



APPROACHES TO IMPROVE THE SERVICE QUALITY OF CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER OF TT&T (PUBLIC) CO., LTD., KHON KAEN PROVINCE

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Abstract

This independent study aims to analyze the environment of management, demographic data, customer behaviors, their levels of satisfaction, and factors promoting customer return, as well as to offer service quality development guidelines for the TT&T Public Company Limited Customer Service Center in Khon Kaen Province. This survey research has used a questionnaire as the research instrument and judgement sampling has been adopted to collect 400 samples. The collected data has been analyzed using percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, one-way ANOVA and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The researcher has found that the company is able to adapt to both external and internal environment well. According to the demographic data of customers at the TT&T Public Company Limited Customer Service Center in Khon Kaen Province, most customers are female, aged 25-40, with a bachelor degree. Most of them are individual customers who work as private company officers with an average monthly income of 9,000-15,000 baht. Regarding the customer behaviors, the customers themselves are decision makers and they mostly use the landline bill payment service because the customer service center is near their residence/workplace. The overall satisfaction with the service is at the high level. The customers of different genders, age groups, levels of education, types, business/careers and income levels share the same level of satisfaction as there is a statistically significant difference at 0.05. The findings have been used to develop the TOWS Matrix, including attracting customers and advertising as an S-T strategy and decreasing service line steps as a W-O strategy. After the implementation of these strategies, it is expected that the TT&T Public Company Limited Customer Service Center in Khon Kaen Province will be able to provide services that conform to customer behaviors and that give customers complete satisfaction, while the customer service center itself will continue to function and achieve its full potential.

Keywords: service quality, landline, consumer behavior, customer satisfaction

1. Introduction

In today's world, time is precious for everyone in every society. As seen in customer service, the speed of service is the number one priority and it is the key to customer satisfaction. The current economic circumstances require that everyone is in a race with time. Being late means the disappointing loss of opportunity and income. Organizations or businesses that are able to provide customers with fully satisfying services before other competitors will create great customer satisfaction and favorable impression on the services as well as promote positive and reliable images for them. Achieving customer satisfaction can be considered a considerable success in the operation of organizations and businesses.

In terms of problems, there is inadequate number of service employees, and when some staff have to go outside to introduce the products and services as well as new promotions to the public, customers who come to use the services at the service center have to wait for a long time. In addition, there is inadequate number of service centers and some steps are redundant resulting in slow services. Therefore, the research is interested in exploring the approaches to improve the service quality of TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province and creating guidelines for improving and developing the service procedures in order to increase the effectiveness of the services. The collected data has been used better the service quality and maintain the confidence to provide services at TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province in the future.

There are currently 3 major landline service providers, including Advanced Info Service Public Company Limited, Total Access Community Public Company Limited and True Move Company Limited. Therefore, these 3 companies are directly responsible for the decrease in income of TT&T Public Company Limited. In addition, they offer special promotions to attract TT&T customers which help steal market share of landline services from TT&T Public Company Limited. Therefore, TT&T Public Company Limited has established administrative centers in different regions across the country. In the northeastern region, there are 2 main administrative centers in the upper northeastern region and the lower northeastern region. However, the focus of this study is on the administrative center in the upper northeastern region in Ban Nontoon, Muang Kao Sub-district, Mung Kao District, Khon Kaen Province.

The researcher is interested in offering the guidelines for improving and developing the service quality in order to increase customer satisfaction and customer confidence with the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province.

2. Research Objectives

The objects of this study are to obtain the related data and analyze the environment of management, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, obstacles, customer behaviors and customer satisfaction with the service quality, as well as to suggest service quality improvement guidelines for the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province.

3. Methodology

This study has adopted descriptive social science research methodology to interpret, analyze and assess the data and used descriptive analytical method to present the research (Mario F. Triola, 1995).

The parameters of the population of this research were 141,403 customers who have used the services at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province, as per the following formulas.

$n = N/(1 + Ne^2)$, where: (1)
 n represents the number of size of the sample,
 N represents the number of members of the population,
 e represents the acceptable deviation ($e = 0.05$)
 The numbers were placed into the formula.

$$n = \frac{141,403}{1 + 141,403 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 398.88$$

From replacing the values in the formula as noted, a sample of 399 people was found. The researcher therefore set the sample group for the present study at 400 people, to guard against the loss of questionnaires. A questionnaire has been used to collect demographic data of customers at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province, including genders, age groups, educational levels, customer types, business types/careers and budgets/income levels. In addition, the questionnaire also contains multiple choice questions about the customers' purchasing behavior to obtain the information about their decision making processes, their satisfaction and the different levels of customer satisfaction with the service quality of the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province. A simple scale has been used to measure the customer satisfaction and opinions towards the service quality.

