

1994

Analyzing customer service in publishing advertising

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San Jose State University, 1994

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**ANALYZING CUSTOMER SERVICE
IN PUBLISHING ADVERTISING**

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Psychology

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Jeffrey Jay Walikonis

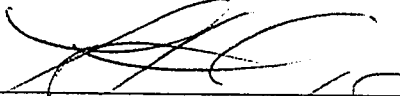
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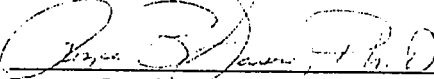
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ABSTRACT

ANALYZING CUSTOMER SERVICE IN PUBLISHING ADVERTISING

by Jeff Walikonis

Services are a large part of what we produce, consume, and export in this nation, thus it would be surprising if businesses weren't concerned about quality. This requires companies to discover what their customers want. This study was developed to help people assess how the extent of interaction with the customer might influence the rating of the service provided.

A total of 546 active advertisers, or their agencies, from three music trade publications, were chosen for this study. The results showed that the frequency of contact on five of seven different areas for contact significantly influenced the overall ratings of service towards being excellent. The remaining two results show a trend towards the same conclusion. These findings have important implications for organizations to identify the appropriate amount of contact their customers are looking for.

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Analyzing Customer Service
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Running Head: Analyzing Customer Service

Footnotes

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ABSTRACT

Services are a large part of what we produce, consume, and export in this nation, thus it would be surprising if businesses weren't concerned about quality. This requires companies to discover what their customers want. This study was developed to help people assess how the extent of interaction with the customer might influence the rating of the quality of service provided.

A total of 546 active advertisers, or their agencies, from three music trade publications, were chosen for this study. The results showed that the frequency of contact on five of seven different areas for contact significantly influenced the overall ratings of service towards being excellent. The remaining two results also show a trend towards the same conclusion. These findings have important implications for organizations to identify the appropriate amount of contact their customers are looking for.

Analyzing Customer Service In Publishing Organizations

America is realizing in order to be competitive in the world, much effort has to be exerted in controlling quality of products produced. To stay ahead of global competition in every product produced, companies must look for strategies to keep one step ahead of the thousands of companies trying to produce the same or similar product. If a company doesn't have something unique to offer its customers that will keep them coming back for more, they risk the possibility of going out of business. This realization has become evident for goods producers in recent years, and now is being realized in the service industry. Companies that produce services are literally scrambling to find the "key ingredient" that will keep consumers pleased with the service received. The purpose of this study is to discover if the amount of contact made to an advertising department affects the rating of overall service provided by the organization.

The central role of services in the current American economy is a key factor behind the rising prominence of service quality as an institutional and societal issue. Services are a large part of what we produce, consume, and export in this nation, thus it would be surprising if businesses weren't concerned about quality. Additionally, it has been shown that America is becoming increasingly dominated by the service sector (Bowen & Schneider, 1988; Mills & Morris, 1986). For example, it is estimated that in the year 2000, seventy-one percent of those engaged in paid employment will be in service industries (Statistical Abstracts, 1989).

A second factor behind the rising prominence of service quality is that superior quality is proving to be a winning competitive strategy. A few examples of such organizations well known by the world are McDonald's, which was started over 40 years ago, has over 10,000 restaurants nationwide and served over 55 billion hamburgers; Federal Express, who met the need of delivering small packages overnight and is able to

track the exact location of a package; and Nordstroms has the policy of the customer is always right. These examples from different industries illustrate the obsession for, and success of, providing quality service. These companies use service to be different, increase productivity, earn the customers' loyalty, and fan positive word-of-mouth advertising.

Companies have learned that to be able offer good services there must be an objective to achieve. This requires companies to discover what their customers want. Companies and consumers are finding that customer service is hard to rate because of its inexact nature and lack of a universal definition. One definition proposed is "a service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything . . . it may or may not be tied to a physical product" (Kotler, 1980). A second study defines service as the offerings of benefits and satisfactions to customers beyond the product itself which are controllable and which may or may not incur costs (Buswell, 1983). These definitions help give an overview of the ways that services can be produced, and who benefits from them.

Characteristics of Services

People don't fully realize the differences between services and tangible products, thus, the distinctions that show services uniqueness have been identified and are described in the following paragraphs. A central difference between service and manufacturing firms is that in service organizations customers are often physically present as the service is offered, unlike manufacturing firms where customers are rarely present during production. Because of the differences between the two industries, service industries face different problems than goods marketers.

