

# **Customer Centricity at Saudi Telecommunication Company (STC)**

## **An Investigation of User Perspectives on Customer Centricity At Saudi Telecom Call Center**

Document One

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## **1 Overview**

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Until recently the Saudi telecommunications market was controlled by a single state-owned organization. This monopoly is now broken so that the Saudi market to day, contains two telecommunications companies as competitors, namely, Saudi Telecom Company, the former monopoly, and Etisalat Consortium, the new operator (CITC, 2006). This research will examine how Saudi Telecom Company (STC) can cope with the competitive market, enhance the customer services activities and establish policies and activities, which lead STC to be a customer centric organization in order to retain its customers, position, and market share.

The following section will provide a primary background to Saudi telecommunications market as well as the Saudi Telecom Company.

A brief introduction of contact centers at Saudi Telecom Company which are under this study will be discussed in the following sections. Customer centricity for organizations is a very essential subject and considered to be one of the corner stones to most of the companies. The importance of this approach will also be discussed briefly in the next section.

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## **2 The Subject and Objectives**

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### **Background to Saudi Telecom Company and Saudi Telecom market:**

The Saudi Telecom Company (STC) was established on 21 April 1998, following Royal Decree No. M/35 and the Council of Ministers' Decision No. 135, directed at transferring the telecommunications sector from the Ministry of Posts, Telegraphs, and Telephone to a Saudi joint stock company under the name of the Saudi Telecom Company (Al-Anssary, 1999). On 20 April 1998, the basic regulation for the company was approved, in accordance with the Council of Ministers' Decision No. 213, and the company started its work by providing telecommunications services throughout the Kingdom on May 1998 (Al-Anssary, 1999).

The Saudi Telecom Company obtained its commercial registration number 101050239 as a Saudi joint stock company on 29 June 1998 (Al-Anssary, 1999). As a result, the company became responsible for providing a chain of communications services, such as mobile telephones, landlines (local, national, and international), telex services, telegraphs, data transfer, rental lines, public telephones, public net services, wireless and internet services (Al-Anssary, 1999).

The establishment of STC was the first step towards the privatization and development of the telecommunications sector, as well as towards the opening of the market. At the end of 2002, the Saudi Government announced that 30 percent of Saudi Telecom shares would be released for sale to Saudi citizens and organizations: Saudi citizens (twenty percent), the General Organization of Social Insurance (GOSI) (five percent), and the Pension Fund Organization (five percent). By the end of the subscription period, requests for shares exceeded the number offered by a factor of 3.5 (STC, 2006a). The company started its activities with a clear vision and mission:

The Vision is to provide timely, integrated telecom solutions that provide optimum value to all stakeholders;

The Mission is to enrich peoples' personal lives and contribute to their business success by offering high quality communications services that reflect their true needs and be the

flagship of Saudi Arabian values and progress by acting as an economic and intellectual asset to its shareholders, customers, and employees (STC, 2006a).

According to the STC report issued in 2006 (STC Annual Report, 2006), the number of services, such as mobile telephones, landlines and DSL, had increased as follows:

1. From 2.500.000 in 2001, mobile telephone lines increased by 420 percent to reach 13 million at the end of 2006.
2. From 2.200.000 in 2001, the number of landlines increased by 81.8182 percent to reach 4 million at the end of 2006.
3. From 83 in 2001, the number of DSLs increased by 252912 percent to reach 210.000 at the end of 2006. (STC, 2006a).

Furthermore, Saudi Telecom magazine (STC, 2006) reported that the company had been marked by Al-Iqtisadiyah newspaper in third position among the 100 biggest Saudi companies. The Al-Iqtisadiyah report commended STC's determination to meet its customer's needs and evaluated the work mechanism inside the company where all individuals, employees and managers work as a team to meet customers' needs and expectations.

Undoubtedly, these are some factors that have helped the company to develop and increase its services as well as its customer base. These include the fact that the company has a wide-ranging infrastructure around the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Al-Anssary, 1999). Moreover, the company has implemented some customer centricity programmes that attract and retain customers (more information about these programmes will be given in the next documents).

According to Kotler and Keller (1994) companies are classified by the role they play in the target market; leader, challenger, follower, or nicher. They added that, forty percent of the market is in the hands of a market leader, thirty percent in the hands of a market challenger, while twenty percent is in the hands of market follower, which is a company that is willing to retain its market share without rocking the boat. The remaining ten percent is in the hands of market nichers, which are companies that serve small market segments not being served by larger companies.

According to this classification, the STC is regarded as the leader in the Saudi telecommunications market, because it was the first company in the market and it serves the majority of Saudi people, with more than 13 million mobile phones and more than 4 million landlines (STC Annual Report, 2006)

However, Mobily which is the official brand name of Etihad Etisalat (Etisalat Consortium) is regarded as the market challenger, because it is growing faster. It has more than 5 million subscribers at the end of its first operational year (Ameinfo, 2006).

### **Brief overview of STC Contact Centers**

Saudi Telecom Company (STC) currently provides telecom services to its customers through customer service offices, contact centers, STC website, and other means.

Within its customer focus strategy and in order to meet the rising demand and confront the competition challenges, STC has expanded the role of contact centers to include provision of all telecom services in addition to the original inquiry function. Contact centers which are dispersed to cover all the geographical areas of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam), are currently the main unit in STC responsible for serving customers particularly after retail of most of the customer service offices. To undertake the task of serving STC customer effectively, contact centers have been provided with the necessary skilled manpower and equipped with advanced equipment and systems such as the Integrated Customer Management System (ICMS), Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and the Automatic Call Distributor (ACD).

A recent report (STC Annual Report, 2006) showed that the total manpower of contact centers is around 1500 employees working on shift bases all day round and that contact centers receive through ICMS a huge amount of calls ranging between 800.000 to one million calls daily, 80 percent of them are automatically transferred to the IVR while the operators handle 20 percent of the calls. In addition, more than 700.000 services are provided through Short Message System (SMS). Performance key indicators of standards are applied in the call centers to ensure that high standard of service are delivered to STC customers.

### **Why study customer-centricity at Saudi Telecom?**

The revolution in the telecommunication industries across the world during the last decade has largely been driven by the technological advancement and liberalization of the market

through a series of privatization and regulatory actions. One already known outcome of these trends has been the empowerment of the end user, or the customer. The changing expectations of the Saudi consumer from telecommunications services will be the single most important driver of Saudi Telecom's transformation in the coming years. And this customer-centric transformation will require changes in organization, processes, mind sets of the staff, and underlying technologies, but will ultimately help creating a significant competitive advantage for Saudi Telecom Company (STC), one its competitors will find very difficult to copy. This study of customer centricity at STC aims to highlight, define and investigate this sustainable competitive advantage we will call "customer-centricity" in Saudi Telecom contact centers and discuss its rationale and benefits.

The recent advancements in information and telecommunication technologies present opportunities as well as threats for the operators. Customers want it all, cheaper solutions that are tailored to them, supported via seamless experiences in contact centers, retail shops and online. The difficulties consumers face in trying to adopt advanced technologies and the complexity of their support requires the new skills from telecommunication agents working at contact centers who should value the importance of being a customer-centric. Both incumbent such as STC and challenger operators such as Mobily alike are making plans to capture potential margins available from bundled multi-play solutions, but the risk of failing to deliver the right customer experience by those agents at contact centers during the adoption process is an equally strategic topic.

Liberalization of national telecommunication market worldwide brought consolidation across borders, thereby, creating unprecedented scale for some early movers like Deutsche Telekom, France Telekom and Vodafone. These companies have learned to share best practice in marketing, selling and servicing their customers across their individual country operations; creating a wonderful test-bed for hundreds of new and innovative customer initiatives to accelerate penetration, reduce churn etc. It should be of no surprise that these organizations posed a significant threat in every new country they operate. Not only did their effective acquisition campaigns result in heavy churn to incumbents, but these challengers also learned to cherry-pick and therefore even more heavily bleed the incumbents in profit terms.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not an exception to these global developments. The Kingdom opened its market to competition and privatized 30 percent of the previously,

fully and publicly owned Saudi Telecommunication Company. The stakes were tremendous for Saudi Telecom and know that, it is facing competition from a new entrant Mobily. This challenger gained remarkable market share not only due to its aggressive pricing, but also because of some of the unsatisfied Saudi Telecom customers who were waiting for a new competitor to jump ship.

With more competition coming in and defensive multiple-play solution bundle offerings emerging; Saudi Telecom will find it more and more difficult, yet critical to protect its best customers. Customer centricity will take on a different meaning for Saudi Telecom in this new era. It is not another management fad but a strategic and imperative to make its best customers less sensitive to competitive offers by giving them a very compelling reason to stay with Saudi Telecom.

Danish Roland, *et al. ed* (2006) stated that the importance of Customer Centricity has only been introduced by the business community. Only less than 20 percent of marketing organization among the global 1000 enterprises will have evolved added processes and capabilities and as mentioned with the same report that by the year 2007, marketers who devote at least 50 percent of their time to advance customer centric approach will achieve a marketing ROI that is at least 30 percent greater than that of their rivals who lack such an approach.

Saudi Telecom like most service businesses and most other telecommunication operators command a diverse customer base in terms of expectation from telecommunication operators and regular telecommunications and home entertainment spending. And since Saudi Telecom still commands the largest market share in the Kingdom, every new challenger has their eyes set on Saudi Telecom's most profitable customers. Customer-centricity journey is the path Saudi Telecom must follow to protect and grow its most promising customer relationships.

The aim of Saudi Telecom should then be making its best, most profitable and high potential customers and less sensitive to competitor offers by engaging into learning relationships with them where Saudi Telecom will learn something new about these customers' expectations in every interaction at contact centers and tailors its service offer or treatment as a result. The competitive advantage of any organization comes from its

ability to learn more about the customer valuable segments faster than the competition and then turn that knowledge into action faster than they can.

### **Primary objective of the study**

The primary objective of this study is to measure and analyze the level of customer experience and employee satisfaction at Saudi Telecom Company (STC) and its relation to the level of customer centricity awareness of the contact centers' agents.

### **The importance of the study**

Competition in the Saudi telecommunications industry is getting very severe and the current operators are striving to maintain and grow its market share. Customers have more alternatives and choices. They look for extra services and customer service handling better than before. No study has yet been carried out in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to investigate and analyze the linkages among the three main concepts namely, customer experience, employee satisfaction, and the customer centricity awareness of the front line staff. Customer centricity awareness of the company employees is the corner stone which makes the difference in the competition environment and build the type of sustainable competitive edge for the organization. Therefore, the importance of this study is that it is the first of its kind in the Saudi market, and the marketing field as well which discusses, analyzes and evaluates the level of customer experience about the services delivered and employee satisfaction of the contact center agents and its relation to the level of customer centricity awareness of the agents. This research will be the starting point for other similar studies that will serve to enrich Saudi resources and give a review to the new entrants to Saudi telecommunications market.

### **Provisional research questions**

This study will address the following major questions:

- 1- To what extent do the different resources of STC contact centers understand, value, and support customer centricity?
- 2- How do STC customers value the service experience delivered by the contact centers' agents?

- 3- To what extent are the contact centers' agents satisfied with their current job?
- 4- Is there any linkage between customer centricity awareness of the contact centers' agents and customer satisfaction?
- 5- Is there any linkage between the customer centricity awareness of the contact centers' agents and the employee satisfaction?
- 6- What should we do to help STC contact centers be a customer centric entity?

A brief will be given in section 5 showing the aspects that will be covered in every document of the study namely, documents 2, 3, 4, and 5. The researcher will explain the questions of the study mentioned earlier related to each section of the document which participate in assisting the researcher to answer, determine the approaches that will be adopted, and the research instruments that will be utilized.

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### 3 Preliminary Literature Review

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#### Topic frame work overview

In the last decade the world has experienced dramatic shift in the business culture and business practices, mainly, from product oriented to purely customer oriented approach to operating in either profit or non-profit organizations. As suggested by Bose (2002) business orientation has changed from purely production growth focused in 1900's, to sales growth focus until 1950's, to marketing driven by 2000's, and has evolved into customer centric currently in the medium term future. This has triggered a new era in the marketing theory and the companies which were able to shift to the new practices managed to become more profitably and has gained a competitive advantage over companies practicing old marketing approaches. Such a shift has occurred due to the strengthening economies and tightening competition in them, thus increasing the number of suppliers of different goods and services in the market. At the same time, daily needs in terms of foods and services for the population remain approximately the same over time, which triggers necessity by the companies to either create new demand for new products in services which is very expensive, or to retain the customers as long as possible through different methods.

Many researchers have focused their numerous studies on the most important factors in retaining the customers, and thus winning the business for the company. But this can be considered only as external marketing, while organization success depends heavily not only on winning the customers and brining in the business, but also on how the front line employee of the company benefits from this growing business. If the wealth and psychological satisfaction of the employees grows proportionally with the company revenues and profitability, the sole end effect on overall company performance is synergetic as more satisfied employees will perform their duties at another more professional level, which will develop customer satisfaction with the products and services offered, and lead to more business. If all the segments within this success cycle are implemented wisely by the top management of the company, the organization will be successful financially and a good employment place for the people. In this contest Bailey and Dandrade (1995, p.1-4) commented that "when companies put customers and

employees first, their employees are satisfied, their customers are loyal, their profits increase, and their continued success is sustained".

The three major cores of the successful management from this point of view are the positive customer experience which help customer retention and win business for the company. As Reichheld and Sasser (1990) have stated already that retaining customers and increasing their loyalty is much less costly for the company than acquiring new customers. The second core is the employee satisfaction within this organization, leading to the third core, or to devotion of staff at all hierarchy levels to turning organization operations into customer centric organization. The researcher prefers to adopt a structure approach which focuses on these three major milestones.

### Contact centers' service overview

Contact centers are the vital link to one of the most important strategic assets of the organization, which are customers. Contact centers have a direct influence on customer acquisition, retention, satisfaction, and growth all of which affect the share holder value.

Contact center is considered to be a central place or other places where customers and other activities are processed by an organization. These activities may take place over a number of different channels including telephone, email, IVR, web, and others.

Contact centers provide the organization with an opportunity to reduce costs and increase productivity through offering a centralized point of contact. They handle large volumes of interactions, these volumes must be sufficient enough to make the contact center an efficient and effective center for delivering customer service.

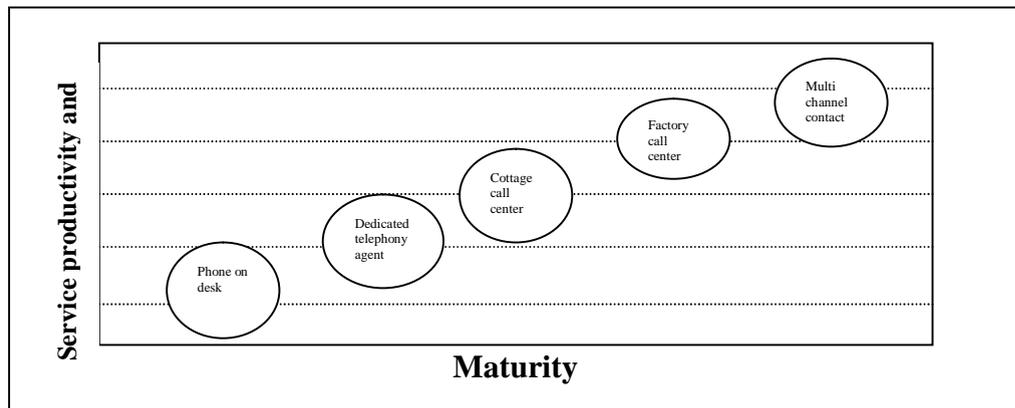


Figure (1): The Evolution of Contact Center (Bocklund, 2005)

Figure (1) shows the evolution of the contact center which started as a single phone on a desk. It reaches to a contact center that can handle increasingly high volumes of calls. Facilitated by modern technology, in particular the proliferation of the Internet, the call center then evolved to become a multi-channel contact center. (Bocklund, 2005).

There are two main commercial drivers for contact centers namely, customer related, and cost reduction issues. The customer related drivers are presented to improve customer service, retain customers, and derive greater value from their existing customers. The cost reduction initiatives are seen through operational efficiency and organizational effectiveness (Bocklund, 2005).

The work force of contact centers is critical to its performance, their strategies should be aligned with the business strategy, learning and development of the staff on different skills is essential to have happy and productive staff. Establishing a positive culture values and performance management metrics are one of the important challenges that face organizations. Again this section is going to be discussed more in the following section of this study.

### **Customer centricity overview**

It is the aspiration of several enterprises to become customer centric and enhance their employees' customer centricity awareness. Most of the writers in customer centricity failed to stress on the notion that customer centricity is a journey and not a destination.

Bailey (2006, pp. 3-16) identifies that the first step to become a customer centric organization is to define what it means to your company. He defines customer centricity as "Aligning the resources of your organization to effectively respond to the ever changing needs of the customer while building mutually profitable relationship."

Building a customer centric organization was defined by several ways and methods in the literature. Customer centricity approach can be summarized as constructing business operations which ensure 360 degrees view of the customers (Bolton, 2004), and customer centric business processing is defined as 'culturally-focussed approach which genuinely attempts to put the needs of the customer at the heart of all core business processes'. The difference between designing customer centric enterprise structure, and between implementing customer relationship management system, is in the fact that the latter is

more focused on improving performance of different sales and marketing department, where the former is the process of aligning all business process and resources to the customer needs, including production, manpower, delivery, logistics, heavily dependant on changing the front lines employees' awareness as well as the corporate culture awareness, and thus changing the attitude of the employees to the customers and increasing of employee customer centric awareness and the importance of customers to the enterprise. It is a broader notion or the next evolutionary stage of customer relationship management approach. Most of the writers in the field of customer centricity characterized the customer-centric organization as the one, offering long-term constant and consistent best quality experience to customers over all customer access points; across all marketing, sales, and service programs; throughout all parts of the organization. As can be clearly inferred from this definition, the product will vary over time to satisfy evolving customers needs, but the staff of the company must be adequately trained to offer best quality service no matter what services it offers to the customers: at the touch points, such as the sales offices offering optimal time of the service or delivering a service, and after sales servicing to motivate another purchase.

There are certain steps within building such organization. The first phase of collecting and analyzing customer database corresponds to the first phase of customer relationship management and calls for clear understanding of customer needs and their segmentation according to this, foreseeing changes in future needs and possible shifts of customers to different segments, and currently adjusting the assortment of products and services offered to be able to match in the near future the changed demand of each customer segment. Nevertheless, the companies must not provide equal quality services to all the customers, customer managers based on collected customer information, must be able to distinguish the most valuable and profitable customers to the company and Stefanous (2003) even suggests developing 'customer-specific strategies'.

Customer centric organization trains each employee to treat each customer to serve his best needs and staff that directly communicate with the customers must strive to become their personal trusted advisors or the like, which can be the result of successful creating of customer centric culture within organization. Promotion campaigns shift from product and services oriented to purely customer desired centric. Even if the top management of the company invests heavily into updating technological support of customer centric

organization and data storing, analysis, without training staff and setting the corporate mission at servicing the customer in best possible way, the success will not be as strong. With each employee understanding the importance of customer centricity awareness to them, the staff of different departments will optimally use the precious customer information available within the company. The organization must become not only efficient by minimizing costs, but effective; not only managing internal company environment, but being capable of managing and predicting external atmosphere; tailoring the products to meet the challenges of evolving markets (Stefanous, 2003).

Rance (2006) states that organization which strive to be a customer centric should let the customers say what they buy, how it is designed, configured and packaged even how much they pay and when they pay.

Building customer centric organization focusing on retaining the customers is classified as defensive marketing strategy, where gaining new customers and motivating switching from rival companies is referred to as offensive strategies. Not until recently, companies were aiming to optimally combine the two, but obstacles exist and many corporations have shifted to implementing purely defensive strategy due to tightening competitions in the markets.

Stauffer (2001) stated in Harvard Management Update seven distinctive characteristics of what customer-centrism isn't and is. These examples are as follow:

- 1- It goes beyond handling customer call efficiently. It means taking care of all customers requests and fully resolving them.
- 2- It is not just supporting the front line employees, it is ensuring that all organization entities adopt an external focus.
- 3- It is not telling the front line employees how to treat the customer's right, you have to empower the employees and give them the tools to decide the suitable way to serve customers.
- 4- It is not a matter of steering customers through different touch points just the way you envisioned. Customer-centrism means allowing customers interact with your touch points just the way they want.

- 5- It involves giving customers what they will want, it is not just giving them what they want.
- 6- It is not structuring the company to serve customers. It is giving the customers determine how you structure the company (customer centric culture).
- 7- Customer-centrism isn't just about issuing new orders from recommendation of current customers. It is about having customers say you should raise your prices.

These attributes will be explained more in-depth in the main literature review.

In order to measure externally the performance of customer centric organization, it is necessary to benchmark its customers' retention and satisfaction rates with those of the competitors offering similar products. To measure the customer loyalty internally to the company, the methods include surveys of customer satisfaction, call reports, analysis and feedback for customer complaints, customer scorecards. Financial performance measures such as sales to each customer and years worked with the customer are only a part of full customer satisfaction and must be monitored in couple with methods stated herein.

Analyzing and listening to the customers is a meaningful, but still initial step to fully satisfy them. In order for the company to succeed, it must constantly improve its' operations and react to the customer attitudes, also, circulating to the customers and showing them the results of the company reaction to the customer attitudes (Ricci, 2003).

In summary, after customer segmentation and analysis, the actions or the feedback of the company must be phased as follows. The company must increase the number of the customers which it has discovered bring the highest value to the company. By perfecting the four cores of classic marketing mix, the price, product, distribution and promotion, the company can win new customers of desired profitable segments. Extrapolating from this, the company staff must increase the revenues and sales achieved from these segments by diversifying the assortment of sales, their volumes, and doing both at ones. Thus, the demand must be constantly stimulated. Then, the company must follow the tactics of reducing the costs of servicing these customers and achieving these sales, by optimizing administrative and management costs, distribution and communication and the like. The quality of the products and services offered must nevertheless remain the same.

The next step, or more better described, the next process is to grow the customer loyalty to the company by achieving higher satisfaction rates by constantly improving the services offered. The final step to creation of a wise customer centric organization is to minimize the costs of acquiring new customers within the favourable customer segment by improving assortment and using resources more efficiently. As can be observed from all these steps, the major difference from a company employing product oriented strategy is that the latter attempts to out perform the rivals by the product and speed of logistics and knowing their weaknesses, and optimizing the marketing mix. On the other hand, customer centric organization unites market research with company strategy formulation and each department planning, and then implements this to satisfy or exceed the expectations of the customers, rather than finding the customers for the services which it delivers. Also, the customer oriented organization instead of optimizing marketing mix, choose the most appropriate team of professionals to serve or exceed specific customer needs. Instead of circulating to the customers offers with new services, the company entitles customer manager to contact and monitor the wishes and adopt the services offered.

Creation of customer centric organization and remuneration of the stages involved in deep customer analysis and satisfaction process, it is evident that the product and services the company has become as important as the quality of staff it has. It will depend on the skills of the employees to be able to precisely estimate the needs of the customers through direct communication with them and analyze these needs thoroughly, employing human capital rather than technical support, will be able to translate to senior management the shifts in these needs. The organization must be studied carefully by the professionals to develop optimal transition order into customer centric organization and training employees sufficiently. Top management in their turn will have to take necessary steps to adopt the whole business process, or the company structure to shift the production, invest into innovation of necessary products and manage this very customer satisfaction process. Key to success of this whole process becomes not only the product/services, it is one third of the success. It becomes the quality of the services delivered by the staff, or the impression from direct communication, and differentiation of this from the rivals. The staff at all corporate levels must be motivated sufficiently to perform their best to serve customer needs. In product oriented businesses, the quality of the people does not matter that much as the product is what drives the revenues and profits and acts as a magnet to the

customers. But as the number of suppliers offering similar products increases, it is the satisfaction of the customers with the total process of being served what matters to company success. This has led to development of a theory mentioned above about growing significance of human capital for the company. For this reason, the importance of top management being able to work out and adopt perfect employee remuneration system becomes vital for the companies. Again this matter will be discussed thoroughly in the literature review section, however, the definition of customer centricity offered by Bailey (2006) and the explanation of customer centricity by David (2006) deemed to be the most apt for this study.

### Customer experience Overview

J. Kirkby and J. Wecksell (2003, pp.1-5) define customer experience as the delivery of the company's brand promise to its customers. This experience occurs at every and each touch point such as contact centers, salespeople, advertising, events and others. The customer experience is filtered through customers' expectation of the company which is determined by the customer's value proposition and feedback from other customers. (See figure 2).

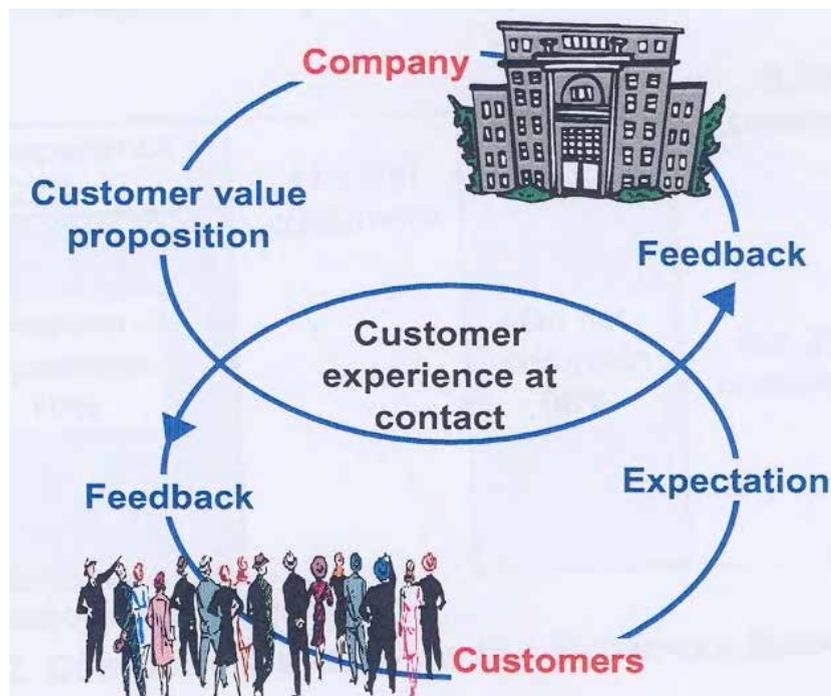


Figure (2): What is Customer Experience Management? (J. Kirkby and J. Wecksell, 2003)

The classic transaction marketing has transformed into relationship marketing, either internal to company relationship, or relationship with external networks, such as suppliers,

customers, referrals and the like (Christopher, Payne and Ballantyne, 1991). In order to motivate the customers to turn to the company goods and services as often as possible and to purchase more each time, the company and the employees must ensure that each customer's experience with this company is very positive and the customer from an occasional purchaser turns into a loyal golden customer. Garbarino and Johnson (1999) stated that the company must improve and develop cumulative customer satisfaction with the company, rather than one transaction-specific customer satisfaction. Any company will have value to the customer only if this firm is able to firstly, satisfy or/and exceed customer's expectations, such as having products/services required and being easily and comfortably accessible to the customer. Secondly, as there are different providers of similar products, the customers will also choose by the quality of the service offered and the level their basic needs are satisfied, such as speed of delivery and responsiveness as well as the support of the staff dealing with the customer (Ponsonby, 2004). Thirdly, the two mentioned above must differentiate the firm from the other competitors by means of flexible pricing, customized approach to the customers, adaptation of the products and services to exceed customer expectations, and generally positive attitude to the cooperation. These three components will affect the total customer experience with the company and will influence desire for future cooperation. Molineus (2002) emphasizes that customer's decision on which company to deal with depends on three milestones: how, when and at what cost to the customer. More importantly, customers that have already existing relationship with the company, expect to receive quality services all the time they deal with the company, which stresses necessity to train staff to constantly offer best quality services and products. It is vital to match and/or exceed customers' expectations, as due to human psychology, they tend to compare anything to the best they obtained once in the market.

Show (2005) explained that great customer experience is characterized by the following attributes namely, source of competitive advantage, differential by focusing on stimulating emotions, enabled through inspirational leadership and people who are happy and fulfilled, designed outside in rather than inside out, and revenue generating and can reduce costs. He stated that the purpose of a customer experience is to create constructive interactions that make customers come back and enjoy dealing with this company's products and services.

Customer Relationship Management concept has been developed as a tool for managing customer experience by allowing to actively analyze the historic purchase patterns of the customers within the company and be able to adopt company productions and services, ability to adopt which becomes company competitive strength, as noted by Ahn (2004). Widely used definition of Customer Relationship Management concept is developed by D. Nelson (2003): a business strategy that maximizes profitability, revenue and customer satisfaction by organizing around customer segments, fostering behaviour that satisfies customers and implementing customer-centric processes. To achieve the long-term value of CRM, enterprises must understand that it is a strategy involving the whole business, and thus should be approached at an enterprise level.

As the result of successful customer relationship management program adopted by the company, and growing customer positive experience with the company, as suggested by Gummesson (2004), the company will maximize its Return On Relationship, or 'long-term net financial outcome caused by the establishment and maintenance of an organization's network of relationship'. Findings of Reichheld (1996), Jackson (1994), and Levine (1992) state that CRM implementation triggers customers' satisfaction and retention levels, increases the positive customer experience and makes the companies more competitive. Customers receive the message that the company is making efforts to maximize customers' costs and time savings by getting better service.

Analysis of successful customer experience management has stimulated development of an idea by a number of researchers, such as Edvinsson and Malone (1997), Sveiby (1996), Olve (2002) with his colleagues, that the importance of intellectual capital in the company, measured as difference between company capitalization value in the stock market and the book value, is overcoming the importance of financial capital in company performance. Accumulation of human capital in terms of (1) staff quality, their skills, knowledge (customer centricity awareness), behaviour and motivation (Gummesson, 2004); all these being employed to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and in terms of (2) growing customer database or expanding personal relationship network of company staff with the representatives of the customers, is the driver behind the company value and profitability. Quality of such human capital accumulated can reveal possible future performance of the company, or the tasks it will be able to carry out, while financial indicators typically

presented in the balance sheet to the investors, say for the past performance of the organization.