3.1 Framework

In obtaining general information about customers at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province, the researcher has included 7 inputs which are environmental analysis, genders, age groups, educational levels, customer types, business types/careers and budgets/income levels. The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire, based on the 6Ws and 1H from customer behavior theory, customer satisfaction theory, Likert scale theory, marketing mix theory and service quality theory. To validate the instrument, the researcher has employed an index of consistency and alpha scale reliability coefficient. Convenience sampling has been used to collect the data on customer satisfaction with the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province. The researcher has later offered the guidelines to improve the service quality.

3.2 Hypothesis

At the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center, customers of different genders, age groups, education levels, customer types, business types/careers and budgets/income levels share the same level of satisfaction with TT&T service quality.

3.3 Scope of the study, population and samples

The samples of this study are 400 customers who have used services at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province. Most of them are female, aged 25-40, with a bachelor degree. They are mostly individual customers in Muang District, Khon Kaen Province.

3.4 Research instruments and validation

This part of the questionnaire has adopted the Likert scale to measure customer satisfaction with the service quality.

For instrument validation, the research has had an expert who is the customer service center manager examine, criticize and revised the questionnaire content on April 2015. In addition, the researcher has used an index of consistency to determine whether the items in the scale measure the same construct.

3.5 Data collection

The data has been collected from 400 customers at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Muang District, Khon Kaen Province, during April and May 2015.

After the questionnaires are returned from the respondents, the researcher has reviewed the questionnaires and analyzed the data using a microcomputer. The researcher has also used SPSS for Windows Version 11.0 to analyze statistical data, including percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA.

3.6 Research conditions

The hypothesis testing was used to accept or reject the null hypothesis (H_0). The null hypothesis was accepted when the computed significant value was 0.05 or higher and the null hypothesis was rejected when the computed significant value was less than 0.05.

4. Results

4.1 Environmental Analysis

4.1.1 External environment

According to the PESTE analysis, politics has negative impacts on TT&T Public Company Limited. Besides being a competitor in the market, TOT Public Company Limited uses the state power to gain advantage over other parties in terms of capital expenditure and profit shares as it is an administrative agency. As a result, TT&T Public Company Limited and other competitors have been put at disadvantage. Regarding the economy, the overall economic expansion of Khon Kaen Province has significantly increased. To expand the customer base, TT&T Public Company Limited aims at business customers and government officers. Technology has both positive and negative impacts on TT&T Public Company Limited. The landline services have recently been replaced with voice services and information on mobile phones as nowadays



customers increasingly communicate via social media. In terms of physical evidence, devastating floods in Thailand have resulted in the company's damaged property in many provinces.

Considering the five forces model, the threats of new entrants which, in this case, are the 3 major service providers, including Advanced Info Service Public Company Limited, Total Access Community Public Company Limited and True Move Company Limited, have limited the competition in the market. The competitors of TT&T Public Company Limited are True Move Company Limited and TOT Public Company Limited. Both companies possess high quality service and effective business marketing which affect the operations of the companies. As for the bargaining power of customers, customers have significant bargaining power as they are able to compare the products and then choose the ones that offer them more benefits. In other words, the customers are more selective. The company plans to secure current customers and attract new customers in order to increase the market share. In terms of the threats of substitute products in telecommunication service provider business, rapid development in technology has led to mobile phone service and data transmission on the Internet. It is also important to pay attention to the bargaining power of suppliers as the increased bargaining power will affect the production costs.

4.1.2 Internal Environment

With regard to marketing practices, the target customers of TT&T Public Company Limited are business customers and government officers since the average income per number is higher than the average income from residences. Concerning the finance, the expansion of customer base uses new products to attract new customers, while the company also pays attention to current customers. In addition, the company offers the products that meet various customer needs. Regarding human resource management, a number of trainings and workshops are conducted for employees to enable them to effectively work in the current conditions and accurately follow the procedures.

According to the SWOT Analysis, the strength is its extensive network in Khon Kaen Province and the weakness is its inadequate number of service employees and service centers. In terms of opportunity, as there is an increase in the purchasing power of customers, new services and new systems should be introduced into the market since they will interest the customers and they are easy to market. The threats are direct and indirect competitors of the customer service center.

4.2 General information

According to the general information of customers at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province, most customers are female, aged 25-40, with a bachelor degree. Most of them are individual customers who work as private company officers with an average monthly income of 9,000-15,000 baht.

4.3 Customer behavior

In respect of customer behaviors at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province, most customers themselves are decision makers and they mostly use the bill payment service because the customer service center is near their residence/workplace. For most of them, the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon

Kaen Province is the only customer service center that they use. There is no specific day or month that they come to the customer service center, while the most convenient time for them is 8.00-10.00 a.m. Most customers receive the news and information about the customer service center from friends/acquaintances and they come to the customer service center more than one time.

