

The Impact of Internal Marketing on Customer Service Employees: The Case of Mobile Telecom Network, (MTN) Ghana Limited

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Abstract

This research uses a grounded theory approach at identifying the variables affecting the motivation of customer service employees of MTN, Ghana. The research questions ask whether there is a variation in the motivational factors based on gender and age. And also whether the variables affecting the motivation of part-time employees differ from that of full-time employees? The literature review, apart from summarizing the modern approaches to motivation theories, shows that these research questions are also important in understanding the recruitment and selection procedures of MTN. Data was triangulated from three sources: questionnaires, one-to-one interviews and a past conducted survey from MTN. The findings from these data showed that men wanted growth in terms of job promotion. Having a clear progression plan was important to them. Women and part time employees seemed to be intrinsically motivated and time flexibility was an important concern to them. No clear differences were found across the employees of different ages. And finally, it was concluded that MTN has to rethink on how it uses its communication channels and make sure that the employees feel they are a part of the organization. This suggestion becomes especially important in the narrow context of the call centre work as explained in this paper. Based on these findings, this study concludes that consumer behaviour is driven by a complex set of factors so it cannot be simply predicted on the basis of popular attitudes amongst consumers, and sets out some implications of these findings for marketers.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Customer service, Customer satisfaction, Customer retention.

Introduction

The gradual integration of the world's markets through the extensive intrusion of information and communication technology has been hailed the world over to be the best developments of this age. However, this new world order has brought on its trail competition, which has been threatening the survival of businesses, employment, capital formulation and economic stability. To gain competitive advantage in this competitively globalized market demands a greater effort at customer acquisition, retention and long-lasting relationships through efficient customer service. Thus, to enhance the performance of the customer service employees' demands the identification of variables that motivates them. This growing need to develop and improve the link between the firm and its external customers makes up the case for internal marketing (the motivational aspect) - a management philosophy of treating employees as customers. This concept is not to be overlooked if a higher market share and growth is to be achieved through the use of customer service.

Companies were chastised by Kotler (2000) not to only ask "How can we reach our customers? But also how can we find ways to let our customers reach us?" In this light,

the effectiveness and efficiency of customer service employees' holds the key. The customer service function is viewed as the key to unlock the door of corporate success. Most service firms are in the buyer market, where the customer has a vast range of alternatives to choose from and would only remain loyal if he is accorded attention, respect and recognition.

Internal marketing to Kotler (2006) requires that everyone in the organization accepts the concepts and goals of marketing and engage in choosing, providing, and communicating customer value. He points out the fact that everything the service provider does for its external customers is first perceived and evaluated by its own personnel.

The increasing importance of internal marketing as a means of delivering an effective customer service is derived from the fact that a firm's employees are its internal customers among which are the customer service employees (Parasuraman, 1993). Customer service employees' interaction with the external customers must make a customer satisfied in order to build a loyal customer base which could be catapulted into a long lasting relationship. This relationship, if nurtured, would

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result in expansion and growth of the company. Kotler (2006) summarized this as “only when all employees realize that their jobs are to create, serve, and satisfy customers does the company become an effective marketer”

It is imperative to consider internal marketing seriously as the best way to rendering efficient customer service. From the above exposition, it is necessary to market the core competencies or commodities to the internal market-employees so as to have every employee to be a well-informed staff that can link up with the external customer effectively

Internal marketing is a two-type management process, attitude management and communications management. This work is set out to look at the attitude management. That is, attitude of employees and their motivation for customer-consciousness and service-mindedness (Gronroos, 2007 p. 387).

Internal marketing in this context refers to the motivational factors that drive the customer service of any firm to be competitively effective and efficient in today's global village. The new interest in internal marketing among researchers has revitalized the concept from a relationship-oriented and network organization-based perspective which Gronroos (2007) believed has brought new aspects to the management of human resources: ‘a need to view individuals on the internal markets as a relationship partners and a need to create internal marketing processes that do not only include the personnel of one organization but reach out to people in relationship with other organizations in the network’.

The concept of internal marketing thus operates as a holistic management process to integrate multiple functions of the firm in two ways. First, it ensures that employees at all levels in the firm (including management) understand and experience the business and its various activities, campaigns and processes in the context of an environment that supports customer consciousness. Second, it ensures that all employees are prepared and motivated to act in a service-oriented manner (Gronroos, 2007 pp. 386). The premise of internal marketing is that internal relationships between the organization and its employee groups must operate effectively before the firm can be successful in achieving its goals regarding its external markets.

In this context internal marketing (identification of motivational factors) has been posited as one of the major determinants of increased external market orientation (Piercy 1995) and business performance (Heskett et al 1994). As such, there is a need to examine the impact of internal marketing on customer service employees.

The question ‘how individuals relate to the group and organisations in which they are participants’ lies at the heart of our understanding of human relations within organisations (Brown 2001, p.114 cited in Whittle, 2005 p. 1302). Understanding motivation is important at three levels. First for management, who clearly needs to know and understand what motivates people. From the managerial perspective, it is hoped that employees will act in the best interests of the organization not because they are coerced, threatened or rewarded, but rather because they are motivated by a strong identification with company goals and values (Kunda 1992; Willmott 1993, cited in Whittle 2005). Second, employees need to think through what expectations they have of work and whether they are happy with their lot. Third, for

personnel and development professionals, an understanding of motivation is essential in order to comprehend fully the effects of variations in other factors, leadership style, job redesign and salary structure, as they relate to performance and satisfaction (Greenberg and Baron, 1995; Steers and Porter, 1991).

It needs to be stated that motivation may change with changes in personnel, social, economic and other factors as shown by a number of survey results and it may not be the same for every sub-group (Wiley, 1997). More importantly, management must understand what motivates employees within the context of the role they perform (Kovach, 1987) given the restricted nature of most work settings (Wegge et al., 2006).

The consumer, it has been established is the king at the marketplace and should be treated as such to ensure business success. This is necessary because human as the consumer is, cannot be easily predicted. Literature in this area of attitude and behavior produced strong evidence that there is pronounced incongruence between consumer attitudes and consumer behaviour. Wong et al. refer to this as an “attitude-behaviour gap” or a “words-deeds inconsistency” (Wong et al. 1996: 264 cited in Wegge et al., 2006). This assertion has exacerbated the burden on customer service employees, often termed the front desk, which drives and positions a firm firmly in the minds of the consumer.

The customer service employees of the leading cellular phone operator in Ghana, MTN who were highly commended for the corporate success of Areeba in 2006 has come under much media criticism lately on the Ghanaian liberalized airwaves for their perceived pathetic and appalling customer service delivery (Source: myjoyonline.com, November 12, 2007).

The intense competition in the telecommunication industry has brought intense pressure on the customer service performance as one main area of competitive advantage (Parasuraman et al, 1985). With the frequent challenges of the performance of the service in terms network failures in Ghana, it is believed the only way to maintain the customer base is through effective customer service. Thus, internal marketing has assumed an important role in ensuring the survival of any service based organization through institutionalization of effective motivational schemes.

Customer service is generally viewed to be problematic from a marketing management and quality management perspective (Christopher et al. 1991). It is therefore, paramount to consider the view that motivational aspect of internal marketing is needed by the customer service employees to function effectively.

Research Questions

The research questions are derived from the Hilltrop (1999) suggestions that he offers in his article ‘How can Organisations Attract and Keep Talent?’