Successful Swedish company Skandia Group has developed a set of 111 major indicators of human capital accumulation and performance within the company, which company invests into monitoring and analyzing, the process yielding in higher company profitability. They can be classified as three major groups: customer focused (sales per customer, trends in preferences, customers lost, times a customer was visited and the like), employee centred but directly linked to customer satisfaction (motivation, turnover of staff, number of years worked for the company), and development of customer centric organization of promoting technological base for effective and cost efficient timely customer support. This example is the practical case of successful implementation and integration of three major principles discussed herein and how tracking customer experience can lead to a customer centric organization that maximizes the stakeholder value.

Quality of customers experience is measured by customer retention rate and customer satisfaction rate, after which the customers can be grouped according by their loyalty to the company. Lindgreen (2004) in his study suggests development of such customer loyalty matrix for this purpose. Changes of the quantity of customers within each segment can reveal effectiveness of the transformation of the company into customer-centric organization. Also, changes in customer loyalty can reveal effectiveness of implementation of employee motivation systems. For big companies which have many sales account managers or the like, it is also necessary to monitor changes in customer loyalty and performance for each such big sales manager in order to be able to define areas of improvement for total company level customer loyalty mix.

J. Kirkby (2003) noted that resolving complaints and improving customer experience at companies' touch points such as contact centers can help to reduce customer defection by 2 percent to 3 percent per year. They continue explaining the stages of customer experience as shown in figure (3). It shows the emotional values customers put on their experiences from feeling of loathing to Zen. The figure provides a way to feel and quantify emotions from a customer experience perspective, and it shows the emotional values customers put on their experiences.

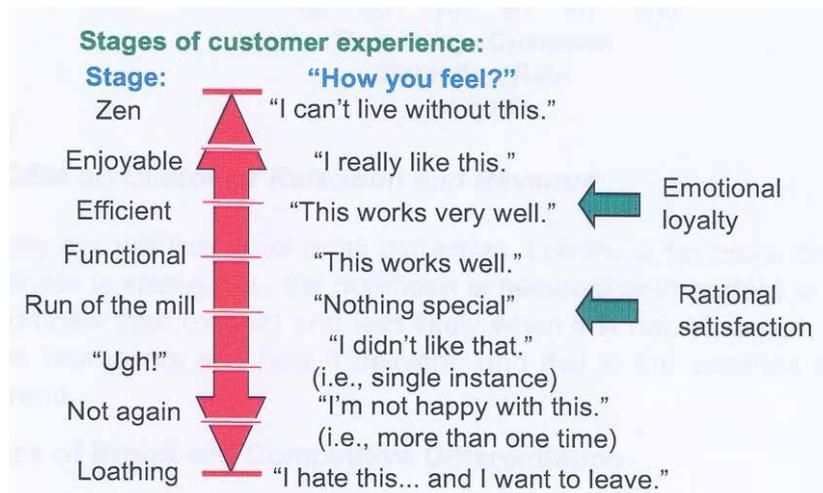


Figure (3): Stages of Customer Experience (J. Kirkby, 2003)

Not every customer will have a Zen experience. The aim is to move customers up the scale based on their potential. Some may never get past "run of the mill"; however, it must be known that a company can deliver satisfaction without gaining loyalty, but not loyalty without satisfaction. Ultimately, the customer experience is a business issue. A poor customer experience can put customers' relationship and stakeholder value at risk and promote value defections and lower share holder value. These stages of customer experience are going to be discussed thoroughly at the next section.

### **Employee satisfaction overview**

As defined above, quality staff or the quality of the company's human capital is the corner stone of a long term effective customer centric enterprise development. Also, effectiveness of company performance is a multi layer architecture, consisting of financial, psychological and productivity angle (Guest, 1997). The company must invest heavily to make the staff at all levels be devoted to this company vision and ensure the staff clearly understands the specific needs and expectations of the customers in varying segments. For this reason, it becomes very costly for the company to lose staff and train new staff to the company practices and customers expectations. A study from Walker information targeted on employee and customer satisfaction revealed, that though out of the surveyed employees 75 percent declared they were rather satisfied with their work, only 30 percent of them could consider themselves loyal to their companies (Drizin and Schneider, 2004), approximately 30 percent were looking for outside job better opportunities and the remaining said they remained with this company and this position because of some

circumstances. Loyal employees are different from the other as they are working for the company and moving to better opportunities because these employees choose to do so, while those at risk would leave the organization if the financial gain of such a shift to another location would be marginal. It is proven that the most loyal workers are those who believe the management treats them fairly.

Norquist (2002) stated that there is considerable evidence demonstrating that customer loyalty is a leading predictor of financial results and employee satisfaction is predictive of customer loyalty. Retention of quality staff becomes as important as retention of valuable customers. The top management must be rewarded sufficiently to work out wise performance measurement and compensation system for the staff at lower levels. The organization performs the best and offers best quality services when employees feel that their performance is measured accurately and continuously and their personal psychological aspirations and financial needs are covered accordingly. Another survey states that more satisfied, happy and loyal front line staff build much stronger and happier, loyal customers which purchase more with longer cooperation periods with the company.

Such studies as Bretz & Thomas (1992) suggest that dissatisfaction with reward system is the cause for enterprise poor performance. Scholars also define different angles of employee well-being which can affect their performance, such as job satisfaction, aspiration, anxiety and burnout (Vanhala and Tuomi, 2006). Majority of researchers agree that complex of fair pay, adequate training, development and performance appraisal constitute the employee satisfaction levels. Browne (2000) in his study proved that high employee satisfaction level was heavily correlated to overall company performance effectiveness. Other researchers find that employees tend to have higher levels of self discipline and control in the organizations with higher discipline levels, and these companies are prone to having better performance levels. Thus, creating a well organized and distinct in functions customer centric approach with clear devotion of high management to its implementation will positively influence the perception of employees of corporate culture and practices, which in term contribute greatly in enhancing the positive customer experience. Bailey and Dandrade (fall 1995) added that companies that view their customers and employees as the most important resources and creating a culture profit which values them will yield sustainability as well as competitive advantage which others aspire to emulate. Personal satisfaction level has enormous effect on total company

performance and culture if the company is customer centric, because the latter assumes that many employees communicate closely with the customers, send them positive energy and their openness to provide the best service possible, and this drives the business. Receiving this psychological message makes the customer perceive the quality of the product or service higher than the actual physical quality. If each employee is not personally satisfied especially those who are working at the front lines such as contact centers, he/she can send the message of negative feeling about the company to the customers which can ruin the company reputation in the short term and business in the long term. 'Every 5 point increase in [employee] satisfaction is related to a 1.7 percent increase in customer loyalty which in turn is associated with a 3.4 percent increase in earnings' Norquist (2002).

These findings are for the companies operating in business to customer environment, but the same logic appears in experience of the companies operating in business to business environment, where relationship of the customer with the key account manager of this customer is crucial to the success with the company. The study mentioned by Abbott proves that the researchers could not track direct correlation between the customer centric awareness approaches within the company and overall satisfaction of the employees and customers, but the study is believed to be flawed and must be extrapolated from. On the other hand, this research tracked very strong positive correlation between employee satisfaction with their work, morale of the employees and satisfaction of the customers with experience with this company. Also, strong positive correlation was observed between the mentioned above three factors and the total company profitability.

If more than one employee is dissatisfied with the current position at work, negative attitude becomes collective which can influence the total company customer centric culture negatively. Johns (1991) and other scholars have proven that generally negative attitude of the front line employees in the company to the state of things in the company has a much more negative influence on company financial performance and the sum of each of these employees' separate negative feeling. To summarize, the management must work hard to make team attitude positive to work and reward team work sufficiently for a better positive customer experience and dealing with customers. The company must invest into monitoring the perception of the employees of the corporate culture, whether they feel they are being treated fair and receive fair pay for their efforts. Considering the financial benefits that positive employees attitude brings to the overall financial well being to the

company, such an investment into employee satisfaction improvement must go hand in hand with implementation of distinct Customer Relationship management program and turning the organization into a clear customer centric organization, where employees are satisfied to be working for the best of the customers, the company, and the stakeholder. Again this concept is going to be studied thoroughly in the next document where the type of relation with other concepts mentioned in this study will be investigated.

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## 4 Methodology

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### **Methodological approach: "Paradigms"**

Easterby-Smith (2002) stated that choosing a methodological stance has been explained through two basic philosophical traditions that form the basis of the debate concerning social science research. The author has a primary preference for the quantitative approach as positivism and to the qualitative approach as phenomenology (Collis and Hussey, 2003).

Fisher (2000) posits that positivism is an effort to use the scientific methods of hard science to social and organizational related issues. The central belief of the positivism approach is that the social world exists externally, and that its key properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition.

In contrast, the central belief of the phenomenological approach is that the world is socially constructed rather than objectively determined. Hence the task of social scientist should not be to gather facts and measure how often certain patterns occur, but to appreciate the different constructions and meaning that people place upon their experience (Easterby – Smith *et al.* 1991).

Remenyi *et al.* (1998) states that phenomenological is characterized by its holistic approach, thus it can search below the surface to understand the essence of what is happening, and therefore it is the suitable method for conducting this study in Saudi Telecom Company (STC). The drawbacks of using this methodology are that qualitative researches do not replicate well and it is difficult to apply confidence levels to findings (Ott, 1989).

The following table shows the main differences between the two paradigms:

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Positivism Paradigm</b>	<b>Phenomenological Paradigm</b>
<b>Basic Belief:</b>	The world is external and objective. Observer is independent. Science is value-free.	The world is socially constructed and subjective. Observer is part of what is observed. Science is driven by human interest.
<b>Researcher should:</b>	Focus on facts. Look for causality and fundamental laws. Reduce phenomena to simplest elements. Formulate hypotheses and then test them.	Focus on meanings. Try to understand what is happening. Look at the totality of each situation. Develop ideas through induction from data.
<b>Preferred method include:</b>	Operationalising concepts so that they can be measured. Taking large samples.	Using multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena. Small samples investigated in-depth or over time.

Table 1: Key Features of Positivist and Phenomenological Paradigms (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1991)

The above table shows what paradigm the researcher should choose, based on the basic beliefs of each paradigm, what techniques he or she should follow, and what are the preferred methods for each paradigm. Accordingly, due to the fact that this research explores the relationship between the customers and employees' perceptions and attitudes towards the Saudi Telecom Company services and support. This research produces numeric or quantitative data. The positivist quantitative paradigm is thus mainly used in this research.

### **Primary research methods**

According to Saunders *et al.* (2003) there are three research approaches or methods, namely, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed (combination) methods.

The quantitative methods were developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomena, and were also used in the social sciences. They include laboratory experiments, survey methods, formal methods, and numerical methods. The quantitative method, as its name suggests, relies on the proportions or percentages of each of the

components in determining an outcome. It is deductive: the testing of a theory (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

On the other hand, qualitative methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena. Action research, case study research and ethnography are typical examples of quantitative research methods. Observation and participant observation, interviews and questionnaires, documents and text, and the researcher's impressions and responses are sources of qualitative data. It is inductive: generative of theory (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

"The motivation for doing qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, comes from the observations that, if there is one thing that distinguishes humans from the natural world, it is our ability to talk! Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural context within which they live. It is argued that the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified" (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994, pp. 45-68).

The use of a combination of methods in a single study is suggested by some researchers. However, most researchers carry out either quantitative or qualitative research work. In order to ensure triangulation, some researchers use mixed methods. This approach is supported by Lee (1991), Gable (1994), and Kaplan and Duchon (1988).

Saunders (2000) argued that the deductive approach has three main characteristics: its aim is to explain the relationship between variables, it gathers quantitative data, and its results can be generalised. It has been argued by several researchers that adopting qualitative methods (phenomenological approaches) involves taking a different perspective on human behaviour from the methods adopted in utilising quantitative methods (positivist approach). Both methods have differences in terms of the nature of their data, and in the methods of collecting and analysing data. However, "these differences should not obscure the similarities in logic, which makes mixing methods an accepted methodology" (Punch, 1998, p. 240).

Due to the fact that the two methods are very different, they can together provide a balanced approach. And can be used to complement each other's data. According to Miles

and Huberman, (1994, p. 42) "both types of data can be productive for descriptive, reconnoitring, for explanatory, confirmatory, hypothesis-testing purposes".

The method chosen, whether qualitative or quantitative, depends on the assumptions about what constitutes valid research and which research methods are appropriate. For this study, the researcher will use the quantitative approach to reach the results concerned with customers and employees attitude towards the services of STC and customer centricity awareness respectively.

### **Justification for the proposed research approach**

According to Saunders *et al.* (2003) and Fisher *et al.* (2000) the quantitative approach is the one most commonly adopted in business research. Much work in the field of risk perception and trust building has been conducted using the quantitative approach. For instance, Mukherjee and Nath (2003), Kolsaker and Payne (2002), and Udo (2001) have conducted their studies on risk perception and trust building using the quantitative approach.

Triangulation approach suggested by Smircich (1983), Hofstede *et al* (1990) and Claver *et al* (1999) appears to be the most suitable way to approach this study. Interviews, focus groups and questionnaire will be used throughout this research.

On the other hand, the qualitative approach also has some advantages that can help the researcher to obtain more data and more insight of some of the quantitative results.

### **Provisional research hypothesis**

The following statements are the proposed research hypothesis that the research is going to test during this study.

- 1) The higher the customer centricity awareness of contact center agents, the higher is the positive customer experience.
- 2) The higher the positive customer experience the higher is the employee satisfaction and customer centricity awareness of the agents.
- 3) The higher the positive customer experience the higher is the employee satisfaction.

### Document 2

Literature review is considered to be one of the most important basic steps within the research process Fisher (2000), (Remenyi *et al.* (1998), and Howard and sharp (1996).

Document 2 will cover most of the important aspects of Saudi Telecom, such as the company information and market conditions. This section will address the most important concepts of the study namely, customer centricity and its importance to organizations, positive customer experience and its role in the company success and then the effect of employee satisfaction in the organization performance.

Document 2 will explore some of the linkages among these concepts and their effects on each other and the organization especially on the customer service side. A conceptual frame work will also be decided upon. The structure of document 2 will also be presented under the following subheadings:

- Customer centricity
- The role of customer experience
- A frame work of this study will be one of the derivables of this document.
- The role of employee satisfaction.
- Critically reviewing and evaluating the contributions made in this study area.

Some of the questions of the proposed thesis concern and relate to this document. They will be explained and the methodology of raising them will be determined through the discussions that will be made in this section. Some questions that relate to this document and generally considered as an important part of the special questions of the thesis will be answered during the coming phases of this study. Some of these questions are:

- What should we do to help STC contact centers' agents to be a customer centric or focus employees?

- Is there any linkage between customer centricity awareness of the contact centers' agents and customer satisfaction?
- Why STC should be a customer centric organization?

### **Document 3**

In-depth interviews will be the main part of this document. The focus of the interview will be to explore the level of customer centricity approach awareness among the contact centers' management and some selected supervisors. To identify the issues that will be included in the questionnaire and to gather qualitative data for this study, in-depth interviews are going to be conducted with the following parties:

- 1) Contact center managers
- 2) Contact center supervisors
- 3) Selected different sub-groups of STC customers;
  - Females
  - Expatriates
  - Youth segment
  - Customers who have been with STC for more than 5 years, between 5 and 9 years (the beginning of privatization).
  - Business customers.

Participants will be selected from throughout the STC contact center employees, targeting agents from different shifts, and different grades. It is expected to conduct at least 6 in-depth interviews with the STC contact centers' managers and some supervisors.

This document will assist the researcher to analyse some of the research study questions such as:

1. To what extent do the different resources of STC contact centers understand, value, and support customer centricity?

2. How do STC customers value the service experience delivered by the contact centers' agents?
3. To what extent are the contact centers' agents satisfied with their current job?

#### **Document 4**

Advice on designing questionnaires was drawn from Saunders *et al.* (2003). They state that there are two types of questionnaire open questions "which allow respondents to give answers in their own way", and closed questions "which provide a number of alternative answers from which the respondent is instructed to choose" (Saunders *et al.* 2003, pp. 292).

Saunders *et al.* continue to explain the purpose of closed question as: "closed questions are usually quicker and easier to answer, as they require minimal writing. Responses are also easier to compare as they have been predetermined", (Saunders *et al.*, 2003, pp.292).

The proposed questionnaire will be designed to a stratified sample of the Contact Center, in order to ascertain the views of a representative selection of the population under the study. The strata that are suggested for this study include:

1. Position of the different staff working in the contact centers
2. Geographical area the contact center covers.

The objective of this questionnaire will be to explore the level of customer centricity awareness among the contact centers' agents, employee satisfaction, and customers' experience of the contact centers' services delivered to STC customers.

The results of this document will enable the researcher to investigate the linkages between the main three concepts under discussion of this study namely: customer centricity awareness of contact centers employees, customer experience, and employee satisfaction. This questionnaire will be further developed once the literature review and the results of the interview are completed.

It is proposed to conduct the questionnaire in the contact centers' buildings at the three main cities, Riyadh, Jeddah, and Abha. It is hoped to have approximately 150 questionnaires, and 200 questionnaires completed for both STC contact centers employees

and STC customers who used its contact centers services respectively. The results will be analyzed using SPSS.

This document after being studied and completed according to the adopted methodology will help me to answer some questions of the study especially the quantitative ones that totally depend on field survey and field researches on random samples of STC customers and employees of contact centers. Following are some of the questions that pertain to this document:

- To what extent do the different resources of STC contact centers understand and support customer centricity?
- How do STC customers value the service experience provided by the contact centers' agents?
- To what extent are the contact centers' agents satisfied with their current job?

#### **Document 5**

This document is intended to simplify the interviews and the questionnaires following the initial administration and analysis from documents three and four. A triangular approach base on the work completed for documents three and four is framed for document five.

Several different analyses will be implemented at this stage. The first analysis will concentrate on ascertaining the frequencies of different variables under discussion, identifying those variables that are scored high and those that are scored low that are extracted form document four. The second group of analysis will examine and explain the variation of contact centers' agents in different attitudes that are derived form document four such as, customer centricity awareness, and employees' satisfaction. Customers' experience towards the services offered by STC through these contact centers will be shown in this phase. The third set of analysis will classify employees and customers of STC into groups, based on the differences derived from document four. Finally the comparisons between each sub group identified in the third step will be made. Cluster analysis will be used in this process.

A small number of in-depth interviews and additional focus groups will be conducted to build up quantitative data and to clarify any exceptional issues.

In this document some of the general questions of the study which are already shown in the previous sections will be answered and analysed.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative analysis will be the major factors that help the researcher to answer the above mentioned questions which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Brief summary updates on the critical literature review which have been thoroughly reviewed in document 2 will be stated.

Last and not the least document five will assist the researcher to construct a road map for STC contact centers to be customer focus centers.

**Political and ethnical**

Being one of STC executives makes it easy for me to obtain the necessary support from the higher management of the company to conduct the field survey particularly among the staff of the Customer Care Contact Centers as well as STC customers. However, the author is well aware of the danger of subjectivity and every effort will be made to overcome this issue.

Questionnaires will be distributed to customer care employees in their work locations and to the visiting customers through the sales outlets. Customer with no previous experience with the contact centers will be excluded. Customers will be free to accept or reject responding to the questionnaire and no personal information will be requested.

As for the customer care employees, dealing with them in this respect will be very sensitive taking into consideration that I am one of the STC executives and accordingly they may feel embarrassed to answer the questions frankly and freely. Therefore, it is preferred to exclude my name, as a researcher, from the questionnaire and state in the first page that the researcher requests the respondents to answer the questions and observe not provide any personal data.

The research results will be handled by the researcher and the university in a very confidential way due to the fact that STC is operating in a competitive market and some results of the research may negatively impact the company and its competitive position in the market and consequently may enable the competitors to acquire a competitive advantage.

**Outcomes**

This study will have a positive impact on three main parties namely, the author, my company (STC), and the marketers researchers generally:

The author will yield the following benefits:

- Gain a further knowledge of the subject that has been of personal interest for a long period of time.

- Use the study results to improve and gain a very valuable experience in my work career.
- Perfects the author's research skills in positivist / phenomenological approaches.
- Obtain a recognizable high degree for the effort that will be made in this study.
- Improve my academic and knowledge capabilities.

The benefits for my organization:

- Provide better understanding of the existing capabilities of one of the major corner stones of STC success.
- Helping the organization to expedite the ongoing change to customer centric organization.
- Having an outcome from a watchful eye which looks for STC success.
- Having high quality research implemented at no cost to the organization because the author is self financing.

Marketers will yield benefit by:

This Research for the first time studies and explores the linkage between three major factors: the customers, the employees and the customer centricity awareness of the employees. All the previous studies in this field had only focused on the relation between the employees' satisfaction and customers' satisfaction.

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# **Customer Centricity at Saudi Telecommunication Company (STC)**

## **An Investigation of User Perspectives on Customer Centricity At Saudi Telecom Call Center**

Document Two

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## **1 Introduction**

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### **Overview of Saudi Telecom Company (STC)**

Saudi Telecom Company (STC) has gone through an impressive transformation since the times it has inherited the public sector telecom services to date. The company has overcome the technical and operational obstacles in a vast and tough geography and a large number of customers. Currently, the company is getting more ready to face the new set of challenges brought by the fierce competition.

As announced by STC itself, the company is determined to deliver results in a journey to become a customer centric and competitive company that customers will choose over the competition. Investors will confidently invest in, and people will be proud to work for. STC is working to become a company where staff and managers are a confident team, working together to deliver what the customers want, need and expect (STC, 2006a).

Saudi Telecom since its establishment in 1998 has delivered a range of positive results and provided a better service to more customers. This has been achieved through an ambitious Transformation and Restructuring Program compounded with an extensive expansion of its network and infrastructure.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a vast, lightly populated area, with some of the most difficult terrain in the world. Building a modern telecommunication infrastructure in such an environment is a challenge that Saudi Telecom has been battling and overcoming for many years. Temperature can reach 50 degrees Celsius in summer, high humidity on the coast, extreme dryness in the central areas, dust storms, lightning and occasional flooding all add to the challenges STC faces.

During the period since privatization in 1998 STC has added to the challenges by setting the objective of building more infrastructure in four years than was built in the previous thirty years. This has been our priority; to deliver for our customers sufficient Fixed and Mobile network capacity, to deliver telecommunication services to all who need them. (STC, 2006b).

By the end of 2002, the Saudi government announced that 30% of Saudi Telecom shares will be released for sale to Saudi citizens and organizations; Saudi citizens (20%), General Organization of Social Insurance (GOSI) (5%), and Pension Fund Organization (5%). By

the end of the subscription period, requests for shares exceeded the number offered by 3.5 times. This is a clear indication that Saudi people are confident of Saudi Telecom's success and trust in its future (Communications and Information Technology 'CITC', 2006). It is clear that since 1998 STC has made significant progress in its transformation into a private company. Evidence of meeting quality standards can be observed by reviewing the Saudi Telecom Quality Report. STC is exceeding the (CITC) standards in all areas. Only one area – Bill Accuracy, Public Switching Telephone Network (PSTN) shows adverse trends even though it is still within the 5 per thousand standard set by CITC. STC has embarked on a program of process re-engineering and development of new services across all its business divisions. ADSL subscription alone increased to 120,000 by the end of June (STC, 2006c).

### **Customer centricity and customer and employee satisfaction in organization overview**

Telecom service providers around the world are facing a sea of troubles. The days of double-digit market growth are over leaving competitors to fight for one another's customers. Real revenues for local and long distance calls are falling while competition from new entrants is tackling market share from incumbents.

To overcome the ever increasing difficulties facing telecom companies to improve their margins, many telecom companies are trying a more customer centric approach in maximizing their new and existing customers' lifetime value.

Businesses seek profitability above all else. Cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and good customer employee relationships are essential in so far as they contribute to the financial well-being of the organization. According to the belief of customer centricity, the needs and concerns of the client occupy a central place in the overall business paradigm (Craig, 2006). The client or customer is the individual or organization that is served by the company. The customer demands quality services and goods at a reasonable price. These goods and services can be made available at a reasonable cost only when a company pays attention to each and every one of the factors that contribute to commercial success. The successful organization studies its methods of production, cultivates good relations between employees and management, and listens to what its customers say. The requirements of these clients shape the internal workings of the organization. A business that manufactures automobiles, for example, must employ personnel that are knowledgeable in each of the processes involved in auto manufacturing and sales.

Customers who do not receive what they want i.e. a good car, will look elsewhere to make a purchase. If their questions about the vehicle are not properly answered, they will seek out another product provider. If their complaints are not addressed, they will find an organization that will attend those considerations. Properly trained and compensated employees can accomplish each of these essential tasks within an organization. Yet, employees can only be properly trained if management takes the time to educate them and to understand their concerns and needs – the employees' requirements reflect back on the requirements of the customer. Used as a guiding force within business, customer centricity unites these different elements of the operation. The concept of customer centricity keeps companies and their employees true to the corporate mission.

Customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction can be seen as two sides of the same process. The customer looks at the organization from the outside, while the employee views it from within. The customer and employee are affected by many of the same corporate policies and procedures, only in different ways. On the simplest level, both of these concepts speak to an understanding of interpersonal relationships. Dealing with customers and employees is about getting along with others. As described by Andy (2002) the well functioning organization owes its success to the inputs of an extensive range of disciplines: accounting, operations management, marketing, finance, economics, psychology and sociology. Each of these fields contributes in some measure to customer satisfaction and also to employee satisfaction. Not unnaturally, these skills encompass tangible measures of success together with talents that are not as easy to quantify. Accounting, marketing, finance and economics in general, represent mathematical calculations of a company's or customer's bottom line. These disciplines address the practical, physical side of getting to the customer the things that he or she needs or wants. On the other hand, psychology and sociology and in some respects, operation management and marketing examine business and customer behaviours as a matter of interaction between individuals and groups. In these areas, we are on different ground. Emotions frequently come into play, as do the positive and negative feedbacks that accrue from a job well-rewarded, or a service ineptly provided. Marketing and operations management represent the intersection of these objective and subjective approaches. In marketing a good or service, one often appeals to the feelings in order to sell a tangible product. In running a factory or office, an operations manager deals with personnel as operators of machinery or furnishers of services, in other words, as human resources that perform

specified functions. That same operations manager; however, must also consider those employees as living breathing men and women; men and women with families, feelings and personal preferences that may have little or nothing to do with the specifications of a piece of equipment or the needs of an assembly line of corporate board room.

These quantitative and qualitative attributes come together in the mind of the customer as in the mind of the employee. (Anders and Michael, 2000) depict customer satisfaction as a complex set of perceptions: "The way the customer perceives the concrete attributes of a product, the benefits the customer derives from those attributes, and the personal values that the product supports. All these elements reside with the customer and are beyond the company's direct control..." (Anders and Michael, 2000).

Though not under the company's direct control, these attributes are; nevertheless, capable of being influenced by the proper procedures and considerations. The customer-centric organization recognizes that a company and its employees can make decisions and implement practices that can indirectly mold the perceptions of end customers. Under these conditions, knowledge of customer behaviour is especially important. Psychology and its allied disciplines offer a window on the cognitive processes that lead to the development of specific attitudes and preferences on the part of consumers. Consumer surveys and other analytical studies can help marketers to understand what affects consumer choices, and how customers fit into different categories according to age, sex, social and income status, and so forth. Much of marketing can be related to the ideas of social identity theory. Social identity theory states that individuals are continually endeavouring to shape their identity, or identities, for according to this theory, an individual possesses multiple self-images that fit different situations. "Our multiple selves are thus assumed to be more or less salient in different contexts; the self or selves that are currently active are then the drivers of actions designed to establish and reinforce those selves." (S. Ratneshwar, David and Cynthia, 2000). By placing the customer at the center of the operational paradigm, customer centricism declares the necessity of comprehending these different customer selves.

As well, social identity theory is applicable to the employees of a company. Employees, like the customers they serve, constitute a discreet social group or set. Sharing a common environment, they interact in what students of social behaviour term an "arena." "Arenas are social groupings that create and enforce socially constructed rules and procedures that represent the social identity of participants and the appropriateness of their activities." (Theresa and Zur, 2001). In other words, a company is a form of social organization that

governs the conduct of its members. The employees of a business act in line with the rules that are formulated by the organization (Theresa and Zur, 2001). These rules may include not merely the specific regulations enacted by management, but also the collective responsive of employees to external stimuli, as for example, communications from customers. In a sense, the attitudes and procedures that develop could be considered a form of corporate "common law." Ad-hoc decisions become a kind of precedent that establishes environmental norms within the organization. An example might be a case where particular customers' complaints are handled in a certain manner not regulated by any official company regulations. An auto manufacturer employee responds to complaints about late deliveries by claiming that an essential part has been held up at customs. This excuse becomes standard operating procedure in this and all similar situations. Such an example also provides insight into the development of potential problems in dealing with customers. A corporate culture can develop that actually works against good consumer relations. Once more, customer centrism can serve to bring procedure back into line with the company's actual mission, in this case, the provision of honest customer care in order to secure the good customer relations that lead to continued profitability.

Related to these concepts in behavioural decision theory, another set of ideas that applies to both customers and employees. Central to consumers' decisions to purchase a product or service is the process of goal setting. With goal setting, the consumer identifies specific aims that are to be achieved through the use of the given good or service (Richard, and Utpal, 2004). A television purchased in order to enable the customer to watch various programs. These may be favourite shows, or just any material, but even so, the availability of content may not be the only consideration involved in the decision to buy a particular television. The consumer may look for any number generally popular or personally important features. Surround sound, multiple pictures in picture capability, and HDTV may all be considered features of importance when determining which set to obtain. In that case, the real goal of the customer is not so much the purchase of a device that permits her or him to watch her or his favourite shows, but rather the procuring of a television with all of the newest and most fashionable technological features. Understanding the real goal that customer has set is an important part of learning to work with goal setting theory. It is also an example of how the customer centric business strives to look at the entire process from the customer's point of view. Knowing the customer's point of view entails being able to examine that viewpoint from every conceivable angle, and being able to predict for such.

