Emotion and Customer Service

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Quality Service Requires A Service Climate:

Fundamental Values and Assumptions that Guide Employees in How to Behave

Quality Service Requires A Service Structure:

A Structure of Roles and Resources That Allows Employees to Provide Quality Service
Service Never Ends

- Suppliers ➔ Employees ➔
- Employees ➔ Employees ➔
- Employees ➔ Customers
- Customers ➔ Customers

What is Service?

Ben Schneider (and Marketing)
- Intangible;
- Consumed while produced:
  Cannot be stored;
- Requires customer participation
Customer Service IS Emotion!

Sponsored Links

Customer Service
Contact Center for Dummies: See the benefits of superior contact!
www.avaya.co.uk/contact-center

Better Customer Service.
Give Frontline Staff The Tools They Need To Deliver ‘Superior Service.’
www.cdcrespond.com

Emotion at the Organizational Level

- Employees
- Customers
- Organization
What is an organization? (Rafaeli, 1996)

In Finance: A set of contracts

In Psychology:
- A set of people (employees, customers)
- A set of artifacts (logos, structures, queues, policies)
- A set of emotions

Organization of Customer Service

“An organization is a group of people (a group of groups …) working together (in some structured fashion) toward a common goal …”

Customer service organization:
.... Working together … to fill customer service needs …. and to create the right customer emotion …
"... Customer service ... Creates an experience"

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Organizational Emotions?

"I got a blank memo too. Management must have added another unwritten rule."

"Managing Knock Your Socks Off Service"

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Quality Service Requires A Pleasant Work Climate

“People who focus their aggression on the less powerful—poison the work environment and are detrimental to businesses. They have to go!”

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Sources of Organizational Emotion

• Physical set-up
  (“in Marketing: “Servicescapes”)
  (Elsewhere: Physical Design, Logos, Symbols, Employee Dress, Queues)

• Policies

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Disney: Service and Happiness

Experience 'The Happiest Place on Earth'

Starbucks: Service and “Cool”
Organization Physical Design Creates Emotion

Gilboa & Rafaeli, (2003); Wasserman, Rafaeli, & Kluger, (2000): More Harmonious and Organized Restaurants and Stores Create more Positive Emotions

Organization Policies Inspire Employees Emotion (and Behavior)

Organization Policies Can Ridicule Employee Emotion

“Hi! I'm Ted, your co-worker, and I'd like to think our friendship is more than contextual.”


Service is delivered through Relationships or through Encounters
Policies can Hurt Emotions!
Service Queues

Perceptions of Service Organizations are Saturated with Emotion
(Rafaeli and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2004)
Emotion Embedded in Perceptions of Organization

Emotion to Artifact ➔ Emotion to Organization

Customer: “I’m angry! What a dark and gloomy color. It’s so depressing. But it is typical. They’re obnoxious to their employees and passengers!”

Employee: I am furious. They pretend to be a good, warm, caring organization.”” But they are bad; they pollute the environment.”

Customer Emotions
Service is An Experience

- Time, Context evokes emotion
- Money evokes economic exchange

Context Effects

Emotion Mediates Reactions

![Diagram showing the relationship between E-Service Display, Customer Emotion, and Customer Reactions]

NOTE: Solid lines show the relationships between aesthetics and the mediator and dependent variables (DV); broken lines show the relationships between professionalism and the mediator and DV.

Starbucks: Service and Relaxation

![Image of Starbucks website]

“Please stay on the line. All our customer service rep’s are busy kidding around.”

Service = Waiting = Time = Emotion!

Service and Waiting

Multiple Queue

Single Queue

Number Queue
Customers Emote to Queues (Time!)!

Rafaeli, Baron & Haber (2002): Customers View Multiple Queues as Shorter but More Unfair!

Expectations Effects

Multiple Queues viewed as UNFAIR

Single Queues Evoke More Positive Feelings
Telephone Waiting is Really Bad!

Munichor & Rafaeli (2007):
Create a Sense of Progress in Customers

"...If you'd like to hear all of your options again, press 49. If you've forgotten why you called in the first place, press 50."

Mindless Emotion:
Reactions to Corporate Logos
Brands Sell! And Evoke Irrational Emotions and other Reactions!

Rafaeli, Sagi and Derfler (2008): Do You Trust These Women?
Higher Trust of Stranger With a Logo!
What Emotions do Customers Display?

“Greg and George are customers who call to complain about a bill problem.”
Greg acted ANGRY.
George acted CALM.