- How varied are motivational factors of MTN’ internal marketing based on gender and age?
- What are MTN’s part-time employees looking for in terms of the duration of their career/job?
- Do all employees feel that they have less growth opportunities?

Literature Review

Internal marketing has become an important aspect of marketing in service firms due purely to the ever present competition in the services sector which is the leading

sector of the world's greatest economies today. This situation has positioned the customer service as the engine of the service firms.

The attitude management aspect of internal marketing is purely dependent on the motivational aspects of employees. Researchers utilizing service blueprint and internal marketing schematics have concluded that satisfied internal customers are more likely to achieve successful exchanges with both internal and external customers (Lings 1999; Lings and Brooks 1998). When the organization fosters a satisfied workforce through internal marketing, the conditions should lead to greater service-type behaviours between entire work groups.

The most prominent contributions in this area of study can be seen in the analysis of the service triangle, and the SERVQUAL and gap model which are geared towards improving services. The service triangle according to Zeithaml suggests that there are three types of marketing that must be successfully carried out for a service organization to succeed. To him, all of these relate to making and keeping promises to customers. The triangle consists of external marketing efforts on the right side; interactive marketing at the bottom and the left side is internal marketing which enables employees to keep promises that have been made to the customers.

The Service Triangle, SERVQUAL, and the Gap Model's Linkage of Customer Service and Internal Marketing

The concept of internal marketing has been discussed in the academic literature for over two decades (Piercy and Morgan 1990, 1991). Surprisingly there is still no clear consensus as to the nature of its construct and what its implementation entails. As a result there is no empirical evidence linking internal marketing implementation with customer service outcomes, despite the strength of the conceptual arguments in support of the benefits of internal marketing. There is however, increasing evidence on the positive impact of customer service on organisational performance (Rafiq and Ahmed 1993; Varey 1995).

Internal marketing refers to the activities the firm must carry out to train, motivate, and reward its employees. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) believed that unless service employees are able and willing to deliver on the promises made, the firm will not be successful in keeping its promises and the services marketing triangle will collapse. This contribution of Zeithaml suggests the vital role that customer service plays in fulfilling the promises of their firms in order to maintain the service delivery satisfactory if not a perfection. This goes down with Gronroos (2007) who opined that the many people representing the firm influence the customer perception of quality and value creation in various service processes. These people are believed to be involved in marketing to the extent that Gummesson (1999) referred to these customer contact service employees as part-time marketers.

To ensure that the customer service stay focus and deliver they must have the best of knowledge about the service. To promote good service knowledge, attention must be paid to attitudes, that is, changing negative or attitudes that are indifferent by improving upon employees' knowledge which are according to Gronroos (2007) intertwined. Internal marketing activities involves the training of employees on all levels from top management through to contact personnel in

understanding their role in the total relationship with customers and each and everyone's role and tasks in maintaining and enhancing this relationship.

Internal marketing is based on the assumption that employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction are intrinsically linked which has led Lings and Greenley (2005) to suggest encouraging employees, respecting them and acknowledging the good performances, correcting them, and advising them for the challenges ahead in a socially conducive manner.

In his research Ballantyne D (in Lovelock and Gummesson, 2004) viewed internal marketing as a knowledge renewal concept where groups of customer contact employees have accumulated knowledge about customers' behaviour and preferences as well as about how and with what means to best serve customers and create a good service quality perception.

In the area of empowerment, Bowen and Lawyer (1992) claimed empowering employees means providing them with information about the performance of the organization, rewarding them based on the organization's performance, creating a knowledge base that makes it possible for employees do understand and contribute to the performance of the organization, and giving employees the power to make decisions that influence organizational directions and performance.

Internal marketing according to Lings (2002) and Keller (2002) is the same as to treat employees' as internal customers. Internal marketing facilitate employees to be more customer oriented and service centered (Donaldson and O'Toole, 2002). The scholars regarded internal marketing as quasi human resource management (Joseph, 1996; George and Grönroos, 1989) that seems to manage human resource in the perspective of marketing (Bansal et al., 2001).

Base on this intricate issue of service quality, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) developed the "Gap Model" of perceived service quality. In this model has five distinct identified gaps. The first gap covers areas like marketing research orientation, upward communication and the levels of management within the organisation simply referred to as consumer expectation – management perception gap.

The second gap concerns with management perception – service quality specification gap which deals with management commitment to service quality, goal setting and standardization of tasks as well as the perception of feasibility. The third, service quality specifications – service delivery gap covers broad areas that obviously concern customer service employees. These are teamwork, employee-job-fit, technology-job-fit, perception control, supervisory control systems, and role conflict and role ambiguity. The fourth identified gap, service delivery – external communication gap results from the horizontal communication channels within the firm and the propensity to overpromise customers.

The above gaps converged to form the fifth, expected service – experience service which is purely a matter of service quality (Zeithaml et al, 1988. P. 46). These expositions showcase how service quality depends on a gamut of factors, not just the end result. It is in this light that this work sought to delve deeper into what excites the customer service employees of MTN to deliver value and to fulfil the promises made to their external customers.

Another construct to solve the myth surrounding the service delivery and expectations is the SERVQUAL

model. SERVQUAL model was originally measured on ten aspects of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding or knowing the customer and tangibles. This model just as the fifth gap in the gap model helps in the attempt to measure the gap between customer expectations and experience. However, by the early nineties the authors had refined the model to the useful acronym RATER: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness (Parasuraman et al.'s 1985)

SERVQUAL has its detractors and is considered overly complex, subjective and statistically unreliable. The simplified RATER model however is a simple and useful model for qualitatively exploring and assessing customers' service experiences and has been used widely by service delivery organizations. It is an efficient model in helping an organization shape up its efforts in bridging the gap between perceived and expected service. This is the situation with MTN's customer service employees who are constantly at the receiving end of a flop in service quality or failure to fulfil the promises to the external customers. In all these situations these service personnel are expected to rise up, to cushion the service quality gap, fully prepared and motivated. Maslow (1954) sought to explain why people are driven by particular needs at particular times. His answer is that human needs are arranged in a hierarchy, from the most pressing to the least pressing. In order of importance, they are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. With the increase in the number of knowledge workers, employees today would most likely be inclined to develop and exploit their own potential unconditionally (Kalra, 1997). Base on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Tampoe (1993) found that the biggest motivational factor for knowledge workers is "personal growth" followed by "operational autonomy" and then by "task achievement". Among the four major motivators, money was the least motivational factor.

Motivational Theoretical Dimensions

Research on motivation is concern basically with the question, "what creates human action" (Franken 1994, cited by Ahl 2006, p. 387). Motivation has been defined as the set of processes that arouse, direct and maintain human behaviour towards attaining a goal (Greenberg and baron 1995). This definition along with all the other definitions provided by social scientists like Atkinson (1994), and Campbell and Pritchard (1976) (all cited by Steers and Porter, 1991) have three common elements which should be primarily concerned with. These are:

- What energizes human behaviour?
 - What directs or channel such behaviour?
 - How this behaviour is maintained or sustained?
- (Steers and Porters 1991, p.6)

The above three distinct areas of concern although very core to research works on motivation, hold firm only on certain basic assumptions. The three basic assumptions that guide contemporary research on human motivation are as follows:

- Motivation is inferred from a systematic analysis of how personal, task and environmental characteristics influence behaviour and job performance.
- As stated in the introduction, motivation is not a fixed trait. It refers to a dynamic internal state resulting from the influence of personal and

situational factors. As such, motivation may change with changes in personal, social or other factors.