Therefore, an ability to understand all of the implications of goal setting for the customer requires a similar ability in regard to the organization's own personnel. A first goal of any customer centric business is the serving of the customer. Everything a company does must be geared to achieving that all-important goal. The enterprise needs to be organized in such a way that the customer's interests are never sacrificed to those of the employee. "The customer is always right." Nevertheless, such an attitude demands its own subsidiary goals. If the aims of the organization include the achievement of a high level of customer service, employees' tasks and routines must similarly be conducive to satisfying the customer. (Jim, Olga and Mary, 2005) identify the characteristics of decision – making that tend to enhance an organization's ability to be customer centric. As with all decisions, the decision-maker must be able to make judgments that satisfy objective as well as subjective requirements.

"A decision maker operating in a complex, dynamic task environment should be thought of as an engineer endeavouring to control adaptively a complex dynamic system, a key element of which is the decision maker's own self-regulatory processes. Thus, self-monitoring and self-regulation processes are a source of feedback about the effectiveness of the decision maker's adaptive task system control endeavours." (Jim, Olga and Mary, 2005).

The goals that must be met on the employee side of the equation are real-world aims. The solutions that accomplish them must be real-world solutions. Essentially, Jim, Olga and Mary (2005) distinguish between the decision-maker who operates largely, or exclusively, in the realm of theory as opposed to the realist who closely examines the actual effects of a policy. Implicit here is the belief that policies must be tested before they are implemented or, at the very least, altered after implementation if they are found wanting or ineffective. Customers do not want or need a return policy, for example, that saves the company a lot of money, but which costs them a great deal of time and expense. If a retailer makes it too difficult to return a purchase without a receipt, that retailer might save unnecessary refunds, but that retailer will almost certainly also lose money through a reduction in the number of repeat customers. The customer centric approach encourages the testing of new or amended policies in just such real-world solutions. The ultimate goal of profitability through such attributes as good customer service is achieved by reducing loss through unnecessary or improper returns while not penalizing honest customers. In this instance,

the ultimate goal set was that of having company personnel understand that decisions cannot adversely affect customer relations.

In its widest possible sense, the belief of customer centricism embraces every aspect of the modern business paradigm. By treating employees, as well as consumers, as, in effect, consumers, service can be improved and along with it the quality of company products and offerings. Employees, too, are recipients of a service in the sense that they expect decent working conditions, and a business environment that makes sense. If personnel do not understand instructions, or do not comprehend the goals of given policies and procedures they will not be productive and will be unable to adequately serve the company's external, paying customer base. Furthermore, employees who are not properly compensated and rewarded are not obtaining their desired level of "customer" satisfaction within the work environment. Consumer centric organizations must set as their company-wide goal the aim of high performance, "effective organizations must expect a lot from their employees and must try to insure that they gain a sense of satisfaction in return for their efforts. Employee satisfaction will derive, in part, from giving employees personally meaningful work that they are capable of handling and, in part, from taking pains to reward good performance.... The best American organization ... have organizational philosophies that place a high premium on excellence in performance and on respect for employees." (John, 2002).

Respect for employees leads directly to respect for customers. As in the theoretic example given above, the offering of excuses to customers does not bode well for the creation of good customer relationships. In similar vein, a company that mistreats its employees, or keeps them ill-informed, or cut out of the decision-making process, is a company that is almost certain to damage its relationships with its clients. Dissatisfied personnel will not care to correct mistakes, or to deal properly with outside customers. They will give their all to the company; not put in that extra amount of time and effort. The organization's bottom line will be adversely affected. The customer centric approach dictates a concern for every aspect of the business process, from the lowest-level employee on up the line to the most high-powered levels. In the customer centric world, everything and everyone are related. As the following sections will discuss in detail these important concepts namely, customer centricity, customer and employee satisfaction will be discussed in detail and further investigation of these concepts will be conducted in documents three and four.

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## 2 Customer Centricity Overview

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### **Introduction**

In the last decade the world has experienced dramatic shift in the business culture and business practices, mainly, from product oriented to purely customer oriented approach to operating in either profit or non-profit organizations. As suggested by Ranjit (2002), business orientation has changed from purely production growth focused in 1900's, to sales growth focus until 1950's, to marketing driven by 2000's, and has evolved into customer centric currently in the medium term future. This has triggered a new era in the marketing theory and the company which were able to shift to the new practices managed to become more profitably and has gained a competitive advantage over companies practicing old marketing approaches. Such a shift has occurred due to strengthening economies and tightening competition in them, thus increasing the number of suppliers of different goods and services in the market. At the same time, daily needs in terms of foods and services for the population remain approximately the same over time, which triggers necessity by the companies to either create new demand for new products in services which is very expensive, or to retain the customers as long as possible through different methods.

Many researchers have focused their numerous studies on the most important factors in retaining the customers, and thus winning the business for the company. But this can be considered only as 'external marketing', while organization success depends heavily also not only on winning the customers and bringing in the business, but also on how the staff of the company benefits from this growing business. If the wealth and psychological satisfaction of the employees grows proportionally with the company revenues and profitability, the sole end effect on overall company performance is synergetic as more satisfied employees will perform their duties at another more professional level, which will blossom customer satisfaction with the products and services offered, and lead to more business. If all the segments within this success cycle are implemented wisely by the top management of the company, the organization will be successful financially and a good employment place for the people.

The three major cores of the successful management from this point of view are the positive customer experience satisfaction which help customer retention and win business

for the company. As Reichheld and Sasser have proven already in 1990, retaining customers and increasing their loyalty is much less costly for the company than acquiring new customers (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). The second core is the employee satisfaction within this organization, leading to the third core, or to devotion of staff at all hierarchy levels to turning organization operations into customer centric organization. The aim of this literature review is to focus on these three major milestones.

### **Evolution of Customer Centricity**

Customer centricity, as a concept that we know of today, was introduced in 1990s with the technological advancements in database industry. But it is actually not a new idea. It has been around for many years in different forms. At its most basic level the seller matching the offer the buyer's demand. This concept has been around since mankind discovered the advantages of trading (Bailey, 2006).

It is dated back to Mesopotamians when they started to farm their lands. These early famers realized that they were producing more than they could eat and so they started to trade. Early merchants kept accurate business records to keep track of what products were sold to which customers, by what quantities and when, so that they could produce more of selling items during the times customers needed them.

The small grocery store on the corner of the street used to know the names of its customers, their preferred brands and their buying habits. It used to stock the favorite brand of cookies to selective customers so that they could buy them every time they wanted to and if even delivered them to their homes on their preferred time.

Together with industrial revolution, small grocery stores like those left their places to big super market chains who did not know who the customers were and didn't care what their individual preferences were as long as they were selling enough products to make big profits. Mass marketers were attempting to sell products through persuasion by broadcasting a message hoping to reach as much customers as they could to sell their "one size fits all" products.

Henry Ford's, father of mass production, famous quote "Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants so long as it is black" for Ford Model T summarizes the marketing strategy of 1920s product driven companies.

As it became important for suppliers to learn what their customers demand to stay alive in the competition, marketers started suing market segmentation to learn more about their

customers and their needs as smaller groups based on variables such as demographic, geographic and psychographic variables. In 1960, initiating a new approach to customer centricity, Theodore (1960) famously stated "People don't want to buy a quarter-inch drill, they want a quarter-inch hole." and opened the eyes of marketers who were focusing too much on creating products for narrow demographic segments rather than satisfying individual customer needs.

Together with the advancements in technology, the importance of knowledge on customers came into focus. It enabled companies to do business in the oldest fashioned ways by making it possible to remember individual relationships with millions of customers.

Eighties were the years when the database marketing started enabling companies, no matter what their sizes were, to store their customers' information. However, it was too costly for most companies by that time to collect data on customer purchases and the return on investment was not as high. Even the companies that could afford the new technology were mostly using customer information only as a one way road to better market their products. American Airlines was one of the first to realize the real potential of knowing customers and their values as individual beings was not only knowing what they demand but also to turn them into loyal customers that always choose their services even when the prices are a little higher. They decided to take advantage of this and launched their frequent flyer program to help retaining their best customers by giving them back in terms of free upgrades and tickets.

At the beginning of nineties Don and Martha (1993) introduced the concept of "one-to-one marketing" and Michael and James (1993) wrote about customer centric business models in their book. They were introducing customer centricity as an organizational structure rather than just a marketing tool. During these years an unparalleled technological revolution took place. With communications technologies, such as internet, becoming more and more available, free information exchange rate increased enormously leading to commoditization process. This caused a reduction in the profit margins in many marketplaces. Suppliers' need for finding alternative ways of keeping profits high combined with now more affordable database marketing tools opened the doors for true customer centricity. Suppliers who previously only trying to know more about customers' buying habits to better market their products now wanted to create a two way communication to learn more about customer needs and their preferences and at the same time giving back to them base on the information collected. "Database Marketing" turned

into "Database Relationship". Loyalty programs became more and more popular and customer centricity grew into specialist areas such as contact management, customer service and customer value analysis (Bailey, 2006).

During early nineties, computer systems were used to support sales and service processes. More and more companies started to use these systems to create automated sales forces systems and customer service and support systems became the backbone of automated call centers. In mid-nineties, customer relationship management systems were started to be used as a linkage between sales and service departments sharing the customer information to provide a single view of customer and enhance the relation with them.

During this time, many companies found out that they knew much less about their own customers than they thought they did. In an attempt to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty in 1996, Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) opened more branches, extended working hours and installed many ATMs to create a convenient banking experience for its customers. But it was to their surprise that their customers were not choosing a bank for its convenience but rather based on how much their business was valued and they get recognized as the same individual no matter with what unit they needed to do business with. (Michael and James, 1993).

With increased usage of internet during late nineties, CRM systems were enhanced to handle e-business applications making it possible to give same high quality service to customers, preserving the same single company face, no matter which communication mode they chose to use.

With the advancement in wireless technologies, such as cellular phones, organizations have more possibilities than ever to connect with their customers and build strong relationships increasing value of each customer.

Today, it is clearer that it is the organizations, and not the marketing departments that shape and drive the brand. "Getting close to customers is not so much a problem the IT or marketing department needs to solve as a journey that the whole organization needs to make." (Ranjay and James, 2005). Becoming a truly customer centric organization requires changing the whole culture of how they do business. Now, understanding the customers through CRM systems are being followed by designing value chains around customer experiences and aligning the organization around it and still being able to be profitable. In this document these concepts are going to be discussed and defined in more detail.

## **Defining customer centricity**

In a world where customer expectations are constantly rising, changing and competition is always growing, companies are under increasing pressure to become customer centric. Bailey, (2006, pp. 3-16) identifies that the first step to become a customer centric organization is to define what it means to your organization. He defines customer centricity as "Aligning the resources of your organization to effectively respond to the ever changing needs of the customer while building mutually profitable relationship."

More than 50 years ago Durcker (1954) wrote in his book, *The Practice of Management*, that "if the customer who determines what a business is, what it produces and whether it will prosper." The company will eventually be a profitable company.

Booz Allen Hamilton report (2004) distinguishes the customer centric organization from other companies that proclaim their customer centricity by moving beyond lip services and re-oriented their entire operating model around the customer, increasing customer satisfaction and their own profitability in the process. The report defines the concept of customer centric companies as those who "understand not only what the customer values, but also the value the customer represents to their bottom line."

The report added that customer centric organizations are characterized by clear and aligned operation models which are linked to a carefully defined and quantified customer segmentation strategy. This segmentation strategy should deliver the greatest value to the best customers for the least cost.

The American Productivity Quality Control (APQC) report (2001) stated that "There is no one agreed upon definition for customer centricity, although consistent characteristics are found among best – practice organizations." However, the same report characterized customer centric companies by those who "are built around the ideal experience of the customer, their prototype is the 'mom and pop' store of days gone by." Mom-and-Pop stores knew what their clients wanted by creating a transparent interaction, which allowed clients to specify their desired experience with company.

Jay (2005) defines the customer centric companies as those organizations which consist of structure, business processes, management practice, reward systems and human resources procedures. All of these areas are aligned around the customer's needs and expectations. In the same vein, Ron (2006) stated that "customer centric business put the customer needs

and desires at the center of their entire operations, from technical support to marketing and even new product and service decisions."

The latter definitions of both Jay (2005) and Ron (2006) are in line with Bailey's definition of customer centricity as "Aligning the resources of your organization to effectively respond to the ever changing needs of the customers while building mutually profitable relationship." Bailey, (2006, pp. 3-16). It seems that there is a common understanding among different authors in defining customer centricity, most of them have concluded that being a customer centric; all of the companies activities, offerings, services and products have to be based on the customer's needs rather than the requirements of internal processes and systems.

Bailey (2006) and APQC (2001) definitions of the concept are more suitable for Saudi Telecom Company (STC) and will be the working definition for the research.

### **The product centricity versus customer centricity**

Historically, firms have tended to be product centric (Denish *et al.*, 2006), because profits were primarily a reflection of market share (Buzzell and Gale, 1987). As a result, firms were more internally oriented, with their attention focused on manufacturing high quality products rather than being oriented toward the purchaser and users of those products or services (Levitt, 1960). In short, production efficiency possesses the highest priority. A product centric company draws its foundation from the early years of marketing. The first marketing scholars directed their emphasis toward commodities exchange. Denish *et al.* (2006) and Jay (2005) revealed that a product centric company tries to look for as many users and customers as possible for its products and services. In contrast, a customer centric company tries to find as many products or services as possible for its customers (Jay, 2005). He continued to characterize the product centric firms by being structured around the product profit centers, called business units, while the customer centric firms are structured around the customer segments. In a product or process, centric firms, a single subject, such as the customer, is not the primary concern; their emphasis is highly devoted to the processes and systems as well as delivering cutting edge new product features (Claudia, Lisa, and Jonathan, 2001).

Customer centric company focuses on the processes and technology that support and enhance a customer centric strategy. They realized that process and technology changes are the corner stone of becoming a truly customer centric organization (APQC, 2001). Denish

*et al.* (2006) added that the true essence of the customer centricity paradigm lies not in how to sell services or products but rather on creating value from both the customer and the company; in other words customer centricity is related to the process of dual value creation.

Centric organization is the highly advanced customer while the customer centric organization like the advanced customer, but it is the most loyal and profitable customer; the customer relationship is the valued asset. Based on this relationship customer centric organization prices its offering on the basis of the value it creates to customers not on the basis of market condition (Jay, 2005).

The comparison of product centric and customer centric organization are summarized in table 1. It gives a good idea of what a customer centric organization looks like and how close or how far a company is from that model.

	<i>Product-Centric Approach</i>	<i>Customer-Centric Approach</i>
Basic philosophy	Sell products; we'll sell to whoever will buy	Service consumers; all decisions start with the customer and opportunities for advantage
Business orientation	Transaction oriented	Relationship oriented
Product positioning	Highlight product features and advantages	Highlight product's benefits in terms of meeting individual customer needs
Organizational structure	Product profit centers, product managers, products sales team	Customer segment centers, customer relationship managers, customer segment sales team
Organizational focus	Internally focused, new products developed, new account developed, market share growth; customer relations are issues for the marketing department	Externally focused, customer relationship department, profitability through customer loyalty; employees are customer advocates
Performance metrics	Number of new products, profitability per product, market share by product/subbrands	Share of wallet of customers, customer satisfaction, customer lifetime value, customer equity
Management criteria	Portfolio of products	Portfolio of customers
Selling approach	How many customers can we sell this product to?	How many products can we sell this customer?
Customer knowledge	Customer data are a control mechanism	Customer knowledge is valuable asset

Table 1: A Comparison of the Product-Centric and customer-Centric Approaches

Source: Shah *et al.* (2006) the path to customer centricity

### **The importance of customer centricity**

Customers are the life and blood of any company and the heart of the demand-driven economy. They are critical for the survival of a firm and the most valuable asset; as a

result, companies have to move quickly toward the customer centricity approach (Gupta et al., 2004). To become a customer centric organization, a company needs to be capable of providing the right customer experience at the right time.

The rise of the customer centricity dimension is motivated by "the increasing buyer-power influence - and the correct thinking that this is where longevity, competitive edge and financial profitability lie." (Jay, 2005). He added that there are specific factors causing the increased importance of customer centricity to organization, namely, the globalization of customer, the preference of customers for partnership or relationships, the rise of e-commerce, the customers' desire for customized solutions. Fierce competition in most of the markets has derived the implementation of customer centricity very quickly. Hewlett-Packard, for example, has reorganized its structure several times to meet the needs of its customers, it named top level managers of "total customer experience" for both its consumers and field operations. It implemented a blended channel strategy that gives the consumers the flexibility to switch back and forth from the web to the phone, as well as to other media and it restructured the managers' bonuses to reflect their units' customer experience scores (David, 2007).

Total customer experience is a key source of competitive differentiation in the constantly evolving markets. By excelling at the strategic customer centric imperatives, companies can deliver a superior customer experience that could not only result in constantly high customer relations but also increase in customer loyalty and profitability (IBM, 2005).

Companies can no longer rely on the traditional means of competitive differentiation. For example, strategies based just on price are ineffective. More information about the customer needs and expectations are more vital for the success of many products and services. Today's information and technology savvy customers demand more from the shopping experience. They are often more knowledgeable than companies' employees about available products, services and prices. Companies and their sales employees need to know more about their customers to deliver a superior customer experience to them (Gina et al., 2005). Critical strategic imperatives for customer centricity were defined by Gina et al. (2005) as four main factors. The first one is the importance to build the organization offering a customer experience that evolves with changing customer expectations and needs. The entire organization must focus on identifying, satisfying and responding to the target customers' rapidly evolving needs and preferences. The second imperative is the need to provide a truly convenient shopping experience; this shopping experience keeps

customers coming back. Customers want a company that is easy to deal with and requires less time and effort. The third imperative is the need for organization to have a holistic and integrated view of the customers. Eliminating customer data silos that can lead to inconsistent versions of customer data and letting the customers to decide how much intimacy they want or need is an essential imperative for company to reach to the customer centricity level they want to be. The fourth imperative is organizations are struggling to deliver flexible products or services that meet their target customers.

Companies must address customer needs and preferences across several areas, including target segments, local markets, shopping occasions and service categories. To deliver flexible offerings companies require to address four key steps namely, understanding target customers and their wants and preferences, develop deeper insight about their customers interactions, leverage these insights to tailor products and services to the needs of target customers. Finally, build a team of skilled sales employees that can provide the level of service which meets different customers' needs. (Booz Allen, 2003).

The case study presented by Booz Allen (2003) about the customer centric bank, revealed that banks need to understand how to build interactive relationships and that is a social sciences concept called the "Johan Window". It describes interpersonal communication in term of four major quadrants: open, blind, unknown and hidden (see figure 1). To develop true relationships with customers, banks need to maximize the open quadrant of shared information. Today, the only information shared with customers are bank statements, loan applications, credit contracts and service requests as shown in figure 1.

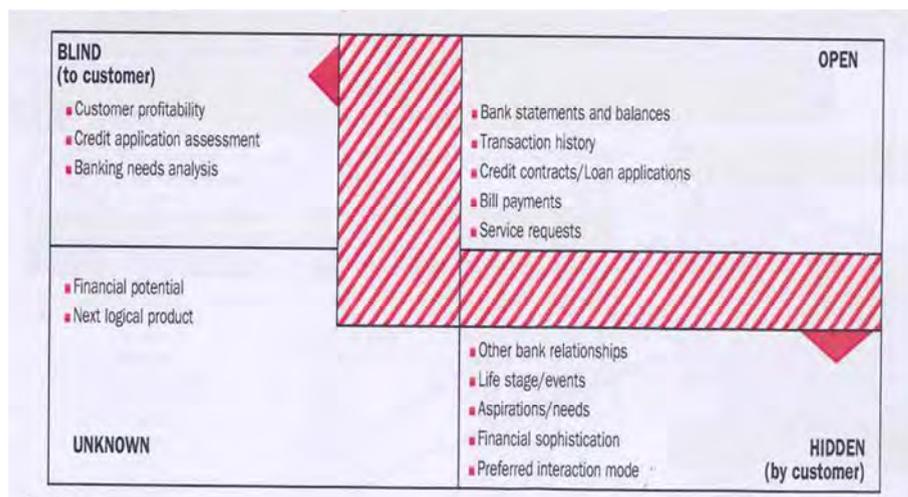


Figure 1: Retail Banking Johan Window

Source: Booz Allen Inc (2003).

Banks need to enlarge this open window to include information in the hidden quadrant i.e. known only to the customer such as life stage, wealth goals and preferred mode of interaction. In the same time banks should leverage the information in the blind quadrant i.e. known only to the bank, to educate customers and win their trust. The Johan window (figure 1) has created a need for organizations to open a dialogue with their customers and build with them a genuine interactive relationship through adopting a truly customer centric strategy (Booz Allen, 2003).

The customer imperatives that Gina *et al.* (2005) identified and the findings of the case study of Booz Allen (2003) for specific bank are more related to the surrounding conditions of the research as well as the companies' environment under study. The research believes that it would be useful also to identify through the research the management and front line employees point view of the importance of customer centricity to their company and relate them to the competition environment of the market. It is important to investigate through the research the drivers of Saudi Telecom Company (STC) to become a customer centric organization and relate them to the status of the company.

### **Issues and challenges of customer centricity facing Saudi Telecom**

Moving away from a monopolistic environment constitutes for Saudi Telecom a paradigm shift characterized by ever increasing levels of customer expectations in terms of price, speed, innovation, short delivery time and high quality.

The author view, any discussion of customer centricity move needs to focus on the productive behavior of people in the organization. In this context it is important to align customer centricity strategy, organizational processes, and structure and information technology so that they encourage the whole organization to move toward customer centric approach.

Customer centric is the ultimate state of the customer being in full control of the buying process. Being a customer centric means that the customers say what they buy, how it is delivered, designed and packaged and some time how much they should pay and when they pay (David, 2007). Customer service tends to be a generic and determined in advance for its customers where as customer centric is about providing a personalized service to individual customers. As Zairi (1999) suggests "it is a statement of intent. It signals the organization is willing to challenge the status silo and embrace new concepts and management disciplines." Such a commitment is evidence that the transition to customer

focus is an evolutionary process that requires the organization structure, culture and business processes to be structured and continually restructured to respond to individual customer needs.

At the center of this, and is surprisingly overlooked, is the customer. All too often organizations assume they know what their customers want. This is a dangerous and naïve assumption and will only serve to lessen the degree of fit between what the organization offers and what the customers want. It is very necessary that companies focus on the customers and attempt to get close to them, their needs, share their concerns and develop future needs. As Zairi (1999) suggests "the process of identifying customers must be well disciplined and adhered to." Customer need to be rigorously studied from bottom of the organization right to the very top. Such a commitment necessitates a change in all three aspects of organization namely, corporate culture, process and organization structure. These concepts are going to be discussed separately later in this section.

John (2006) has identified clearly that there are six layers that stand between the organization and their customers. These barriers create a challenge to companies to become customer centric. The barriers both connect and separate the organization from the customers.

Figure 2 presents these barriers in the form of a hierarchy where the valued assets sits at the top and the many hoped-for customers sit at the bottom.

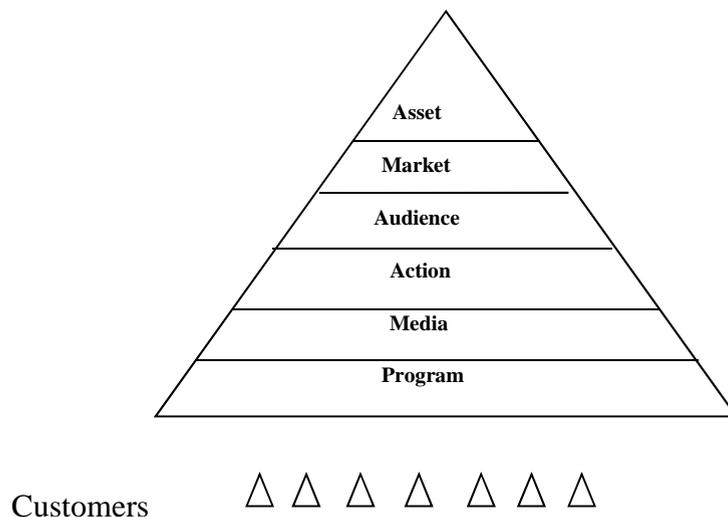


Figure 2: Customer Reach, (John, 2006).

To make a real change in any organization, companies have to invert the pyramid shown in fig. 2, connect the customer psyche intimately with the asset of the organization as shown in fig. 3 (John, 2006).

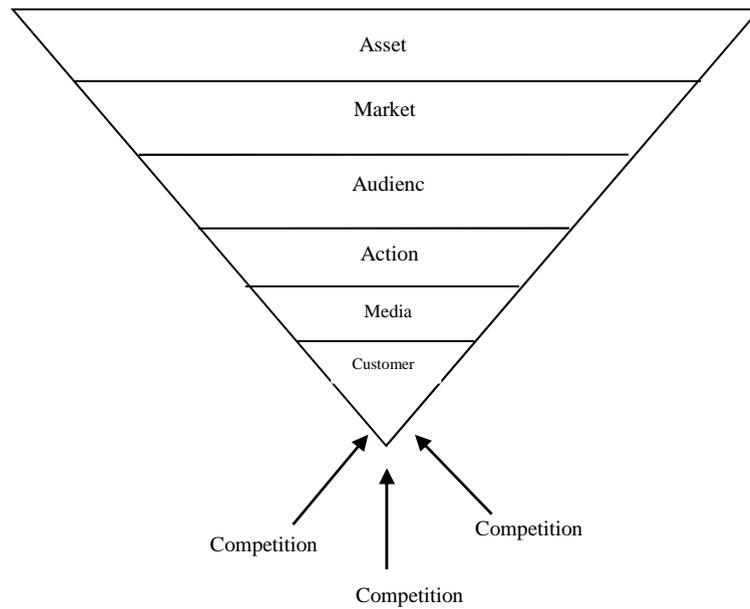


Figure: 3: Inverted figure 2 (John, 2006)

Once the organizations are able to make this challenge happens by putting the customer at the center of all the operations within the company, they will discover that customers are more inspired, and loyalty has increased. The company profitability will be enhanced and the customer centric model starts rolling out.

The real challenge facing Saudi Telecom is building a customer centric organization, whilst also being prepared for the move from a monopolistic situation to a more openly competitive market. Saudi Telecom should move from a Telecom company to a communication provider, a relaxed company to a vibrant competitor, a sole provider to a brand of choice, a place of work to the place to work, and from a work force to a community.

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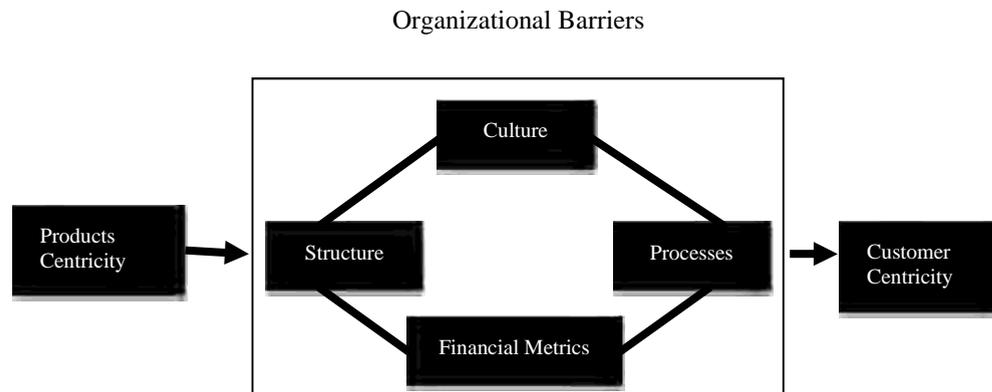


Figure 4: Path to Customer Centricity: Potential Roadblocks

Source: Denish *et al.* (2006)

### Organization culture

Corporate culture is complex and difficult to understand. Wilson (1997) suggests that corporate culture comprises "visible and less visible norms, values and behavior that are shared by a group of employees which shape the groups sense of what is acceptable and what is valid. These are generally slow to change and new group members learn them through a formal and informal socialization process. Consequently program of change will be complicated and long term.

The transition to a customer centric culture necessitates change in practices and procedures that facilitate the delivery of services. Craig (2006) adds that the key to succeed in moving toward customer centricity culture is to constantly change the business model based on a more detailed understanding of the target audience, customers and employees are one of the most important success key drivers.

Cultures have many levels and facets, which make them very resistance to change. Denish *et al.* (2006) stated that values which express enduring preferences and behavioral attitudes of the front line employees are considered to be one of the difficult barriers to overcome toward the customer centricity path. He added that norms, which are shared beliefs about preferable or expected behavior. Customer centered organization is that employees are customer advocates. Sharing information among the members of the organization is a common norm of customers centered companies; this will put the company in a better position to understand and meet the needs of the customers. Conversely Sarah (2002)

pointed out that a destructive norm found in many firms is that sales own the customer which greatly impedes information sharing. Craig (2006, p 13) states that "a leader should share as much information as is practically possible. Every one is on the same team, right? If so, every one needs abundant information about the direction and performance of the organization especially in relation to satisfying customers."

Denish *et al.* (2006) and Craig (2006) have stated that customer centric organizations are characterized by two main factors, the behavior of senior managers and employees exhibit as they make choices about how to spend their time. Time spent among the customers is a clear indication of the solid commitment of both leaders and employees toward customer centricity approach. So, it clear that senior management must reinforce and monitor the customer centric values that company strategy is driving, and it is imperative that they should buy in and commit to those values.

