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UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

QUALITY MANAGEMENT (ADM 510)

CASE STUDY 1:

**QUALITY IN PRACTICE: WAITING TIME AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT FLORIDA
POWER AND LIGHT**

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INTRODUCTION

Expected waiting time can be defined as how long customers expect to wait based on their previous experience, number of customers in the service, critically time to the customer and other distractions, intended or otherwise (Davis & Vollmann, 1990). Meanwhile perceived waiting time is how long customers perceived they had waited depending on the ambience of waiting area provided by the firm, length of the lines and many more (Tom & Lucey, Davis & Heineke, 1998). It looks nothing but waiting time, can effect level of customer satisfaction. It can defined as core element in customer service (Oliva, Oliver and MacMillan, 1992) and occupies a central position in marketing thought and practice, major outcome of marketing activity and serves to link processes culminating in purchase and consumption with post-purchase phenomena such as attitude change, repeat purchase and brand loyalty (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982).

Florida Power & Light Company is an energy company in the United States that produced and sold the retail electricity. It serves more than 5 million customer accounts or can estimated 10 million and above people across the state of Florida. It means that they need to serve more than millions of customer and it can cause various type of satisfaction or delayed services also can be occur anytime and anyone. Every customer might be in 'waiting time' that they need to make a request for an action or services. But during this situation, there have two types of waiting time which is expected waiting time and perceived waiting time. That why Florida Power and Light that have 3.4 million customer accounts that they need to take care and fulfill their various level of satisfaction, need to take serious of this small problem but will greatly affect their company and come out with the best solution to this problem.

The issue in this article is the company need to find out either their research to provide the estimate time to the customers during the waiting session can achieve their company needs and improve their customer satisfaction or not. Based on the company planning in providing the questions to the customers, it shows that the determination the company to get the results. They can get the duration of their customers willing to wait during the session. This is the key point of the reason this interview launched by the company. Once they have figure on the duration, they can settle down the other things afterward. Their customer have their own perspectives. So they can get various kind of impact of wait time announcement by the customers. In this way, the company will be more alert to make any changes in services because they know how their customers thinking based on this interview session. Besides, from this interview session that they will make to their customers will figure out the possible points that can make the customers feel uncomfortable or dissatisfy for. If they make this kind of changes, the customers will not satisfy with those changes. So this action is like a valuable 'mind-map' to the company regarding on how to satisfy their customers or the guidelines so they just can refer this note before take other action in future.

Key Issues for Discussion

1. Have one of your friends time you while you wait for varying amounts of time between 30 seconds and 3 minutes. Try not to count the seconds! Estimate the amount of time you waited. Did you find that your actual waiting times were longer or shorter than your estimates? What does this experiment mean for organizations that are trying to set service standards?

If we need to wait friends between 30 seconds and 3 minutes, absolutely 30 seconds is shorter than 3 minutes because waiting is like we do not do anything for such a period and it can makes us bored. But if we do have something to make or play during waiting time, it is surely make us forget about the time. Maybe if our friends set 'waiting time', we will not realize that time is passing by because we have set time in our mind. As stated by Gable and Poole (2012), it says that high in approach motivation make us feel as though time is passing quickly because they narrow our memory and attention processes, helping us to shut out irrelevant thoughts and feelings. This statement strongly agreed that we can wait longer if we have given estimated waiting time because it move away our unrelated thoughts that can cause bored or anger. For example, everyone surely have experience go to bank, post office or hospital. Those places require us to queue up and take a number to ensure our turn. We can calmly wait for our turn even the period is quite longer but we have set in our mind about our turn so it make us to not hardly think when our turn will come out. Time feels like it will be going more slowly if we are bored because there are none of things that can appeal our mental states. So one of ways to speed time up is think differently about what we are doing. It can distract our attention to feel bored while waiting. For example, we need to wait our friends that go to buy their stuffs. So during the waiting, we can think about what we do tomorrow, or we can revise our list of works in daily life. It can help us a lot to not feel bored. Distract minds, or we will bored.

Based on those statements, we examine this waiting time in our daily life. We create two situations which is situation A have estimated waiting time and situation B do not have estimated waiting time. During situation A, we set the waiting time and make other activities, it feels much shorter than the actual time. Otherwise situation B, we feel that time is becoming longer than actual waiting time and it make us feels uncomfortable to wait any longer than that. We are too concentrate focus about time than try to do other things like situation A.

This experiment can give quite solid conclusion that people need to get the information in details so that there is no need to feel like we are waiting for something. Majority of people like the things that are straight to the point without need to add unnecessary things. The organizations can take note about this like change their procedures to tell their customer to wait for about 3 or 4 minutes for example. This small changes can get extra marks from customers because of their satisfaction towards the service. There is no one like to wait. If the organization can change this kind of procedure, it will greatly affect their organization in terms of service, financial and marketing. It is because customer that satisfy with our services, they will spread our good service to the others and we can call it as unpaid promotion. This kind of promotion is actually the best strategy to gain new customers because most of us will believe their family or friends suggest to them. They can ensure the quality of services because their own family or friends already go through the organization. Tell the customer about estimated waiting time can make that they can feel that they are truly our customers and will come again next time.

2. What key lessons can be learned by other organizations from FPL's experience?

Many lessons can be learned by other organizations from FPL's experience such as the company must take quick action in any problem that customer face. Customers are a priority in an organization and customers also bring benefits to an organization. Customer satisfaction needs to be attention so we can find out where an organization's level. No matter the small or big customer problem, FPL's cares about its customer problems. Therefore, the organizations can emulate FPL's that take quick action in resolving customer problems. When we waste their time, we lose their confidence and, sooner or later, their custom (Jarvis, M, 2016). As the server, this kind of service are like a small gift to show that we appreciate their patience in waiting even it takes few times of them.

The others lessons can be learned are FPL's divide the call into several categories avoid long customer waiting times. They make a several categories because it is important to reduce the waiting time customers to talk to customer service. FPL's take very good steps by dividing calls into different categories to increase customer waiting time satisfaction. So customers do not have to wait in the wrong broad categories to solve their problems. Others organization can refer FPL's strategy to increase the customer satisfaction on waiting time.

Beside that the FPL's also use the new system that called 'Smartqueue'. The smartqueue are the system can update the number of callers waiting before customer can talk to the customer service. In Malaysia, Astro companies apply the same system FPL's used. The system can make customer feel better to waiting the calling. The system will also give customers space to think about what they want to convey to customer service. It's also can increase the customer satisfaction on the waiting time to the company.

CONCLUSION

In the conclusion, customer satisfaction and waiting time are two things that need to be consider in the organization. This is because customer satisfaction affects the profit fluctuations of an organization. Customer satisfaction plays an important role in your business. Not just key indicators for measuring customer loyalty, identifying dissatisfied customers, reducing change and increasing revenue, this is also a key point of differentiation that helps you attract new customers in a competitive business environment. An organization must be sensitive to every complaint and problem faced by customers to increase customer satisfaction with the organization's services. Efficiency in service needs to be improved because it can reduce complaints from customers. If an organization receives many complaints from customers it symbolizes the lack of an organization services and will give impact to the company.

We as the customers for another company or brand also do not like to wait for a long time unless we already given the estimate waiting time like this case. Every customers have their own patience limit but if the company able to tackle the customers and able make them feel okay with the waiting, it will be such a great achievements to them. The customers will feel okay afterwards due to great service that the company give to them. They feel appreciated and will spread to their friends on how comfortable they are with the company' services.

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