- Motivation affects behaviour, rather than performance (Nicholson 1995, p. 330-1). Initiatives designed to enhance job performance by increasing employee motivation may not be successful if there is a weak link between job performance and an employee's efforts. (Wiley 1997, p. 263).

As implied, theories and their associated constructs can be organized in terms of their conceptual proximity to action. Theories of distal constructs, such as achievement motivation and expectancy-value, stress the impact of non-cognitive individual differences on choice. Other distal perspectives, such as cognitive evaluation theory and organization justice theories, emphasize the influence of activation particular motives, such as challenge and injustice. These constructs are termed distal as the impact of these constructs on behaviour and performance is often indirect (Kanfer 1992, p. 3). For example, personality determinants of action, may exert a regular influence on goal choice, and thereby indirectly affect long-term patterns of behaviour across situations.

Proximal constructs theories focus on motivational constructs at the level of purposive action. Analyses of motivational processes in these theories tend to begin with the individual's objective. Such theories concentrate on the processes and variable that affects the goal-behaviour/performance relation. Social-learning/Social cognitive theories, self-regulation models and goal-setting approaches represent several of the more well-known proximal theories (Kanfer 1992, p. 4). The distinction between distal and proximal constructs and theories is based upon the call for differentiation of the motivational processes underlying choice and violation (example, see Ajzen 1985; Heckhausen and Kuhl 1984 (Kuhl 1982, 1984; Kuhl and Beckmann 1985; Gollwitzer, 1990).

The modern approaches to motivation had been organized into three related clusters (Kanfer 1992 cited by Wiley 1997) as follows:

- Goal/self-regulation perspectives;
- Cognitive choice/decision approaches, and
- Personality-based views. (Wiley 1997, p. 264).

Goal/self-regulation frameworks of work motivation emphasize the factors that influence goal striving which focuses on the relationship between goals and work behaviour (Locke and Latham 1990). The idea is that goal setting produces high performance. The basic premise of goal setting theory is that an employee's conscious intentions (goals) are primary determinants of task related motivation since goals direct their thoughts and actions (Locke et al. 1988). Results of goal/self-regulation research indicate two critical preconditions of a positive goal-performance relationship: acceptance of the goal assignment and provisions for performance feedback.

More recently, cybernetic control (Stacey 2003), resource allocation (Kanfer and Ackerman 1989), and social cognitive theories (e.g. Bandura 1986) have been used to examine more closely how particular attributes of a goal, a person and a situation influence goal striving and performance (Nicholson 1995, p. 334). These findings suggest that task demands, self-efficacy, goal commitment, and task orientation are important

determinants of the effectiveness of goal setting methods (Nicholson 1995, p. 334; Wiley 1997, p. 264).

Cognitive choice/decision approaches of work motivation emphasize two determinants of choice and action: expectations; and subjective valuations of the consequences associated with each alternative. These expectancy value (EV) theories are intended to predict an individual's choices or decisions. More integrative frameworks have been developed. They incorporate the classic assumptions of EV theories in a broader framework of decision making that includes individual differences in personality and other motivational processes, including self-regulation (Nicholson 1995, p. 332; Wiley 1997, p. 264).

Personality-based views emphasize the influence of enduring personal characteristics they affect goal choice and striving. One type of personality-based work motivation perspective concerns models based on broad theories of personality, such as Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Workplace behaviour is posited to be determined a person's current need state in certain universal need categories. A second type of perspective considers the influence of a small set of psychological motives behaviour and performance. This perspective focuses on the role of individual differences in the strength of achievement motives (e.g. Clayton Alderfer's ERG theory, discussed below). Individuals with a high need for achievement are more likely to want and/or select challenging tasks. Other motive theories emphasized the conditions that arouse the motive and its influence on behaviour. For instance, in the Equity Theory –primarily from J. Stacey Adams' work - the arousal of the justice motive occur when an employee perceives an imbalance in his/her inputs and outcomes relative to others' (Bowditch and Buono 1997, p. 89 and 103, cited by Nicholson 1995, p. 333; Wiley 1997, p. 264)

While these personality-based theories do not necessarily predict motivation, they can provide a basic understanding of what energizes (motivates) individuals. The main strength of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is the identification of individual needs for the purpose of motivating behaviour. By appealing to an employee's unfulfilled needs, managers may influence performance. Alderfer's ERG Theory is one attempt to modify Maslow's hierarchy by reducing the number of need categories. Alderfer found only three levels of need (Wiley 1997, p. 265):

- existence or survival (E); relatedness (R),
- dealing with social interaction and the external facets of esteem (recognition and status from others); and
- growth (G), focusing on the desire to achieve and develop a person's potential and the internal facets of ego fulfilment (success and autonomy).

David McClelland's Socially Acquired Needs Theory proposes that people are influenced by a need for achievement, power, or affiliation and that the strength of that particular need will vary according to the situation. Studies have found that employees with a high need for achievement will set higher goals than will those with lower achievement needs (Wiley 1997, p. 265). Another research-based theory is Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory. Herzberg's research suggested that motivation is composed of two largely unrelated dimensions:

- 1) Job-related factors which can prevent dissatisfaction, but do not promote employees' growth and development (hygiene); and

- 2) Job-related factors that encourage growth (motivators).

Even though there has been some support for Herzberg's thesis, most empirical studies refute predictions based on this theory. Needs for salary, recognition and responsibility, for example, have been shown to operate both as motivators and as hygiene factors (Maidani 1991). In general, the theories mentioned here continue to provide the foundation for a significant amount of organization and management development and training, including work redesign and career development (Wiley 1997, p. 265).

Motivational Factor Variances Based on Sex, Age, and Part/Full Timers

A research conducted on a group of Australian women results show that nearly two-thirds of women working full time would prefer to work part time but did not reduce their hours because part-time employment, as perceived by both full-time and part-time women, was associated with fewer promotion opportunities and perceptions of being less committed. Some of the women emphasized the value of flexibility which included variable start and finish times, being able to work from home and being able to change days when necessary (McDonald et al. 2006, p. 481). Measures such as flexible employment and parental and maternity leave which facilitate career continuity are important. They would be expected to have an impact on the accumulation of women's human capital and wages as well as incentives to acquire skills before and after labour market entry (Joshi et al. 2007, p. 53).

Using data on women working part-time and full-time in different level occupations in the British Household Panel Survey, a paper by Tracey Warren reveals a less positive picture of their 'life balancing' than is portrayed in much work-family literature as she examines the financial situations and the leisure lives of female part-timers in lower level jobs. They emerged as the least financially secure employees and less satisfied with their social lives too. She concludes by saying that to assess all the benefits and disadvantages associated with working part-time and with other work-life balancing strategies, it is important to examine how all life domains with each other since the work-life system is multi-dimensional (Warren, 2004).

It must be remembered, however, that the level of achievement that is attained at any age is much more likely to be a question of interest and incentive than of capacity (1942, p. 65 as cited by Kanfer and Ackerman 2004, p. 443). In her article titled 'What motivates employees according to over 40 years of motivation surveys', Carolyn Wiley explores past and present attitudes of employees concerning work-related motivational factors. She compares the results of four motivation surveys conducted in 1946, 1980, 1986 and 1992. During 1992 approximately 550 surveys were administered to persons employed in industries such as services, manufacturing, utilities, and health care and government agencies. The workers overwhelmingly selected "good wages" as the top motivator. Although, "good wages" seem to be purely extrinsic, they do communicate what the company values and affect employees' emotional and familial wellbeing (Wiley 1997, p. 267).