Though much of the current literature deals with goods production, there are general themes in the literature regarding services quality and characteristics. These help

define what services are, and have been summarized by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990). These themes include:

Service quality is more difficult for the customer to evaluate than goods quality. This is due to the fact that goods are generally tangible and easy to scrutinize, while service quality is hard to quantify. For example, customers' assessment of the quality of health-care services is more complex and difficult than their assessment of the quality of automobiles. Therefore, the criteria customers use to evaluate service quality may be more difficult for the marketer to comprehend.

Customers do not evaluate service quality solely on the outcome of a service (e.g., how a customer's hair looks after a hair cut); they also consider the process of service delivery (e.g., how involved, responsive, and friendly the hair stylist was during the hair cut).

The only criteria that count in evaluating service quality are those defined by customers. Only customers judge quality; all other judgments are essentially irrelevant. Specifically, service-quality perceptions stem from how well a provider performs without taking into account how the provider should perform.

In trying to identify exactly what makes services unique, four characteristics have been outlined to show how hard it is to evaluate services in an effective manner. The first characteristic is intangibility. Because services are performances, rather than objects, and have no physical property, they cannot be seen, felt, tasted, or touched in the same manner in which goods can be sensed (Webster, 1990; Zeithaml, et al., 1985). We consume them, but do not possess them, often cannot see the result of their use, and seldom can we test a service in advance--thus making it difficult to evaluate a service in advance. It is noted by Shostack (1977) that the prototypical service, because of its intangibility, is experienced immediately in the way it is delivered. This means that a service is the

experience as it occurs, in contrast to a good, which can be experienced in other contexts and at other times. This factor makes internal marketing such a focus in many companies. If people are going to base their opinions of whether to use a company based on the service delivered, companies must be very careful who deals with the customers, and make sure they know what will leave the greatest impact.

A second unique characteristic of services is inseparability of production and consumption. Regan (1963) points out that while goods are produced, sold, and then consumed, services are sold, produced and consumed simultaneously. Because of this characteristic of inseparability, it is common for the buyer or recipient of the service to participate in producing the service, thereby affecting the performance and quality of the service. An example of this would be a bank teller that has to first, understand what the customer wants by listening to the request. Then the teller must produce the service immediately by completing the needed tasks in a timely and effective manner. Finally, the teller must end the interaction by asking if there is any other assistance which could be given at that particular time. The tone of voice used, eye contact, and successful completion of the customers request are important parts of this interaction and factors that make up the production of service. Unlike goods producers, service providers do not have the benefit of a factory serving as a buffer between production and consumption.

Another important characteristic of services is heterogeneity (Berry, 1980; Booms & Bitner, 1981), which describes the inability of a producer to provide consistent service performance and quality. The quality and essence of a service can vary from producer to producer, from customer to customer, and from day to day. This comes from basic human nature which says that people are not robots that act a certain way everyday. The example of the bank teller could be used again. The teller could provide great service one day and inappropriate service to the same person the next day just because they were having a

"bad" day. Knisely (1979) noted that "the level of consistency that you can count on and try to communicate to the customer is not a certain thing."

The final characteristic is perishability. This means that services cannot be saved. For instance, a restaurant customer can't keep the service a waiter gives them. They experience the service as it is given and will rate the restaurant by how they perceive the service given. Because of this, service industries find it difficult to plan for supply and demand of the service, and the match is quite often not made (Bessom & Jackson, 1975).

Companies are beginning to seriously look at these four factors. They are realizing that when they focus on the characteristics of service and act accordingly, excellent service will pay off because it creates true customers. These customers are those who are glad they selected a firm after the service experience, or who will use the firm again and sing the firm's praises to others (Zeithaml, et al., 1990). This would be evident in a fine restaurant with excellent waiters, in which people would continue to dine on a consistent basis.

In effect, since companies have been attempting to provide the best quality service, they have also begun to find they can achieve a better financial bottom line. This discovery is reinforcing them to increasingly perform better for their customers, and creating a cycle of great service for the customers and financial success for the company (Zeithaml, 1988). We see this evidenced in the paper and on the news every day when we hear about how successful a company has become because they have met the needs of their particular customers. Customers respond to these firms because they perceive more value in their services than in competitive offerings. Zeithaml (1988) goes on to define value as the customer's "overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given." Thus, customers will be more likely to use a particular firm's services again.

Past Research

Due to the obsession to be the "best" in service quality, firms have been attempting to discover how to achieve this goal. Thus, customer service in all industries has been the topic of research. Various studies have tried to discover what makes one certain organization good at customer service and another come up lacking in their ability to provide quality service.

A study by George and Jones (1991) found that quality customer service is viewed as customers receiving the level of service they desire. This entails service providers being sensitive to customers wishes and varying the provisions of customer service contingent upon their perceptions of what customers want. This will most likely lead to getting repeat business from the customer.

