

Employee Satisfaction and Its Affects on Customer Service

In a Healthcare Facility


by

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ABSTRACT

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One facet in determining if a business will continue its success is the relationship between employees and the customers they serve is. This research will take the aspects of employee satisfaction and relate it to factors that make customers of a health care facility satisfied. There will be an exploration of what employees feel are reasons for job satisfaction at a health care facility. There are specific topics that highly influence employee satisfaction. This information can be obtained through employee satisfaction surveys. In addition, the way customers of health care, patients, view the care they receive will be researched. The essential factors for rating care as 'very good' will be discussed. These factors can be measured by using a patient satisfaction survey tool. The

research will show there is a relationship between satisfied health care consumers and empowered and satisfied employees. A relationship between unsatisfied employees and subsequently less satisfied customers will also be shown. By analyzing this information, action plans can be developed for each department to either maintain or increase the satisfaction of both employees and customers. Lessons can be learned from the department with higher overall satisfaction and shared with departments who need to see an increase. This research will clearly show where efforts need to be made to promote satisfied employees and consequently provide care to highly satisfied customers.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| ABSTRACT..... | II |
| CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| <i>Statement of the Problem</i> | 2 |
| <i>Purpose of the Study</i> | 2 |
| <i>Significance of the Study</i> | 3 |
| <i>Assumptions of the Study</i> | 3 |
| <i>Limitations of the Study</i> | 4 |
| <i>Definition of Terms</i> | 4 |
| <i>Methodology</i> | 5 |
| CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 6 |
| <i>Patient/Customer Satisfaction</i> | 6 |
| <i>Employee Satisfaction</i> | 9 |
| <i>Relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction</i> | 13 |
| CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY..... | 17 |
| <i>Research Design</i> | 17 |
| <i>Population</i> | 18 |
| <i>Instrumentation</i> | 18 |
| CHAPTER IV: RESULTS..... | 22 |
| <i>Employee Satisfaction Results</i> | 22 |
| <i>Table 1</i> | 23 |
| <i>Patient Satisfaction Results</i> | 24 |

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| <i>Table 2</i> | 25 |
| <i>Summary</i> | 26 |
| CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION..... | 28 |
| <i>Limitations</i> | 28 |
| <i>Conclusions</i> | 29 |
| <i>Recommendations</i> | 30 |
| REFERENCES | 32 |

Chapter I: Introduction

Healthcare institutions have entered the world of competition that had been historically reserved within other business venues. This is especially true in Green Bay, WI which had entertained a culture of cooperation among health care providers. Hospitals worked cooperatively to offer services to meet the needs of the community without duplication of those services. Since the introduction of managed care and the building of a fourth acute care hospital, the culture of the area has changed to one of competition. With this in mind, St. Vincent Hospital began measuring customer satisfaction in October 2001 using a tool provided by Press-Ganey Associates. This tool provides comparative data at both the national and state level. The customers of St. Vincent Hospital have consistently rated the hospital with mean scores between 82 and 86. The goal of the hospital is to reach a mean score that will place the hospital in the 90th percentile which has been unattainable for the past three years.

Various processes have been put in place to try to influence the customers' satisfaction of the care they receive at St. Vincent Hospital. There have been changes to all employees' performance review standards to include a section on customer service. The staff has implemented the use of scripted statements to be used at key times (introduction and exit phrases). Directors of departments are required to visit with each patient at least once during the hospital stay (rounding). The Organizational Development department has provided a variety of customer service training programs to help staff become acclimated to the changes regarding customer service and customer focus. Management has insisted that customer service discussions be a part of every meeting at both the department level and facility level. All these facets combined have not made a

significant change in the customers' measurement of their perception of the care they received. This chapter will present the problem statement, objectives of this project, and the significance of doing this study.

Statement of the Problem

Customer service scores as attained by Press-Ganey Associates have remained consistent even after attempts to improve the ratings. Previous research has shown a correlation between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. Through this study, the researcher will focus on comparing one department that has not made significant advances in department satisfaction scores (department X) to another department that has obtained and maintained the positive results (department Y). The researcher will attempt to find a relationship between customer satisfaction scores and employee satisfaction scores of these two departments. Suggestions will then be given on how to increase the scores.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. Explore the connection of customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction in departments X and Y.
2. Develop a plan to implement changes at the department level to increase both customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction.