TABLE 1
Comparisons of employee responses in 1946, 1986 and 1992

Factors	1946	1980	1986	1992
Full appreciation of work done	1	2	2	2
Feeling of 'being in on things'	2	3	3	9
Sympathetic help with personal problems	3	9	10	10
Job security	4	4	4	3
Good wages	5	5	5	1
Interesting work	6	1	1	5
Promotion and growth in the organization	7	6	6	4
Personal or company loyalty to employees	8	8	8	6
	9	7	7	7

Source: (Wiley 1997, p. 268)

Table 1 shows the 1992 survey results according to subgroups reporting higher positive significant preferences for each job factor. Since the difference

between age group was not significant, it was concluded that good pay is an important motivator regardless of age (Wiley 1997, p. 273).

TABLE 2
Table of job factor comparisons

Factors	Employment status	Gender	Age
Full appreciation of work done			
Feeling of 'being in on things'		Women	
Sympathetic help with personal problems			
Job security			
Good wages			
Interesting work	Part-timers	Men	
Promotion and growth in the organization			
Personal or company loyalty to employees	Full-timers		
Good working conditions	Part-timers	Women	
Tactful discipline			

Source: (Wiley 1997, p. 270)

Motivation in the Work Environment

The question is whether it would be possible to increase the motivating potential of work (e.g., task variety, task significance, task completeness) given the strongly restricted nature of the work setting in which the basic nature of the task itself cannot be changed. Previous research has shown that call centre agents responsible for outbound calls report less time pressure, more autonomy, and lower strain than agents working only inbound (e.g., Isic et al. 1999). Moreover, it can be expected that employees also value getting access to training and development programs (Shah and Sandi 2003; Wegge 2006, p. 68). Nevertheless, Wegge et al. (2006) were able

to replicate in two studies that strong relationships exist between organizations identification and several indicators of work motivation and wellbeing.

• So, what are the variables being considered?

If motivation is concerned with these factors which energize, direct and sustain human behaviour, then we need to look at three set of variables which constitute work situation. The conceptual model put forth by Porter and Miles (1974) proposes that these motivationally relevant factors must be viewed within a systems framework and we have to concern ourselves with inter-relationships and interactive effects among the various factors (Steers and Porters 1991).

Table 3
Conceptual model put forth by Porter and Miles

Individual Characteristics	Job Characteristics	Work Environment Characteristics
1. Interests	1. Types of intrinsic awards	1. Immediate work environment
		Peers
2. Attitudes	2. Degree of autonomy	Supervisors
Towards self		
Towards job	3. Amount of direct performance	2. Organizational actions
Towards aspect of the work situation		Reward practices
	4. Feedback	System wide rewards
3. Needs		Individual rewards
Security	5. Degree of variety in tasks	Organizational climate
Social		
Achievement		

Source: (Porter and Miles 1984 cited by Steers and Porter 1991, p. 20)

The various theoretical approaches towards understanding motivation tell us that though theorists themselves have taken different approaches to the subject; the clear message is that motivation is a complex process. It would be over simplistic to say that everybody will be motivated by money (winield et al. 2004, p. 118). Most of this study's concerns/questions will also stem from the Hiltrap (1999) suggestions which he offers in his article "How Can Organisations Attract and Keep Talent?" (Hiltrop 1999, p. 424 426):

1. Start with the recognition that psychological contract is changing.

Most organizations will have to re-examine their career structures and look for other sources of 'security' to avoid excessive turnover and retain global talent (Mirvis and Hall 1994, cited by Hiltrap 1999, p. 424). In companies confronted with the risk of take-over, downsizing and even closure, a permanent redundancy policy - where employees can see at any time what they would be offered to leave may be necessary to reduce the cost of voluntary turnover.

2. Make the ability to attract and retain talent a top management priority.

The result of a study by Mckinsey (Chambers et al. 1998) show that only 23 per cent of some 6000 executives surveyed agreed that their companies attract highly talented people, and just 10 per cent said they retain almost all their high performers. More alarmingly, only 16 per cent think their company knows who the high performers are. And only 3 per cent said their company develops people effectively and moves low performers out quickly (Chambers et al. 1998 cited by Hiltrop 1999, p. 424).

3. Create policies and practices that enhance the firm's attractiveness in the labour market.

Merely paying people more rarely is the most effective way to protect a company against poaching and many of the incentive programs companies have used to keep good people are so often riddled with inner contradictions that only end up creating more confusion and frustration.

4. Make line managers accountable for the people they need and lead.

According to the McKinsey team, companies should hold their line managers accountable for attracting, developing and keeping talent (Hiltrop 1999, p. 424).

5. Create a winning employee value proposition.

To test your organization's commitment to the quest for talent, ask the question: 'Why would a talented person want to work here?' Companies with a good talent pool have a compelling answer to this question. For some (e.g. BMW, Procter and Gamble, Microsoft), the advantage of having strong brands and products helps to get the best people interested in working for their companies (Hiltrop 1999, p. 425).

6. Provide opportunities for learning and self-development, Integrated with career planning and mentoring.

What matters now are job enrichment, employability and providing the opportunity for employees to develop the

skills and perspective to take care of them (Noer 1993 cited by Hiltrop 1999, p. 425).

7. Provide information and support for the individual's own efforts at development.

Although organizations and managers cannot do much directly to develop a person's career, they can provide the necessary information and tools for self-assessment and development (Hall and Moss 1998 cited by Hiltrop 1999, p. 425). Some companies have tried to deal with this issue by making access to jobs more transparent. For instance, at Raychem, employees can tap into the internal-information interview network, to arrange interviews with other employees who are willing to talk about what jobs they do, and how they got to do them (Hiltrop 1999, p. 425).

8. Provide realistic job previews.

Research on the earliest stages of employment has shown that most people go into new jobs with inflated expectations and that unmet expectations during the initial stages of employment result in higher levels of employee dissatisfaction and turnover (Hiltrop 1999, p. 425).

9. Create challenging and career enhancing work experiences.

The challenge of work experience has been shown to be one of the most significant factors in the development of employee commitment and loyalty (Steers 1977; Meyers, 1989 cited by Hiltrop 1999, p. 425). Given this strong influence, efforts should be made to design tasks and structures that will enable talented employees to feel a sense of accomplishment, to express and use their talents, and to exercise their own decision-making powers (Hiltrop 1995, p. 425).

10. Redefine the role of human resource managers

To support the talent-building challenge, human resource managers need to be effective, proactive 'architects' with personal and business credibility and strong relationships with business units. The human resource business partner adds value to a firm through strategy execution, administrative efficiency, employee commitment, and cultural change (Hiltrop 1995, p 426)

The above ten points, vital as they are, help set the tone, as usual with Grounded theory research, to frame the research questions captured in chapter one.

Methodology

Research Strategy

This study being exploratory in nature was conducted with a grounded theory research strategy which emanates from the reviewed literature. Grounded theory is fashioned on qualitative research. Qualitative research is preferred because of its numerous advantages. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2003) "qualitative technique can increase a researcher's depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. However, the researcher made use of some figures and statistical instruments that fall within the ambit of quantitative research.