In trying to discover how to make a service relationship flourish and ratings of satisfaction in this relationship excel, one study found that the providers of service need to meet the expectations of those coming to receive the service (Burgoon, Pfau, Parrott, Birk, Coker, & Burgoon, 1987). Customers want to feel good about coming to a company and getting the things they expect out of the relationship. The results of this study also found that the amount of contact with the service provider had a direct effect on producing higher ratings of service, showing that service must meet the expectations of the customer.

Service providers, though, must not fall into the trap of thinking that all customer expectations are consistent and that high levels of service are universally valued. George and Jones (1991) found that different customers want different levels of service from the same organization and prefer service to meet their desires, not exceed them. This means that service quality can be determined by the difference between the level of service customers receive versus the level of service they desire or want. Also, this could mean

that too much service could be just as detrimental as too little service in terms of customers' perceptions of quality and satisfaction, which leads to organizational success. This further suggests that service providers must accurately perceive the differences in customers desires and be responsive to them.

In any business, the constant reminder that customers can and will go somewhere else to conduct their business makes companies try their best to provide the very best service. In reviewing the literature it was found that most prior research on customer satisfaction centered on the health industry. A study conducted by Levoy (1970) found that in doctor-patient relationships, the patient would go "doctor-shopping" most frequently if they felt they had an unsatisfactory relationship with their doctor. To help support these results, a study conducted by Kasteler et al. (1976) found that lack of confidence in and dissatisfaction with performance as significant reasons for "doctor-shopping."

In addition, it was found in the medical profession, where the patient relies quite exclusively on the doctor for service, service was rated higher if the doctor is able to satisfy the patients ideas of how accessible doctors should be. Patients usually have reasons they are in contact with their doctors. It was found if the doctors are accessible and help the patient through their illness, patients rated the service higher than those who felt they were not getting the treatment they were desiring (Street & Weimann, 1987).

Because the nature of service dictates that the provider of the service and the customer must come together in the delivery and receipt of services, these two people are physically and organizationally close. Customers often equate services with the employees who render them (Bowen, 1986; Shostack, 1977). This should motivate employers to be aware of the kind of contact their employees have with the customers, and exactly what kind of presentation is made to them. Front line employees can be a very valuable source

of information about customer preferences when decisions are being made about what new services to offer and how to deliver them.

In an attempt to find out the aspects of the employees skills that potential customers might pay attention to when choosing which company to do business with, several important characteristics have emerged that are worth noting in trying to identify what kind of employee that would be most appealing. Schneider (1980) found that employees should be courteous, have a helpful attitude, and provide prompt service. Weitz et al. (1986) also found that overall knowledge of the business, and being motivated were two of the most important factors potential customers identified they would look for when shopping around for the service firm to earn their business. Obviously, these factors are subjective, but when it could mean a satisfied client or turning one away, companies need to be aware how these factors tie into the different aspects of contact their employees will make with customers.

Overall, it was found in high contact service businesses, like restaurants, the quality of service is inseparable from the quality of the service provider. For example, if a waiter is rude, the customers probably won't eat at the particular restaurant again, especially if it is their first time. Human performance is part of the product and hence its quality and is judged accordingly (Berry, 1981). Carlzon (1987) found that employees remain the key to success at the "moments of truth," which is the time when the service provider and the customer meet and interact.

Providing good customer service has been found to create customers who will be loyal to a particular service organization (Parkington & Schneider, 1979). This should make companies constantly modify their services to assure they are truly meeting the needs of the customers they are trying to reach. Klaus (1985) found that customer service

quality directly influences the productivity of service organizations, and hence their continued success in an ever changing market.

Summary

Service is becoming such a great part of what America is all about. Therefore, it is important to discover what it takes to find the "key ingredient" in providing good service. Services are harder to rate than goods which makes it hard to find areas of improvement. Services have unique characteristics of intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity, and perishability.

Past research has identified the need for organizations to pinpoint what customers are looking for in the service relationship and try and meet these expectations. In trying to meet these expectations, the service provided will hopefully create repeat business. There are certain characteristics customers look for in a service provider; for example, being courteous, having a helpful attitude, and providing prompt service (Schneider, 1980). Past theory has not given much room for the input of the customer, but this notion is changing.

Listening to customers has proven vital as the input they provide has helped certain companies succeed beyond expectations (George & Jones, 1991; Bowen, 1977). It has been found that there is a "good" level of service. Too much or too little service can both be detrimental. All these items have been identified as being important in providing good service.

Current Study

Past research has shown that companies have been mainly interested in the characteristics of the service provider and the impression they might leave on the customer (Schneider, 1980; Weitz et al., 1986). To look further into the interaction between the provider and the recipient, this study evaluated a direction not previously studied at any

great length. This study assessed the relationship of the frequency of, and reason for, the interaction between the provider with the recipient of the service and how this might affect the rating of the services.