4.4 Level of satisfaction with the service quality of TT&T customer service center

On the subject of the level of customer satisfaction with the service quality of the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province, the researcher has found that the overall satisfaction with the service is at the high level. The customers have found home Internet installation service are highly satisfied for its operations. In terms of the price, compared to other Internet service providers, the Internet service rates are found appropriate. Regarding the service channels, the customers can pay the landline bills by choosing to deduct money from their bank accounts. In addition, the services can be purchased from the sales and service staff and customers can ask for more information from the call centers. As for the promotion, there are promotional landline packages with additional free services, such as caller ID service and call waiting service. Concerning the service employees, the customers are satisfied as the staff are ingenious, knowledgeable, efficient and informative. Relating to the procedures, the customers are highly satisfied with the service provision based on queue. Considering the physical evidence, the employees are well dressed and the service center is clean and well organized and the customers are truly satisfied. With regard to the service quality, the customers are fully satisfied that the bill payment service is done correctly and all customers are treated with the same service standards.

4.5 Different levels of satisfaction and suggestions on the service quality

Regarding the level of customer satisfaction with the service quality at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province, both juristic person customers and individual customers of different genders, age groups, education levels, business types/careers, amounts of authorized capital and monthly incomes with various frequency of service use share the same level of satisfaction as there is a statistically significant difference at 0.05.

Considering the genders, the satisfaction of female customers is found at the highest level, while the satisfaction of male customers is at the high level. In terms of age groups, the satisfaction of customers who are 40-60 years old is at the high level, and the satisfaction of customers who are older than 60 years old is also at the high level. With regard to the education level, the satisfaction of customers with a bachelor degree and those with a diploma/high vocational certificate is at the high level. Due to the customer types, both juristic person customers and individual customers share the same level of satisfaction with the service quality. According to the business types/careers, the juristic person customers of different business types have the same satisfaction level. Concerning the work positions, the juristic person customers of different work positions possess the same satisfaction level. Referring to the amounts of authorized capital, the juristic person customers of different amounts of authorized capital have the same satisfaction level towards the service quality. Regarding the careers, the individual customers of different careers share the same level of satisfaction with the service quality.



The customers' suggestions on the service quality of the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province are provided in 8 areas. Concerning the service types, most customers would like to use the high speed Internet installation connecting to the landline. With respect to the price, most customers would like to use the landline bill payment service without paying the fee at the service counters. On the subject of distribution channels, most customers would like to have more service channels, such as computers that allow customers to check the service areas for landline installation. Referring to the promotion, most customers think that there should be a computer system for checking the bills. As for the employees, most customers believe that the employees should be able to communicate in various languages to be well prepared for the arrival of the ASEAN Economic Community. With respect to the procedures, most customers would like to have functional queue slips that clearly show the service order. Regarding the physical evidence, most customers think that there should be adequate parking spaces for customers. In terms of service quality, most customers would like to be offered product warranty and after sales service.

4.6 Guidelines for improving the service quality

4.6.1 STP Analysis

The market segmentation is based on geography of location. The TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province provides services for customers in Muang District, Khon Kaen Province, and customers from nearby districts. The target market includes residence customers, business customers and government officers in Muang District, Khon Kaen Province. In terms of product positioning, excellent service quality is required and the products must consistently meet customer needs.

4.6.2 TOWS Matrix

According to the TOWS Matrix, the management team has chosen to use 2 strategies to plan the projects which will be the development guidelines for the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province. The purposes of the S-T strategy are to attract customers and to advertise the customer service center and the project is called TT&T Super Sales Project. Another strategy is the W-O strategy which aims to decrease the service line steps and the 2 projects include Walk Rally for Teamwork Seminar and We are TT&T project.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The analyses of the environment of management, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and obstacles, customer behavior and the levels of customer satisfaction with the service quality have led to the suggestions and guidelines for improving the service quality in order to appropriately respond to the behavior, satisfaction and needs of customers at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province.

The satisfaction of customers who have used the service at the TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center in Khon Kaen Province is found at the high level due

to its high standard services and progressive improvement of services to increase customer satisfaction in 8 areas, including service types, prices, distribution channels, promotions, employees, procedures, physical evidence and service quality.

5.2 Discussion

In terms of products and services, there are landline service, call waiting and call holding services, 3G mobile services, international calling service, 007 international calling service and high speed Internet service. The satisfaction with prices and landline bill payment via cash service are found at the high level. Regarding the distribution channels, there are express service counters for government officers and state enterprise officers to secure to secure target customers and for customers with high purchasing power. Concerning the promotions, the advertisements are available through various media, such as television and the Internet. With the service employees, customers are satisfied with the employees' smart and neat uniforms and the employees' liveliness and friendliness respectively. The customer satisfaction with the procedures is found at the high level as the customers are provided with convenient and fast services. As for physical evidence, there are modern service systems and service queue systems. Considering the quality of Internet service, the connecting speed is high with a highly stable network.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations for TT&T Public Company Limited customer service center

To fulfill customer needs, there should be regular follow-ups and evaluations on the service, while the customer service center should propose the development projects that cannot be carried out on its own to the customer service quality and standard control division of TT&T Public Company Limited.

5.3.2 Recommendations for future studies

In the future, there should be studies on factors affecting the development of service quality from the viewpoint of employees as the results can also be used to further improve the quality of service. There should also be follow-ups and studies on customer service centers of competitors in order to compare the services and find solutions to better the service.

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