Sampling and data collection

This study concentrated on the employees in the customer support and service department of MTN as the

population for this study. Purposive or Judgemental sampling was employed to select the sample customer service points and the respondents for this study. Twenty customer service points were selected within the Greater Accra, Volta Central and the Eastern regions of Ghana. The researcher first was assisted to select five customer service points in each region based on the number of five or more employees being present within a day at the customer service centre. The researcher was given a full list of employees at these service points. Since the adopted sampling approach is purposive, the researcher eliminated those who worked less than three years. A questionnaire was then administered to all the 236 employees that satisfied the researcher's criteria. Thus, intended to be a census study but then it is termed 'census' only if data is collected and analysed from every possible case or group member (Saunders et al. 2007: 204). However, questionnaires analysed were reduced to 42.

The researcher administered a set of questionnaire to all who worked with MTN from three years above at the selected service points in the four regions mentioned above. The researcher also interview individuals believed to be knowledgeable or has the ability to contribute meaningfully to this study. For the interview, the researcher allowed for self-selection sampling where the respondents identified were given the freedom to decide to take part in the research (Saunders et al. 2007: 335). However, due to the shift system being run at the most customer service points by MTN, the researcher was assisted to select the interviewees.

Designing the Questionnaire and Interview Questions

The open-ended questions were designed to encourage the participants to provide an extensive and developmental answer and may be used to reveal attitudes or obtain facts (Grummitt 1980 cited by Saunders 1997: 226). Some of the questions in the questionnaire were framed using projective techniques in which the approach is association: the 'say-the -first-thing-that-comes-to-your-mind' approach which is based on the assumption that a fast response to a stimulus word, picture or question will be less 'guarded' and therefore more revealing of underlying attitude and motives (Oppenheim 1992: 139).

The other issue has to do with comparisons when we use more than one technique to measure the same attribute or variable. Suppose that we asked a number of questions to measure attitude to abortion, and that, on our first question, we have found that 62% of the middle-class respondents to be 'in favour'. It only acquires meaning when compared, say, to a response of 48% 'in favour' among working-class respondents. Taking a look at differently worded questions on abortion, it's found that 53% of the middle-class respondents gave a favourable reply. Nevertheless, the relative differences may well be quite stable and consistent in their direction, no matter how the question is phrases. In social research, there are few absolute measures, but relative measures are well worth having if they are consistent. They constitute a 'real' finding and can give an indication of relationships between underlying variables (Oppenheim 2003: 288-289).

On the use of Likert's scale, Cohen et al. (2000) contend that it is illegitimate to the intensity of feeling between strongly disagree and disagree is equivalent to the

intensity of feeling between other consecutive categories on the Likert scale. The response categories in likert scales have a rank order, but the intervals between values cannot be presumed equal (cited by Jamieson 2004: 1217). The interviews were semi-structured interview. In this, the researcher had a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these varied from interview to interview given the specific contexts which were encountered (Saunders et al., 2007) the researcher tried to answer the questions before settling on them.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected was processed into graphical representations using the Microsoft Excel office programme. The interview recorded was later transcribed into a tabular form by an expert for analysis.

The two sources of data were considered so that there could be a buffer in case there was a problem with accessing any of the sources. As mentioned earlier, triangulation was proposed as a way to implement them. Refining the concepts of corroboration and validation, triangulation consists of strengthening qualitative findings by showing that several independent sources converge on them, or at least, do not oppose them (Decrop 1999: 157).

Memos were used as one of the aids for the generation of the concepts and categories. This served as a reminder about what is meant by the terms being used and provided the building blocks of the theory (Bryman 2004: 405). One of the statistical analyses which were thought of was the use of contingency tables. The chi-square test of whether two or more populations have the same probability distribution, but it is also a test of the independence of two categorical variables (Swift and Piff 2005: 689).

Reliability and Validity

Qualitative approaches are criticized because of their lack of rigor and credibility. Both are put into question since homogeneity of data and coefficients of determination cannot be computed. This issue of soundness goes beyond the quantitative/qualitative debate (Maxwell & Rossman 1995: 143, cited by Decrop 1999: 158). To achieve reliability and validity, the researcher relied on the four criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for qualitative inquiry that parallel the quantitative terminology. These are as follows;

1. Credibility (internal validity): how truthful are particular findings?
2. Transferability (external validity): how applicable are the findings to another setting or group?
3. Dependability (reliability): are the results consistent and reproducible?
4. Confirm-ability (objectivity): how neutral are the findings (in terms of whether they reflective of the informants and the inquiry, and not a product of the researchers biases and prejudices)? (Cited by Decrop 1999: 158)

Reliability is about purity and consistency of the measure and validity is whether the question, item or score measure what it is supposed to measure (Oppenheim 1992: 144-145).

Main Findings

The researcher based on the adoption of the purposive sampling technique explained in the methodology (3.3

Sampling), selected 236 customer service employees from the customer service points in the Greater Accra, Volta, Central and the Eastern regions of Ghana who were surveyed. The total number of adequately filled questionnaires was 42 after going through data reduction due to the adequacy of the filled questionnaires. Thirteen women (inclusive of 4 part timers) and 29 men responded to the questionnaire. There was only four part timers' who responded - all of them women. That means that the overall response rate is a low 17.8%. In the internal report, the response to the survey has been as high as 98.92 per cent for some of the questions.

Findings from Primary Data

Do men and women have different motivational factors?

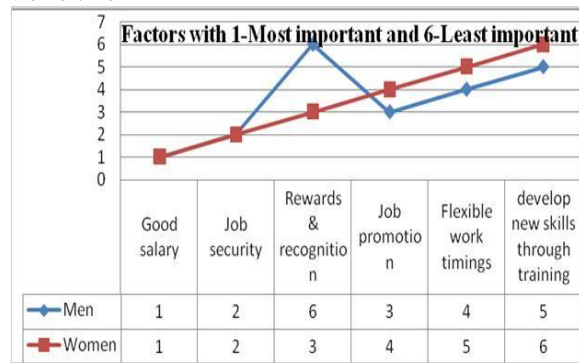
In a bid to find out the differences in motivational factors of men and women, the employees were asked to rank a list of 6 factors they considered important with 1 being the most important to 6, the least important.

As seen from figure 1 below, apart from the fact that good salary and job security ranked the number 1 and 2 factors, flexible work timings seem to be a concern for the women. When asked whether they would prefer flexible working hours, out of the 13 women who responded, seven (7) of them strongly agreed and the rest agreed. None of the women disagreed.

In their response, under Good salary, the ranking for both women and men is 1; also, job security is 2 for both sexes. Flexible work timings saw the women with 3 and the men 6. For Job promotion, it is 5 for the women and 4 for the men. On the factor of to 'develop new skills through training', it is 6 and 5 respectively. This is transcribed into the figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1

Ranking of the six important options in the job by women/men

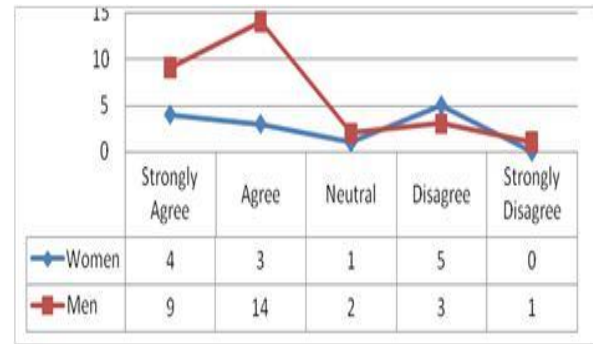


(Source: Author contribution based on questionnaire)

Figure 2 indicate the response to the statement that they found their job repetitive, 23 men agreed (inclusive of 9 who strongly agreed) while 4 men disagreed. As you see, there was no consensus among women. This graph shows that men tend to find their job to be more repetitive. It was interesting to note that among women, all the 4 part timers found the job not to be repetitive.