There is a reason for every interaction in providing customer service. This study was developed to evaluate how the extent of interaction with the customer might influence the rating of the service provided. It was designed to look at advertisers' overall rating of a music magazine publishing company in the South Bay. The company used in this research is a publisher of three music magazines that were directed towards current musicians or people interested in keeping up on the latest equipment used by the popular artists. For each magazine there is an advertising department which sells ad space to manufacturers of various products that could be useful to the readership.

Keeping these magazines in production requires the income that comes from the advertisements. The advertising department is in constant contact with the different manufacturers or agencies for the larger manufacturers. This contact is to keep the relationship between these two parties active and hopefully mutually beneficial. This interaction requires the advertising personnel in the company to provide customer service to the advertisers.

The company studied was trying to discover how to provide better service for their customers. As has been pointed out earlier, in any service industry there is a need to adhere to the characteristics of "good service" in order to provide the best service possible in hopes of getting return visits from customers. One of the factors of "good service" shown to be important is the personal characteristics of the provider (e.g. friendly, knowledgeable, and courteous). This factor has been used to rate the effectiveness of the services provided by assessing if customers return for a second time.

As mentioned above, the interaction of the service provider and recipient has been shown to be very crucial in feelings of satisfaction by the participants. Since the interaction is important, the frequency and reason for the contact that a customer had with a service provider could be a second factor that would make a difference on the rating of the effectiveness of the services provided, thus hopefully producing a return visit.

The purpose of the present study was to examine whether overall ratings of service in the subject company are related to the amount of, and reason for, the contact between the provider and customer. Areas included in this study are:

1. Advertisers of the three music magazines studies have specific reasons for contacting the publisher on a monthly basis. These reasons are: Upcoming Issue Information, Current Market Trends, Advertiser Marketing Objectives, Developing Ad Strategies, Confirming an Ad in an Issue, Ad Material, and Deadline status for an Issue.
2. These advertisers were asked to rate their opinions of the optimum level on contact they had had for the above mentioned reasons as well as their overall rating of the service provided by the advertising department.

This study has seven hypotheses, each proposing that those advertisers who feel the level of contact on each of the reasons for the contact is "Just Right," will rate the overall level of service higher than those that feel they have "Too much" or "Too little" contact with the advertising department.

Method

Subjects

A total of 546 active advertisers, or agencies for the advertisers, from three music trade publications, were chosen for this study. This group comprised the total number of advertisers worldwide that had placed an advertisement in these three publications within the last year, and did not have delinquent accounts. The people responding were primarily

either the owner(s) of a certain manufacturing company, if it was small, or a representing agency for those manufacturers who were larger.

Instrument

A survey consisting of twenty-eight questions (see Appendix A) was created assessing five steps in the process of advertising in this company's magazines. The section of the survey primarily used in this research assessed the service provided during the development and placement of the advertisement in the publications. This section attempted to identify how advertisers felt regarding their direct contact with the advertising department.

There were seven reasons why advertisers would have contact with the advertisement department. The first, Upcoming Issue Information, gives the advertisers information on what issues might be highlighted in a particular issue which would help them know where their advertisement monies could be spent. Second, Market Trends helped the advertiser know what issues were the latest "gizmos" on the market and where the music industry might be headed. The third reason, Marketing Objectives, helped the advertiser identify the market they were trying to reach. This again would help them spend their advertising dollar most effectively. Fourth, in Developing Ad Strategies, the advertisement department could help the advertiser develop ads that would reach the largest part of their market. Fifth, Confirming Advertisement in an Issue is important to be sure that a developed advertisement was actually placed into the magazine it was intended to be included in. The sixth reason, Ad Material, is where the advertising department would identify if the materials would be changing or if the same ad would be placed in consecutive issues as is. The last reason was Deadline Status, which is when an advertiser would contact the department to assure that all needed materials had been received on time for placement in a particular issue.

The other sections of this survey dealt with who the person responding was and frequency of placing an advertisement; the print quality that ad traffic gives in an issue; the service that the accounting department provided and how it might be improved; and assessing how this publishers' magazines compared with the competition; as well as getting feedback about the improvements that could be made.

The focus of this survey was to see if there was a breakdown somewhere in the process of trade magazine advertising that would hinder a potential advertiser from placing an advertisement and may consider a competitive magazine, and, thus hindering revenue from reaching this publisher.

