these efforts.

Statement of Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. The survey instrument does not even ask for your name, but does ask for some basic demographic information for the sole purpose of data comparison. I do not believe that your data to be included in the resulting project can be identified from any of this information, and completed surveys will be viewed only by me. By returning this completed survey you are signifying your willingness to have your survey responses included in the data results. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to take the time to participate in this project. The resulting data will be distributed electronically to all call center employees, including call center management.

This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Wisconsin-Stout's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study please contact the Investigator or Advisor. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator.

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I sincerely appreciate your willingness to take the time to fill out and return this survey. The resulting data will be distributed electronically to all call center employees, including call center management. Thanks, Sue

Length of Employment at ICS (please check one):

- Less than 1 year
- 1 – 2 years
- 3 – 5 years
- Greater than 5 years

Call Center Team (please check one):

- Response Team
- Resolution or Resource Team

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
1. The amount of stress I am under negatively impacts my performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I sometimes think that I'll not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of various people I work with.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I have access to the information needed to carry out my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I know what the people I work with expect of me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I sometimes think that the amount of work I have to do may interfere with how well it gets done.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I sometimes feel that I have to do things on the job that are against my better judgment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I feel clear about the limits of my authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
8. I am as clear as I would like to be about <u>what</u> I have to do on the job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I am as clear as I would like to be about <u>how</u> I am supposed to do things on the job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I feel the policies, rules, procedures, and regulations of the <u>company</u> that affect my job are clearly defined.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I feel that the rules, policies and procedures of my <u>department</u> are clearly defined.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I sometimes have to violate a rule or policy in order to carry out a work assignment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I regularly receive conflicting <u>requests</u> from two or more people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I regularly receive conflicting <u>feedback</u> from two or more people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. We often sacrifice the quality of our products or services in order to meet goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I believe that we should be brief and concise in our communication with customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I like to make a personal connection with the customer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I encourage customers to share their complaints with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
19. I try to give customers an accurate expectation of what we can do for them, even if it will make them unhappy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. A good customer service rep is primarily focused on the company's goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. A good customer service rep is primarily focused on meeting the customer's needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. I try to complete my services as quickly as I can, rather than satisfy a customer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. I try to achieve my goals by satisfying customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. I feel our company has a service-oriented culture; we are here primarily to assistance the customers and each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. I am encouraged to respond effectively to customer's problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. I have the freedom in my job to truly satisfy my customer's needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. I am given the means to respond effectively to customer's problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. I feel confident about my ability to satisfy customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. I believe that the satisfaction of our customers relies primarily on whether or not I am polite to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
30. I believe that the satisfaction of our customer relies primarily on my ability to solve their technical issue or answer their question.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. I feel that I make customers happy most of the time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. It is important to me to feel that I satisfy customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Making customers happy is the most satisfying part of this job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. I feel that most employees are treated fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. When I see someone struggling it bothers me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. I believe taking time to “dwell with people” to really hear their stories is an important part of my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. I think that expressing empathy to upset customers is an important part of my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. I believe that building a relationship with the customer is an important part of my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. I believe that building the confidence of customers is an important part of my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. I believe leadership considers the needs of the employees in my department carefully before implementing new policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
41. My company hires people who are qualified to do their jobs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. I have confidence in the leadership management is providing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. I believe we have open communication between personnel and leadership in this company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44. I feel that ICS has clear goals and vision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. Leadership listens to me and helps me resolve issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. I believe leadership work toward making this a fun and fulfilling place to work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47. I am satisfied with how often I am made aware of what my supervisor thinks of my performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48. I am satisfied with how my supervisor evaluates my performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49. I understand the value of the measurements that are part of my performance evaluation (schedule adherence, resolution rates, total phone time, etc...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50. My supervisor is good at his or her own job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
51. My supervisor helps me develop my skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52. My supervisor gives recognition for a job well done.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53. My supervisor keeps me informed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54. My supervisor encourages me to participate in important decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55. I trust my supervisor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56. My work is important to the success of the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57. I understand the goals and vision of ICS.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
58. I feel changes made in the past year or so are positive for the long-term success of the call center.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
59. I believe that my performance in providing customer service has an impact on the success of ICS.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
60. Everyone in my department contributes to a team effort in serving customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
61. I feel a sense of responsibility to help my fellow employees do their jobs well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
62. My fellow employees and I cooperate more than we compete.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
63. I feel that I am an important member of this company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
64. I feel that I am an important member of my work team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
65. I look forward to working with my team members every day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
66. My team is effective at helping everyone to do his or her job well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
67. My team is effective at developing new team members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
68. If I need assistance at work, I can trust other people in this company to help me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
69. I can rely on other people in this company to perform high quality work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
70. I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this company succeed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
71. I am proud to tell others that I work for this company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
72. I would turn down a job at a comparable pay and prospects in another company to stay with this company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
73. My job provides me with the opportunity to prepare myself for future advancement in the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
74. My job provides me with the opportunity to grow and utilize a wide range of my skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
75. My job is viewed as important by employees working in other areas within this organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
76. My job allows me to set goal and objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
77. My job provides me with a sense of accomplishment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
78. Other people outside our organization view my job as important.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
79. My job is challenging.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
80. My job description is clear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
81. My job allows me to utilize the full range of my educational training and previous work experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
82. I am satisfied with the promotion prospects of this job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
83. I feel I am fairly compensated for my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
84. I am satisfied with my workload.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
85. I am satisfied with the influence I have over decisions that affect my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
86. I am satisfied with the way my job performance is measured.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
87. I am clear on the scope and responsibilities of my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
88. I am aware of opportunities for advancement or promotion that exist for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
89. I work on things that are of value.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
90. I understand the measurements that are used to assess call center success (service levels, call back times, etc...).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
91. I see the value in the measurements that are used to assess call center success (service levels, call back times, etc...).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
92. I receive assignments without adequate resources and materials to execute them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
93. The technology I work with enables me to do my job effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
94. The technology I work with is user friendly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
95. The technology I work with is flexible enough for me to make adjustments to suit my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
96. I have all the tools I need to perform my job effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>