FIGURE 2

Response to the Statement



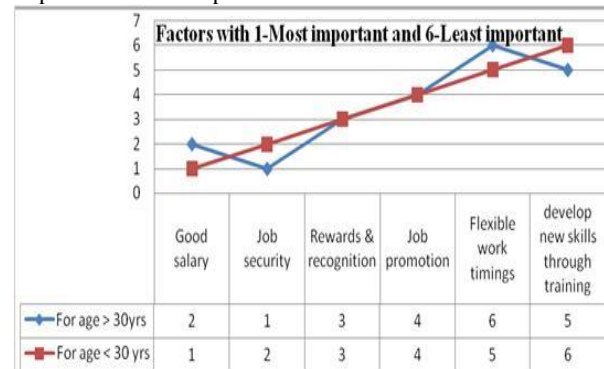
(Source: Author contribution based on questionnaire)

So, did the preferences changed as we moved across the ages?

There were 20 employees aged less than 30 years and 22 employees aged more than 30 years who responded back to the questionnaire. Figure 2 indicates the rankings of the six factors as we try to differentiate between the 2 groups. Job salary and job security still take the top 2 spots. As can be seen, there is no clear difference between the respondents aged below 30 and over 30 years. It was not possible to differentiate across age like 20-30, 30-40.....because of low number of respondents to the questionnaire.

FIGURE 3

Sub-groups ranking of the six options from most important to least important

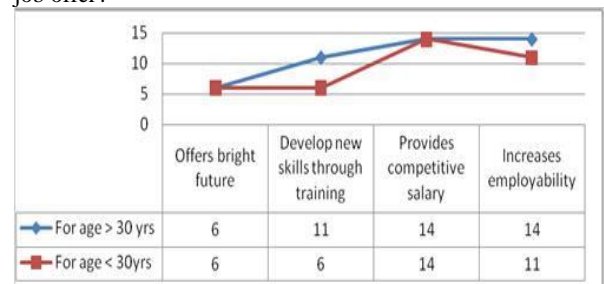


(Source: Author contribution based on questionnaire)

When asked what did their job in MTN offer them, competitive salary came in first with the prospect of their employability increasing (the chances of finding a good job in other companies) coming in second as shown in figure 3. It's important to note that the option 'offers bright future' came in last.

FIGURE 4

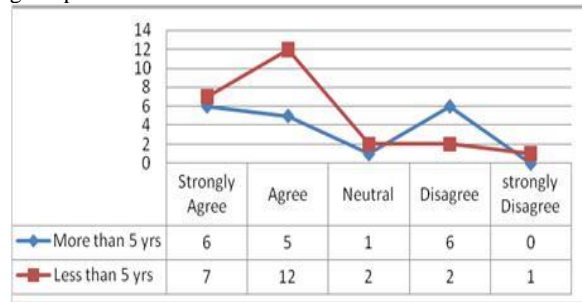
Sub-groups response to the statement: What does your job offer?



(Source: Author contribution based on questionnaire)

It would be interesting to see whether the people who have stayed in this job for long time would find this job repetitive. Out of the 42, 19 employees who have been working for less than 5 years agreed (inclusive of 7 who strongly agreed) and 3 disagreed (inclusive of 1 who strongly disagreed). As seen from figure 4, there was no strong consensus among employees who have been working for more than 5 years.

FIGURE 5
Sub-groups response to the statement: My job tends to get repetitive



(Source: Author contribution based on questionnaire)

As pointed out at the beginning of this section, the number of respondents being small, these data do not let statistical analysis being performed on them. Suppose we performed a chi-square test on the table shown in figure 5 above, we get the results as:

Chi-square=5.549

D.F. = 4

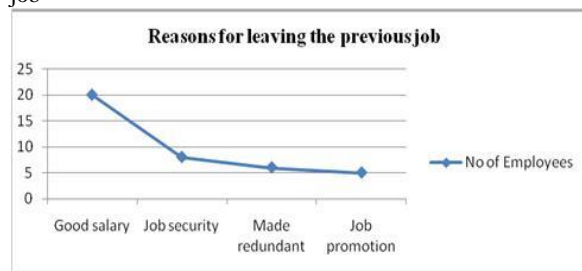
WARNING: 2 cells expected counts less than 1. The chi-square approximation is probably invalid. Six (6) cells expected counts less than 5.

The chi-square test of significance is useful as a tool to determine whether or not it is worth the researcher's effort to interpret a contingency table. A significant result of this test means that the cells of a contingency table should be interpreted. A non-significant test means that no effects were discovered and chance could explain the observed differences in the cells (Stockburger, 1998). In this case, an interpretation of the cell frequencies is not useful.

Reasons for leaving the previous job.

As seen from figure 6, good salary and job security again were the major reasons given by the employees as to why they left their previous job. Of the 39 people who gave reasons for leaving their previous job, 20 gave good salary as the reason, 8 - job security, 5 -job promotion and 6 - made redundant.

FIGURE 6
Reasons given by the employees for leaving their previous job



(Source: Author contribution based on questionnaire)

About the part-time employees.

The response to the question whether the employees feel that the part-timers have fewer chances of promotion in the company was mixed. Two of the four part-timers who responded were neutral about this statement. The full time employees were divided about this statement. Again, with a low response of 42 respondents, there was nothing conclusive that could be said by the questionnaire. When you look at the answers given by the part time employees to the other open-ended questions, the researcher felt that part-timers weren't really concerned whether promotion was on the cards. As quoted by the part-timers during the interview: "Maybe, being a part-timer affects your job promotion a little bit....Not really." (Source: IN-1). Table 4a summarizes the other findings from the interviews and the open ended questions of the questionnaire.

Findings from the interviews and open ended questions

This table is an attempt aimed at the implementation of the coding process. The idea of using this table is taken from a paper by Amberg and Weiner (2005) in which they have used the grounded theory approach. Aggregation level 1 has some of the most recurring statements/ideas which the employees spoke about. This list is used as basis for further evaluation in Aggregation level 2 which is about focused coding.

What do we understand from the primary data?

- Good salary and job security have been the top two motivating factors which did not change with age, sex and whether they are part-time employees. These two are the main features which have attracted these employees to work within MTN.
- Women and part timers want flexible working hours. Though every employee would prefer more money, they want to be able to have a healthy work/ home life balance.
- Men want to have a clearer idea about the career progression in terms of their job promotion.
- There is a lack of communication between the upper management and the floor. Employees do not feel they have formed a bond with MTN. This can be seen in the two responses below:

We had alerted the management about this one particular service product with some defects in it before they launched it in the market. They still went ahead with it and surely, there were problems." (Source: Interviewee 3)
"Our team was moved from small business division in the metropolis to the Accra business centre-market division. And again, we were moved back to small business division. They don't know where to put us."(Source: Interviewee 1)

What the employees have to say about communication?