Procedure

A survey, consisting of twenty-eight questions was mailed to all 546 advertisers and asked them to take a few minutes to complete the survey (see Appendix A). Honest feedback was requested and the advertisers were told their input would be used to enhance the working relationship, the publication(s), and, ultimately, the value and effectiveness of the clients' advertising. The survey was designed so that the advertiser would complete the survey, seal it, and mail it back self addressed and pre-stamped.

Results

Survey results covered responses from companies around the world that advertised in the three magazines published by the company. Due to the response rate obtained (roughly 15%) the totals from the three advertising departments were being combined for analysis as all the departments offer the same services to their perspective customers.

The rating of overall service provided by the advertising departments was the focus of this study. The hypotheses state that those advertisers who felt they were receiving the "right" amount of service for the seven reasons contact would be made, would rate the level of overall service as being higher than those that felt they were

receiving either "Too much" or "Too little" service. To test these hypothesis, separate chi square statistics were computed using each of the seven reasons that an advertiser, or their agents, would have contact with the advertising department. These reasons were Upcoming Issue Information, Market Trends, Marketing Objectives, Developing Ad Strategies, Confirming Advertisement in an Issue, Ad Material, and Deadline Status. To help in the analysis, the values of "Too much," "Too little" and "Never" for the above mentioned variables were combined into the value of "Not just right"; this was compared against the value "Just right" in evaluating level of contact. In addition, the values of "Satisfactory" and "Poor" for the dependent variable overall satisfaction were combined into "Satisfactory or less"; the other levels of satisfaction being "Excellent" and "Good."

The chi square for those advertisers who contact the advertisement department to Confirm An Advertisement In An Upcoming Issue was significant [$\chi^2 (2) = 11.08, p < .05$] (see Table 1). Specifically, 54.0% of those advertisers who felt the amount of contact with advertisement department was "Just right" in confirming their advertisement rated the overall level of service as being "Excellent," while only 9.1% of those who felt the level of contact was "Not just right" rated the level of service as "Excellent."

For those advertisers who contacted the advertisement department for Marketing Objectives the chi square was significant [$\chi^2 (2) = 11.92, p < .05$] (see Table 2). For advertisers whose contact with the advertisement department was "Just right," 66.7% rated the overall service as being excellent, whereas only 30.6% of those who felt the amount of contact was "Not just right" rated the overall service as being "Excellent."

The chi square for Issue Information was significant, showing that customers who felt that their contact with the advertisement department was "Just right" rated overall service higher than those who felt the level of contact "Not just right" [$\chi^2 (2) = 6.80, p < .05$] (see Table 3). Specifically, 56.5% of advertisers who rated the level of contact "Just

Table 1

Overall Rating of Service, Level of Contact On Confirming Ad in Issue

		Level of Contact			
		Not Just Right	Just Right	TOTAL	
Overall Rating of Service	Excellent	N	1	34	35
		%	9.1%	54.0%	47.3%
	Good	N	5	22	27
		%	45.5%	34.9%	36.5%
	Satisfactory or Less	N	5	7	12
		%	45.5%	11.1%	16.2%
TOTAL		N			74
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi Square = 11.08		df = 2	sig. = .003		

Table 2

Overall Rating of Service, Level of Contact On Marketing Objectives

		Level of Contact		
		Not Just Right	Just Right	TOTAL
Overall Rating of Service	Excellent	N 11 % 30.6%	22 66.7%	33 48.5%
	Good	N 15 % 41.7%	10 30.3%	25 36.2%
	Satisfactory or Less	N 10 % 27.8%	1 3.0%	11 15.9%
	TOTAL	N % 100.0%	100.0%	69 100.0%

Chi Square = 11.92 df = 2 sig. = .002

Table 3

Overall Rating of Service, Level of Contact On Upcoming Issue Information

		Level of Contact		
		Not Just Right	Just Right	TOTAL
Overall Rating of Service	Excellent	N 7 % 30.4%	26 56.5%	33 47.8%
	Good	N 9 % 39.1%	16 34.8%	25 36.2%
	Satisfactory or Less	N 7 % 30.4%	4 8.7%	11 15.9%
TOTAL		N % 100.0%	100.0%	69 100.0%
Chi Square = 6.80		df = 2	sig. = .03	

right" felt the service received from the advertising department regarding issue information was "Excellent," compared with 30.4% of those who felt the level service was "Not just right."

The fourth chi square was done for those advertisers who contacted the advertisement department to talk about Deadline Status for placing their advertisements. This analysis revealed significant results [$\chi^2 (2) = 10.22, p < .05$] (see Table 4). Advertisers who thought the level of contact with the advertisement department was "Just right," 49.2% felt the overall service was "Excellent." In contrast, 40.0% of those who felt the level of contact was "Not just right" rated the overall level of service as being "Excellent."