Overall, culture can be either an important facilitator of performance or a major impediment. When Deshpande, Fraky and Webster (1993) compared four types of organizational cultures based on the degree of emphasis on customers, they found that market cultures that place the customers' interest first were the most profitable and successful cultures.

Employees must be made aware of the benefits and implications of adopting a market culture that leads to customer centric organization. They need to be clear of the organization objectives and reasons for change. They must possess a fluent understanding of the organizations' agenda, their role in attaining this and what is expected of them and the senior management needs to articulate this in such a way that it energizes employees about helping customers. In order to accept and support this shared vision it is important for senior management to empower employees to take action on behalf of customers. Empowerment releases employees "judgment, initiative and creativity in serving customer requirements and loyalty" (Scheuing, 1999). Similarly, Sarah (2002) stated that giving people responsibility for decisions affecting their work encourages a customer centric approach and continuous improvement, the concept of empowerment is going to be discussed in detail as one of the important factors to employee satisfaction.

Culture change is achieved by altering behavior patterns and helping employees to be trained in customer focused behavior. It must be ingrained that customer satisfaction is the central concern of the whole organization and every one is responsible and accountable for

delighting customers. People are critical factor to achieve customer centric culture. They will make or break the relationships of organizations' cultures, not technology, no matter how much capital it invests.

### **Organization structure**

"All organizations have structure." (Dalton, *et al.*, 1980, p. 49). One way of understanding organization structure is to consider its function and purpose. As Newman (1973, p. 61) describes, its meaning is to "hold the things together, to give it form rather than randomness, to give it consistency and stability, to relate its parts to one another, to delineate its operations." He also recognizes some general aspects that lead to the need for structure. As far as the organization's tasks concern, it is desirable to allocate what activities that are needed and who will perform them and as well as knowing what decisions that has to be made and the resources necessary for activities. Structure will also clarify the co-workers relation to each other and what they should have (Newman, 1973). The firm's organizational structure is an important strategic factor and is there to show functional and divisional result responsibility. This reasoning also implies that, structure follows strategy. However, there are critics indicating that it yet can be the other way around; that structure needs to be set out first and strategy becomes a product of the structural forces (Booz Allen Hamilton, 2004). However, structure is there to straighten out people's role, responsibilities and authority, consequently contributing to an overall organizational understanding, for co-workers as well as parties with external interests. A clear organizational structure, where co-workers easily understand their area of responsibility and how their actions affect the overall business performance is important. It facilitates contribution of values to the customer value process as a whole. Further, it creates a broader responsibility, higher overall understanding of the organization, higher motivation and engagement (Amerup-Cooper & Edvardsson, 1998).

According to Mintzberg (1989) you can strive for and clench on to internal consistency of organization structure variables but at the cost of bad fit to the external environment and that finally forces a change in term of complete structural redesign. The way the organization appears might not depend so much on what the market forces looks like as on culture and institutionalization aspects. Thus, such possible barriers must be taken into account when imposing change on an organization (Homburg, *et al.*, 1999). If an organization is designed to complete a certain task, then the reason for success or failure lays in the fit to its basic purpose. Natural structures exist in all organizations and there is a

strong need for synchronization among parts within it. A fatally wrong assumption is that every organization looks the same, and as a consequence, the structure of an organization is inserted or extracted as picked randomly up from a shop. Thus there are implications that the recipe for organizational success in design is to be consistent and logical in defining their structural dimensions. Such dimensions are, for instance, various degrees of centralization, formalization and specialization (Mintzberg, 1989). Mintzberg is not alone in having studied the structure dimensions of organizations. There are many answers to the question of what the dimensions of structure really are. Common responses concur with Mintzberg and are for instance formalization, centralization, complexity and span of control (Blackburn, 1982) and (Olsen *et al.*, 2005).

However, the author will stick to Mintzberg's dimensions of the organization structure in general: formalization, centralization and specialization and will link this definition to the main purpose of this research which is the customer centricity structure.

An ideal customer centric organization structure implies having all functional activities integrated and aligned to deliver superior customer value. This is in contrast to the product centric structure which is organized around functional silos (Day, 1999). Organizational structure of customer focused companies must be developed and flattened to enable a smooth coordination of customer direct processes. The customer must be the catalyst for reengineering of processes (Scheuing, 1999). Denish, *et al.* (2006) stated that there is mounting evidence that organization structures are evolving toward closer alignment with market conditions, especially from firms that want to have a consistent and seamless transactions in all of its touch points. They continued explaining this type of alignment through two stages; the first one is the emergence of informal coordination activities that serve to overcome the familiar deficiencies of functional silos. If this is not sufficient the second stage is going to be integrating functions such as key account managers to coordinate all customer contact activities.

Booz Allen (2004) has raised a very important point towards the journey to customer centricity, "To strengthen operating economics and business unit linkage, telecommunications service providers will need to change the way they are organized to do business." It means that organization levers from structure to management systems to processes to roles and responsibilities will need to be changed, even overhauled. The challenge of moving a company from product centric to a customer centric is explained by Denish *et al.* (2006). The challenge arises from the fact that functional differences are

deeply rooted in background and interest, time scales, incentives and interests. Hence, any effort toward this subject is going to be related to the improvement of alignment of the organization which is subjected to contending forces. To sum up the author's beliefs that the challenges expressed by both Booz Allen (2003), Booz Allen (2004) and Denish *et al.* (2006) are of relevance to this study in order to assess the impact of organization structure at the path to customer centricity approach.

### **Processes and procedures**

We ought to start off with the definition of a business process. Sometimes the term business process is used to talk about high-level descriptions of organization's activities which are used to describe market-oriented aspects like the satisfaction of customer needs (Olaf and Frank, 2000). Also Booz Allen Hamilton (2004) uses a pretty similar definition "The business process comprises all activities carried out in an enterprise, including e. g. staffing, financing, production, marketing, etc."

Figure 5 shows a rather general model of business processes. In general, business process comprises activities that produce an output of value to the customer. A business process can be thought of as a box turning a certain input into an output of greater value (Michael, 1997). Usually it is the desired output of the customer but it can also add value to the company itself.

The business process of product development, for instance, has an idea or concept as an input and gets a design of prototype as an output. In order to get the desired output, many kinds of people have to participate, such as, research and development departments (contributing their technical expertise), marketing (offer knowledge of customers' needs), manufacturing experts and finance people. The process activities are the means to transform the input into the desired output. At any time the activities have a specific state and the process flow is determined by business rules (Michael, 1997).

In other words, a business process can be thought of as a cook book for running a business. It is a recipe to achieve a commercial result.

History showed us the importance of business processes. In the 1980s the inefficiencies and inaccuracies of company performances were beginning to matter. Before, customers had much choice where to buy specific product, but in the 1980s customers started deserting to other companies when they were not satisfied because they had simply the choice due to increasing competition.

At that time many corporations had to improve their business to keep their customers. After attempts to change their situation, they found out the main problem. It was the fact that they were applying task solutions to process problems. A task is a unit of work usually performed by one person. In contrast, a process comprises of tasks and activities to create a result of value to the customer (Michael, 1997).

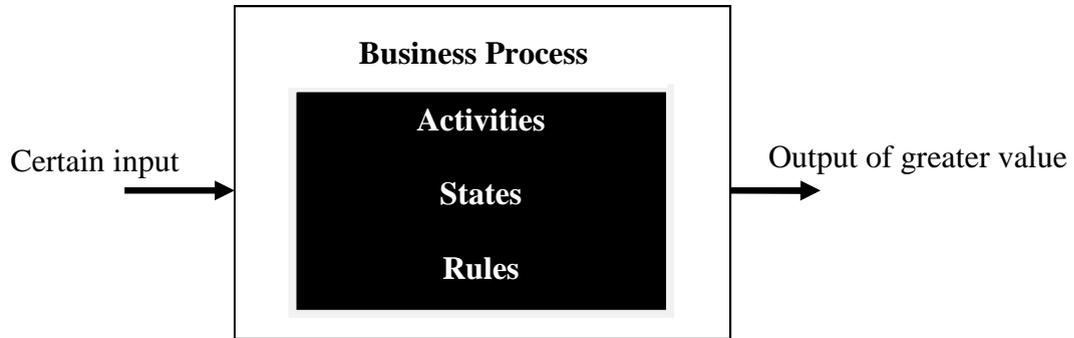


Figure 5: The general model of business processes (Michael, 1997)

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That was the time when organizations got aware of the importance of business processes. It is vital for their survival to let them be at the heart of the company. In other words, clear business processes and procedures are the key to a successful customer centric organization. This is probably the case as they focus on creating value for customers.

To implement the customer centric business strategy at Saudi Telecom, the organization must have better processes and procedures standards. Effective business process, innovation and responsiveness in the changing complex environment are very important for achieving business success and competitive advantage. The organization has to manage the processes and procedures with application of knowledge, skills, techniques and systems to meet customer requirements and expectations (Icifi, 2007). Denish *et al.* (2006) stated earlier at this chapter the difference among customer product and customer centric companies. The customer centric organizations, their processes and procedures aimed to

develop and sustain a customer relationship, while the product centric is aimed to achieve an efficient transaction regardless of the quality of relationship with customers.

Payne and Frow (2005) surveyed a number of customer relationship management (CRM) executives and indicated five generic processes that contribute heavily for the firm to be customer centric, namely;

- a) The strategy – development process that not only includes a business strategy but also a customer strategy.
- b) The dual creation process which considered to be of the exchange process.
- c) The multi channel integration process that encompasses all the customer touch points.
- d) The information management process which includes the data collection and analysis functions.
- e) The performance assessment process which ties the firm's action to firm actual performance. Day (1999) pointed out a very crucial challenge concerning customer centric companies that look to develop a business processes and seek to optimally match the customer's requirements with the right product/service. To achieve this, companies should segment their customers into different groups based on their different needs and expectations.

Denish *et al.* (2006) added that recent advances in IT and marketing database have facilitated marketing personalization processes as increased dialogues with the customer, making use of these dialogues processes and analyzing the collected information to allow the firm to make more values offers. However, he stresses that firms should be careful in terms of the level of automization of services' delivery. For example, some banks made huge investments in IT to automate and standardize huge banking transactions only to find out that they were losing human interactions with their customers. By offering virtually all services online or through automated phone/ATM centers, many banks had unknowingly distanced themselves from their customers.

At the same vein, Robert (2004) stated that organizations need to know their customers as individuals, concentrate on serving those with highest needs and lifetime profitability potential. To achieve such dramatic shift in culture, the CEO needs to take the lead of customer strategies and the organization's culture and processes to make this happen in the

ground. This is considered to be a major challenge facing organization to re-engineer the whole processes and procedures that are customer related to be aligned with the customers' needs and expectations, and built around customers' segmentation strategy.

Raul *et al.* (2004) pointed out that organizations which strive to achieve new strategic position in the market should concentrate on aligning their organization structure and business processes with their customers needs. This needs to modify their internal processing architecture to reflect a market rather than a product centric approach (Raul *et al.*, (2004).

Robert (2004) and Day (1999) have similar point view towards the challenge facing organization to align their processes and procedures with customer centricity approach as well as consumers' needs. Their approach is very relevant to STC and coincides with its existing conditions. It is clear that there is an extensive agreement in the literature that aligning the cross functional processes and procedures within STC departments is very crucial for the success of the long-way to customer centricity. Cross-functional integration and synchronization is therefore a key success factor in coming up with pragmatic and sound customer centric strategy across the organization and to ensure that every function is aligned with strategic move of STC toward the customer focus company. This related subject is going to be further discussed in the following documents three and four.

### **Operational and financial metrics**

Organizations realize that long-term success cannot be predicated by short-term metrics so not completely displaces short-term, micro level, or transactional metrics in the organizations (APQ, 2001). However, APQ (2001) pointed out that they place the transactional measures when dealing at the macro level. Customer centricity metrics such as operational and financial measures are not only important in motivating individual employees to be more customer centric, they are also useful in helping management at organizations to the financial and operational implications of their decision making and to think of marketing and sales expenditures as investments (Srivastavam *et al.*, 1998). This point is very crucial because the journey toward customer centricity demand a substantial investment by the company to move from a product centric to customer centric. Hence, the need to monitor, control and measure the operational and financial impact of customer orientation (see figure 6).

A comprehensive approach to customer measures should be adopted as these serve as an important way of judging the overall success of organizations from the customers' perspective, provide a source of market information, provide a basis for setting goals and taking corrective action (Adebanjo & Kehoe, 2001). Measures may include satisfaction, complaints, product delivery, product return, customer requirements, sales figures, benchmarking of operational performance and response times to customer enquires. Customer satisfaction should be a paramount goal of every employee and, although difficult to quantify, some measurement should be attempted. Measurements must be defined from the customer's perspective and standards developed such as response times, staff interface, reliability and service level thresholds.

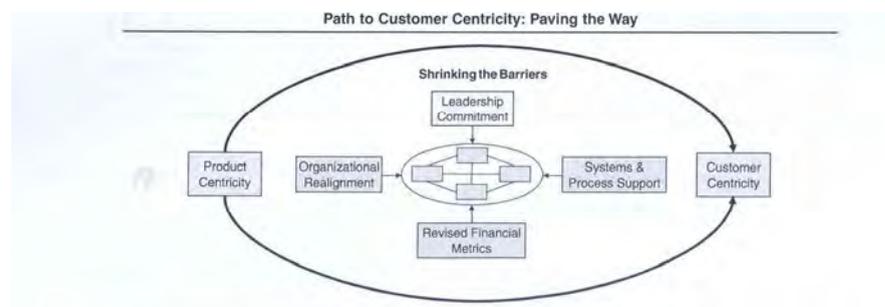


Figure 6: Path to Customer Centricity: Paving the Way

Source: Denish *et al.* (2006)

Complaints are an invaluable source of information on where process breakdown therefore, a structured approach to complaints should be adopted. Reverting potential defectors and managing customer dissatisfaction will lead to an increase in customer satisfaction. The importance of this point is illustrated by figures suggested by Zairi (1999) "satisfied customers share their experience with 5 or 6 people, yet dissatisfied customers share their experiences with 24 least to others."

Monitoring and tracking this transformation to customer centricity may not be an easy task. Devoting resources to a customer centric system is tantamount to investing in the construction of a virtual factory that generates intangible output such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, advocacy, reduced price sensitivity and so on (Hart, 1999). The intangible outs may be difficult to measure directly. Hence, the challenge lies in quantifying the financial impact of customer centricity by determining the optimal levels of investment in such measures as customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Customer life time value (CLV) and its implications have received increasing attention (Berger and Nasr, 1998), (Reinartz and Kumar, 2000). In the other side, Booz Allen (2004) shows that brand equity, a fundamentally product centric concept, has been challenged by the customer centered concept of customer equity

In addition tracking and measuring individual customer level value helps firms manage resources at the individual customer level, thereby making the financial and operational orientation of the firm compatible with its customer orientations. For example, customer equity has been shown to be reasonable proxy for firm implying that strategies that improve customer equity will also enhance the value of the firm value (Grupta, Lehamann and Stuart, 2004).

The application of customer equity as the focal point for guiding financial impact of marketing actions is apparent in its versatility. Spanning several applications and instances of managerial decision making for example, customer equity can be used as a basis for optimally allocating a firm's resources across customers (Yenkatesan and Kumar, 2004).

Another important issue related to both financial impact and the challenge of achieving customer centricity is downsizing – that is, cutting costs through reducing headcounts to enhance financial performance cost reduction programs, for example, downsizing customer service staff or outsourcing customer service to a cheaper offshore location to reduce cost and improve productivity. Transfer savings associated with these programs, directly to the bottom line look great on firm's annual reports. However, the apparent financial attractiveness of such cost cutting measures and consequent propensity to adopt them hastily are a potential impediment to achieving customer centricity. Decisions to downsize or outsource should be carefully evaluated as they may result in increased productivity in the short term but may threaten future profitability if customer satisfaction is highly dependent on the efforts of the downsized personnel or quality of the outsourced functions (Anderson, Fornell and Rust, 1997) and (Oliva and Steman, 2001). Furthermore, the implementation of a cost cutting emphasis, instead of revenue expansion emphasis, has the tendency to initiate unpleasant initiatives such as, firing and/or loss of benefits and perks which may lower the morale of employees who operate at the market interface (Rust, *et al.*, 2002). This in turn may lower customer service, customer loyalty and sales which lead to further cost cutting – a vicious circle (Gronnroos, 1984) or "death spiral" that may seriously affect the firm's performance in the long run and be a real barrier toward customer centricity.

In summary, Saudi Telecom has to adopt operational and financial metrics that emphasize the customer centric approach and increase its shareholder value. Saudi Telecom should start to adopt its systems to incorporate customer live time value (CLTV) and customer equity as one of the main Key Performance indicators (KPIs) of customer centricity strategy plan.

### **Building customer centric organization**

It is the aspiration of many organizations to become customer centric which involves many of the elements that this approach will consider such as, customer service programs, marketing and management. Actually becoming a customer centric or focused and driven organization requires more than just deciding that it is a good idea in order to boost sales and revenues. The discussion in this part of the research will show that becoming customer centric organization requires dedication, time, commitment and a good deal of effort.

In their quests to become customer centric organization firms must consider that it is not enough just to take care of the customer today, they must think beyond today and plan for what the customer will desire tomorrow. Organization must do more than anticipate customers' stated needs and become proficient at anticipating unarticulated needs and desires (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994). This is not always a necessary thing to do, especially when technology is involved. However, organizations that make the investment are required to change their whole way of thinking often find that the process is made easier. At the heart of becoming a true customer centric organization is the ability to create value for the customer whenever they come into contact with an organization. "What drives this new model is not profit but the creation of value for the customer, a process that lies at the core of all successful enterprises. Value creation generates the energy that holds these businesses together and their very existence depends on it." (Reichheld, 1996).

Organizations that become customer centric understand that their business is no longer about product or service that they once provided, it is now about the customer that uses the product or service provided by the organization. Customers don't buy products or services; they buy value. The attitude and quality of the service provided to customers play an important role (Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger 1997). Customer centric organizations ask questions differently. Their values, mission and organizational structures exist for the customer, not the organization or its owner.

A first step in the journey toward customer centricity for an organization such as Saudi Telecom is to define and understand what it means to the organizations. The definition of customer centricity that the author has selected earlier in this chapter is:

"Aligning resources of 'your organization' to effectively respond to the ever-changing needs of the customer, while building mutually positive relationship." (Bailey, 2006, p. 3)

Now, let's break that definition down into three parts so that we can discuss each of them.

- 1) Aligning organization resources.
- 2) Respond to the ever-changing needs of the customers effectively.
- 3) Building mutual profitable relationship.

Becoming a customer centric does not mean that organization becomes a door mat for customer. If the relationship for both the customers and companies does not remain profitable, it is not going to last for long. Aligning the resources of organization is ensuring that all personnel in the firm develop and maintain excellent interpersonal communication skills. The last, not the least factor that contributes to build customer centric organization explained by Bailey (2006) is to effectively respond to the ever-changing needs of the customers. To do this, organizations need to obtain customer input, perspective and feedback in support of the voice of the customer. The tools that can be used to attain such requirement are; transactional surveys to measure customer's satisfaction, observe the customer behavior, obtain input from front line employees and mystery shopping experience. Jay (2005) stated an example for a company called Chipco which is a product centric company, in the semiconductor industry. Chipco had gone through several restructuring programs toward a customer centric organization; it adopted star model structure shown in figure 7.

The Chipco's solutions Star Model started with strategy and then completed the star model design by moving from strategy to structure to process to rewards to people.

The strategy consists of product and service strategy plus selected solutions for selected segment of customers. The structure is combined of product division at the back end and business units and customer segments in the front line. Business processes have been added for solutions development, pricing and supply chain management. The reward system has been modified to reflect a one company down model. Finally the career paths for the Chipco's people have been redesigned to generate leaders for the new business unit.

The overall re-structuring of this firm was led by the top management and communicates to every employee in the firm (Bailey, 2006).

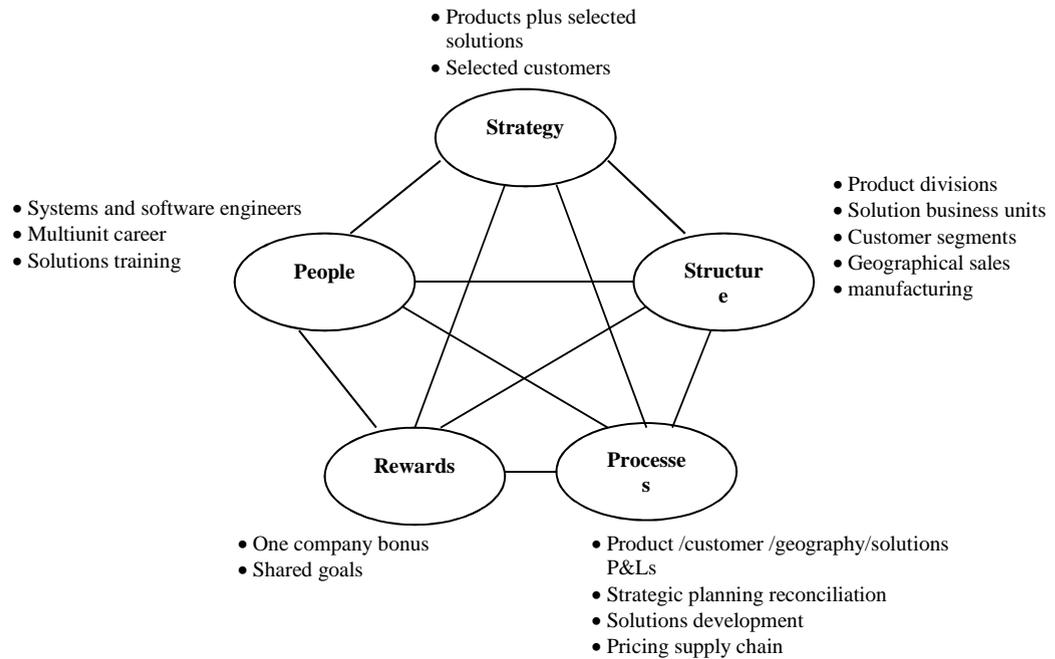


Figure 7: Chipco' Solutions Star Model

Source: (Jay, 2005)

Cristian (2006) in the other hand proposed an important basic step that a company must take in its efforts to become customer centric company. He recommended three main steps in the journey of customer centricity, namely, employees' training, every body should think in term of customer benefits rather than product features. Refine the organizational structure, which includes fine tuning the information channels, allowing knowledge about the customer to flow freely throughout the organization. The final step is to ensure the right market approach between the company products and services approach and customers' behavior.

Raul *et al.* (2004) frame work offers another perspective on building customer centric companies. According to his frame shown in figure 8, there are design principals that telecommunications service providers should keep in mind during the designing phase of customer centric organization:

- Differentiate the customer experience through new, open and transparent approach.
- Redesign distribution and customer management around a solution approach.
- Develop a segmentation process that differentiates your customer based on needs.

- Pull away from competitors by getting execution right the first time.

Putting these four principals working together will yield to a vast transformation of the organizations.

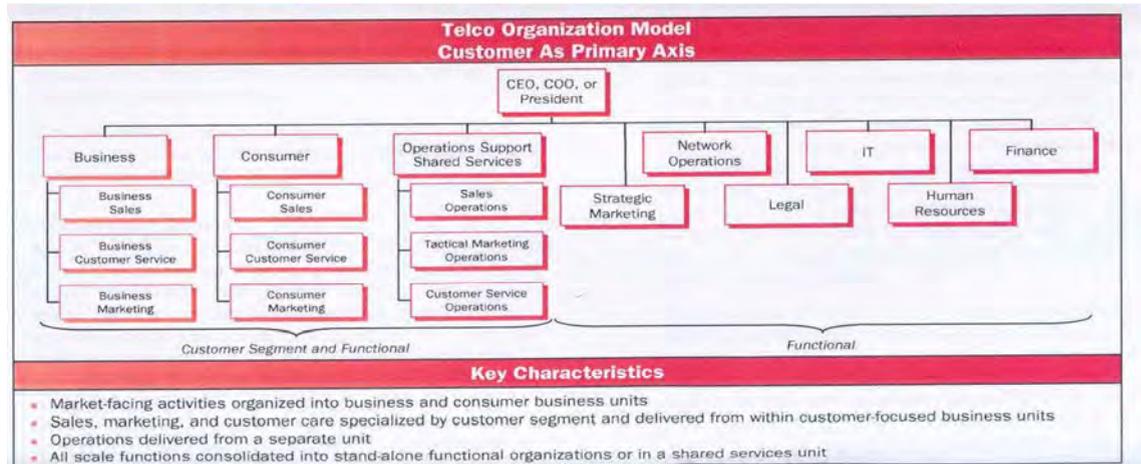


Figure (8): Customer Centric Operating Model for Telecommunications Provider  
Source: (Raul *et al.*, 2004).

No longer these organizations are organized around functional or product areas; instead. Customer segments are the primary axis. "Building a customer centric organization, in our experience, requires repositioning the business around an optimized continuum of tailored solutions. To achieve this repositioning, telcos need to shift from mindset to a full service provider market. The telecommunications company of the future will provide tailored bundles of products and services to anyone, anytime, anywhere, anyhow." (Booz Allen, 2004).

In summary, there is extensive agreement among literature that building customer centric organization must be made around the customer needs and segments. Discussions on the importance of building the internal capabilities of the organization and aligning the resources toward these needs is also have an important effect in designing these organizations. For the purpose of the present study, the approaches of both Bailey (2006) and Raul *et al.* (2004) will be adopted. Both approaches have similar characteristics and very much related to the existing environment of Saudi Telecom Company. Further details of this topic will be explored in both document three and four which will clarify the road map of Saudi Telecom to be a customer centric company.

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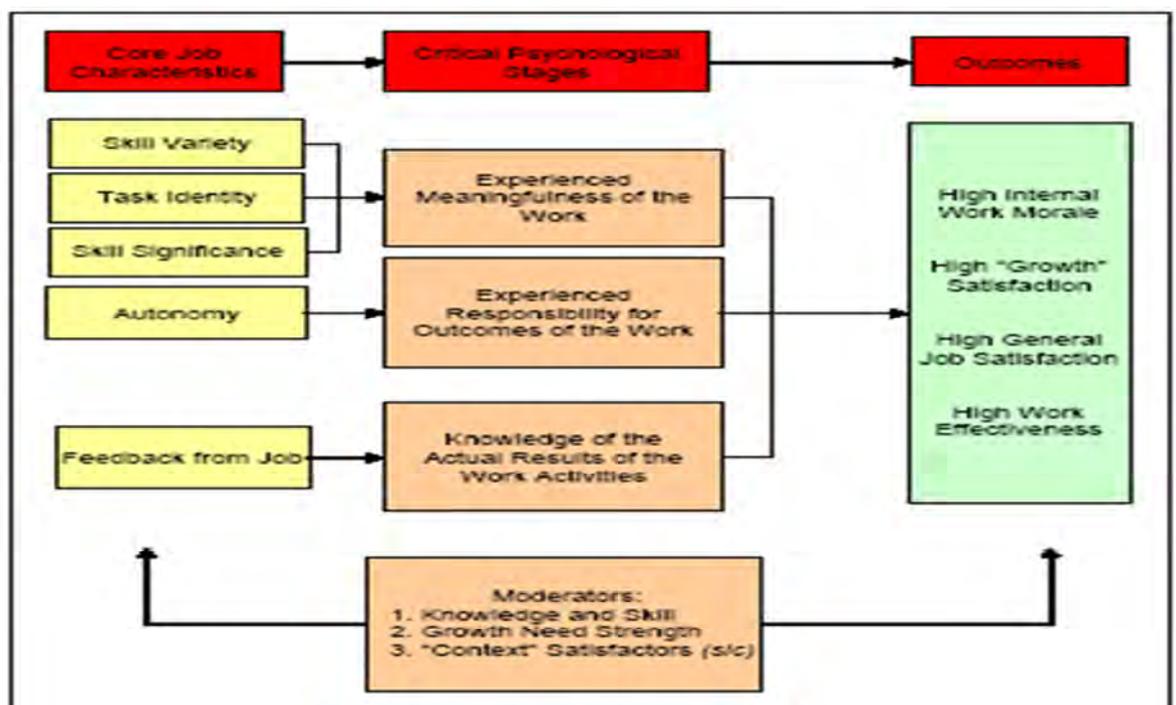
### 3 Employee Satisfaction and Customer Centricity

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#### The Hackman and Oldham Model Theories of Employee Satisfaction

Processes within organizations must be designed to meet not only the technical demands but also the human/ mental needs of the employees who work in it (Eskildsen and Dahlgaard, 2000). Dahlgaard, Kristensen & Kanji (1998) contend that continuously improving processes will improve quality and thus productivity, and if processes are further designed to fulfill the human/ mental needs, morale and motivation will increase, leading to an improvement in quality and productivity.

The underlying principle behind the Hackman and Oldham model, figure 9 below, incorporates both the technical and mental elements of job design. Evans and Lindsay (1996) confirm that the Hackman and Oldham model is a further development and operationalization (*sic*) of Herzberg's theory, and has been validated in many different organizational settings. Evans and Lindsay (1996) also mention that employee satisfaction can be improved if the job design incorporates empowerment and involvement, process ownership, job enlargement/ rotation and feedback about performance.



Source: Adapted from Eskildsen and Dahlgaard, 2000: 1084

Figure: 9 Hackman and Oldham's Work Design Model

Source: Evans and Lindsay (1996)

Employees can derive satisfaction from their jobs by meeting or exceeding the emotional wants and needs they expect from their work (Pepitone, 2006). Therefore, Managers that can recognize this and understand the many different aspects that are involved in employee satisfaction will be successful at achieving the link between employee satisfaction, customer retention and added profitability. As previously stated, the issue of employee satisfaction has a major impact on building customer centric organization and customer centricity. This section will comprehensively analyze the many important elements that are related to employee satisfaction, and resultant employee loyalty. The chapter will consider the elements, define their concepts, and discuss the salient points in relation to the main hypothesis that customer centricity of organization has a major impact on customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction.