Significance of the Study

This study is important to the competitive edge that St. Vincent Hospital would like to maintain in the Green Bay community. If changes can be implemented in one department with success, then the same changes can be attempted in other departments that may be experiencing the same issue of low customer satisfaction and low employee satisfaction. It is also possible that if department X, a large patient care department, is able to increase their customer satisfaction scores, the hospital mean score will also rise. Completing this study will not only increase the awareness of how employee satisfaction impacts customer satisfaction, but it will also create a path to happier, more effective employees.

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions of this study are:

1. St. Vincent Hospital will continue to measure customer satisfaction using the same tool for several years.
2. St. Vincent Hospital will continue to measure employee satisfaction on a two year cycle.
3. Employees will answer the questions on the employee survey freely and openly.
4. There will be a correlation between employee and customer satisfaction.
5. Training alone will not make significant changes in the customers' satisfaction scoring of their hospital experience.

6. Employees understand and utilize basic concepts of providing superior customer service.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are:

1. This study will be comparing results of only two departments X and Y at St. Vincent Hospital with 60 departments.
2. Employee satisfaction is measured every two years.
3. Customers that receive the post-discharge surveys are those discharged to their homes. Customers discharged to other facilities are not surveyed.
4. Both survey tools use standardized questions with the capability to ask only a limited number of customized questions.
5. This study will be utilizing tools already in place at St. Vincent Hospital.

Definition of Terms

Press-Ganey Associates: A leading independent vendor of satisfaction measurement tools in the healthcare industry.

Customer: In a health care setting, the customer is considered the patient that receives a service from the institution.

MSA: Management Science Associates. This is a consulting firm located in Kansas City, Missouri. This group administers employee satisfaction surveys and produces the results.

HRD: Human Resource Development

Rounding: A consistent practice of asking specific questions of stakeholders to obtain actionable information.

Key phrases at key times: A communication technique where specific simple words connect the patient understanding of the care they are receiving from healthcare providers. This is also referred to as scripted statements.

Methodology

A thorough review of literature on the relationship of employee and customer satisfaction will be discussed. A comparison of the data obtained from customer satisfaction reports and information gained through the employee satisfaction survey will be presented. This will be followed by recommendations to improve both customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction at St. Vincent Hospital.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This study will compare how employee satisfaction is related to customer satisfaction in two specific departments at St. Vincent Hospital. There has been no significant increase in the mean score since awareness and training on customer service was provided to the staff. There must be other factors that influence the satisfaction of customers and this study proposes it is the satisfaction of the employees. It is important to first explore the application of customer service concepts to the healthcare world.

Patient/Customer Satisfaction

In the August 2003 edition of “The Press Ganey Satisfaction Report”, Robert Wolosin quotes Press Ganey CEO, Melvin Hall:

Our health care system has done such a good job that many patients take the technical aspects of their care for granted. But they are sensitive to how they are treated a persons, not merely as bodies. This means that hospitals need to foster a culture of responsiveness to patients. Staff should attend to the concerns of every patient, and understand that these concerns include emotional and spiritual, as well as physical issues. (p. 3)

This is the essence of customer service in the healthcare arena. This particular type of customer, a patient, expects the equipment to be current and treatments to be effective in all healthcare institutions. The variable among healthcare organizations is how the patient is treated. Customers are scrutinizing “the how” of service provision, not just “the what” of service. If a customer is satisfied with the way the product is delivered, a positive relationship will develop between the consumer and the provider. This is especially evident when consistency in the provision of services is attained. The customer will

return for the cares that they perceive as high quality and the institution will have profitability (Hesket, J., Sasser, W., Schlesinger, L., 1997).

One of the major issues healthcare providers deal with when considering customer service are the ideals that define it. According to Scott MacStravic (2004) in his article, "Health Care's Management Myopia", he states that the health care industry has three concepts that paint its identity. These are: thinking of itself as a thing rather than a place, the patient experience is managed only within facility walls, and the business is defined by diagnoses and treatments of diseases rather than as health management. These ideals are important to note when asking for feedback from the customer's viewpoint. Patients often begin evaluating the healthcare experience even before they enter through the doors. There are certain expectations initiated by the first phone call or from a previous encounter with an institution. The evaluation by the customer continues through the healthcare event and ends with the recovery period. It is vital to capture all aspects of the customer experience with any survey tool chosen by an organization.