A chi square looking at those advertisers who contacted the advertisement department to discuss Advertisement Material was significant [$\chi^2 (2) = 6.00, p < .05$] (see Table 5). For those advertisers who rated the level of contact as being "Just right," 87.1% felt the overall service was "Excellent" and "Good." Sixty percent, though, of those who thought the level of contact was "Not just right" also rated the level of service as being "Excellent."

The chi square for contact on Market Trends was not significant, showing that contact with the advertisement department being "Just right" did not produce higher ratings of the overall service [$\chi^2 (2) = 3.58, p > .05$] (see Table 6). For market trends, 61.5% of those rating the amount of contact as "Just right" gave an overall rating of "Excellent," while 40.5% of those who felt the amount of contact was "Not just right" gave rating of the service being "Excellent."

The final chi square was done to look at those advertisers who contacted the advertisement department for Developing Advertisement Strategies. This chi square approached significance [$\chi^2 (2) = 5.84, p = .053$] (see Table 7). Advertisers who

Table 4

Overall Rating of Service, Level of Contact On Issue Deadline Status

		Level of Contact			
		Not Just Right	Just Right	TOTAL	
Overall Rating of Service	Excellent	N	4	31	35
		%	40.0%	49.2%	47.9%
	Good	N	1	25	26
		%	10.0%	39.7%	35.6%
	Satisfactory	N	5	7	12
			50.0%	11.1%	16.4%
TOTAL		N			73
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi Square = 10.22		df = 2	sig. = .006		

Table 5

Overall Rating of Service, Level of Contact For Material

		Level of Contact		
		Not Just Right	Just Right	TOTAL
Overall Rating of Service	Excellent	N 5	29	34
		% 50.0%	46.8%	47.2%
	Good	N 1	25	26
		% 10.0%	40.3%	36.1%
	Satisfactory or Less	N 4	8	12
		% 40.0%	12.9%	16.7%
	TOTAL	N 72		
		% 100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi Square = 6.00		df = 2	sig. = .04	

Table 6

Overall Rating of Service, Level of Contact On Current Market Trends

		Level of Contact			
		Not Just Right	Just Right	TOTAL	
Overall Rating of Service	Excellent	N	17	16	33
		%	40.5%	61.5%	48.5%
	Good	N	16	8	24
		%	38.1%	30.8%	35.3%
	Satisfactory or Less	N	9	2	11
		%	21.4%	7.7%	16.2%
TOTAL		N	68		
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi Square = 3.58		df = 2	sig. = .16		

Table 7

Overall Rating of Service, Level of Contact on Developing Ad Strategies

		Level of Contact			
		Not Just Right	Just Right	TOTAL	
Overall Rating of Service	Excellent	N	17	16	33
		%	38.6%	64.0%	47.8%
	Good	N	17	8	25
		%	38.6%	32.0%	36.2%
	Satisfactory or Less	N	10	1	11
		%	22.7%	4.0%	15.9%
TOTAL	N			69	
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Chi Square = 5.84		df = 2	sig. = .053		

contacted the advertisement for developing strategies and felt the amount of contact was "Just right," 64.0% rated the overall level of service as being "Excellent." In addition, 38.6% of those that felt that the amount contact was "Not just right" still rated the overall level of service as being "Excellent."

These results show us that even though certain advertisers might not rate the level of contact with the advertisement department as being "Just right," they still lean more towards rating the level of service as being "Excellent." It further shows that advertisers will rate service as being "Just right" rather than "Not just right" if they feel the service they did receive was "Excellent."

Discussion

The purpose of this current study was to see if the amount of contact advertisers had with their respective advertising departments would affect the rating of overall service. It was hypothesized that those advertisers who felt the level of contact was "Just right" would be more likely to rate the overall level of service provided as being "Excellent" than those who felt the level of service was "Not just right." Support was found for this hypothesis in getting significant results in five of seven of the separate chi-square analyses conducted. These analyses show that those advertisers that were in contact with the advertising department felt they were getting the right amount of service and in turn were able to rate the overall level of service as being excellent.

For those two chi-square analyses not significant, those advertisers who felt they were getting just the right amount of service, the trend was still present to rate the overall level of service as being "Excellent" instead of "Good," or "Satisfactory or less." It should be further noted that advertisers who rated the overall level of service as being "Excellent" still felt the level of service was "Just right" instead of "Not just right."

Implications of Study

Companies who want to stay in business will usually try to identify what is an optimum level of service they should provide. It is thought that people will be more likely to use a companies services if they feel they are having their needs met. As noted previously, service providers must be sensitive to the wishes and desires of what the customers want and vary the services accordingly (George & Jones, 1991).