As pointed out by the primary data, lack of communication is felt by the respondents. Let's look at figures. Of the 534 employees who responded to the question whether they received enough information about changes that affect them, 374 employees disagreed (inclusive of 107 who strongly disagreed). This is 75% of the total respondents.

So, what is it that we understand from the secondary data?

We see that the morale is low. Because its employees do not believe that MTN is fair. One of the reasons could be the lack of transparency. The employees do not feel that MTN takes any initiatives to retain the good employees nor that the right people get promoted.

Interpretation of Results

How varied are motivational factors of MTN's employees based on gender and age?

Looking back at the results of the 1992 survey cited in the secondary data, which shows the results of 550 surveys conducted in 1992, we see that good wages, full appreciation of work done and job security take the top 3 positions. From this research, we again see good salary and job security take the top 2 positions. Employees are attracted to work in MTN because of good salary and job security. Men want variety in their job role. They are definitely looking for growth in terms of job promotion. The results showed women have flexible work timings on their mind. As seen in the literature review, McDonald et al. (2006) pointed out the same results. Women emphasized the value of flexibility which included variable start and finish times, being able to work from home and being able to change days when necessary. Also, the fact remains that women seem to be intrinsically motivated to work. With intrinsic motivation, the purpose of performing a behavior is for the pleasure and satisfaction of the process (Buckworth et al. 2007, p. 443). The employees in MTN see their job as a stepping stone to finding a good job in another company. They value the training provided by this organization as a means of increasing their employability.

The findings did not show any noticeable difference in the motivational factors as we move across the ages. What was interesting is the fact that from the 1992 survey in the literature review also could not find any variation.

Are MTN's part-time employees looking for short-term career/job? And do they feel that they have less growth opportunities? What needs to be kept in mind is that the part-time employee interviewed (Interviewee1) and all the 4 questionnaires received from part time employees were women. So, it's difficult for the researcher to decide whether this data should be looked at as coming from a woman or a part-time employee.

As seen from the Table 2 of the 1992 survey, our data also points towards the direction that shows part-time employees reporting higher positive significant preferences for interesting work and good working environment. They are internally motivated.

The current situation in MTN

In light of the findings, the conclusions of the two tests conducted by Wegge et al. (2006) on call centre employees become all the more significant which found a strong correlation between the strong psychological attachment of employees to their organization and work motivation and well-being. In MTN, the main concern is: lack of communication. This situation is evidence in the literature on the service gap model. The expectation of customer service employees' is not being met in terms of dissemination of information that particularly concerns affect them. Lack of communication might cause employees to perceive that MTN is unfair – that the 'right' employees are not promoted. They do not realize the significance of the various programs and measures

being taken by the organization. They see it as nothing but 'grand schemes' (as quoted by Interviewee 3).

All of these impacted negatively and cause employees to feel 'disconnected' with the company, a situation uncovered by Zeithml, and Bitner (2000), Berry and Parasuraman (1993) which has culminated in the fifth gap in the 'gap' model as captured in the reviewed literature on service quality especially the fifth gap which is about the expected and the experienced service.

Conclusions

The aim of this research was to understand the motivational factors of the internal marketing activities that affect customer service employees of MTN and whether it differs based on sex, age and employment status (full time/ part time employee). As shown in the literature, there is a strong argument in understanding the motivational factors if we are looking at gaining a better perspective on an organization's policies and procedures. This would also explain the attrition rate that has increased during the past few years. The research questions were guided by Hiltrop's (1999) suggestion on how a firm can attract and retain talent.

Some of the major drawbacks of this research are the low response from questionnaires distributed which meant that it would not lend itself to statistical analysis and that the 3 interviewees were handpicked by the company although with my guidance. A focus group of employees from wider demographics would have been a good option. Also all the responses (questionnaires and interview) from part-time employees have been from women which makes it difficult to decide whether to look at the response from a woman's view or a part-time employee's view. The survey report has very high validity as the response rate to some questions was as high as 99. However, in spite of all these drawbacks, these findings are strong as triangulation shows that these three independent sources converge or at least, do not oppose each other (Decrop 1999: 157).

The results of this research enable managers including those of retail outlets to better understand the nuances of managing their employees to achieve market success. It is recommended that all managers of a firm have a role to perform if internal marketing could be effective. In particular the need for managers to balance their formal behaviour with the more informal behaviour towards employees is apparent, as is the need to collect, disseminate and act upon intelligence about the wants and needs of employees, the factors influencing employment in the industry and the employment offerings of competitors. It is only when this is done with constant review of wages to be commensurate and motivating in line with Stacy Adams Equity theory, will MTN stamped out favouritism.

It behoves on management to periodically renew employee contracts well ahead of the expiration of these contracts, vary job roles among the men which will ensure and encourage customer service employees about their job security.

Similarly, management should institute flexibility work timings for women to enable them contribute their widows mite to corporate productivity while maintaining their traditional womanhood roles. MTN as a communication entity should develop and incorporate working through the information and communication technology media, to ensure that women can work from even homes. This is important in order to overcome the

negative perception of women in paid jobs which tends to affect family life and social cohesion in the Ghanaian society.

Furthermore, there is the need to efficiently integrate part time employees in terms of rewards and promotion which is likely to enhance their motivation, job security and ultimately higher productivity. This will aid word of mouth recruitment which has been cited as a top recruitment method.

Finally, MTN needs to communicate its vision more clearly, something that clarifies the direction in which an organization needs to move (Kotter 1995: 63). Hiltrop's (1999) suggestion on creating an ability to attract and retain talent speaks about designing challenging and career enhancing work experiences, making line managers accountable for the people they need and providing opportunities for learning and self-development integrated with career planning and mentoring. How is MTN intending to do this? And how would they communicate what is being offered in terms of job promotion and development? It is the role of the managers to answer these questions to ensure that all available options and choices are identified, and that the choices made take account of both short- and long-term interests of all their stakeholders - whether these are shareholders, employees, the managers themselves or the community at large. The worst managers may not be those who make poor choices; it may be those who fail to recognize that there are choices to be made (Burnes 2000: 508). The researcher believes that it is necessary to start improving ones customer service practices by focusing on the HIT factor – Honesty, Integrity and Transparency.

Indeed, if the premise of internal marketing is the internal relationships between the organization and its employee groups is anything to go by, then the concerns of the respondents suggests a more meticulous and prudent internal marketing plan.

The findings of this study matched with what has been found in the literature. Men wanted growth in terms of job promotion. They were looking for variety in their job role. Women and part timers - both wanted flexibility in their work schedule. These two sub-groups seem to be internally motivated. Salary and job security were the top two reasons for employees to work for MTN. There was no conclusive difference among the motivating variables as we moved across the ages. Majority of them did see their job as a stepping stone to finding a good job in other companies. As pointed out by the labour trends survey (2002) in table 3, word-of-mouth recruitment tops the list on how the majority of new hires got their jobs. In MTN, it appears the workers are not properly integrated through internal marketing programmes. We have 58% of the employees who disagreed that they will recommend MTN as a great place to work (table 14). That's one very important source of recruitment being used ineffectively as a result of how the company's internal marketing program is administered.