Overall, most customers of the healthcare industry, patients, will be satisfied or very satisfied with their experiences. Quint Studor (2003), the author of *Hardwiring Excellence* states, "85% of patients in average hospitals rank care as good or very good". Hospital executives have the challenge of encouraging staff not to become content with these good ratings. Healthcare providers can become preoccupied with those customers who have a poor experience with the facility and give low ratings. The real challenge is to increase the overall satisfaction scores by having more patients experience a very good occurrence rather than simply a good one (Studor). When hospital staff does a good job according to their job description, but without warmth or sincerity, then patients will

likely rate their satisfaction as “fair” or “average”. If the employees add some sensitivity and courtesy, the experience rating can increase to a “good” or “satisfied”. But add some touches that exceed the expectations of what the patient had for their care, the rating of satisfaction will reach the “very good” or “excellent” mark (Lee, 2004).

It is important to realize that one bad experience can flavor the future encounters with the healthcare facility. It is also noteworthy to recognize that one individual employee can influence the outcome of an entire customer experience. It is unrealistic to believe that department managers can supervise all employees all the time to determine if they are treating customers in an acceptable manner. It is important to manage customer service activities through a facility’s culture of providing exceptional customer service when delivering the procedures or treatments (Snyder, 1998). With a customer service culture, service encounters are managed by all staff. Employees are vested in customer service concepts from the hiring process through the annual evaluation of observed service practices. This concept makes all employees responsible and managers of “very good” experiences.

Gallup Organization has determined a number of questions asked of patients that relate to a feeling of overall satisfaction for the care they received (Lee, 2004). The questions included:

1. Nurses anticipated your needs.
2. Staff and departments worked together as a team.
3. Staff responded with care and compassion.
4. Staff advised you if there were going to be delays.
5. Nurses explained about medications, procedures, and routines.

6. Nurses responded promptly to pain management.

7. Nurses responded in a reasonable amount of time.

These questions focus on the perception of how the person was treated with very little emphasis on the equipment or skill level of the practitioner. This again provides information on how the care provider connects with the patient and provides the experience of health care.

Employee Satisfaction

A good business practice of successful companies is to measure the satisfaction of their employees as well as the satisfaction of customers. Employees are the essence of the company and their satisfaction of business practices does influence the bottom line of the company. According to the *MSA's Leader's Workbook* (2002), "Quality improvement processes in use today suggest that constituents be regularly surveyed and performance be regularly measured. The Employee Opinion Survey is one important way to gather this critical information as objectively as possible".

St. Vincent Hospital has chosen to formally survey their employees on a biannual basis with the MSA tool. The researchers at The Business Research Lab have determined that two year intervals may produce inaccurate results for several reasons. A change may have occurred and then a relapse happens before the next survey. There may be a significant amount of turnover in staff over a two year period. Finally, keeping employee satisfaction as a focus may be unrealistic as other business practices may take a front seat to managers' efforts. These researchers suggest surveying employees every 12-18 months (When To Repeat, n.d.). In *Human Resource Kit for Dummies* (1999), Max Messmer recommends surveying employees every six months in companies with 50 or more

employees. In the end, individual companies need to decide how frequently and how formally they wish to conduct an employee satisfaction survey.

Gallup Organization has done extensive research in determining what core elements are necessary to keep and attract talented employees (Buckingham and Coffman). In its research, the organization narrowed down a long list of questions that correlated with the business practices of productivity, profitability, retention, and customer satisfaction. Since this research is focusing on the customer satisfaction aspect of healthcare business, the focus will be on those questions that influence patient satisfaction. The specific questions are:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
3. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
4. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
5. Do I have a best friend at work?
6. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?

These questions have been tested by the Gallup Organization and should be used as a measuring stick in all organizations to determine how engaged and satisfied employees are.

The administration of the MSA survey biannually allows all employees the opportunity to state how they see the company is meeting their needs. This is an anonymous process which encourages employees to openly and honestly answer questions. Employees are confident that their comments will be considered by

management because the outside consultant (MSA) will tabulate and analyze the data. This way the employee is part of a group rather than an individual which is at times a safer mode for the individual to express their thoughts and ideas.