Who will be rewarded?

Customers: Anger is rewarded (though I don’t like this!)

Customer Responses to: “Who WILL BE rewarded?” ANGRY

Customer Responses to: “How WOULD YOU behave to be rewarded?” ANGRY
Employee self-concept: “I am not influenced by anger”

Responses to: “Who would YOU reward?”:
POLITE
Represent self-presentation and social desirability

Responses to: “Who WILL BE rewarded?”:
ANGRY
Represent social norms

Emotions at the Employee Level
Emotion of Customer Service: Employees

- **Employee Emotion:**
Reactions to the Work and the People

- **Employee Emotion Work**
Employees Follow Organization Requirements to Display the “Right” Emotions.

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How Do Service Employees Feel?

“If you’re not completely satisfied, your money will be cheerfully refunded as soon as we can find someone around here who’s cheerful.”
How Do Service Employees Feel?

- Service Jobs Typically have Poor Job Design (Identity, Autonomy, Feedback)
- High Burnout
- High Withdrawal
- Higher Withdrawal in “encounter” rather than “Relationship” service design

Most Severe Problems: Telephone Service

- Average Work Load: 100-150 interactions
- Can reach 250 per shift!
- Highly Scripted Work;
- Extreme Monitoring;
- Little autonomy;
Average Tenure in Call Centers -- 13 months  
Average Tenure in General -- 4.6 years !! (controlling for age and education)


Global Call Center Survey (Batt et al.; 2006)
Are workers' rights in the toilet?

British workers are too busy to step out to the toilet! Some have suffered a pay cut for visiting the lavatory during work time, a move which has prompted the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to launch a campaign, called Gotta Go, to force bosses to treat staff with greater respect. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/)

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http://www.hazards.org/toiletbreaks/index.htm

“Britain's bad bosses have a dirty secret. They don't think you deserve the right to choose when you need to go to the loo. … They work you so hard there's no time for breaks.

• A November 2002 poll of more than 1,000 staff found over half (54 per cent) of British workers are too busy to take toilet breaks.”

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Emotions Displayed by CSR’s? to CSR’s?

What do you believe you Should do when you are interacting with a XXX and you feel angry?

Are customers hostile to CSR’s?

Globalized Emotion Suppression Norms!
Do Employees Express what they Feel?

“Let’s have a show of hands. A motion has been made and seconded that it’s all right to cry.”

Employees may express emotions non-verbally
Organization Policies and Employee Emotions Toward Customers

“Please stay on the line. All our customer service rep’s are busy kidding around.”

Gap between employee and customer needs.

Needs to be resolved by organization
I have no chance to be mad or sad all day because I work in retail and I am forced to smile so that I give my customers good customer service. I sometimes feel so crazy and out of mind because I will be sad or depressed and I will be smiling! It is because I have trained myself to not let my emotions get to me even though I have a sad or angry heart.

**Important Developments in the Study of Emotion of Customer Service Employees**

**Emotion Contagion in Service (Pugh, 2001):**

Customers as a source of influence over employees

(Customer Emotion as a Source of Influence over Employees: More in Keynote Address)
Important Developments in the Study of Emotion of Customer Service Employees

**Types of Emotion Labor:**

- *Surface acting* (managing facial expressions) vs.
- *Deep acting* (managing inner feelings)

- Surface acting ➔ Stress, quality service
  (Grandey, 2002, 2003)

**Employees as Actors**

**Surface Acting**

- Grows with greater number of interactions
- Grows in shorter interactions (encounters)
- Includes showing **required** emotion and
  NOT showing felt emotion
Deep Acting

**Deep Change**
- Employees come to **feel** required emotion
  - Presumed better for customer
  - Presumed better for employee
  - Difficult to develop given job structure!
  - Is it really valued??

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The Loneliness of a Service Employee

- Frequent Interaction with Customers means little opportunity for social support.
- Employees CANNOT find social support in customers.
  - Little structure for peer support.
  - A Population with High Social Needs!
Effects of Loneliness

Known in psychology to …
- Hamper job satisfaction
- Create Stress
- Create Withdrawal
- Hamper Cognitive Abilities

Summary
Service is Saturated with Emotion

- **Organizational Level:**
  Physical design, policies and practices
- **Customer Level:**
  Time and Brand Reactions and Expectations
- **Employee Level**
  Emotional Labor Poorly Rewarded and Creates Severe Emotional Demands
"Are there any questions?"