In general, this study shows that getting feedback on whether the needs of the customers are being met which could affect having repeat customers. In prior research it was found that people come to organizations hoping to find the kind of service they want and have come to expect (Levoy, 1970; Street & Weimann, 1987). If they don't receive what they perceive to be an optimum level of service, they will most likely go to a different organization in hopes of finding this "great level" of service.

This research further points out the need to try and specify the exact reasons people are coming to the organization. If the company isn't aware of what services their customers are looking for, there is no possible way that the customers expectations can even be met. Identification of the customers expectations would come from analyzing who their customers really are and what they are trying to achieve. If this can be identified, the organization could target the services to help the customers advance in whatever goal they feel they need to achieve.

More specific to the company studied, this study shows that the advertising department is meeting the needs of the customers on five of the main reasons they would have contact with each other. This shows that the company studied is aware of the contact made with each advertiser and is adjusting the amount of contact with each advertiser. This also shows that the proper level of contact is being given to each

advertiser to help keep them from feeling overwhelmed and choosing not to use this source of advertising.

This is also good for the company because it gives them knowledge that their employees, who are the front line contact with the advertisers, are able to identify what the advertisers are looking for in their advertising. This will most likely result in continued contact with the company.

Of particular note for the company is the results for the level of contact on confirming an advertisement in an issue. Since there was such a wide margin in those advertisers who felt that the level of contact was "just right" versus those that felt the level was "not just right," confirming an advertisement must be of great concern to advertisers. This would make sense, because if an advertisement was not in a particular issue, for whatever reason, the revenue it was supposed to generate would be lost. This could hurt both parties in the long run.

In addition, the advertisers showed that they felt the level of contact for developing their marketing objectives, which would assure that the advertisement was reaching the musicians it was intended to reach was important. Since the coverage of different topics varies so greatly from issue to issue, it is beneficial for the advertiser to know what will be covered in the main theme of a particular issue, so advertising could be targeted accordingly. Contact for upcoming issue information, which would help the advertiser to know which issue to place an advertisement to reach a particular readership was also shown to be important to the advertisers.

For issue deadline status, there was not a significant difference in the findings for the level of contact. Most advertisers are aware of when the time frame for "closing" an issue comes up. Being in contact with the advertising department for deadline status

would primarily be for a new advertiser who isn't aware of the time frames, and may be disappointed if they are not able to place an ad.

Being in contact for advertising material was shown to be significant, and had a greater number of advertisers feeling the service was "just right." This follow up is usually initiated by the advertising contact within the magazine. This shows that confirming if the advertising layout and materials is to stay the same, or if it will change, is important for the advertisers. Advertisers want to feel their advertisement is important to the magazine no matter what the size or content.

The results for contact on current market trends, as well as for developing advertisement strategies did not produce significant results. The results show that for advertisers, who rated service as being excellent, there was a perception that the level of contact for these two areas came up lacking. This could mean that advertisers don't necessarily know what the current market trends are, and in turn are needing help in developing advertising strategies to try and meet those trends.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths of this study can be found in getting results from advertisers who have direct contact with the advertising department. In larger companies which have agencies working for them, the people running the organization would never have any direct contact with the advertising company unless there was a huge dilemma. This could lead to companies not being aware of where their monies are being spent and if they are actually getting a good return for their money.

The results obtained in this study reflect, the opinions of the owners of the companies actually manufacturing the products that are being advertised. This gives the results the true perceptions of the people who purchased the advertising space in the magazines. This is opposed to agencies or third parties who really don't have as big a

stake in the success of the company they are representing, thus don't keep as close of an eye on the "bottom line" in the profits.

The possible weakness found in this study is the amount of returns on the survey (roughly 15%). Having this rate of return could lead to the assumption that the views expressed in the results cannot be generalized to the rest of the population. A low rate of return could mean the organizations don't care what the service they receive is like, or maybe they are so displeased they don't want to take the time to even acknowledge their displeasure, thus not allowing the company to try and rectify the problem.

If the company doesn't get a good return, advertisers opinions which could greatly improve the quality and even quantity of the service, would never be known. This could mean that if they aren't aware of what their customers are looking for, they will not know how to meet their needs. This could potentially lead to lost revenue from advertisers who switch to a different magazine to market their products.

A second weakness might be the instrument. One section dealt with the amount of contact with the advertisement department. The survey asked the advertisers to rate how they felt in regards to being in receipt of the service. The survey did not look at what factors might cause a change from "Just right" to "Not just right." By being able to identify what would make this change, the organization could target specific areas of concern and keep their customer base intact and attract future business.