The formal information gathered every other year is valuable to form strategic plans regarding retaining, empowering, and satisfying the current employees. All employees are involved in feedback sessions. This builds morale of the employees as they feel part of the decision process (*MSA Handbook, 2002*). During these feedback sessions, the employee becomes aware of hospital wide issues as well as department specific issues. Janelle Brittain, in her book *Star Team Dynamics* stated:

As we observe companies going through downsizing, rightsizing, reengineering, mergers or layoffs, we consistently see morale lowest during times when employees do not know the specifics about their future. Once they know whether they are staying, leaving or changing job functions, they can plan and take action. Often management has withheld information until the last minute, then expected people to accept it and move on. This approach is sure to cause angst and strife for everyone involved. Share information as soon as you have it. (p. 189)

Thus, it is important to review the survey results in a timely manner. Employees are curious on what other employees saw as both strengths of the organization as well as areas that need improvement. Other useful information includes how the particular department compares to other departments in the same organization as well as against national benchmarks. One strength of the MSA survey is its reports contain comparison data at both the company and national levels.

Once the results are published and shared, the department managers can begin to formulate action plans to resolve the issues of their department. Action plans also need to be aligned to the strategic need of the entire company (Bernardin, 2003). The managers are again encouraged to involve their employees. Here is an opportunity for employees to become engaged in the process improvements that need to occur and understand their personal roll. Employees can become disconnected from their jobs, because of never-ending changes and challenges to perform better (Harris & Brannick, 1999). Involving the employees at the beginning of the planning process, keeps them focused on the positive aspects that change can bring to their job.

The executive management team of St. Vincent Hospital feels that they are able to get some informal information at the annual performance reviews that department managers administer. There is also informal information gathered at monthly administrator/employee meetings where the hospital administrator meets with groups of employees and answers their questions and resolves any rumors that staff may have questions about. This method proves to be effective for the administrator to get accurate information to and from employees. This involvement of employees can lead to higher satisfaction which will improve attitudes and cooperation at work as well as decrease turnover and absenteeism (Bernardin, 2003). This can all lead to employees feeling empowered as they see their ideas being discussed.

Empowering employees allows them to think for themselves, encourages creativity, and produces more efficient workers (Kay and Jordan-Evans, 1999). Because the employees have been part of developing or improving a process, they will have ownership and seek to see their suggestions succeed. Employees, who are not

empowered, tend to be more apathetic toward their job and seem to just go through the motions without any interest in performing better. The involvement of employees in not only the feedback process, but also the strategic planning process can only bring about workable plans that can be implemented at the department level and possibly at the hospital wide level.

Satisfied employees can be measured on the written survey by questions that ask if the employee feels they are being utilized appropriate to their knowledge or if they feel their job is challenging. Questions on the survey revolving around participation in decision making can also lead to information on how empowered the employee feels about their job and department leadership. Satisfied staff members feel they have the opportunities to share their ideas and bring suggestions to solve issues and make decisions. During the feedback sessions is an optimal time to utilize employees to their potential and tap into those who need some encouragement to do so. Implementing this practice will foster an environment of empowered and more satisfied employees.

Brian Lee, in his book *Satisfaction Guaranteed* (1996), gives the following definition of empowered employees. "It is seeing the gifts and the talents, the caring and the intelligence in another person and helping them live up to that". Managers of healthcare departments need to see the potential in their employees to provide accurate, timely care to patients with the flair of customer service. This will tie the employee to the customer who will be satisfied with the facility.

Relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction

It seems apparent from the information gathered thus far, that there is a relationship between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. In the airline

business, Southwest Airlines has shown how happier employees produce happier customers and in return an excellent financial result (Brown, 1996). This company has become the benchmark in the airline business. In *First Break All The Rules*, the authors begin to apply the concepts of Southwest Airlines to the world of healthcare (Buckingham and Coffman, 1999). As discussed earlier in the section on customer satisfaction, there is an issue on how healthcare identifies itself. Many healthcare facilities focus efforts in relaying to customers how modern their equipment is or how safe their procedures are. When looking at the satisfaction of healthcare customers, they expect all institutions to have modern equipment and safe practices. The difference is how the front line care providers connect with the person and show understanding and empathy as they administer the cares.