### **Work environment**

Employees, like customers, are readily influenced by the environment in which they must perform their tasks. For the consumer, this environment consists normally of a store or office in which the consumer plays the role of an individual purchasing a good or making use of a service. What companies often forget, is that there are other people sharing those same spaces, individuals who, in fact, make possible the experience enjoyed (or not) by those customers. Much as consumers like to have a variety of choices when presented with an opportunity to buy a good or service, so too do employees like to have jobs that are personally enriching and varied at least in so far as they are not hopelessly monotonous. Studies show that employees who feel “empowered” are productive employees. According to Ronald J. Burke and Cary L. Cooper, "The idea that employee empowerment can lead to positive outcomes is not unique to the service context, as evidenced by the widespread acceptance of the job characteristics model according to which enriched jobs (characterized by greater autonomy, variety, task identity and significance, and performance feedback) are associated with positive work outcomes and employee satisfaction." (Lisa and Benjamin, 2004).

Employees are often placed under considerable pressures in today’s fast-paced and constantly-changing business environment. Business cycles have become so attenuated, and changes both within and without companies so frequent and rapid that employees do not always have time to adapt. Corporate buy-outs and take-overs bring sudden changes in management personnel and style, in company goals and business techniques – all things which employees are required to adjust themselves to without further consideration, thus

creating a rapidly changing emotional cycle that unfortunately is not as flexible as the business cycle to which it is attached (Marc, 2004). Management, especially those lower-tier managers directly responsible for supervising regular employees, play an extremely significant role as the “voice” of rank-and-file personnel; their input and active participation in the customer centricity journey is essential and plays a vital role if any change is to be successful in an organization. These sudden pressures of another emotional cycle notwithstanding, the ordinary pressures of the workplace compounded with lack of communication, unintelligible procedures, too heavy workloads, etc. can also lead directly to loss of productivity and to problems with all-important customers: "Burnout, a psychological process that results in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of decreased accomplishment, is brought about by long periods of unrelieved job stress and is closely associated with decreased employee performance, higher absenteeism, and high levels of turnover." (John and Lucy, 1998).

The customer-centric organization must be as concerned with the atmosphere it furnishes its employees as with the shopping or service environment it provides to its clientele. The two are interdependent. In particular, the consumer will suffer if the employee’s basic needs are not being met.

The single most important factor contributing to employee satisfaction is the internal quality of the work environment. The respect and appreciation employees derive from their co-workers and employers helps to determine the internal work environment (Stein and Book, 2000). The term “work environment” encompasses many different aspects such as: physical work environment, management’s attitude toward employees, relationship with colleagues, and working conditions. Recent research has highlighted the hypothesis that an employee’s work environment can have a dramatic effect on his/her performance and attitude toward work. For example, one’s workspace has traditionally been conceptualized as just a passive host to its user activities. However, it is now recognized that the space workers occupy at work effects patterns of interaction, and can have a noticeable impact on behavior and performance.

Management must strive to always be aware of toxic relationships, tense behavior between employees, and negative overtones in the work environment. By creating positive environments that nurture success, employers are exhibiting to their employees a commitment to achieving an atmosphere that will engender employee satisfaction in the workplace.

## Employee satisfaction and recognition

Employees were once thought to be just a normal part of the production process of creating goods and services. Today however, most organizations realize that employees are much more than just “input” as part of the business generation process, and require motivation and subsequent recognition in order to build and maintain employee satisfaction. This section will consider the different methods associated with motivating and recognizing employees, in order to achieve maximum employee satisfaction. Much of the basis for employee motivation can be traced to the Hawthorne Studies, conducted by Elton Mayo from 1924 to 1932. The major conclusion of this study was that employees are not solely motivated by money and employer behavior and attitude have a great deal to do with an employee’s satisfaction. After this initial research, understanding employee motivation was the focus of many other researchers, the most notably being Maslow, who developed the need-hierarchy theory. According to A.H. Maslow, people’s needs resemble a pyramid. As basic needs are satisfied, higher levels of needs emerge and motivate the employee’s behavior. Because of this, organizations need to provide a work environment that will motivate employees above and beyond their physiological and safety needs (John, 2006). The analysis in regard to this topic will be done using the analysis and research presented in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory (Fig. 10).



Figure 10: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Source: John Gray Awards

Motivation has been defined somewhat differently by many different researchers, but is generally accepted as: the psychological process that gives behavior purpose and direction; a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific, unmet needs; an

internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need; and the will to achieve (Lindner, 1998). For this research, motivation is operationally defined as the inner force that drives individuals to accomplish personal and organizational goals. Having established a working definition for “motivation”, the next step is to assess the role of motivation in moving organizations to be more customer focus. The obvious question that must be asked before assessing the role of motivations in organizations is, “why is it necessary or important to motivate employees?” The answer is one of economics. Motivated employees are more productive, more engaged, and are satisfied workers. Employees that are motivated have a sense of purpose and belonging, and therefore tend to exhibit greater loyalty to their respective organizations.

A good example of an organization proactively assessing the factors that motivate their employees can be found at the Piketon Research and Extension Center in Piketon, Ohio. The Company developed a survey questionnaire consisting of ten factors and asked employees to rank them in order of importance. A comparison of these results to Maslow’s need-hierarchy theory provides some interesting insight into employee motivation. The number one ranked motivator, interesting work, is a self-actualizing factor. The number two-ranked motivator, good wages, is a physiological factor. The number three-ranked motivator, full appreciation of work done, is an esteem factor. The number four-ranked motivator, job security, is a safety factor. Therefore, according to Maslow (1943), if managers wish to address the most important motivational factor of the Center employees, interesting work, physiological safety, social, and esteem factors must first be satisfied. As is the case in this example, an employee survey can help management effectively identify the factors that they should consider in order to better motivate their employees.

An integral part of employee motivation is making it constant and perpetual and one of the best ways to accomplish this is with a formal employee recognition program. Recognizing and applauding employees’ achievements and contributions are critical to reinforcing desired behaviors. The best way to encourage desired behavior and create enthusiasm for continued future improvement is to formally recognize employees. Recognition programs have proven to play an important role in a company’s employee satisfaction and creating a customer centric environment. Recognition programs serve to create positive environments that encourage desired behaviors. Organizations that implement meaningful and effective recognition programs often gain a competitive edge through increased employee retention and an increase in overall employee satisfaction (Reche, 2006).

The implementation of effective award and recognition programs can create a positive working environment that encourages employees to thrive. Recognition makes employees feel valued and appreciated, it contributes to higher employee morale, and increases organizational productivity. In addition, strong recognition programs are effective employee motivation tools. They work to reinforce organizational goals, mission, and vision (Brintnall, 2005). In a recent Gallup poll survey of 80,000 employees, recognition ranked fourth among the 12 dimensions that consistently correlated with those workgroups that have higher employee retention (Gallup, 2006). The key to recognition programs being successful is to formalize them and make them a priority, like any other corporate goal.

The important point to keep in mind regarding recognition programs is that they come in all shapes and sizes and do not have to be expensive to initiate. The most important factors are that they must be fair, consistent, and valued by the employees. Effective recognition does not necessarily have to be in the form of monetary remuneration, but must be tangible and appreciated by employees. Most employee surveys indicate that their organization lacks an effective recognition program, and also that recognition programs are valuable at increasing employee satisfaction. Organizations that are able to implement effective recognition programs often benefit from higher employee morale, increased productivity, and a general increase in overall employee satisfaction as well as customer satisfaction (Reche, 2006).

### **Communicating with employees and customer centricity**

The art of communication is a vital component of employee satisfaction and engagement. Without workplace communication, nothing would be accomplished. Instructions could not be given; equipment and supplies could not be ordered; progress could not be measured; and services could not be delivered to customers. The five functions of management: planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling, are all dependent on communication. Surveys conducted with highly successful managers consistently highlight the benefits of effective communication (Slagle, 2006). There are many different methods of communicating in the workplace that include: face-to-face meetings, staff meetings, small group meetings, department meetings, management forum meetings, walkabouts, telephone conversations, mission statements, newsletters, bulletin boards, e-mail, and intranets, just to name a few. All other components of this analysis would be impossible to implement without communication. For that reason, this section will be concerned with employee communication in the workplace, and the many considerations involved with

effectively communicating at work that contributes greatly in building customer centric organization.

Employees communicate with each other and management in many different ways, as well as being communicated to by management in many different ways. Employee communication is a very powerful factor in the level of employee satisfaction that workers in an organization have. From the perspective of the employee, communication from management is a reaffirmation of what the leadership believes and stands for. For this reason, the effectiveness and efficiency of communication in an organization is often used as a barometer to gauge the performance and overall effectiveness of an organization. In an article titled, *Interpersonal Style and Corporate Climate: Communication Revisited*, Hall (1980) states in regard to the importance of communication: “High on the diagnostic checklist of corporate health is communication. The ease with which information flows downward, upward, and horizontally is often a major internal indicant of organizational effectiveness; who listens to whom may reveal the real as opposed to the apparent authority structure in a firm; and the proportion of people who consistently fail to get the message is frequently taken as a statistical baseline for predicting the efficiency with which plans will be translated into actions.” (Hall, 1980)

This statement highlights the importance of effective communication in the workplace, and the potential negative ramifications of errant or misguided communication.

Communication is traditionally thought to have three main elements: a message, a sender, and a receiver. However, this is a stark over simplification of the process involved in workplace communications. Each of these stated elements has attached to it, several factors that must be considered in the process of communicating. The first to be analyzed here is the element of the message. Some of the more important considerations in regard to the message are: clarity, purpose, audience, meaning, complexity, and pertinence. Vague words or phrases may lead to ineffective results or no reaction at all from the intended recipient. Different words have different meanings to different people, depending on their age, economic status, position within the company, or cultural background.

The second element of communication is the sender, or source of the message. The sender must be known to, or have relevance to the recipient in order for the message to carry any importance in most cases. This element is closely related to the amount of communication an employee is subject to in the workplace. In many organizations, mass communications

or cross-departmental communications are done everyday that do not have particular relevance to everyone they are communicated to. This issue creates two problems; first, it increases the amount of information an employee is subject to and second, the information may not be pertinent to all those that read it. This situation has the effect of employees, over time, becoming immune to certain communications. It may also result in information overload, which may have an adverse effect on future employee communication. Employees generally prefer to hear from their direct supervisor, but in some cases, mass communication may be appropriate. As long as the sender of the information is legitimate, known, and relevant, employees will be more willing to internalize the message being sent.

The third element of communication is the receiver, which is closely related to the element of the sender in the regard that the receiver must be relevant and known. A relative message that is sent by a relevant sender, but is sent to an irrelevant recipient, has no effect and is wasted communication. If the receiver of the communication is relevant and is the intended audience, the message must be understandable to the employee. This concept goes back to the element of the message itself. If it contains information that is valuable and pertinent to the receiver, it will be received much better. Two important factors involved in the communication process that involve the receiver, and are used to ensure a successful communications loop, are follow-up and feedback. The sender should follow-up with the receiver to see whether or not the receiver has interpreted the meaning of the message as it was intended. To help facilitate this process, the receiver, in turn, should provide adequate feedback to the sender of the information that gives an indication that they received the information and understand its intended meaning. This process helps to close the continuous communications loop and ensure that the communication process was successful and effective.

This next section will consider communications in the traditional work environment, expectations of employees, and management's responsibility in regard to effective communication to employees. Many supervisors and managers already know and understand how important it is to be effective communicator's with employees. Communications in the workplace is not just about communicating directives; it is also concerned with building relationships, instilling trust, promoting mutual understanding, and providing a tool for employee involvement. Like many facets of an employee's job, communication can be taught, and effective organizations ensure that it is. In most cases, the communication style of an organization conveys the values and culture of that

organization. Communication is not only an important part of each internal department, it is affected and shaped by the culture of a workplace and therefore demonstrates and transmits the characteristics of a workplace culture. Communication patterns within an organization typically follow the hierarchical model that exists, such as a command and control management style. If an organization's management exhibits an open, participative environment that is receptive to employee involvement, so too will be the communication style of the overall organization (Communication strategy, 2006).

Just like the planned direction of a company, so too should organizational communications have a strategy that is conveyed and understood by all members of the organization. Many organizations fail to recognize the importance of highlighting internal communications, but rather choose to assume that employees should automatically march in lock step with organizational priorities, strategies and initiatives. Companies that focus on improving the effectiveness of their internal communications experience increased productivity, customer centricity, employee satisfaction, and market value. Communication in progressive organizations reflects a view of the relationship with its workers. Management provides information to support participation of the workforce in decision-making. Collaborative employee-management communication is designed for the management and employees of an organization to mutually understand the strategies, goals, and initiatives that exist. It also allows all of the parties involved in these goals and initiatives to understand their roles, as well as expectations, in relation to meeting the objectives to be attained (Wilkins, 1989).

The goal of communication should be to facilitate the bilateral flow of information that should improve the employees' commitment to the organization's goals and objectives. Leadership must also be open to feedback. Employees need to believe they have a voice in the company and that their input matters. The management of an organization must do more than talk about bilateral communication; they must prove that it exists within the organization (Varelas, 2005). If employees see that the management of an organization is committed to a communications process that is based on respect, dignity, trust, and shared ideas, they will participate in the communications process openly and honestly.

An organization should have a strategy for internal communications, and that strategy should be shared with all employees. Organizations should delineate the communications expectations to employees and establish clear guidelines for communicating in the workplace. The communications strategy should be developed in order to encourage open

two-way communication and also facilitate the exchange of information necessary to conduct the customer centric change. Having a strategy in place and everyone in the organization understanding it, is good management and helps to promote effective relationships within the organization. Some of the early research on this topic by Blake and Mouton (1968) revealed that where management is effective and relationships are sound, there are fewer problems with communication. The starting point for developing internal organizational communication processes that build trust and credibility is to establish a set of working principles as the foundation.

The issue of communication in the workforce is one of great breadth and size that covers many different sub topics. Certain advances in technology have helped modern communication, but at the same time, have created other issues that must be considered when examining the communication process. One of the positives of the introduction of technology to the communications process is the ability to communicate with many employees quickly, without regard for geographic location. An issue that exists in communicating with employees electronically is that most senders of information expect that when a message has been sent, and subsequently received, that it has been understood as intended. Brown (1973) said: “The complex of technical devices which have come to facilitate the process of communication in larger organizations tends to divert attention from the essential truth that effective communication is more a matter of minds than of machines” (Brown, 1973). It is very easy to get lost in the technological advances that are related to communication. However, it is important for organizations to concentrate on effective communication and not get distracted by the technology itself (Harshman and Harshman, 1999). Flaherty (1997) indicates that effective organizational communication plays a major role in employee satisfaction as well as creating customer centric culture. High performing organizations provide channels for upward communication and listen to what employees say. A common factor revealed at many high-performing customer centric organizations is the very effective channels of communication that exist from the employees up to management. In these organizations, employees feel that their messages are heard by management and quite often used in the decision making process (MacGregor, 2006). Employees have an intrinsic need to know that their input counts and that when they attempt to communicate with management, the message is received and understood. All staff, no matter their length of tenure should have frequent opportunities to clarify goals of their work and give and receive feedback about how they perform their

jobs. It does not matter what the content of the message may be, as long as workers feel that they can effectively and openly communicate with the management of the organization (Communications Strategy, 2006).

### **Teamwork and employee satisfaction**

Only motivated, committed workers can successfully assist organization to achieve its customer centric goal. Working smarter can only be achieved with an involved workforce. Teamwork has been proven to improve many of the factors related to employee satisfaction that includes increased motivation and productivity (Hamel, 1994). Teamwork is now being used as a behavioral modification tool, used to increase employee satisfaction and motivate groups of employees toward organizational goals and objectives (Morley and Heraty, 1995). The assumption behind teamwork is to upgrade autonomy that is realized in terms of identifying the best way of practicing a job to achieve the highest performance through continuous search of employees for alternative ways of work practices. Increased autonomy is expected to foster self-fulfillment and make jobs significant (Ross, 1999). Teamwork is often viewed as an efficient and motivating method of coordinating and condensing the individual contributions of individuals into one cohesive outcome. In this regard, teamwork is viewed as a motivational tool for the purpose of enhancing individual input and involvement through a group of employees working together in team environments (Rodwell *et al.*, 1998).

Teamwork is not a new concept. The concept of “teams” has tended to be relegated to sports and media, rather than in business environments (Wellins *et al.*, 1991). The sports analogy is often used to cite the benefits of teamwork in organizations. The idea being that a true team is a group of cohesive equals with a common goal. The team functions as an organic whole where the group truly is greater than the sum of its parts. The term “self-directed work teams” has been used since the 1950’s to describe teams of employees working together toward one common goal. There is no universally accepted way of designing one of these teams because the formation process should be participative, and will probably differ from organization to organization. In the “typical” work environment, a *self-directed work team* is an intact group of employees who are responsible for a “whole” work process or segment that delivers a product or service to an internal or external customer. In essence, individuals work as an autonomous team that plan and control their work in order to achieve specified organizational goals and objectives (Wellins *et al.*, 1991).

Extensive research in the field of employee satisfaction has supported the hypothesis that employees derive pleasure and satisfaction from socializing with their co-workers, with the greatest source of satisfaction coming as a member of an “on the job” team. That is a tremendous source of morale for employees. In fact, a good deal of the interaction while socializing is work related. Teamwork contributes to an environment of socializing between employees, in regard to work matters as well as non-work related matters. This socializing contributes to a solidifying of relationships between employees. This social interaction and team environment leads to the establishment of an effective and cohesive work community (Sirota *et al.*, 2005). Although teamwork has been shown to improve employee satisfaction and worker productivity, it is often not managed well or even promoted by some organizations. Teamwork requires dedication and attention from management in order to be an effective morale and production tool. Teamwork is an important factor to manage well. Teamwork requires constant managerial attention and knowledge of the important elements associated with effective teamwork. Managers should understand the personalities involved in teams, the forming process, and the factors associated with successful team formation (Special, 2006).

Several researchers have found that employees realize greater job satisfaction and autonomy when able to work in teams (Ascigil, 2003). Therefore, an organization that promotes and encourages teamwork, and that provides an environment receptive to teamwork, stands to improve both employee satisfaction and productivity. It is claimed that the experiences of employees about team-based initiatives are shaped by multiple factors. Organizational behavior research has shown that management practices give rise to particular job attitudes on the part of employees. It has been found that the participation associated with teamwork leads to positive effects on job satisfaction and to the commitment level of employees (Boshoff and Mels, 1995).

Thus far, this section has focused on the positive attributes and benefits that stem from effective teamwork in an organization. There are however, negative effects of ineffective teamwork, or dissatisfied members of a team. When a member of the team experiences problems or worse yet, causes problems for other members of the team, the affected employee is not the only one that suffers. In fact, the issue may result in a breakdown of team cohesiveness and productivity. In fighting by team members cannot only cause team ineffectiveness, but also lead to individual mistrust and paranoia (Sirota *et al.*, 2005). Because teams are a composition of individuals, they present many unique problems that

must be addressed in a timely manner by management, as well as by the team members themselves. Quite often teams experience problems during the formation and forming stages of team development. Going in circles is a perfectly natural evolutionary stage and one that is important for the development of the group. Teams must go through different stages of formation in order to achieve autonomy as a group element. It is necessary for teams to experience tension and conflict on its way to becoming an effective entity. Groups that recognize and deal with conflict early on are much better equipped to handle issues that may arise later in the process (Wellins *et al.*, 1991).

In addition to the employee satisfaction benefits that an organization is able to reap as a result of effective teamwork, there are other tangible benefits as well. These include employee empowerment, trust in management, and an engendered feeling of organizational involvement. Employee involvement practices have been one of the techniques extensively used for creating customer centric culture by pioneering organizations. Among those initiatives, redesign of work combined with job enrichment are two that are widely aiming at quality increases by creating jobs that entail autonomy and feedback. All of which are accomplished by effectively employing a teamwork strategy (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). As was previously stated, management has an important role in ensuring the success and intended outcome of teamwork in the organization. Management needs to fully understand the teamwork concept and realize that unless management behaves differently, nothing will change. Management needs to give the work-teams clear direction on what needs to be accomplished and autonomy and control over how they do the tasks. With the proper guidance, team members learn to act more like managers that are part of a larger organizational focus. Both management and the employees in the team can learn from the teaming process while contributing to the accomplishment of organizational objectives (Wellins *et al.*, 1991).

### **Employee empowerment**

Empowerment in the workplace is an often-misunderstood concept. Employee empowerment is a term that many managers and organizations think they understand, but few actually do, and even fewer really put into practice. Many managers feel that by empowering employees, they relinquish the responsibility to lead and control the organization. This is not the case. Empowerment is actually a culmination of many of the ideas and tenets of employee satisfaction that have been discussed previously in this research. For an organization to practice and foster employee empowerment, the

management must trust and communicate with employees (Fig. 11). The single most important element of employee empowerment is communication. Consistent communication from management in regard to every facet of the organization empowers the workforce and engenders a feeling in them as active participants in the success of the company (Adams, 2006). Employee empowerment has been described and defined in many ways but is generally accepted as: the process of enabling an employee to think, behave, act, react, and control their work in more autonomous ways, as to be in control of one's own destiny. Effective employee empowerment not only has positive implications for employee satisfaction, but also many other organizational facets, such as customer service and retention. This section of the paper will consider the implications of employee empowerment as a factor in employee satisfaction and creating a customer centric organization.

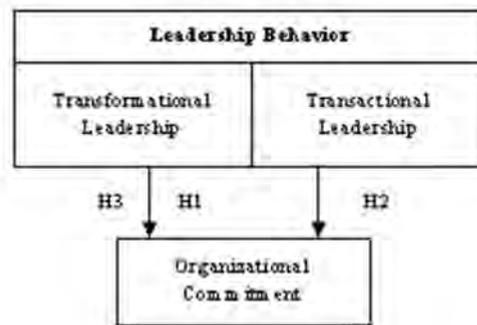


Figure 11: Leadership for Empowerment

Source: Nova Southeastern University

A great deal of managerial discussion has centered on the need to empower employees and give them a sense of ownership and pride in their work. Options have included flattening organizational pyramids and using team management. Many companies actually set out to increase employee empowerment by attempting to increase the level of entrepreneurship within the company (Denton, 2004). Traditionally, entrepreneurship has been thought of as a concept of independence and self-direction, a concept that is diametrically opposed to the process of a synergistic organization. However, the concept of entrepreneurship has been employed in successful organizations and is often referred to as “corporate entrepreneurship.” Corporate entrepreneurship focuses on ways to encourage entrepreneurial activities in corporations, and seeks to identify relevant factors associated with corporations that exhibit characteristics most often associated with the individual

entrepreneur (Gartner, 1988). The concept of corporate entrepreneurship is becoming more important to organizations everywhere as the need increases to retain good employees, while at the same time needing to constantly compete and innovate. Empowerment and entrepreneurship can be synonymous terms when trying to prompt employees to operate with more autonomy, take action, and ultimately control their own destiny. This motivational action often leads to employees feeling more independent and in control of their work situation, which in turn, is translated into greater effort and improved work productivity (Miecevole, 2006).

The most important factor in effective employee empowerment is bilateral communication. As previously mentioned, a key to employee empowerment is effective and honest communication. It requires that management increase the amount of time they devote to actively communicating with employees, as well as how they go about doing it (Hildula, 1996). Communicating and sharing information accomplishes several objectives that are not only important for the empowerment process, but also for overall employee satisfaction with the organization. The sharing of information lets people understand the current organizational situation in clear terms. It begins to build trust throughout the organization and breaks down traditional hierarchical thinking. Information leads to employees accepting more responsibility, making informed decisions, and having an understanding of the goals and objectives of the organization. Information ultimately empowers employees to act as stakeholders of the organization (Blanchard, 1996).

It is also important to remember that communication must work both ways. That is to say, employees must be allowed to have a say in issues that they are required to work with. This includes the opportunity to offer ideas and solutions to situations that may confront the organization. An important factor to consider when discussing idea generation is the treatment of the people involved in the process. It is vital that the participants receive feedback and feel that they have ownership in the process. "People must know that their ideas will be listened to and, if they have merit, acted upon. If they do, it is possible to mobilize individual creativity on a very broad scale" (Champy, 1995). Making sure the participants are treated fairly and as equal partners in the process is a key to successful innovation and creativity.

Everyone involved in the process must believe that anything is possible and that exploring new paradigms and ways of thinking are the goals. Fear of failure and retribution for unsuccessful ventures cannot be presented as impediments to the process. "Punishing the

innovator when an innovation fails is the best way to ensure that no one ever attempts to be innovative.” (Hammer and Champy, 1993). One last note about the people involved in the process is in regard to the hiring of the people themselves. Far too often we hire people in our own image. By doing this, we inadvertently create a uniform, standard line of thinking and methodology. The most efficient way to introduce creativity and innovation into an organization is by hiring creative and innovative people. In order to effectively do this, the leadership of an organization must be willing to step outside of their comfort zone and hire people that may be different from themselves (Freiberg, 2005).

Employee empowerment requires a strong and lasting commitment from an organization’s management. A pervasive misconception in relation to employee empowerment is that it is a top down desire. Employee empowerment comes from the individual. That is not to say that management ceases to have the responsibility to lead the group and is not responsible for performance. In fact, companies that seek to empower employees demand stronger leadership and accountability. This strong leadership and accountability must start at the very top and permeate all levels of management. Once the organization becomes a cohesive, understanding team, the real benefits of employee empowerment can then be realized (Butcher, 2006). It is up to the management of an organization to lead the empowerment process, even though it is most likely the employees that are advocating the issue. Creating and stimulating employee empowerment in established organizations is not an expeditious proposition. It is an easier proposition in newer organizations where the leadership has made empowerment of its employees a priority from the beginning. For this reason, it is incumbent on the leadership of established organizations to demonstrate the benefits and expected outcomes of employee motivation initiatives to employees (Fox, 1998).

A good lens by which to examine the employee and organizational benefits of employee empowerment is through the customers of the organization. It is a well-known fact that companies who are truly successful customer centric have several traits in common, one of which is employee empowerment. This empowerment is exhibited by employees that are able to make on the spot decisions for the benefit of customer service delivery (Haley, 2006). There are now many companies that tout employee empowerment as a selling point to prospective customers. They advertise the fact that the employee empowerment philosophy allows their employees several important capabilities, including the ability to respond intelligently and independently to customer needs, and make critical decisions on-

the-spot. Because employee empowerment leads to more satisfied and motivated employees, organizations are able to deliver higher quality, lasting customer service (Catapult, 2007). Since our society has become a “service” related society, with a service-based economy, empowering employees to make customer service related decisions is imperative to organizational success towards the customer centric principals. It is necessary for customer service employees to exercise a higher level of personal judgment than their manufacturing counterparts because of their proximity to the customer service delivery experience (Huq and Stole, 1998). Using this reasoning, one can easily see that empowering employees to make customer service related decisions will result in the satisfaction of the customer, employee, and subsequently, the organization.

In addition to the employee, organizational and customer benefits already cited here, employee empowerment holds added benefits and outcomes for employees. One of the measures of success for any organization is the personal growth and development of its employees. Empowerment allows employees the opportunity to build on their current skill set. Being empowered gives them the ability to use all the skills that they already possess as well as gain new skills and experiences. Being able to practice these skills and exercise their creativity and innovation will help them improve upon future performance (Hayes, 2003). When encouraged and managed properly, empowerment can be a great solution for many organizational problems. Once organizations and employees are able to understand and practice employee empowerment, they can then begin to recognize personal and corporate growth that results from the empowerment initiative (Butcher, 2006).

### Employee motivation

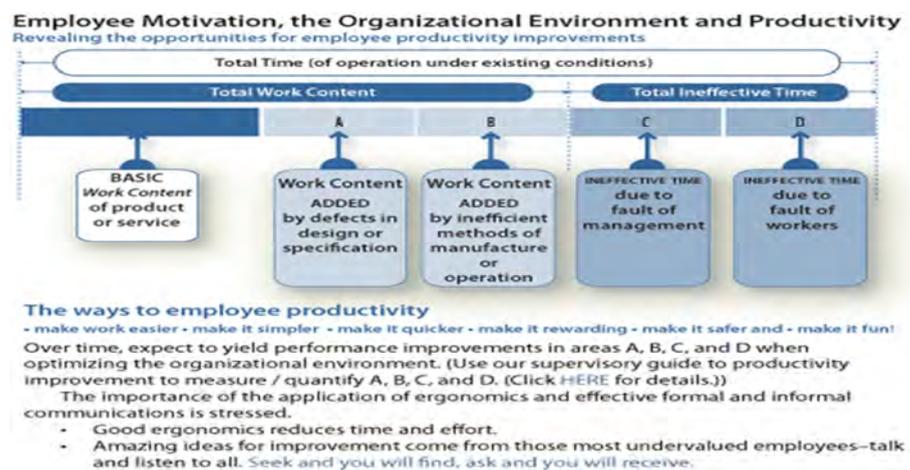
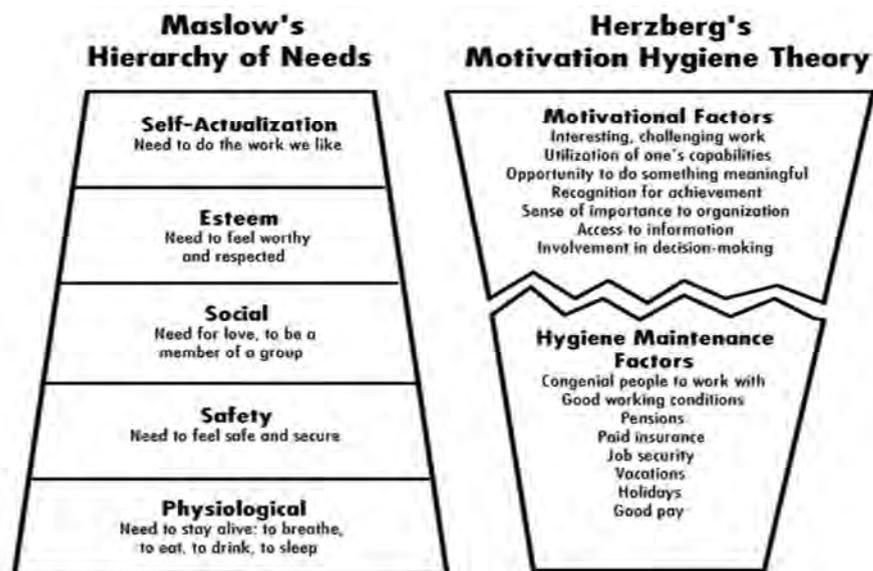


Figure 12: Employee Motivation

Source: Accel Team

The theory of motivation is really rooted in the field of psychology. Because of this, one can infer that motivation is unique to the particular individual, affected by different circumstances. “Motivation is the set of processes that moves a person toward a goal. The purpose of behavior is to satisfy needs. A need is anything that is required, desired, or useful. A want is a conscious recognition of a need. A need arises when there is a difference in self-concept (the way I see myself) and perception (the way I see the world around me)” (Allen, 1998). Although there are several cited motivation theories, two of the more popular will be discussed here: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, and Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory (Fig. 13). Work motivation is one of the key areas of organizational psychology. Using these two different motivational theories, this paper will analyze the motivation triggers used to maximize employee motivation and satisfaction which contribute to create a customer centric culture.