MTN's internal marketing efforts also did not bridge the gap between the lower and the upper management. The findings showed that there is disconnectedness between the employees on the floor and the upper management. The tests conducted by Wegge et al. (2006) on call centre employee studying the work motivation show how crucial this is especially on a job where there are limited things that one could do with the motivating potentials of work (e.g., task variety, task significance, task

completeness). Kotter (1995) in one of his best known articles "Why transformation efforts fail" gives not establishing enough a great sense of urgency and not creating a powerful guiding coalition as two of the eight reasons on why transformation efforts fail in organizations.

MTN's internal marketing programmes impacted customer service employees' through good salary, job security as the most important motivational variables identified to be of great concern to the employees. The study also found that absence of favouritism, flexible work timings in the case of women, growth in job role or promotion and communication between management and customer service employees are other identified crucial factors to be considered in any meaningful internal marketing plan. These findings are my modest contribution to the knowledge capacity in the area of internal marketing and customer service. It is in this light that I agree with Christian Gronroos (2007) that "it should always be remembered that what counts is quality as it is perceived by customers".

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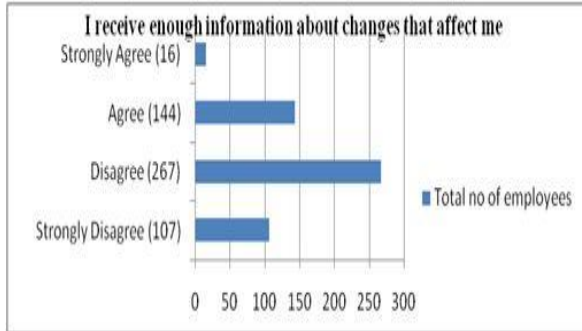
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Appendix

This appendix refers to internal survey conducted by MTN made available to the researcher. These charts were used in the analysis and in arriving at conclusions and recommendations.

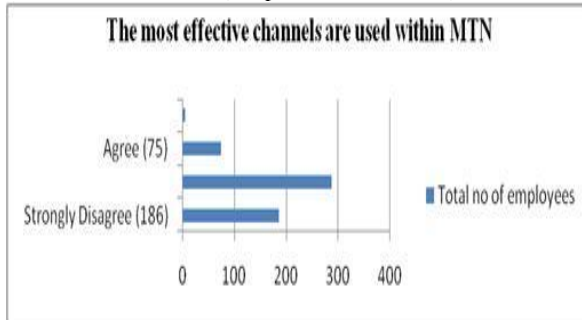
MTN Internal Survey Data Used in the Analysis

FIGURE I (Response rate: 98.92%)



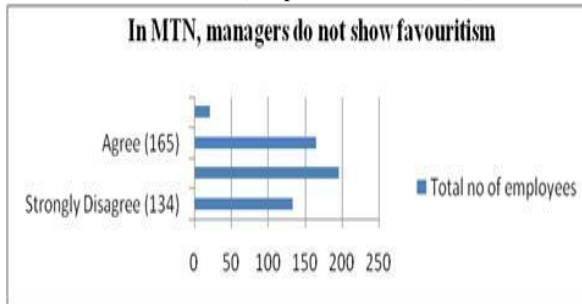
(Source: Internal Report, 2007)

FIGURE II (Response rate: 98.92%)



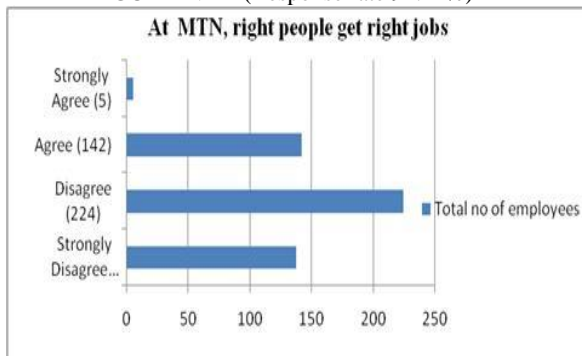
(Source: Internal Report, 2007)

FIGURE III (Response rate: 95.68%)



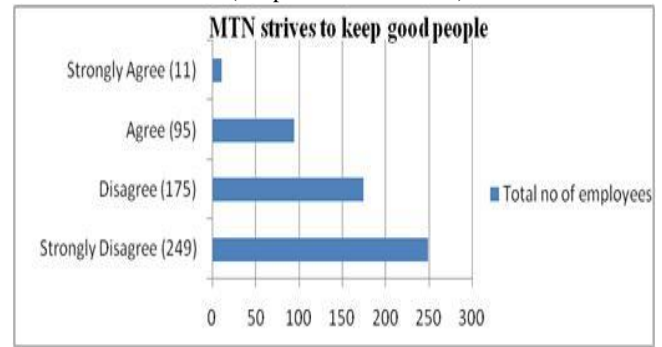
(Source: Internal Report, 2007)

FIGURE IV (Response rate 94.24%)



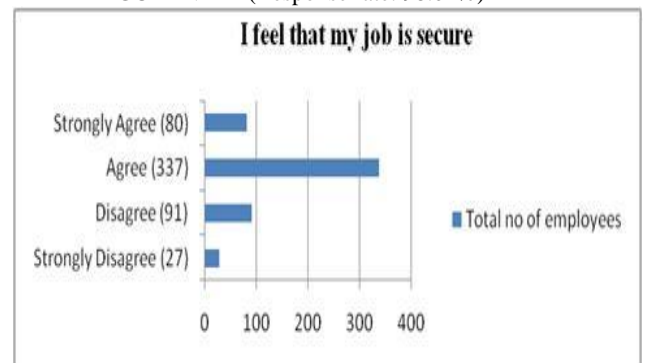
(Source: Internal Report, 2007)

FIGURE V (Response rate: 98.20%)



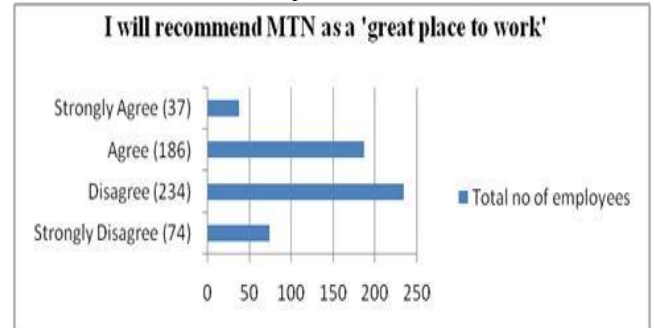
(Source: Internal Report, 2007)

FIGURE VI (Response rate: 98.02%)



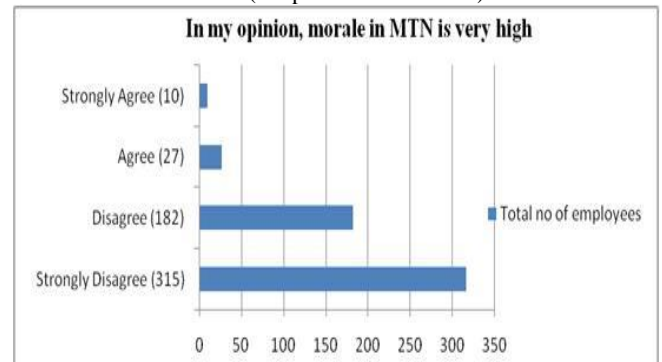
(Source: Internal Report, 2007)

FIGURE VII (Response rate: 98.38%)



(Source: Internal Report, 2007)

FIGURE VIII (Response rate: 98.92%)



(Source: Internal Report, 2007)