Human Resource departments have struggled in the past on how to relate the “people expense” to the bottom line. It is through customer service provided by the employees that will cause a patient to return and subsequently bring in revenue. (Lipson, 2000). Healthcare has struggled with this concept as, historically, customers of healthcare have “needed” those services provided by healthcare institutions. Choices were not available and consumers had blind faith that all healthcare facilities would provide them what they needed. Now with competition for customers and more educated customers, the service side has become more important than just the accessibility of healthcare systems. Schlesinger and Heskett (1991) stated the following:

Employee satisfaction is especially high in service organizations that not only deliver high value to customers but do it through frontline service workers who are carefully selected, well-trained, given latitude to solve customer problems,

compensated at least in part on their performance, and even given responsibility for ensuring that their positions are staffed. (p.3)

This statement reintegrates how important frontline employees are to the productivity of an organization. Managers need to find ways to stay connected to their employees to empower them as well as satisfy them.

One suggestion to stay connected to employees is through “rounding” (Studor, 2003). The manager of a department simply asks employees how their day is going and if there are things the manager could do to make it go better. This opens the lines of communication as well as gives the managers a direction on how to keep employees satisfied. This is also an opportunity for the manager to ask what is working well. This will focus an employee on the positive things rather than on the things that could be better (Studor). Some times in healthcare the employee focuses on the negative as healthcare providers are trained to look for negative things happening to a patient. In customer service, the focus needs to be on positive outcomes. The emphasis is that managers need to practice rounding for outcomes as a way to involve staff in process improvements, recognizing co-workers and physicians, and feel as an important part of the team (Studor). Using this concept will engage the employee in their job as well as feel satisfied that the facility cares about their work. This will be displayed through the service and cares provided to the patient who is the customer of healthcare.

Connecting the employee to the organization is essentially done through their direct manager. If the manager can make the employee feel empowered, they will produce higher quality work for the organization. The customers will sense this. Employees who feel valued and want to work toward organizational goals will be the

shining stars of customer service as well as excel in technical skill. Those who only want to stay because of financial reasons will only be adequate in their skills and may not display high level customer service (Manion, 2004). Employees who also feel connected to the organization on a personal level will also become high performers. If a manager or co-workers are interested in what happens in an employee's personal life, then the employee also feels more connected to the organization's goals. If organizations focus on improving many aspects of an employee's life, they will become better employees. This increases their productivity, patient satisfaction and loyalty among other positive business outcomes (MacStravic, 2004).

Karl Albrecht sums up the relationship between happy employees and happy customers. He states "The way your employees feel is ultimately the way your customers will feel". He also states "You can't bottle attitude" (Albrecht, 2000). Both statements reflect where customer satisfaction needs to be connected to employee satisfaction. They are interconnected. This concept has become evident in the world of healthcare.

Chapter III: Methodology

Customer satisfaction is related to employee satisfaction. Determining what effect they have on each other will be explored in this section. This chapter will discuss how this research was designed. A description of the population this study revolves around as well as the instrumentation will also be included.

Research Design

The design of this project will be to use quantitative research methods when gathering the information from both the patients' perspective and the employees' perspective. The researcher will then use benchmarking principles to determine how a particular department compares to another department at St. Vincent Hospital. Both of the surveys that will be administered by St. Vincent Hospital use a Likert rating scale to answer questions. This will make the comparisons more logical than if different measurement tools were used. An issue arises when looking at the Likert scales from the two tools. The employee satisfaction tool (MSA) is based on a six point scale with #1 equaling a high rating and #6 a very low rating. The patient satisfaction tool (Press-Ganey, Inc.) has a Likert scale uses a five point system with #1 being a low score and #5 a high score. The design of this research will give the researcher results from which to base recommendations of HRD processes to implement. The hospital will then be able to continually measure customer satisfaction to determine if the processes were effective (directly or indirectly) in increasing employee satisfaction.

Because benchmarking too many variables at one time can be difficult, this project has been limited to looking at information just related to departments X and Y. This will allow the researcher to focus efforts on a manageable amount of people and

data gathered from the surveys. Both of the survey tools have national benchmarking data available for the researcher to make accurate comparison. This information will be helpful when giving feedback to the department management as well as employees as they can then see where there needs to be improvements.