**Figure 13: Motivational Theories**

**Source: Allen (1998)**

Frederick Herzberg developed a two-factor theory of motivation that makes clear what the employer can bring to the motivation partnership. According to Herzberg, two factors affect employee motivation: dissatisfiers (sometimes referred to as Hygiene) and motivators. While at work, the organization is in control of both factors (Erven and Milligan, 2001). Dissatisfaction (hygiene) or extrinsic factors, excessive hours, unsafe working conditions, job security, and low wages, produce job dissatisfaction. Motivator or intrinsic factors, such as increased responsibility, adequate training and development opportunities, recognition, and satisfying work, produce job satisfaction (Fig.14).

The implications for the employer's side of the motivation partnership are clear. The dissatisfiers must be removed before motivators can work. Employees working in unsafe conditions with unfair pay will not be motivated by recognition and delegation of additional responsibility. However, if improvements in both safety and pay are made, employees may still not become motivated. Instead, if all else remains the same the employees will become satisfied but not motivated (Erven and Milliganm, 2001).

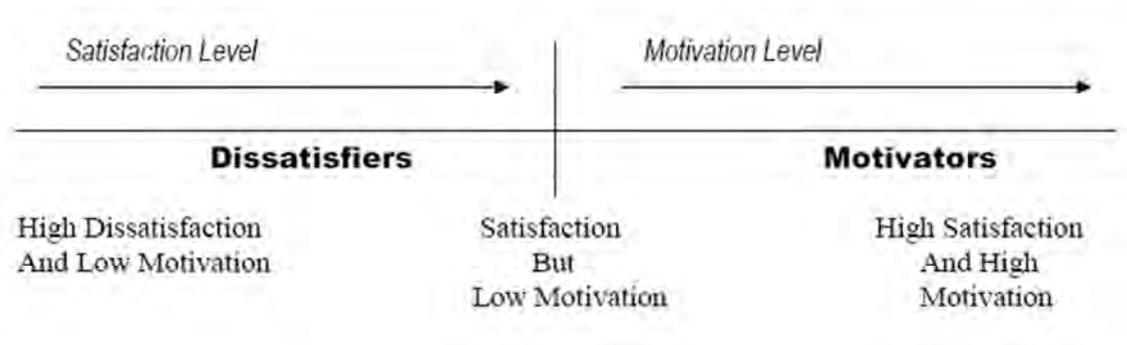


Figure 14: Motivation & Satisfaction Levels

Source: Ohio State University

The second of the two psychological theories of motivation, and probably the most widely recognized, was first introduced by Abraham Maslow and is known as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.



Figure 15: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (illustration)

Source: Allen (1998)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs identifies five levels of needs, which are best seen as a hierarchy with the most basic need emerging first and the most sophisticated need last (Fig. 15). People move up the hierarchy one level at a time. Gratified needs lose their strength and the next level of needs is activated. As basic or lower-level needs are satisfied, higher level needs become operative. Therefore, a satisfied need is not a motivator (Allen, 1998).

The basic human needs, according to Maslow are: physiological needs (lowest), safety needs, love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (highest). This theory indicates that man's behavior is therefore dominated by his unsatisfied needs. As each need is satisfied, another is created, making the cycle a perpetual, ongoing activity of searching for perfection through self-development (Accel, 2006).

Motivating employees is a constant task that requires an understanding of employee psychology, as well as an understanding of individual motivators. The key to motivation unlocks human potential. To be effective, managers need to understand what motivates employees within the context of the roles they perform. Of all the functions a manager performs, employee motivation is one of the most complex management issues they face. As employees find an outlet for their creativity and satisfaction with their work, the work they perform becomes a more important part of their life. As a result, employees become more productive and experience higher rates of satisfaction with their employment (Erven and Milligan, 2001). In the past, managers assumed incorrectly, that all it would take to motivate employees is to pay them more. It is conceivable for an organization to have more employees than a competitor yet produce less and have disgruntled, low-output employees even though the organization is paying their employees more than the competitor. Organizations are beginning to understand that they are able to motivate increased productivity and employee satisfaction by means other than financial incentives (Increasing Productivity, 2005).

The foundation of good human relations, the interaction between employer and employees and their attitudes toward one another, is a satisfied work force. Job satisfaction is the degree of enjoyment that people derive from performing their jobs. Satisfied and motivated employees are more likely to have high morale, loyalty and commitment. As a result, they tend to be more dedicated and make larger contributions to the initiatives and goals of the organization (Allen, 1998). An organization's level of understanding of how to motivate its employees can be considered directly related to the level of productivity and employee satisfaction realized at the organization.

### **Treating employees fairly leads to increased customer satisfaction and customer centricity**

The customer-centric organization depends not only on furnishing employees with an amiable workplace, but also a fair workplace. It is important not to discriminate among

employees, employing different standards to different individuals or groups of workers. Fairness is especially important when it comes to considerations of pay and promotion. In seeking to keep its staff contented, a company must make certain that equitable standards are applied across the board. Special programs must not be instituted that favor one class of employee with stilted pay scales or incentives that are simply not available to others. Some organizations actively implement just these sorts of programs as a means of encouraging people to join the company. College students might be given incentives to sign with an organization after they graduate, or perhaps, to seek summer employment. Workers might be sought for a new department or division and these workers lured to the organization by promises of extra benefits or extra-rapid advancement: "Now the practice is used for new college graduates and hard-to fill technical and customer service jobs. Every time we add a pay practice that makes economic sense for one group of employees, we are perceived to put other employees at a disadvantage. Employees who thought that their pay was okay become dissatisfied with it when they learn about opportunities for pay that they cannot share in. Having a variety of reasons for paying employees inevitably creates invidious comparisons. After a while we find ourselves with a number of pay practices that do not seem to work for us. They:

- Have conflicting goals.
- Are hard to administer.
- Increase labor costs more than we think they should.
- Are not consistent with our mission and values.
- Confuse employees.
- Cause morale problems between the haves and have-nots." (Suzanne, 1999).

Again, these distinctions among employees lead to loss of service for customers. If they are not treated fairly themselves, personnel see no reason to devote themselves to company goals, and therefore, no particular reason to go that extra mile in providing excellent service or, indeed, doing anything to ensure that customers are retained or the customer base is expanded.

One idea is for the customer-centric organization to employ its workforce in observational capacity. Workers actually get to recommend what constitutes best practice in customer

service (Jack, Scott and Kyle, 2006). The concept makes perfect sense as the employees themselves are closest to those they serve. The policy also builds employee self-esteem and further increases levels of custom service by making employees feel they are a part of the solution, and that their thoughts and actions are appreciated by the company. Scott M. Brooks, Kyle M. Lundby, and Jack W. Wiley reports studies that show a correlation of .32 percent for service excellence and .17 for employee satisfaction when the organization chooses to emphasize a customer-centric approach (Jack, Scott and Kyle, 2006). Flexibility in workplace arrangements also helps to retain valuable employees and to foster an atmosphere of opportunity and equity. All workers can be offered such things as flexible work schedules, telecommuting, and similar options. Two different studies reveal the importance of these offerings, one showing fifty-three percent of employees considering telecommuting an important option, while in another twenty-three percent report that they would quit their jobs if they could not telecommute (Brandi, 2001). Southwest Airlines offers an example in which a large company places a premium on employee empowerment. In this instance, the company de-emphasizes the corporate hierarchy and instead plays up teamwork and employee independence; even encouraging employees to work in unsupervised locations where they will have the responsibility to make their own customer service decisions. And in yet another study cited by Subhash and Jay (2004), the link is explicitly made between a quality, well-managed workforce, and the maintenance of a high level of success in each of the following five essential areas of customer service:

- Reliability: Ability to deliver services as promised
- Responsiveness: Willingness to provide prompt service and help customers
- Assurance: Ability to communicate credibility and to convey trust and confidence
- Empathy: Willingness to provide caring and individualized attention to customers
- Tangibles: Maintaining the appearance of physical facilities and personnel

And in three further studies cited by Michael, Kevin and Henry (2004), autonomy and power distance are shown to be significant factors in job satisfaction all over the world. Employees feel better about themselves and the work that they do if they feel that they are given genuine responsibility to make their own decisions. Furthermore, freedom of action

is valued in the sense that workers perform better if they do not feel they occupy grossly inferior positions to managers and supervisors *i.e.* power distance. This is still another example of the importance of teams and teamwork in promoting a sense of camaraderie within the workplace. Such camaraderie actually promotes individual contentment among workers. Employee involvement is an essential element in capturing market share, and increasing innovation and productivity (Bonnie and Teresa, 2000). Each of these elements contributes directly to customer-centricity and going to be further discussed in documents three and four.

**Customer experience**

J. Kirkby and J. Wecksell (2003) define customer experience as the delivery of the company's brand promise to its customers. This experience occurs at every and each touch point such as contact centers, salespeople, advertising, events and others. The customer experience is filtered through customers' expectation of the company which is determined by the customer's value proposition and feedback from other customers. (See figure 16).

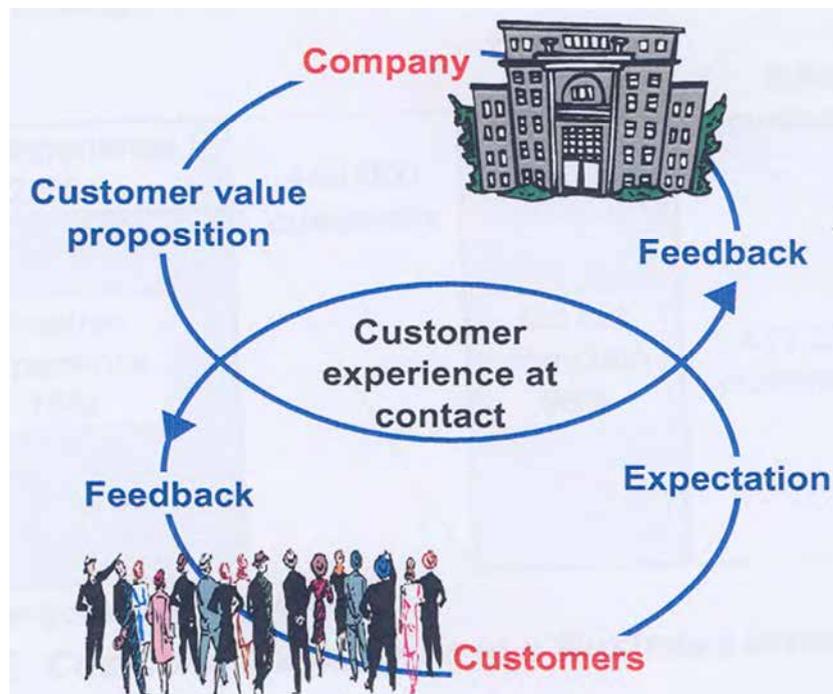


Figure (16) What is Customer Experience Management? (J. Kirkby and J. Wecksell, 2003)

The classic transaction marketing has transformed into relationship marketing, either internal to company relationship, or relationship with external networks, such as suppliers, customers, referrals and the like (Christopher, Payne and Ballantyne, 1991). In order to motivate the customers to turn to the company goods and services as often as possible and to purchase more each time, the company and the employees must ensure that each customer's experience with this company is very positive and the customer from an occasional purchaser turns into a loyal golden customer. Garbarino and Johnson (1999) stated that the company must improve and develop cumulative customer satisfaction with

the company, rather than one transaction-specific customer satisfaction. Any company will have value to the customer only if this firm is able to firstly, satisfy or/and exceed customer's expectations, such as having products/services required and being easily and comfortably accessible to the customer. Secondly, as there are different providers of similar products, the customer will also choose by the quality of the service offered and the level their basic needs are satisfied, such as speed of delivery and responsiveness as well as the support of the staff dealing with the customer (Ponsonby, 2004). Thirdly, the two mentioned above must differentiate the firm from the other competitors by means of flexible pricing, customized approach to the customers, adaptation of the products and services to exceed customer expectations, and generally positive attitude to the cooperation. These three components will affect the total customer experience/satisfaction with the company and will influence desire for future cooperation. Molineus (2002) emphasizes that customer's decision on which company to deal with depends on three milestones: how, when and at what cost to the customer. More importantly, customers that have already existing relationship with the company, expect to receive quality services all the time they deal with the company, which stresses necessity to train staff to constantly offer best quality services and products. It is vital to match and/or exceed customers' expectations, as due to human psychology, they tend to compare anything to the best they obtained once in the market.

Show (2005) explained that great customer experience that leads to customer satisfaction is characterized by the following attributes namely, source of competitive advantage, differential by focusing on stimulating emotions, enabled through inspirational leadership and people who are happy and fulfilled, designed outside in rather than inside out, and revenue generating and can reduce costs. He stated that the purpose of a customer experience is to create constructive interactions that make customers come back and enjoy dealing with this company's products and services.

Customer Relationship Management concept has been developed as a tool for managing customer experience by allowing to actively analyze the historic purchase patterns of the customers within the company and be able to adopt company productions and services, ability to adopt which becomes company competitive strength, as noted by Ahn (2004). Widely used definition of Customer Relationship Management concept is developed by D. Nelson (2003): a business strategy that maximizes profitability, revenue and customer satisfaction by organizing around customer segments, fostering behaviour that satisfies

customers and implementing customer-centric processes. To achieve the long-term value of CRM, enterprises must understand that it is a strategy involving the whole business, and thus should be approached at an enterprise level. CRM and customer centricity will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Analysis of successful customer experience management has stimulated development of an idea by a number of researchers, such as Edvinsson and Malone (1997), Sveiby (1996), Olve (2000) with his colleagues, that the importance of intellectual capital in the company, measured as difference between company capitalization value in the stock market and the book value, is overcoming the importance of financial capital in company performance. Accumulation of human capital in terms of (1) staff quality, their skills, knowledge (customer centricity awareness), behaviour and motivation (Gummesson, 2004); all these being employed to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and in terms of (2) growing customer database or expanding personal relationship network of company staff with the representatives of the customers, is the driver behind the company value and profitability. Quality of such human capital accumulated can reveal possible future performance of the company, or the tasks it will be able to carry out, while financial indicators typically presented in the balance sheet to the investors, say for the past performance of the organization.

Successful Swedish company Skandia Group has developed a set of 111 major indicators of human capital accumulation and performance within the company, which company invests into monitoring and analyzing, the process yielding in higher company profitability. They can be classified as three major groups: customer focused (sales per customer, trends in preferences, customers lost, times a customer was visited and the like), employee centred but directly linked to customer satisfaction (motivation, turnover of staff, number of years worked for the company), and development of customer centric organization of promoting technological base for effective and cost efficient timely customer support. This example is the practical case of successful implementation and integration of three major principles discussed herein and how tracking customer experience can lead to a customer centric organization that maximizes the stakeholder value.

Quality of customers experience is measured by customer retention rate and customer satisfaction rate, after which the customers can be grouped according by their loyalty to the company. Lindgreen (2004) in his study suggest development of such customer loyalty

matrix for this purpose. Changes of the quantity of customers within each segment can reveal effectiveness of the transformation of the company into customer-centric organization. Also, changes in customer satisfaction can reveal effectiveness of implementation of employee motivation systems. For big companies which have many sales account managers or the like, it is also necessary to monitor changes in customer loyalty and performance for each such big sales manager in order to be able to define areas of improvement for total company level customer loyalty mix.

J. Kirkby (2003) noted that resolving complaints and improving customer experience at companies' touch points such as contact centers can help to reduce customer defection by 2 percent to 3 percent per year. They continue explaining the stages of customer experience as shown in figure (17). It shows the emotional values customers put on their experiences from feeling of loathing to Zen. The figure provides a way to feel and quantify emotions from a customer experience perspective, and it shows the emotional values customers put on their experiences.

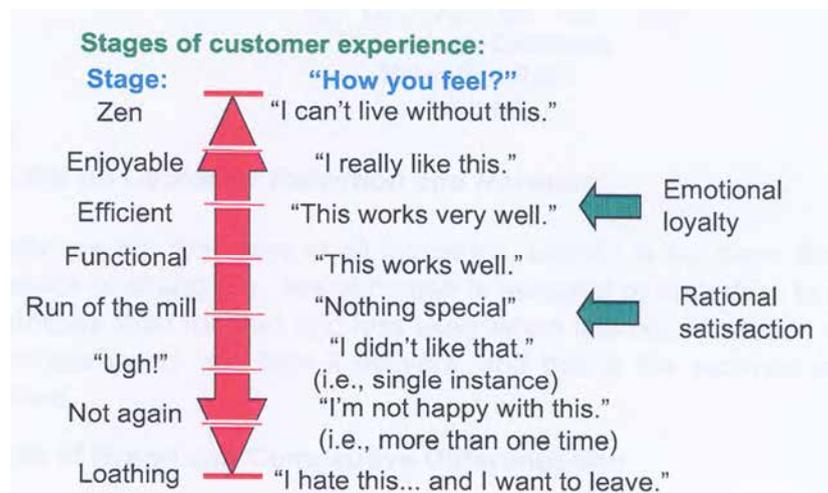


Figure (17) Stages of Customer Experience (J. Kirkby, 2003)

Not every customer will have a Zen experience. The aim is to move customers up the scale based on their potential. Some may never get past "run of the mill"; however, it must be known that a company can deliver satisfaction without gaining loyalty, but not loyalty without satisfaction. Ultimately, the customer experience is a business issue. A poor customer experience can put customers' relationship and stakeholder value at risk and promote value defections and lower share holder value. These stages of customer experience are going to be discussed thoroughly at the next section.

The literature available on the subject of improving customer satisfaction is just as prevalent as the information available in regard to improving employee satisfaction. Many different studies focused on the abilities of new technologies to drastically improve customer service. Businesses are now able to personalize and improve interactions with every customer, and across every point-of-contact, thanks to new technologies for information capture and analysis. Customers receive precisely the information they need, when they need it and how they need it, while businesses are able to manage relationships more effectively, efficiently and profitably through all avenues of interaction (IBM 2005). Many studies suggest the need for organizations to focus on their level of service delivery to the customer. Increasingly, the only thing that separates one business from its competitors is the level of service provided (Saxby 2006).

Most companies lose 45% to 50% of their customers every five years, winning new customers can be up to 20 times more expensive than retaining existing customers (Full 2006). The higher the level of satisfaction that customers experience, the greater the trust and confidence they show. As this trust and confidence grows, they will be less likely to move their business for a few percentage points (Castiglione 2006). When it comes to measuring their customers' satisfaction, too many companies have settled into a comfortable rut of changing their approaches to get the results they want (Columbus 2005). "Competitors that are prospering in the new global economy recognize that measuring customer satisfaction is key. Only by doing so can they hold on to the customers they have and understand how to better attract new customers" (Cacioppo 2000).

A good amount of the literature regarding the improvement of customer satisfaction considered the importance of measuring what matters to customers. This information is critical to understanding exactly what you need to fix. For example, if the customers are particularly dissatisfied with some aspect of the organization's service, but it is discovered that the thing they are unhappy with is not important to them, then the organization can focus on what is important for increasing customer satisfaction (Measuring 2006). An effective way to measure and gauge customer expectations and satisfaction is through the use of Customer Relationship Management tools. Maintaining control of customer relationships is possible only through consistent implementation of classic, well-proven customer bonding techniques, such as individualized customer care and communications, rewards for customer value and loyalty, special consideration for high-value customers and customized products and services (Ferruzza 1999). According to the literature,

implementing customer relationship management strategies is the most effective way to accomplish this. (Greenberg 2006) stated that Employee and customer satisfaction are considered to be one of the priorities for organizations committed to customer centricity and continuous improvement, both internally and externally. In documents three and four the researcher will clarify the position of Saudi Telecom customer experience at the customer experience stages shown in figure 17.

### **The elements of delivering exceptional customer service**

This section of the document will focus on several specific areas of customer service that should be considered by any organization attempting to raise customer service standards and become a customer centric organization. It almost goes without saying that good customer service is essential to sustaining any business. No matter how wonderful a job you do of attracting new customers, you won't be profitable for long unless you have a solid customer retention strategy in place that includes delivering great customer service. Customers are not concerned with a policy statement or the promise of exceptional service. They remember how they have been treated by the organization's employees and what actions were taken to satisfy their needs (Clark, 2006). As to this point, there are several specific considerations for those employees of the organization that come into contact with customers. Most consumers have a desire to receive good customer service. Quite often, they desire the little things like common courtesies, efficient service, and appropriate attention (Wheelihan, 2002). The following sections are concerned with essential elements of providing great customer service that contribute to become customer centric. Examples and definitions will be shown as follow:

***Engaging customers*** – It is tough to exaggerate the importance of customer engagement. Fully engaged customers deliver a 23% premium over average customers in share of wallet, profitability, revenue, and relationship growth, according to Gallup Research, while actively disengaged customers represent a 13% discount on the same measures. Furthermore, workgroups that are in the top 25% based on their levels of customer engagement outperform the rest on measures of profit, sales, and growth by a factor of two to one (Rieger, 2006). Engaging the customer is one of the first steps to providing customer service that will make a lasting impression on the customer.

***Be accessible*** – Customers expect, justifiably so, that they will have access to employees for questions and concerns, whether on the phone or in person. This element of customer

service should be addressed in an organizations customer service strategy. An effective strategy will set the stage and define minimum levels of accessibility for customer access. The expectations of accessibility should be defined and taught to all employees of the organization. Employees should never be too busy to be accessible to customers. An organization should consider investments in the infrastructure that are necessary to provide accessible customer service. This may mean the addition of more people, redesigning physical facilities, or changing the hours of operation for the organization. Whatever the initiative, the goal should be to allow for the maximum accessibility possible for the customer.

***Be reliable*** – Reliability means keeping the promise you made to the customer and doing what you say you will do for the customer. It is important to keep in mind that promises are not only made directly and verbally, but through a myriad of delivery paths in various forms. Organizations make direct promises to customers through advertising and marketing materials, in company correspondence and contracts, and in service guarantees and policies published for everyone to see. In addition, customers will hold the company to indirect commitments – promises that customers believe are implied in the way the company talks about itself, its products, and its services (Zemke, 2003). Not keeping promises is one of the quickest ways to create disgruntled, former customers.

***Display the right attitude*** – Persons' attitude colors the way they react to customers because it has a direct effect on what they hear and how they respond. There are people who can find opportunity in any adversity. Outgoing and optimistic, they strive to make customer engagements fun. They inspire a contagious enthusiasm and make others around them better (Freiberg, 2005). Customers sense this and react better to these types of people. Displaying the right attitude is important for everyone in the organization in pursuing an atmosphere that promotes great customer service. Manners count when dealing with customers. Be polite and exhibit an empathetic attitude toward customers.

***Accept responsibility*** – Everyone makes mistakes. The key to rectifying a mistake is to be honest with the customer and to accept responsibility. “The absolute best way to establish a sterling reputation as an organization is to be prepared to take responsibility for whatever decision you make. It is a matter of integrity, and it will earn you the respect of both the employees and customers of the organization” (Scott, 2001). Accepting responsibility also means being a team player and providing service to the customer on behalf of the entire organization. There can be no “it’s not my job.” When a mistake has been made, admit it

and set things straight. When customers have a complaint – listen, truly listen. Then, apologize and take corrective action. In many instances, the very act of listening (without interrupting) can be enough to diffuse the situation and make the person feel worthy as a customer (Clark, 2006).

***Be responsive*** – Timeliness has always been an important part of delivering great customer service, but in today’s hurried society, it has become even more important. From fast food restaurants to one-hour photo finishing, customers are demanding faster service than ever before. Companies that cater to time conscious customers are everywhere you look. Their success affects your customers’ expectations of your willingness and ability to do the same. When customers see other organizations delivering faster and more efficient service, they will demand it of your organization as well (Zemke, 2003). If an organization is unable to be as responsive as their competitors, they run the risk of delivering undesirable customer service, or at worst, losing customers to the competition.

***Be empathetic*** – Being empathetic toward customers shows them that you care about their situation. Take time to listen to their concerns, and take actions that show you care. We are used to thinking of compassion as an emotional state, based on our concern for one another. But it is also grounded in a level of awareness. “People see more of the systems within which they operate, and as they understand more clearly the pressures influencing one another, they naturally develop more compassion and empathy” (Senge, 1990). To be truly empathetic with a customer an employee should put himself/herself in the position of the customer. Recognizing the customer’s emotional state helps an organization figure out the best way to effectively provide them the service that they are looking for.

***Be there for the customer*** – In many ways, “being there” is the culmination of all of the previous elements mentioned. However, it is also a state of mind. It means that you are present at that time, at that moment, for the customer and his or her needs take precedents over any other function. How much do you actually get done when you are in one place thinking about a different place? Why not commit to being in one place at one time? When you are present, not dwelling on what happened in the past or worried about what may happen in the future, you are fully attuned to opportunities that develop and to the needs of the people you encounter. You gain a healthier perspective and the capacity for greater focus and creativity (Lundin *et al.*, 2002). Customers will easily recognize when they are the sole focus of an employee.

**Monitor achievement** – Measurement is both the first and last step in producing superior service. There is little sense in creating extensive measurement systems until all the other elements of service are in place, or until there is something to measure. But drafting an effective strategy, the first step toward better service, is difficult without some measure of current service performance. Measuring service performance or quality is quite different from measuring product quality because service is an experience. “The best measurement systems focus on the three aspects of service: process, product, and customer satisfaction” (Klein, 1999). Measuring elements of the service profit chain provides an overall indication of how an organization is doing, particularly on dimensions important to the business such as customer service. It is important that the methods of measurement be understood and consistent from period to period. “Organizations that have constructed elaborate measurements and methods often find that the cost of maintaining them and difficulty understanding them defeat their usefulness and guarantee that they will fall into disuse. Such approaches often lead to the kind of tinkering that changes measures from one period to the next, making it impossible to track progress” (Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger, 1997). Great service is much like a gift; it makes us want to continue to do business with an organization on a repetitive basis into the future. With so much competition in the marketplace, customer loyalty is at a premium. The best way to ensure customer loyalty is by consistently delivering great customer service. You achieve customer loyalty by doing the little things that make customers want to deal with the organization again and again, and recommend the organization to others.

Satisfying customers can be a tricky endeavor when organizations are faced with multiple complaints, demands, personalities, and angry customers. When these situations arise, the best course of action is to honestly and expeditiously address them. Employees should listen to the customer’s concern, empathize with their situation, and take actions to rectify the situation (Selland, 2006). One of the more important factors mentioned in this section is to be “present” for the customer. Above all else, if customers really feel that you are solely attending to their needs, they will experience a feeling of importance that will translate into a positive customer service experience for them.

The analysis of customer service elements in regard to Internet and telephone service should be done. With the hyper-expansion of the “virtual” economy more and more customer transactions are taking place in a virtual environment. These customers too expect great customer service. Just as in face-to-face transactions, customers expect virtual

transactions to contain the essential elements of customer service. A recent study done on Internet customer service found that satisfaction with various elements of Internet customer service is not at the levels many would expect. According to the respondents, only 43 percent were satisfied with e-mail as a customer service vehicle. Thirty-four percent were satisfied with Web sites in general as a mode of customer service (Rohrbacher, 2001). These numbers indicate the need for organizations that do business in an online environment to better adhere to desired customer service principles.

In documents three and four the researcher will measure these elements of customer service at Saudi Telecom, determine its relation to customer centricity and the proposed methods of handling them in order to assist Saudi Telecom to rise and take the path toward customer centricity. In section five the researcher will introduce the mechanisms and procedures that relate to raising the level of customer experience in general at Saudi Telecom.

### **Customer relationship management (CRM): Treating different customers differently**

Given the complexities of customer relation, many companies have turned to innovative solutions that help them to achieve success in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. Computers are essential not only for the running of a company, but for virtually every aspect of the entire business paradigm. Computer programs help with the many components that come together to create a high level of customer satisfaction. The computer systems themselves reflect the many individual areas with which the customer centric organization must concern itself. As stated above many areas of customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction overlap. This brings into the picture the many business features that, on the surface appear to pertain specifically to corporate personnel, but which; nevertheless, profoundly affect levels of customer satisfaction. Among these areas may be found such operations as human resources and its subsets of employee compensation and benefits management. Also included under the operational concerns that affect customer satisfaction and make for the customer centric organization are the various decision-making capabilities of management i.e. business intelligence, supply chain.

Planning, Marketing, and so forth. Nearly everything to do with a modern day business somehow affects the end customer's perception of the organization. It is the controlling and managing of these many functions that make an organization ideally consumer-centric.