Future Research

Regarding future research, the author suggests that a study be conducted identifying the point where advertisers change their rating of "Just right" service to "Not just right." This could be done by developing a survey that would list out, first, the exact times there would be contact, for example "once a month," "twice a month." The survey could further ask more specifics on how each encounter went and what was discussed to

see if there was a particular point in the process of placing an advertisement where the communication might have broken down. This survey could be sent to the person that would be responsible for actually placing the advertisement from first contact to payment for the ad. This could help companies identify what amount of service is too much which could also lead a company to be "chased away" from continuing to advertise.

A second recommendation for future research involves the frequency of an advertisement being placed in a magazine and how that might affect the overall rating of service. The frequency of the advertisement being placed would automatically change the amount of contact made with the advertising department. Research to this end might discover if deadlines that are mandatory in producing a magazine could add unneeded pressure to keep track of the progress on each advertisement placed. An added factor is if the ad changes in its design or if it is always exactly the same and then the only issue would be placement within a particular issue.

Conclusion

This study has assessed how advertisers feel in regards to the amount of contact in seven categories at a service organization. Services, by their very nature, are difficult for customers and organizations alike to rate. This study has identified the specific reasons customers would contact the company studied and it was found that the level of contact does make difference in the ratings given. This is important because it shows that if companies are able to identify the needs of their customers, they will be more able to closely match their expectations and hopefully gain their repeat business.

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1. Are you a: Manufacturer Agency Other _____
2. Which magazine(s) do you (or your client) advertise in, and how long have you advertised in them? How long
 Guitar Player _____
 Keyboard _____
 Bass Player _____
3. How often do you place advertising in our magazine(s)?
 Monthly Bi-Monthly Quarterly Less
4. What size of advertisement do you usually place?
 1/6 page or smaller 1/4 1/3 1/2 2/3 FP
5. Do you read our magazine(s)?
 Cover to Cover Ads Only Articles Only Not at all
6. Do you receive our monthly mailings about upcoming issue contents?
 Always Usually Seldom Never
7. If so, do you find the monthly mailing useful? Yes No
8. If "No", what kind of information would you find most useful?

9. Does the editorial content of an upcoming issue influence your decision to advertise in that issue?
 Always Sometime Seldom Never
10. Do you track response to your ads in our magazine(s)?
 Always Usually Seldom Never
11. If so, how do you do it? _____
12. If your ads solicit reader response, is that response satisfactory?
 Always Usually Seldom Not Applicable
13. Have you ever consulted with our advertising department about developing/creating more effective ads? Yes No
14. If "No", why not? _____
15. Are you pleased with the location of your ads in our issues?
 B/W Always Usually Seldom Never
 4/C Always Usually Seldom Never
16. Do you receive your complimentary subscription? Yes No
17. How often do you have contact with your ad representative(s)?
 By Phone Too often Not often enough Just right
 In Person Too often Not often enough Just right
18. Please check off the reasons and frequency you have contact with your ad representative(s):
- | | <u>Too often</u> | <u>Not enough</u> | <u>Just right</u> | <u>Never</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Upcoming issue info. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Market trends | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your marketing objectives | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Developing ad strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Confirming ad in an issue | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ad material | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Deadline status | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

19. Rate overall service provided by our advertising department:
 Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor
20. How might the ad department be of greater assistance to you?

21. Are you generally pleased with the printed quality of your ads in our issues?
 B/W Always Usually Seldom Never
 4/C Always Usually Seldom Never
22. Have you contacted our San Francisco office (Ad Traffic) directly concerning your advertising artwork? Yes No
23. If "Yes", how would you rate the service you received?
 Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor
 Comments: _____

24. Have you communicated directly with our accounting department in New York regarding your account? Yes No Not applicable
25. If "Yes", how would you rate the service you received?
 Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor
 Comments: _____

26. Please tell us which magazines you (or your client) advertise in, and rate their advertising effectiveness.

<u>Check Applicable</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Terrible</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Bass Player	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Musician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Guitar Extra	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Guitar for the Prac. Musician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Guitar Player	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Guitar School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Guitar World	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Home & Studio Recording	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Keyboard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mix	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Musician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. What do you (or your client) like most/least about advertising in our magazine(s)?
 Most: _____

Least: _____

28. What are your suggestions (if any) for improving our overall service to you?

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To: Jeff Walikonis
2319 Middleton Dr.
Campbell, Ca 95008

From: Serena W. Stanford *Serena W. Stanford*
AAVP, Graduate Studies and Research

Date: October 4, 1992

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

"Discovery Customer Service in Publishing Advertising"

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the anonymity of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to any and all data that may be collected from the subjects. The Board's approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Dr. Serena Stanford immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma and release of potentially damaging personal information.

Please also be advised that each subject needs to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate or withdrawal will not affect any services the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

If you have questions, please contact me at 408-924-2480.

CC: Howard Tokunaga