Population

The population that will be surveyed for the customer satisfaction perspective will be 100% of those patients who are discharged home. Excluded are the patients who are discharged to another facility or who pass away. Measurements are made available on a quarterly basis throughout the year. The approximate number of responses per quarter is about 75 returned surveys for a response rate of about 20%. This process is determined by Press-Ganey Inc. which administers the tool.

The population of the employee survey will be the entire staff of St. Vincent Hospital. This entails approximately 2,400 employees. Historically, there has been 85% of staff who have completed the survey. From this the researcher will extract the data from departments X and Y which employees approximately 110 staff members. This group will represent a cluster sample of St. Vincent Hospital as it is a natural division of the larger group of employees. This sample is large clinical departments with various job titles, employees with varying levels of education and provides direct patient care. These departments are a representative of the majority of departments in a hospital setting.

Instrumentation

The data that is needed for the study comes from two tools the hospital is using. The Press-Ganey Inc Patient Satisfaction Tool will be used to obtain the patient's perspective on the care provided. The focus will be on inpatient departments, so the

Inpatient Satisfaction survey will be used. The tool provides information on a department level. According to the information obtained in the literature review, the following questions along with a corresponding question from the Press-Ganey survey will be used to assess patient satisfaction.

1. "Nurse anticipated needs" will be determined by the question, "Amount of attention paid to your special or personal needs".
2. "Staff work together" will be determined by the question, "How well staff worked together to care for you".
3. "Staff respond with care and compassion" will be determined by the question, "Nurses' attitude toward your requests".
4. "Staff advised you about delays" will be determined by the question, "How well the nurses kept you informed".
5. "Nurses explained meds, procedures, and routines" will be determined by the question, "Staff effort to include you in decisions about your treatment".
6. "Nurses respond to pain meds" will be determined by the question, "How well your pain was controlled".
7. "Nurses respond in a reasonable amount of time" will be determined by the question, "Promptness in responding to the call button".

The employee satisfaction results will be obtained from a survey provided by MSA that will be administered to employees. The researcher will again be able to obtain information specific to departments X and Y. As determined by the literature review, the

following questions along with the corresponding questions from the MSA survey will be used.

1. “Do I know what is expected of me at work” will be measured by, “Gives clear working instructions”.
2. “At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day” will be measured by, “I have ample opportunity to use my abilities”.
3. “In the last 7 days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work” will be measured by, “Good communications with employees”.
4. “Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person” will be measured by, “Leadership seems interested in employees”.
5. “Do I have a best friend at work” will be measured by, “Employees treat each other with dignity/respect”.
6. “In the last six months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress” will be measured by, “My last performance evaluation was helpful”.
7. The MSA survey question “I often go home with feelings of satisfaction” will also be compared between the two departments as it is a direct question asked of employees about their overall satisfaction.

Both of these companies chosen by St. Vincent Hospital are considered leaders in the statistical analysis of their specialty, so the information will be both reliable and valid. Both tools have national data banks that give the hospital benchmarking information. The

Press-Ganey Inc. tool has been used since 2001 and hospital administration feels the information has been useful in determining the patient's satisfaction. The MSA survey has been used biannually since 1995. It also has provided hospital leaders with information used to improve the satisfaction of the employees.

Relationships between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction will provide the essence of this study. From this, an action plan can be suggested to increase scores for departments that struggle with similar satisfaction results. St. Vincent Hospital has not done a formal correlation between these two topics in the past. The limitation to this study is that the comparison will be done for departments X and Y only and the hospital would benefit this type of analysis to be done with more departments. It is felt, though, that starting with two large departments will make correlating and developing plans for other departments easier. Departments X and Y will be the pilot departments to determine if suggested HRD processes could be implemented in other departments with the same types of satisfaction scores.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study is to examine relationships between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction in a health care facility. Information was gathered using two survey tools that the hospital has been using to collect data. There has never been a formal comparison between the two tools to determine the relationship between happy employees and satisfied customers. This research will use two departments for the comparisons between areas that portray more satisfied customers against areas where customers are gauged to be less satisfied.

Employee Satisfaction Results

Employees of each department were given the opportunity to complete the employee satisfaction survey through either a paper format or an electronic format over a two week period. Department X had 33 respondents out of 53 for a response rate of 62%. Department Y had 40 respondents out of 44 for a response rate of 91%. Table 1 displays the results of the survey. The information documented is grouped into positive and negative responses rather than per degree of agreement or disagreement. This is to simplify the comparison to the customer satisfaction data which also will be documented in the positive and negative categories. The employee satisfaction printed results from the MSA Company do have the two sections identified in their reporting.