Placing the customer at the center of the business paradigm requires, first and foremost, that the customer be treated as an individual. Too many organizations formulate their grand strategies in back rooms with little concern for the interests of customers, let alone of personnel below the level of top management. Planning for customer-centricity means planning for the customer's specific needs and desires. Best Buy is an excellent example of an organization that has witnessed phenomenal growth and success through an approach that involves, in effect, letting the customer decide the company's direction. Best Buy began as a small record store and today it is a major retailer selling virtually every product that has anything to do with consumer electronics. Key to the chain's profitability was its decision.

"To move from the mass market and price formula that animated much of the strategy of retail chain stores to a "Unique store approach." Stores would become "customer-segmented." and be built around the unique interests of customers in each area. Rather than have a cookie-cutter approach to design and stocking that fit corporate needs for efficiency and control, stores would reflect customer needs. More autonomy would be given store managers, and technology would be employed to keep on top of customer buying patterns. Processes that were not customer-driven would be driven out: readjusted, or eliminated." (Bill, 2006).

The new concept meant that Best Buy's management and employees would be actively listening to their clientele. The chain would no longer stock identical merchandise in identical stores because, with its national scope, the retailer was no longer serving a small, and largely homogenous, customer base. In each location, the public would be permitted to shape the look, feel, and appeal of the retail store. If in one area customers were not buying a given product it would not be stocked. If customers asked for a certain kind of music managers would make sure to provide that kind of music. Consumer tastes and preferences were avidly followed permitting local managers to come up with a store that was uniquely tailored to those who shopped in it. It was as if consumers were being asked to create their own ideal electronics, music and video retailer. In a sense, one could say that Best Buy looked to one of its products for answers. In the name of consumer-centricism, they took the concept behind video games like that Sim City Series, and similar offerings such as those that allow the user to design an amusement park, zoo, Prison, etc. and applied it to the real-life situation of Best Buy's retail business. It was "design your own store."

"This newer approach is about every thing that happens after the orders are placed. The focus is on order creation as customer specifications become more important and products configuration, flexible pricing models, and remote order management take over. In essence, the customer is taking over as chief architect of a manufacture's future product development." (Robert, 2001).

The Acer Corporation is just one example of a company that takes this concept a step further, building the idea of quick response to customer needs into its corporate organizational structure. The computer manufacturer instituted what is called a "fast food" strategy of manufacturing and sales. As at popular food outlets such as McDonald's or Burger King, Acer's operations were split between a slow cycle and a fast cycle according to responsiveness needs. Powers supplies and disk drivers - items that do not change frequently-could be assembled in Asia without regard to pressing time constraints, while microprocessors and RAM - components that are constantly changing in accord with new technologies - could be shipped to regional distribution centers at the last possible moment (Bruce, 2003). Acer's "Fast Food" strategy permits the customer to dictate what she or he wants and needs most. Computer-savvy individuals and small business owners need to frequently change microprocessors and RAM in order to keep up to date. They may make these changes at any time, without necessarily changing the larger, bulkier, and more permanent hardware associated with their machines. Acer categorizes its all of its manufacturing facilities as SBU's, slow business units, or RBU's, Regional Business Units. This Formal division within the organization has benefited Acer enormously by allowing the company to become markedly more innovative in product design. Once more, the Customer-Centric approach, specifically as it applied to responsiveness to the "unique customer" has helped to improve profitability and competitiveness.

As computer manufacturers, Acer and Companies like it would probably appreciate the electronic help that has become available in recent years within the field of customer relations. In today's business world, Customer-Centric organizations may take advantage of applications that are specially designed to handle the overall problems of customer relations.

Customer Relationship Management or CRM can be defined as an "ongoing process that involves the development and leveraging of market intelligence for purpose of building and maintaining a profit maximizing portfolio of customer relationships." (Zablah *et al.*, 2004, p.480). Broadly speaking, CRM is intended to help providers develop maximally

profitable customer base by enabling them to acquire and centrally store information (i.e. intelligence) about current and prospective customers which they can utilize to: (1) prioritize customer relationships according to their long term value to the firm and (2) craft "high quality" interactions that take into consideration each customer's unique set of needs and preferences (Zablah *et al.*, 2004). The underlying assumption is that CRM leads to desirable relationship outcomes (and thus improved organizational performance) because customers tend to naturally "gravitate" towards those providers that are able to consistently deliver "superior" interactions-vis-à-vis competitors – over time (Reinartz, Krafft, and Hoyer, 2004).

Since the emergence of CRM technologies, the market for CRM-related products and services has grown substantially. In fact, early projections suggest that by the end of 2007, yearly global expenditures on CRM technology are likely to exceed \$ 17 billion (Aberdeen Group, 2003).

As customer relation is such a broad area, embracing customers' need and questions, as well as the sales and support aspects of a business as they relate directly to the customer, it is important that the process of understanding and managing it be made as simple and straight forward as possible.

"According to Arvis, CRM is all about: treating different customers differently." (Farrukh, 2007). This article about CRM suggests that the term customer centricity is preferred term for the CRM roll out in organization, because it mostly has technology connection.

Several researches that discuss the failure of CRM application, because of the role of the IT is more dominant than a company wide strategy.

To make the CRM business strategy successful, organizations need to change the organization structure based on culture segments and change the company culture to adopt the new CRM strategy (Farrukh, 2007).

Being individually automated in an electronic context. First among these tasks is that of Market Automation. Marketing automation software is concerned, above all, with promotion and advertising. Advertising campaigns conducted in connection with e-commerce can range from the traditional i.e. newspaper and magazine advertisements, television and radio commercials, and telemarketing operations to those forms of promotion specific to the online environment as, for example. Web pop-ups, banners, e-mail solicitations and so forth. Market automation software can handle the distribution of

these announcements as well as track their effectiveness by monitoring sales that result from specific advertisement, or advertising campaigns, or by recording the reactions of those targeted by these advertisements and advertising campaigns (Misha and Joseph, 2005).

The ability to control all aspects of marketing, in this way, is critical to achieving success in today's global markets. "Companies are becoming increasingly short-term oriented. Marketing executives are often judged on the basis of the short-term sales evolution of the products and brands for which they are responsible. However, the impact of many communications tools, such as advertising, sponsorship and marketing public relations, only become apparent in the long run. Furthermore, their impact is often only cognitive (e.g. increased brand awareness) or attitudinal (e.g. a better brand image)." (Philip and Patrick, 2004).

Market automation software makes it easier for businesses to track current developments, and to use this information to predict future trends. The global reach of many of today's business produces an unprecedented volume of data. Raw information that cannot be processed is, in effect, useless information. The better able a business is to organize and understand data flows, the better will it be able to operate in this new, and highly competitive environment.

Next of the list of customer relationship management applications is Sales Automation software. Sales represents the next step in the process after marketing, consisting of, primarily, the responsibilities of the salesperson. The idea behind Sales Automation software is to create, in effect, a virtual salesperson. The virtual salesperson would perform the necessary functions of tracking prospects and cataloguing contact information. The mobility of the human salespeople that will need to access this information demands also that the information collect and analyzed by these systems be readily accessible anywhere across the planet (Misha and Joseph, 2005). Once again, software must closely match the needs of the company. Not all sales plans are created the same. "Knowing which indicators to look at in a sea of informational white noise can make the difference between accurately choosing and assessing the value of projects and falling into a spending trap." (Lauren, 2005). In order to determine if a Sales Automation application will provide an acceptable return on investment it is advisable to compare the make up of a list of prospects to the record of sales obtained by those prospects. Says Dan Merriman, an expert on return on investment strategies: "After the project has been implemented, a company should use the

numeric information's quantitative results to test the assumptions and see how the project is contributing to revenue or cost goal." "Regular measurement—as soon as three months into a project—would show a project team if the system had helped them to gather more qualified leads. If they had gotten more names of interested buyers, it would be a leading indicator of potential success. If they hadn't, it would point to a problem .... The point is, they could begin to figure it out early into the project and make adjustments." (Lauren, 2005).

Internet software should be able to reproduce the capabilities of current sales paradigms. The idea is to expand – not limit – the reach of the salesperson. Customer centricism is all about expanding business by being able best to meet customers' needs. By applying sales techniques on a global electronic scale, even a small business can reach out to potential customers in regions to which it previously did not have access.

The third and last category of CRM software consists of Super/Service Automations Software. This branch of customer relations is especially important as a business' skill at problem solving can determine whether a customer becomes a repeat customer. Support services would include almost any form of troubleshooting. Merchandise might be delayed or directed to an incorrect address. Severe weather, earthquakes, and other natural disasters, and human-made disasters too, might create emergency needs in connection with the movement of goods and services. Supply might suddenly become an issue, or economical fuel for transport. Also, at the other end of the spectrum are the problems that can arise after delivery is made. Customers may have received faulty merchandise that requires repair or replacement. In addition, a client may have questions, or require further instruction in regard to operating a product, or making use of a given service. Support/Service Software must address all contingencies. Essential too, is the fact that it must be easily accessible to both one's support staff, and one's customer base (Misha and Joseph, 2005). User interface design should be given especial attention. "Research in information systems, especially research on the user interface, strongly suggests that the nature of interface design is an important factor affecting the success or failure of commercial websites. One of the most important design elements in commercial websites may be their level of interactivity... the uniqueness of online shopping environments is that they allow for the implementation of very high degree of interactivity." (Pat, 2005).

"The user intentions, context, knowledge, skills, and experience are the essential things that every designer needs to know. Without this, the team is going to design something that seems useful, but they'll never know if it actually helps the user." (Michael, 2005).

In terms of logistics, one would want a programming apparatus that focuses primarily on the handling of goods and services as opposed to dealing with user's comments of complaint regarding those same goods and services (Misha and Joseph, 2005). There must exist a seamless interaction between the business user systems and customer's end user systems. What works well for one must work well for the other. One should look at either system as serving the other; each supplying the information required for the smooth functioning of the other.

"Much of the activity involved in improving user interface designs has focused on improving methods of entering information. Our interface designs are concerned with making the "input" part of the interface as intuitive as possible for users to provide information to databases and programming algorithms. Yet, equally important to our user community is the information we provide back to them. They view reports and other data that enable them to proceed with actions or make critical decisions before acting." (Denish *et al.*, 2006).

Making the proper choices and testing them before implementation is essential if the interface is to serve its purpose. Interacting with customers and observing customer needs means being able to fully comprehend those same customers' preferences, and even to anticipate those preferences. Computer applications that handle custom relations enable organizations to not only learn from their customers, but to expand their business while acting according to their expressed wishes. In documents three and four the researcher will explore the current status of customer relation manager at Saudi Telecom through focus groups and interviews that will be conducted with some of the involved managers and employees and determine the extent of his participation in customers and employees satisfaction and the progress of the company toward customer centricity path.

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## 5 Conclusion

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Clear definition of the concept and creating a conceptual frame work are means of simplifying the task of this study (Fisher, 1994). Creating this conceptual frame work and defining concepts may be done early in this research process (structured approach) or toward the end of this study (grounded approach). The author favors a structural approach for this research.

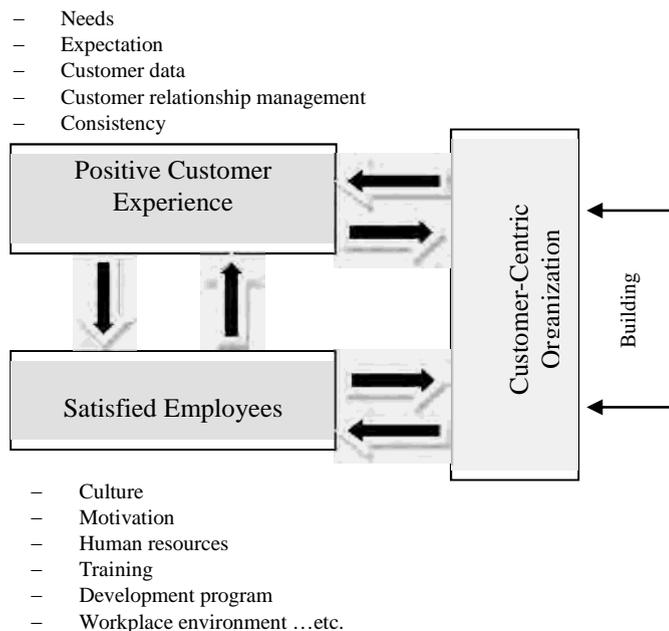


Figure 18: Conceptual Framework

As shown in figure 18 of the conceptual frame work for this study, the concepts of customer centricity, employee satisfaction and customer experience have been explored in this review. As may be seen from this figure 18 the author posits that the Customer-centricity as a concept is applicable to virtually every area of the business paradigm. Seen largely as a matter of customer relations, the concept entails not only that, but virtually every other aspect of a business as it applies to the customer. A closer inspection of any business model will reveal that just about every thing a company does has some sort of an impact on its customers. Pleasing the customer is the ultimate goal of the organization as happy customers are more likely to be retained as customers, and more likely to bring new customers to a business. Pleasing the customer makes good business sense because it increases profitability and can even lead to further innovation and expansion – especially if the company listens to the consumers it serves. In many of its essentials, the doctrine of

consumer-centrism operates like such business models as that of iTV, one in which the consumer is placed in the driver's seat being given not merely a list of places to visit, but rather the opportunity to construct the very road map on which those destinations are placed. The customer-centric organization listens – at all times – to its customer base. The customer base is what drives sales, reputation, expansion, etc. The consumer-centric organization sees consumers as individuals, men and women, who make their own lifestyle choices and who come from a variety of backgrounds. In an increasingly multicultural world, marketers and business managers must look at the varied cultures and subcultures that make up the whole that is the marketplace. They must possess “tacit knowledge” of these social interactions and understand that their retail operations and service locations must conform to these expectations (Eric, and Linda, 2006). Individual consumers will demand certain goods and services; their inquiries will further stimulate the creation of new business models and permit companies to grow, expanding in new and possibly undreamed of directions. With the help of computer applications, today's business leaders can assemble and analyze the reams of data relating to this information, thereby creating, in effect, a huge interactive system with the consumer at one end and themselves at the other (James *et al.*, 2006). The result will be a unity of purpose and process with customers being seamlessly integrated into the business model.

But companies do not depend only on their customers. Customer-centrism involves more than just appeals to the consumer. Consumers are only satisfied if all their needs are being met, and all of their needs can be met only if employees are properly trained and cared for within the settings of the business. Employee success depends on employees understanding a company's goals and also their roles within that company. They must comprehend the organization's mission and know the particulars of their own tasks. An important factor in cultivating good employee relations consists of empowering employees and allowing them to make decisions. Management must also listen to their suggestions, realizing that they are most intimately involved with customers and day-to-day business processes. Employee empowerment is linked with the idea of the supportive organization; one that permits workers a reasonable degree of personal and career fulfillment (John *et al.*, 2002). Anything that tends to raise the self-esteem of employees, that tends to make them feel that they are personally useful to the organization, is important in furthering the concept of the customer-centric organization. In many ways, employees are like customers, only they market their skills to the company rather than the other way around.

They are susceptible to the same forms of encouragement, and also to the same slights as the external consumer. For these reason, employees must also be properly treated when it comes to providing for salaries, work environment, benefits, promotion, and other job attributes. Unfairness in these areas can breed discontent and lower morale, much as inequitable sales practices would adversely affect consumers and thereby reduce the size of the customer base. A hospitable atmosphere should be provided for employees, one that is conducive both to getting the job done, and which promotes feelings of personal satisfaction and contentment among the workforce. Joking and humor reduce conflict and promote creativity (John W., 2002).

The new customer focus must become part of the company's basic culture – its thinking, its spirit, its values, it should be reflected in the metrics and incentives for each employee.

Last but not the least; it is a company top-level management that makes consumer-centrism a reality and a success. A company's leadership must be genuinely committed to change and must use all the tools at its disposal – including computer application – to monitor the vast array of factors that contribute to make the successful organization. Top-level managers must be open to innovation and experimentation. They must listen to their employees and customers. They must look at what really works – in the real world. They must follow trends and be willing to adapt and to initiate new structures and plans at a moment's notice if necessary. Managers must make the hard decisions that permit consumer-centrism to be more than a theory. The theoretical must meet with technical realities and produce something that is understandable, workable, and effective. .

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## **6 Research questions**

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Thus, working from the conceptual framework, the primary objective of this study is to measure and analyze the level of customer centricity at Saudi Telecom Company in relation to the customer and employee satisfaction. The study will examine the level of employee satisfaction at STC and the level of customer and satisfaction toward the services and products delivered to them. It will identify the factors critical to the success or failure of STC to become customer centric organization to enhance its position at the marketplace.

Specific research questions are:

1. What should we do to help STC to become a customer centric entity?
2. To what extent do the different resources of STC understand, value, and support customer centricity?
3. How do STC customers value the service experience delivered by STC agents?
4. To what extent are the STC employees satisfied with their current jobs?
5. Is there any linkage between customer centricity awareness of STC employees and customer satisfaction?
6. Is there any linkage between the customer centricity awareness of STC employees and the employee satisfaction?

As a way forward the next stage of this research will be to conduct a series of interviews, and focus groups to gather qualitative data for inclusion in this study and to clarify the issues that will inform the questionnaire. The main aim of the interviews and focus groups will be to identify the level of customer centricity at Saudi Telecom Company (STC), to understand the level of employee and customer satisfaction and its relation to the customer centric approach and begin to identify critical success or failure factors of Saudi Telecom Company journey toward customer centricity. At this point, the intention is to begin to look at all research questions outline and develop an understanding of the debates, dialogue and understandings of these issues.

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# **Customer Centricity at Saudi Telecommunication Company (STC)**

## **An Investigation of User Perspectives on Customer Centricity At Saudi Telecom Call Center**

**Document Three**

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July 2008

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## **1 Introduction**

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Discussions and their evaluations that take place are simultaneously significant for a society to identify and solve any problem or deficits that it is facing. Conversation analysis is one of the ways that was initiated three decades ago to analyze discussions, such as in call centers. It is considered the most popular offshoot of the field of discourse analysis. Since its birth, the concept of conversation analysis has proven to be a popular overall tool especially when dealing with social and communal issues. The reason of the escalation of popularity and significance of this concept is a direct result of the rising importance that is given to the evaluation of discussions as a domain of breakthrough investigation.

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## **2 The Research Questions**

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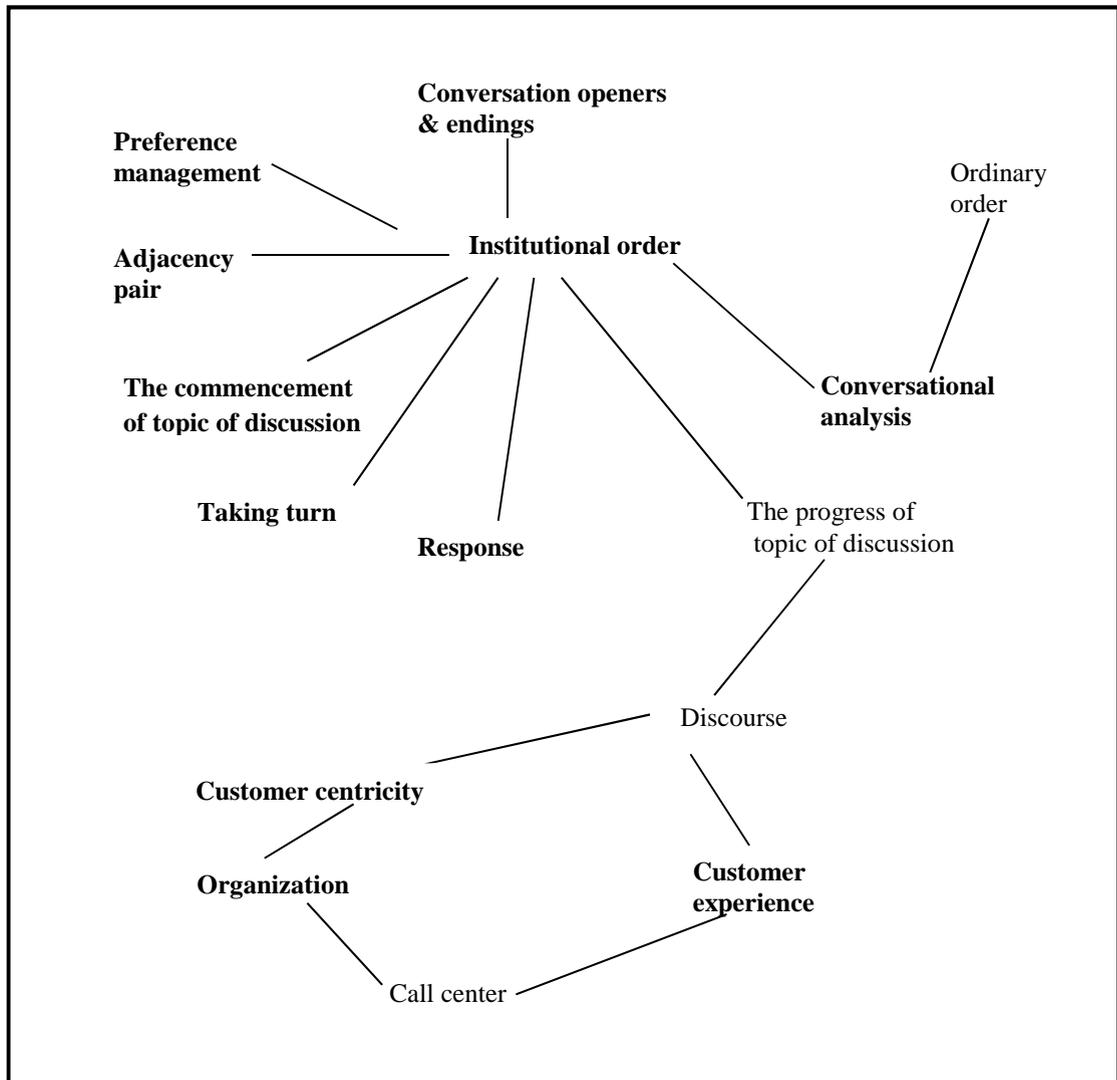
My research questions relate to what happened within Saudi Telecom Company (STC) call centers when a customer calls and engages in conversation with the call center's agent. The research will explore the type of conversation that had happened between the agent and the customer and the level of customer centricity awareness of the agent delivering the service, and the capability of providing the desired customer experience to those customers who are using the call centers' services.

This document reports the first stage of the conversational analysis (CA) study that seeks to elucidate these four questions:

1. To what extent are STC call center agents customer centric?
2. How do STC call center agents treat their customers during the calls?
3. Do STC call center agents possess an adequate knowledge of STC products and services?
4. To what level is the customer experience of STC customers?

The wider conversation analysis study of this research analyzes ten prerecorded calls from different shifts and locations. In the following parts of this document I will analyze each call separately using the conversation analysis technique.

The key concepts that I will be drawing on are customer centricity, conversational analysis and its attributes, organization and customers' experience. Central to each is the notion of discourse. I summarize below the meaning I attribute to each of these concepts. Figure (1) summarizes my conceptual framework in which the key concepts are those in bold and going to be discussed in the following sections.



**Figure (1) Conceptual Framework**

I will draw on the view of discourse as discursive practices that shape action; it enables access to the ontological and epistemological assumption behind a project, a statement, and a method of research. Discourse analysis will enable to reveal the hidden motivations behind a conversation or behind the choice of a particular method of research to interpret that conversation. I define an organization as a network of shared meanings which are created, perpetuated and modified through discourse practices. I will be working with a

discourse perceptive of customer centricity as it has been defined in Document 2: "Aligning the resources of your organization to effectively respond to the ever changing needs of the customers while building mutually profitable relationship". Bailey, (2006, pp. 3-16). It is the aspiration of several organizations to become customer centric and enhance their employees' customer centricity awareness. Customer centricity goes beyond handling customer's call efficiently. It means taking care of all customers' requests and fully resolving them. I see a conversation analysis (CA) as a tool which carefully analyzes and identifies the different denotations, implications, backgrounds and perspectives of the discussions that take place within a community or a certain group. Conversational analysis is characterized by being an institutional order or an ordinary order. Institutional order of conversation is the interaction which involves goals that are tied to institution relevant identities such as contact centers which I will adopt throughout this paper and are going to be discussed in more detail in section four of this document, while ordinary order of conversation is a kind of interactions that are not confined to specialized settings or to the execution of particular tasks. There are many faces that can be included in the conversation exchange, but for the purpose of the this study I will concentrate on the following types: taking turns, adjacency pairs, preference management, the commencement of a topic of discussion, the progress of the topic of discussion, preservation, response, and conversational openers and endings. These facets will be discussed in detail at the following section.

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### **3 Methodology**

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Discussions and their evaluations that take place are simultaneously significant for a society to identify and solve any problem or defects that it is facing. I will be concerned with analyzing the discussions and the course of action between the Saudi Telecom call center agents and STC customers during the calls. This focus lends itself to conversation analysis. It is considered the most popular offshoot of the field of discourse analysis. The reason for the escalation of popularity and significance of this concept is a direct result of the rising importance that is given to the evaluation of discussion as a domain of breakthrough investigation. Through this process call centers' agent awareness and customer experience culture will be evaluated and explored through evaluation and analysis of the discourse between the agents and customers.

## **Methods of analyzing discourse**

Various approaches have been adopted to analyze talk at work, including content analysis, conversation analysis, and semiotics and discourse analysis. The main idea of the conversation analysis concept was first constructed by two American philosophers namely, Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel. They both tackled and included different aspects of conversations and discussions. Goffman (1955, 1983) in his studies explained that all evaluators of discussions or conversations analysts should understand that the whole idea behind discussions is that they not only represent the personal identity, opinion and inclination of the individual but also all the social agencies that operate in and have an influence on his environment. Garfinkel (1967) in his study added that an analyst should simultaneously be able to analyze the role of social agencies as well as be able to use their common sense and consensus of the group to diverge the true meaning behind the topic discussed and the manner in which they are discussed.

Peter Manniny and Besty Cullum – Swan (1994) highlighted the differences between the content narrative and semiotic analysis, as applied to written text. The content analyst views data as representation not of physical events but of text, images and expressions that are created to be seen, read, interpreted and acted on for their meanings and must therefore be analyzed with such use in mind. Narrative analysis positions texts as symbolic action, studying them through a certain frameworks of act, scene, agent agency and purpose. Semiotics' is considered to be the science of signs. Peter Manniny and Best Cullum – Swan (1994) present "a set of assumptions and concepts that permit systematic analysis of symbolic systems". Signs are considered to be a representation of something else in a person's mind, comprising the actual word, its meaning and its context. Narrative approach is seen as a more in-depth alternative to survey research using psychological scales. It focuses on how elements are evaluated differently from others, how the past shapes perception of the present, how the present shapes perceptions of the past and how both shape perceptions of the future (Czarniawska, 1998). Narrative approach is characterized by the stories and metaphors people use to illustrate an organization or set of actions.

In comparing the available approaches, I see them as follow: content analysis tends to decontextualise the text through using particular words and phrases, while semiotics considers words and signs, in their context through trying to interpret what the users mean. Narrative analysis discovers the regularities in how people tell stories or give speeches, it

works to make sense of stories which are gathered, either by explicitly asking for them or collecting them. Conversation analysis seems to be a popular tool to deal with and evaluate social, communal issues, and every day conversation. It focuses on how peoples' every day interaction is organized and how participants show that they understand and orient towards each other's actions. The focus is not in language as such, but on social interaction manifested in conversation and how the turns at talk are shaped, how they are oriented towards both other utterances, and surrounding context (Paul, 1999).

For the purpose of this research that concentrates on studying the interaction between the agents of STC call centers and STC customers, conversational analysis seems to be the proper approach because it provides analytic descriptions of the organization of (inter) action, abstracting from the contents of those actions, which does not exist in the other approaches I discussed earlier in this section (Paul, 1999). This concept also gives the researcher the ability to determine the quality of customer treatment and the quality of customer experience in STC call centers, through evaluation of the conversations between the agents and customers based on the most recent benchmark reached by the researchers to enhance the customer experience and through using suitable customer experience benchmark that serves this purpose.

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#### **4 Conversation Analysis**

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The main idea of the conversation analysis concept was first constructed by two American philosophers namely Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel. They both tackled and included different aspects of conversations and discussions. Goffman (1955, 1983) in his studies explained that all evaluators of discussions or conversation analysts should understand that the whole idea behind discussions is that they not only represent the personal identity, opinion and inclination of the individual but also all the social agencies that operate in and have an influence on his environment. Garfinkel (1967) in his study added that the analysts should, simultaneously, be able to analyze the role of social agencies as well as be able to use their common sense and consensus of the group to diverge the true meaning behind the topics discussed and the manner in which they are discussed.

The whole approach of Garfinkel is purely based on the idea that analysts should be able to filter all the extra jibber-jabber that the community members forward in a discussion

backed up by traditions and laws. The analysts have to understand that most community members will continue to use the traditions and laws to identify and represent their input and contribution within social setting and discussion. Hence, the analysts have to understand that apart from the filtration of all unnecessary interactions there is a “reflexive“ element where by the members of the discussion are not only putting forth their opinions but by doing so they are moving their entire contribution forward for evaluation and growth as a result of the evaluation (Garfinkel,1967).

Conversation Analysis, for the majority of its early years, was focused on evaluation of discussions and debates that did not have a set agenda or weren't restricted to a specific circumstances or situation. This basically means that court hearing or wedding ceremonies or Baptist ceremonies were never a focus for evaluations despite the fact that discussions happened on this occasions too, these were termed “ordinary conversations”. Later in the 1970s the trend or focus of conversation analysis started incorporating the more confined agendas where discussion took place. The confined or fixed agendas that were included for conversation analysis were chosen on the following criteria:

- (i) The entire conversation/discussion is restricted on and around a specific institution and/or situation;
- (ii) The overall objectives of the members of the discussions are also confined within the institution or the circumstance they are in; and
- (iii) All the conclusions and recommendations that are made at the end of the discussion are also confined to the circumstance or the interest of the institution that was the cause for the discussion taking place (Drew and Heritage 1992). This form of conversation analysis was termed as "institutional talk" because of its specific or restricted nature.