*Table 1**Employee Satisfaction Survey Results*

| | Department X Positive Results | Department Y Positive Results | Department X Negative Results | Department Y Negative Results |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Give clear working instructions | 27 | 40 | 6 | 0 |
| I have ample opportunity to use my abilities | 29 | 35 | 4 | 2 |
| Good communications with employees | 18 | 38 | 15 | 1 |
| Leadership seems interested in employees | 24 | 35 | 9 | 4 |
| Employees treat each other with dignity/respect | 28 | 35 | 9 | 2 |
| My last performance evaluation was helpful | 24 | 37 | 9 | 3 |
| I often go home with a feeling of satisfaction | 24 | 34 | 9 | 4 |

Note. The numbers recorded represent employees who chose answers in the two divisions of the survey (positive or negative) rather than numbers recorded in each degree of agreement or disagreement (1-6 ranking).

The one question that is most different between the two departments is, “Good communications with employees”. Department X has almost the same amount of positive responses to this question as negative responses. This may be an area of concentration for improvement among the leadership of department X. Department Y had all but one respondent answer this question positively. Two other questions that have a higher difference between the two departments are, “Give clear working instructions” and “Employees treat each other with dignity/respect”. Each of these questions had six more people in department Y give negative responses to both of the questions. Department Y overall had more positive responses to the survey questions than Department X.

Patient Satisfaction Results

The results of the patient satisfaction survey are taken from patients who received care in Departments Y and X during January through March 2005. Since the employee survey was administered in the first quarter of 2005, this particular set of patient satisfaction results will be the measurement of what the staff was demonstrating to their customers during the survey time. Some of the patients recorded in this time frame were cared for during the month of December, as there is a lag time of two-three weeks before a customer receives and then returns the survey. This will give us results from the patients cared for previous to the employee survey as well as those cared for as the survey was being administered.

The inpatient satisfaction survey had 427 respondents out of a possible 1288 surveys sent for a return rate of 33%. The Press-Ganey data does not provide a breakdown per department on the return rate. The 33% rate is considered significant according to Press-Ganey Associates. Each department had an average number of surveys

returned according to their history of returns. Department X had 118 surveys and Department Y had 123 surveys returned from all the patients discharged home. Table 2 contains the results of the patient satisfaction survey questions that have the most influence of overall patient satisfaction. Patients have to option to not answer all the questions on the survey if they do not feel they have an opinion on the topic. This will account for the discrepancy between the numbers of responses per question in relation to the total number of surveys. The results are classified into positive and negative responses similar to what was done with the employee satisfaction results. This will facilitate the comparison of both sets of data.

Table 2

Patient Satisfaction Survey Results

| | Department X Positive Results | Department Y Positive Results | Department X Negative Results | Department Y Negative Results |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Amount of attention paid to your special or personal needs | 106 | 117 | 11 | 5 |
| How well staff worked together to care for you | 107 | 116 | 9 | 5 |
| Nurses' attitude toward your requests | 113 | 117 | 5 | 4 |
| How well the nurses kept you informed | 109 | 114 | 8 | 7 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|---|---|
| Staff effort to include | | | | |
| you in decisions about | 87 | 100 | 8 | 8 |
| your treatment | | | | |
| How well your pain was | | | | |
| controlled | 95 | 118 | 8 | 0 |
| Promptness in | | | | |
| responding to the call | 109 | 115 | 5 | 8 |
| button | | | | |

Note. The numbers recorded represent patients who chose answers in two divisions of the survey (positive or negative) rather than numbers recorded in each degree of agreement or disagreement (1-5 ranking). In this study 'fair' responses are considered negative.

The mean score of all the questions of Department X is 87.3 and the mean score of Department Y is 91.7. The question that has the most difference in response is "How well your pain was controlled". Department Y had a larger amount of respondents and all rated this questions positively. Another question that had a larger difference is "Amount of attention paid to your special or personal needs". These two questions could be related as pain could be seen by the customer as a personal need and thus rate both these questions with the same type of opinion.

Summary

There are large differences in the employee satisfaction results between departments X and Y. The differences in the individual question results are not as large as compared to the mean scores of each department for all the questions combined. This is due to the consideration of the degrees of agreement or disagreement in the calculating of

the mean scores of the questions. This will be examined more in the discussion chapter of this research.

Chapter V: Discussion

Studying the relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction is a good business practice. In the health care industry this is particularly important as shortages are faced in many of the health care professions. There is also the aging of the general population requiring more service of the providers of health care. The general population is better educated in their illnesses and what to expect of the health care systems. Reviewing this information is important to the stability of St. Vincent Hospital in Green Bay, WI.

Limitations

The limitations to this study are:

1. Comparing results of only two departments of a facility that has 60 departments
2. Measurement of employee satisfaction every two years.
3. Not all customers are surveyed by the Press-Ganey tool. All patients who are discharged home receive the opportunity to complete the survey. Those discharged to other facilities are not given the opportunity.
4. Only a limited amount of customized questions can be asked on each survey which may impede obtaining of some vital information
5. The tools of this study have been in place for at least 3 years and options to utilize other tools is not available at this time
6. The MSA Company was not willing to share raw data scores to facilitate a true correlation of our employee data to the Press-Ganey customer satisfaction data. Therefore, the data was classified as positive or negative responses.

Conclusions

When looking at the data collected from both the patient/customer satisfaction surveys and the employee satisfaction survey, it becomes clear that there is a relationship between the two. The employees in Department X have some unsatisfied results when it comes to communication with their leaders as well as knowing what is expected of them in their jobs. These two questions are more than likely related as they both deal with communication issues. The lower score in the helpfulness of the employees' last evaluation may also be connected to both the general communications question as well as the clear working instructions. Staff members who do not know exactly what is expected of them will have a difficult time meeting performance expectations. This can be displayed by the perceptions of the customers this particular staff serves.

The customers of Department X show a lower level of satisfaction than those of Department Y. Particular questions that Department X had less positive responses to are dealing with pain control, attention to personal needs, and staff working together. These three questions can be related to communication issues among staff and their leaders. Does the staff understand the importance of pain control perceived by the patient? Is it communicated in the performance reviews? Do staff members work together to obtain pain relief for their clientele? There appears to be a relationship between these aspects of employee satisfaction and the patients' responses to their care questions in Department X.

Department Y recorded higher employee satisfaction scores than Department X as well as higher customer satisfaction scores. The patient satisfaction scores were not as different as expected by the information found in the literature review. It seemed that if the employees rank their satisfaction as high as they did for Department Y, that the

patient satisfaction scores would have been even higher. Yet, both employees and customers are more satisfied in Department Y.

When looking at the overall mean scores for all the patient satisfaction questions per department, there is a larger difference noted. Because this study looked at satisfaction in only two categories of positive and negative, it appears that taking into account the degrees of each may make a difference. There were degrees of positive satisfaction and negative satisfaction recorded through the Likert scales both survey tools used. These degrees may show the differences between these two departments to be more obvious than displayed when grouping the responses.

The results of this study of satisfaction of employees and customers of St. Vincent Hospital coincide with the research done on this topic. Satisfied employees will provide cares in such a way to satisfy the patients they care for. This concept is important to keep this employer as a leader in the health care field.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is to continue to try and obtain the raw data scores from the MSA Company so that true correlations to the questions can be obtained. This may be why there was no information found on the relationship between the two sets of questions in the literature review. If this is not possible, St. Vincent Hospital may want to research other vendors who would be willing to produce the raw scores without demographics to facilitate this type of research.

The second recommendation would be to produce this kind of information for all the departments and look for patterns that need improvement. Department directors may like the guidance that relating their employee satisfaction results with their patient

satisfaction results would produce. It would provide for more meaningful process improvements. This in turn can produce a better work environment for employees and better clinical outcomes for their patients.

The final recommendation is to begin work with Department X on communication issues that exist in the departments. The use of focus groups to share the results and subsequently solicit ideas on how to improve communication between the supervisors/directors and the staff would be an important first step. According to the literature review, staff feel empowered when they are a part of finding solutions to issues that affect them directly. Once the staff is empowered, the related communication issues will improve as staff will know their expectations and possibly begin to work together to help customers meet their goals. This is the essence of health care.

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