The link between the two forms of researches that conversation analysts have focused on: ordinary conversation, because of its existence from the initiation of Conversation Analysis takes the higher place on the ladder of hierarchy. Furthermore, the ordinary conversation format is far more experienced and has been far more researched than the institutional talk format because of its nature to include both the individuals' outlook as well as the community's outlook. The format of institutional talk, which includes the schools, media, courts, etc., is comparatively a newer concept and hence has been more

popular for the recent researchers; this is also why it has been going through far more shared modifications in recent years.

One other reason that the ordinary conversation format is considered to be higher in importance in comparison to the institutional talk is that it includes almost every imaginable sphere within an evaluative environment whereas the nature of the institutional talk forces it to be more restrictive and a more condensed approach towards evaluation. There is a lot more freedom of experimentation and context analysis in ordinary conversation as opposed to institutional talk as in the institutional interaction there is very little room for diversification (Drew and Heritage 1992). Atkinson (1982) in his study also pointed out that the other disadvantage of the institutional conversation format is that it is very regularly disregarded by the common man because it seems too limiting, difficult to grasp and at times ominous or unfriendly.

### **Conversation analysis: Practical groundwork**

The main aim of the theory of conversation analysis (CA) is to carefully analyze and identify the different denotations, implications, backgrounds and perspective of the discussions that take place within a community or an institution. In this way it is very similar to the numerous other discussion analysis theories but what makes it different is that it links the different denotations, implications, backgrounds and perspectives to the basic flow and spectrum of the thoughts and viewpoints expressed (Sacks 1987). In this study the researcher will explore the impact that conversation analysis has in the assistance of respondents in a corporate call center.

The fact of the matter is that the pioneers of the CA concept have designed it in such a way that the concept prioritizes the sequence or chain of events that leads to a pattern of discussion over the ideas and thoughts that are expressed in the discussion. The CA concept supports that any denotation of a discussion is a direct circumstance of all the actions that occurred prior to it and that all social constructs are a direct result of the build-up of the sequence of prior interactions. This is perhaps one of the most important facets of CA within the environment of the call center where it is the quick and on the toes thinking of the corporate respondent that allows him/her to engage the caller with every think that had already been exchanged in their conversation. This, of course, helps the corporate respondents to assist the caller get familiar with the corporation in direct relation to their

own thoughts (Sacks 1987). This approach of the CA concept has been heavily influenced by the normal and standard familiarities of the people in a discussion which can be broadly explained as:

- 1) All discussions are based on previous chain of discussions done that could be related to current topic of discussion as well as the potential points of views that can be discussed in the future (Sacks 1987,1973, 1992, 1964,1972), (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), (Schegloff, 1984).
- 2) All the current discussions are structured in such a way that they help to provide foundations for the context of future discussions on similar topics. They are also structured in ways that can be materialized into action for references and experience of future discussions (Schegloff, 1972).
- 3) The members of discussion groups by designing the future actions and incorporating the previous results achieved in the process are able to create a mutually respected atmosphere and understanding of common grounds and procedures over a period of time (Heritage, 1984).

CA, fundamentally, treats all of the above elements in a direct relation to the already standardized and accepted social and lawful traditions and activities. CA realizes that the main elements that, more often than not, dominate or influence an individual's thoughts, inclinations and activities are the sequential evaluation of discussions, the denotation and meaning behind these evaluations, the filtration of the relevant evaluations, common sense and standardized social traditions. Also, the concept of CA understands that the members for the discussions should be made to realize that their expressions, thoughts or deductions can cause them trouble socially and lawfully if they aren't expressed under the most relevant and constructive light.

### **Conversation analysis within a call center**

The focus of researchers when shifted to the more restrictive institutional interaction format, the approach to studying and analyzing discussion under this format remained the same as the one that worked for the ordinary conversation format. The general idea was that all the context and denotations and conclusions that were going to be made would be a

direct result of the construction of the interaction made by the members of the discussion. This was considered more useful as opposed to the collection of bulk load of data that was collected as part of the historical background provided (Heritage, 1987). This approach can work like a charm in the call center industry where the conversation between the caller and the company respondent is purely based upon the construction or configuration of the conversation and all relevant points are exchanged as outcrop of the previous comments off expression.

The main idea in call centers when they use the concept of CA is that, at its core, all the conversation and discussions that take place between the caller and the company respondent can be very easily constructed, referenced, and supervised to help the company as well as the caller come to common grounds of mutual understanding. Also, most of the implementers of the CA concept in a call center can apply the exterior company rules and practices during different phases within the conversation so as to see their influence and whether they can be implemented in the long run for the betterment of both the company and the callers.

Particularly, if one needed to prove that the callers are the ones that actually lay down the foundations for the pattern of the conversation, then one can find this proof in the police call center that is set up for emergency calls (999 in case of Saudi Arabia). The CA setup can help us evaluate the reaction of the individual towards the situation he/she is in, on what basis has the individual treated or expressed the situation as an emergency, the stress he/she is feeling, the intensity of the situation, the legitimate-significance of the situation, and so on.

These are of course some difficulties that can surface which are probably led by the one significant affair of trying to avoid the enticement of defining the traits of a discussion in an unplanned manner while at the same time preserving the organization of the theoretical and practical influences (Schegloff, 1991), (Wilson, 1991). Schegloff (1991) in his study shed light on this issue and explains that along with the member's (in our study caller's) personal input. Thoughts, inclinations, etc the relevance of these within the company's profile has to be identified and added to represent a complete profile of the caller. In other words, if the caller has been exchanging his/her inclinations, viewpoints, assumptions, etc in a conversation with a corporate respondent then it is the additional task of the respondent to identify and represent that set of context in the conversation that is either

directly or indirectly relevant to the company and add that context's relevance to the customer's profile.

The fact of the matter is that while this additional analysis is perhaps a very important facet for the company, it is a really intimidating, difficult and daunting task for the corporate respondent in the call center. Schegloff explains this under a different light in his study and says that it might be very easy for an analyst to point out that two corporations are very different from each other when it comes to their implementations of rules and regulations, like for instance within a call center settings. However, Schegloff points out that if these analysts were to be told to point out these differences in a specific set, they would be unable to do so. This is so as the main features of these differences lie in the additional relevance that can be gathered by corporations through their call center respondents or other channels.

### **Facets of conversational exchanges within a corporate call center**

The facets that can be included in the conversation exchanges are as vast as the elements of conversation can possibly be. However, we have been able to use the guidelines given in the Paltridge report of 2000 and can divide the facets into the following: taking turns, adjacency pairs, preference management, the commencement of a topic discussion, the progress of the topic of discussion, response, preservation, conversational openers and enders and the normal short terms used in discussions or as responses like "depends", "huh", "ahuh" or "hmm" (Paltridge, 2000).

#### ***Taking turns***

Cameron explains that a "continual negotiation is a general feature of conversational organization" (Cameron, 2001, pp. 90). To explain this more profoundly, we can look at the study conducted by Sacks in 1974, where he explains that for a conversation to occur, there have to be at least two or more people who have to be willing to engage and interact on a common topic. Of course since a conversation is about expressing views, both the people in the conversation will get a chance to express their point of view on a topic. The interesting fact here is that a conversation is an on-going exchange like a see-saw where both the speakers continually exchange their views (Sacks *et al.* 1974). This can be more clearly explained with the example of a call center. In a call center, the person initiating the

conversation topic has the upper hand as he/she is the one who can lead or design the pattern of the entire conversation, which normally is the corporate respondent. This is so because the caller will always be the one to respond to the suggestion or opinions voiced by the respondent to the problem voiced by the caller, and hence the corporate respondent can further lead the conversation into areas where the caller's input can benefit the company to understand its market better.

The concept of taking turns was fundamentally laid down by Sack, Schegloff and Jefferson in 1974 under a design that they called "A simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn Taking for Conversation" (Sacks *et al.* 1974). Here they basically laid down the idea to allow one person to talk and the other reacting to what he says by waiting for the turn. Furthermore, they simultaneously justified how and why taking turns was necessary or helpful in carrying out successful conversation analysis.

There are two main aspects of the taking turn conversation that are highlighted in the Sacks et al design. These two aspects are: one, turns can be assigned to the different participants in a conversation which will allow the whole discussion to be a lot more calculated and organized (this is usually the case in group therapy sessions); and two, everyone involved in the conversation knows that he/she will have more than one chance to have their turn and get their message across; this of course can help many people to discern when someone's turn is near the end and how they can react to it (this is the reason that the corporate call center facility is such a success, because both the caller and the respondent know that they will have more than one chance to say what they want irrespective of the time that they get that chance in (Sacks *et al.* 1974).

Continuing with the prior thought, it is also very much possible that upon discerning the end of someone's turn, one might intercede the turn in a way that the conversation might be interrupted. However, there has only been a 5% record of such intrusion taking place. This record shows us that even though the speaker waiting for his/her turn might speak near the end of someone's turn, it usually does not interrupt or harm the entire conversation by its interfering nature (Cook, 1989). This is also why we see a new emerging dimension with the CA setup where researchers are beginning to design a model for organizing or supervising interfering comments and are initiating the concept of "collaborative" comments i.e. comments that might intercede one's turn without interfering with the thought, instead intercession is only used as a form of support or confirmation of

someone's thought (Heritage, 2003). The concept of collaborative commenting, if incorporated, can make a huge success at the corporate call center facility because it will allow both the respondents and the callers to agree on certain matters without repetition of unnecessary justifications. The normal short terms used in discussions or as responses like "depends", "huh", "ahuh", or "hmm" with the addition of statements like "agree" or word inputs like "exactly" and "definitely" are usually enough in a call center setting to create an environment of collaborative conversation and understanding.

Drew and Heritage (1997) in their study highlighted six main elements of a conversation that have been modified below to stand true for a call center setting precisely. These elements are:

- 1) The setup or structure of taking turns
- 2) The design of the conversation or topics in a conversation
- 3) Management of series or sequence of conversation
- 4) The plan for taking turns
- 5) The freedom of the use of words in different contexts
- 6) Relevance and identification of potential irregularities in a conversation (Drew and Heritage, 1992), (Drew and Sorjonen, 1997), (Heritage 1997).

### *Adjacency pairs*

The main idea that the CA setup has about a conversation is that it is a continuous exchange of ideas and opinions that takes place over a certain period of time, has a beneficial or unconstructive aftermath and is interlinked to the very first sentence or statement of the conversation (Cameron, 2001). A good example of this in a call center setting would be if a customer called with a concern about one of the services or products provided by the corporation and the corporate respondent not only helps the customer in eradicating their problem but highlights certain other beneficial and related features or products that the customer might be interested in. The conversation, in accordance to what Cool presented in his 1989 study, does not remain adjacent in nature once the topic of discussion changes into one that is unrelated to the initial statement. This change in the topics also marks or identifies the necessary end of the discussion on the initial statement. Hence, considering this, Cook has outlined that every conversation has an inserted topic

that makes the entire conversation dynamic, reciprocal, structured and semi-structure and collaborated over a period of time (Cook, 1990).

### ***Preference management***

Up until now, we have highlighted that the person who initiates the conversation is in control of the design or pattern of the interaction. This stands true in most cases as opposed to when the initiator asks or states something that requires the approval or disapproval of the respondent e.g. an invitation or proposal. In this scenario, the control of the pattern of the conversation can only remain in control of the initiator if the respondent agrees to or affirms the statement made or answer "yes" to the query. In the case of a disagreement from the respondent's part the entire structure of the conversation then lies in the hands of the respondent. This also stands true for moments within a conversation as well where the response might be designed to change the structure of the conversation by invoking a certain statement from the initiator of the conversation or the respondent. Agreements have always been made in specific patterns while disagreements have always been made in different and varying patterns. As have been highlighted in numerous conversation analytical studies (Chen, 2005). This ability to change or invoke a change in the conversation for the benefit of the company is one of the strongest features of the criteria for hiring respondents in a corporate call center.

### ***The commencement of a topic of discussion***

The commencement or initiation of the discussion is perhaps as important, if not more, than its continuation. The one who initiates the conversation is the one in control of the design of the interaction.

### ***The progress of the topic of the discussion***

The progress of the discussion has twofold meaning: one; that the conversation remains a constant exchange of ideas and opinions on the same topic; and two, the initial topic of the conversation pans out into numerous sub-topics, related and unrelated topics depending upon how similar or dissimilar the opinions of the conversationalists are.

### ***Preservation***

Preservation mainly signifies the correction or alteration of a previous statement to understand the conversation better and move it forward. The most common feature of the preservation is the change in a previous statement with the changing instances within a conversation. This mainly allows not only the conversation to progress but allows the conversationalists to analyze their statements and better structure them for understanding (Cook, 1990).

### ***Response***

Responding to the initiator's statement is what constitutes a conversation. This is perhaps the important element of CA setup as continuous responses show that both or all the conversationalists are engaged and interested in making conversation and moving it forward (Chen, 2005).

### ***Conversational openers and endings***

The conversational openers and endings are mainly standardized and universal in nature. Some openers and endings are of course very specific in nature to the circumstances they are used in (Paltridge, 2000). A good example of specific opening would be "Can you help me change the MMs settings on my cellular?" made to a cellular company's call center while a general opening would be "Hello, how are you today?". This of course can be followed by "are you feeling better" which becomes a specific comment dependent on a previous condition or state. Endings too can be specific and general; a specific end would be "Thank you for your help" which could be preceded by a more specific intonation " Is that all I need to know about receiving or sending MMS through my cellular?", a more general ending could be "I'll talk to you later, Good-bye" which could be preceded by a general intonation of "Take care".

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## **5 Customer Experience Call Evaluation**

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### **Discourse Analysis**

It almost goes without saying that good customer service is essential to sustaining any business. No matter how wonderful a job you do of attracting new customers, you won't be

profitable for long unless you have a solid customer retention strategy in place that includes delivering great customer experience. Customers are not concerned with policy statement or the promise of exceptional service. They remember how they have been treated by the company's customer service agents and what actions were taken to satisfy their needs (Clark, 2006).

Subhash and Jay (2004) stated that exceptional customer services of the most successful customer centric organization is characterized by the ability to deliver services as promised (reliability), willingness to provide caring and individualized attention to customer (empathy), willingness to provide prompt service and help customers (responsiveness).

To analyze the discourse I used the seven elements of delivering exceptional service that has been discussed in document two. These elements lead to a customer centric organization and pave the road for every company to achieve this goal. The following seven elements are considered the basis for analyzing each call and benchmarking it. The next part of this document offers the qualitative evaluation of the ten calls in terms of the seven characteristics of customer centricity.

My process was to take ten pre-recorded calls from the call center data base and apply the seven characteristics of customer centricism which I have already discussed in document two, trying to analyze the calls in terms of these seven elements. The process itself was interesting, if not frustrating. As with any new task, it initially felt awkward and I would sit wondering whether a particular phrase constitutes an evaluation or is it part of the action or what?. I found out that the analysis of the discourse becomes more fluent if I kept in mind that I was trying to make sense of what the customer felt and what the point of the discourse was. The seven elements are:

**1) Engaging with the customer call:**

How did the agent receive the call? The words he used to greet the customer, his voice tone level when he requested information from the customer in addition to the usage of proper and friendly words that encourage the customer to engage with the call easily and to gauge the impression of the customer once the agent answered his call?

## **2) Accessibility of the call center:**

How easy making the call was made for the customer? Was the call center accessible to the customer?

## **3) Reliability:**

Reliability is an influencing and vital element of raising confidence in the customers on the services provided to them. Through this element the researcher will investigate many points including the following:

- Are the services requested by the customers delivered properly during the call?
- How reliable was it?
- How far was the agent reliable in providing the requested service?
- Did the agent, through the questions and inquiries that he directed to the customer prove that he is reliable to provide the requested service?
- Are the questions of the agent to the customer relevant to his request and to what extent did he exhibited to the customer his ability to respond to his request through full understanding to his requirements?

## **4) Display the right attitude:**

Displaying the right attitude is essential for every customer as manners count when dealing with customers. Agents have to be polite and exhibit an empathetic attitude towards customers.

## **5) Responsibility:**

Accepting responsibility means being a team player and providing service to the customer during the call on behalf of the entire organization. There can be no "it's not my job". When a mistake has been made, admit it, listen, truly listen to customer complaint, then apologize and take corrective action during the

conversation. Displaying the right attitude to the customer from the beginning of the call forms a good start of the service and indicates to the customer that the provided service will fulfill his needs and requirements.

**6) Responsiveness:**

Time limits have always been an important factor of delivering great customer experience. How efficient was the agent in delivering the service during the call? To what range does the agent respond to the customer's inquiries and the range of positive response the agent exhibits to the customer during the course of the call?

The answers of the above inquiries are very crucial and help to measure the agent effectiveness and responsiveness and play a key role in creating a positive customer experience.

**7) Empathy:**

Being empathetic towards customers shows them that you care for them, that you care for their situations. To be truly empathetic with a customer an agent should put himself/herself in the position of the customer. Recognizing the customer's emotional state helps the company to figure out the best way to effectively provide them with the service that they are looking for.

Exhibiting respect and appreciation to the customer from the beginning to the end of the call, has significant impact in the customers even if their requirements were not met due to technical or managerial justifications. The displayed respect and attention compensate the failure to deliver the required service, support, or the delay witnessed in this respect.

**The first call analysis**

***Engaging with the call:***

The first call between the agent and the customer lasted for two minutes and twenty seconds. The agent started his reply by greeting the customer and giving his name. The customer requested reactivation of his disconnected mobile telephone because of a debit account due on his other telephone line in the southern region, he said:

“I have paid the first installment at the sales office and they informed me that my mobile will be reactivated within one hour, but it was not reactivated”.

The agent informed the customer that he can't know whether his payment was received or not and referred him once again to the customers service office.

It seemed that the agent has understood the customer's request and started to engage with the call. I will discuss the level of the agent's response to the customer's request and the reaction of the customer based on the following elements that show the agent's actual performance and customer centricity awareness level. These seven elements will be the measurement tools that the researcher will use to gauge the agents' performance levels and the range of their concentration on serving STC customers.

***Accessibility:***

The total reply time did not exceed thirty seconds, so the reply rate was good and the customer was able to access the call center very easily.

***Reliability:***

The customer started the call explaining his problem to the agent and requested reactivation of his mobile and said:

“I have paid the first installment at the sales office and they informed me that my mobile will be reactivated within one hour, but it was not reactivated”.

Immediately after the customer finished explaining his request the agent informed him to visit the customer service office once again saying:

“You have to visit the office once again because the reactivation should be executed there as your account is not shown in the system”.

The agent has improperly used the phrase “you have to” which indicates that he do not pay attention to the customer or he is unwilling to serve him. Here it appeared to me that the agent did not make the necessary effort to serve the customer and did not pay him the due

attention because the information needed by the customer was unavailable in the system as he said to the customer:

“The payment and account number were not displayed in the system; you have to visit the office once again”.

The agent did not exhibit enough reliability through his conversation with the customer as it was clear from his repetition of some improper words such as “you have to” and “where not displayed”.

***Display the right attitude:***

It appeared to the researcher that the agent tried at the beginning of the call to deal with the customer respectfully but did not try hard to understand his request clearly and with enough patience. This was clear during this part of the discourse:

Customer: “I paid the first installment ...etc. I request reactivation of my mobile ...etc.”

Agent: “you have to return to the office, they reactivate ...etc. no, no, you should return to the office, they know how to reactivate it ... they should have reactivated your mobile immediately after payment of the installment”.

The agent used some words and phrases that indicate that he did not try to display the right attitude and that he was unaware of the importance of paying attention to the customers as he repeatedly replied to the customer saying: “you have to ... etc.”, and “they should ... etc.”.

It was clear to the researcher during the discourse that the agent did not understand the customer’s request. This can be related either to the inefficiency of the systems or to the agent who may lacks adequate customer treatment knowledge.

***Responsibility:***

Through analysis of this call and evaluation of the agents capabilities to perform his duties, represent the company in shouldering the responsibility and respond to the customer’s

request, it appeared to me during the discourse that the agent did not act in the proper way and did not prove that he bears the responsibility as he said to the customer:

“You have to return to the office, they should have reactivated your telephone, because this is their job”.

Here, the agent tried to transfer the customer to the sales office and shoulder the office the responsibility of not reactivating the service.

***Responsiveness:***

I listened to this call several times so as to thoroughly investigate the responsiveness of the agent within the course of the call. I did not detect a strong will or desire of the agent to meet the customer’s request positively but on the contrary in order to avoid searching for the required information he took the easiest way and referred the customer to the sales office when he said “you have to go back to the office ... etc”.

Agent: “once you paid they should reactivate your telephone ....through them (he means the sales office).... Reactivate your service... you check with them ....etc”.

Here, the agent was irresponsible, and did not try to share the customer his problem or pay him the due attention but informed him to return to the office. The agent informed the customer in many parts of the discourse to go to other department of the organization to solve his problem and repeated saying “you have to ...” and “they should ...”

***Empathy:***

To be truly empathic with the customer an employee should put him/her self in the position of the customer. Recognizing the customer’s emotional state helps an organization figure out the best way to effectively provide them the service they are looking for (Senge, 1990).

Customer: “I have paid the first installment at the sales office and they informed me that my mobile will be reactivated within one hour, but it was not reactivated”.

Giving the customer an appointment for providing the service as mentioned above by the customer “one hour” and the failure to fulfill this appointment is considered one of the most dangerous experiences that negatively impact the organization’s reputation and the level of their customers’ loyalty. I have noticed that the customer was dissatisfied and displeased when the agent continued using imperative tense and blaming others when he said “they should ...” indicating to his colleagues in the sales office.

Agent: “the reactivation should be made by them and your account number did not appear ..... once you paid they should reactivate your telephone ... go back to the office.”

It appeared to the researcher that the agent did not try to show empathy to the customer or try to understand his problem and serve him. The agent showed desire to end the call and refer the customer to the sales office.

### **The second call analysis**

#### ***Engaging with the call:***

The call lasted for two minutes and thirty seconds. The agent received the call, gave his name and asked the customer about the services that he can offer to him.

Customer: “I want to disconnect the mobile which was stolen from a colleague ...”

Agent: “the owner of the mobile should call us ....”

Customer: “my colleague cannot call because he is in an area not covered by the network ....etc.”

The agent showed desire to serve the customer but the customer’s request was prohibited according to regulations of the company.

#### ***Accessibility:***

The call was replied within thirty three seconds. Therefore, accessibility is fast and within the standard access time.

***Reliability:***

The customer has requested disconnection of the mobile telephone of his colleague because the later cannot call the call center. The agent should have informed the customer with the disconnection regulations in a courteous manner because it appeared from the discourse which continued for two minutes and thirty seconds, that the agent did not try to immediately explain the regulation to customer but continued asking him many questions and finally informed him that his colleague should personally call the call center.

***Display the right attitude:***

The agent has shown understanding of the customer's request although he couldn't execute it because the mobile does not belong to the caller.

Agent: "the owner of the telephone should personally call ....."

He repeated it several times:

"We have nothing to do with you ....the owner of the telephone should call".

The researcher believes that the customer was displeased with this reply but he reluctantly accepted it. The agent should have apologized to the customer in a better way and explained the company's point of view for not allowing any person other than the owner to request disconnection of the service which aims at avoidance of misuse of the service and harming other customers.

***Responsibility:***

There were no indications in the call to incapability of the agent to hold the responsibility of providing the service but the researcher noticed that he repeatedly requested information from the customer although he cannot serve him according to the company's regulations that prohibit such service unless the calling person is the telephone owner.

The agent asking for: "the name of the mobile owner, I. D. number ....full name ...etc."

And finally he informed the customer that the telephone's owner should call the call center.

***Responsiveness:***

Customer: "I want to disconnect the mobile which was stolen from a colleague ..."

Agent: "the owner should call us...."

Agent: "what is the full name of the telephone's owner? What is the number of the stolen telephone? ...etc."

It appeared that the agent has requested a lot of information but did not serve the customer because he cannot disconnect the telephone except upon the owner's request. He showed responsiveness to the request but took too much time and long conversation while he could have directly apologized to the customer in a courteous way.

***Empathy:***

The agent did not show empathy to the customer during the call when he said within the course of the call:

"We have nothing to do with you ....the owner of the telephone should call".

He could have been more polite, understood the customer and briefly explained the regulations to him.

**The third call analysis**

***Engaging with the call:***

The agent introduced himself and offered his services to the customer saying:

"Welcome, how can I help you?"

The customer was a female. She requested SMS chatting number of one of the religion scholars saying:

“How can I get the SMS chat number of sheikh Al Maghamis; can I chat with him through Sawa service (prepaid service)?”

The customer and the agent seemed to be engaged with the call. The customer started to explain her requests at the beginning of the call and tried to obtain the required service as quickly as possible. But from the progress of the discourse it appeared to the researcher that the agent did not fully understand her request. In the remaining elements of analysis we shall see how the conversation progressed.

***Accessibility:***

The total duration of the call was two minutes and thirty three seconds and the accessibility to the call center through the automatic system was very fast and did not exceed twenty five seconds.

***Reliability:***

The customer’s request was:

Customer: “How can I get the SMS chat number of sheikh Al Maghamis?”

Agent answered: “One minute if you don’t mind”.

After listening to the call the researcher noticed that the agent did not fully understand the customer’ request and in many situations mentioned that the service was unavailable saying “it is unavailable ... etc” although the customer tried to request further services that might be available but the agent did not make any effort in this respect.

In more than one situation the agent did not apologize to the customer and ask her to wait. He spent about sixty seven seconds to return to the customer call and say:

“Sorry, I could not obtain the number of sheikh Al Maghamis”

It seemed to the researcher that the desired information was unavailable for the agent to meet the customer’s request.

The customer tried to request the service from another source where the chat number might be available saying:

“Can I get this number from other department of the company which may have it?”

The customer was in urgent need to the SMS chat number of sheikh Al Maghamis, but the agent was not reliable enough to provide the customer with it and once again said:

“This service is unavailable”.

When the customer recognized that the first service could not be implemented she tried to get the SMS chat number of Al Majd TV channel.

The customer was displeased of repeatedly listening to words such as “sorry ...” and “it is unavailable” which indicates that the agent was unaware of the required information or the information was really unavailable although the customer repeatedly tried to get it.

Customer: “okay, can I get the number of Al Majd TV channel?”

The agent appeared to be unaware of the service and said:

“One minute please, ..... sorry even Al Majd TV channel number is unavailable”

The researcher noticed that the agent has repeated apology to the customer and conveyed a negative message about his ability to obtain the required information although it was very simple and the request was easy to respond to.

***Display the right attitude:***

It appeared to me that the agent tried to deal with the customer politely and courteously. He started with:

“How can I help you?”

He apologized many times for not being able to provide the customer with the required information.

Agent: “I apologize ...etc”

The requested information should have been made available automatically but during the course of the call the agent could not serve the customer despite the simplicity of the request of the customer which was:

Customer: "How can I get the SMS chat number of sheikh Al Maghamis?"

The customer then requested another service from the same category (SMS chat) saying:

"Okay, can I get the number of Al Majd TV channel?"

Unfortunately it seemed to the researcher that this service was unavailable and again the agent apologized for the unavailability of the service.

Here the attitude of the agent with the customer was not right because she waited for about two minutes and did not receive even an apology for waiting neither at the beginning of the call nor at the end of it.

***Responsibility:***

During the course of the call, the agent did not pay clear attention to the customer's request. The customer has requested different services and the agent asked him to wait saying:

"One minute, I will search for it if it is available ... etc"

The customer waited for about two minutes although the agent already knows that the requested number may not be available. He finally said to the customer:

"Thank you for waiting, it is unavailable".

Afterwards and when the customer felt that the agent was unable to provide the first requested service, asked whether she could get another service saying:

"Can I get the number of Al Majd TV Channel?"

Neglecting the due apology the agent asked her again to wait saying:

"One minute please"

Then the agent once again apologized for unavailability of the service. Here it seemed that the agent was uneager to exert an extra time to serve the customer or the information was unavailable in the customer's service system.

***Responsiveness:***

The agent failed to show positive response either due to unavailability of the information or his inability to search and deal with the available systems to respond to the customer. Consequently he apologized many times to the customer for unavailability of the service. The customer in turn asked whether she can get the number from any department in the company other than the call center saying:

“Can I get this number from other department .....

The agent did not respond to the customer in the right way but said:

“The numbers are too many and unavailable currently .....

The agent's repeating of the word "unavailable" and his apology for unavailability of the service in more than a situation has made the progress of discourse with the customer very negative.

It did not seem to me that the agent had a true desire to provide the service or at least get the information from his supervisor or other supporting section that might attend for the customer request.

***Empathy:***

It appeared to the researcher by listening to the discourse more than once that the agent did not try to be more empathic with the customer due to the unavailable information and even did not refer her to any other department in the company to provide her with the requested information or seek help from his supervisors. The customer repeated in more several situations within the call her desire to obtain the service even from a department in the organization other than the call center:

Customer: “How can I get this number from other department ...?”

But the agent ignored this request and said:

“There are many subscriptions and chat numbers but the numbers you are asking for are unavailable”.

At the end of the call he apologized without empathy with the customer for not responding to her request.

In many situations within the discourse the customer has witnessed a very bad experience where I noticed that she was frustrated for the failure of the agent to respond to her request although she had requested many different SMS chat services. The researcher noticed that the agent did not pay the customer the due attention and empathy or apologize to her for not responding to her request.

#### **The fourth call analysis**

##### ***Engaging with the call:***

The agent introduced himself and said:

“Al Salam Alikoum (peace be upon you), how can I help you?”

I noticed that the agent by starting with greeting the customer and saying "how can I help you?" has comforted and pleased the customer and accordingly made the engagement in the call for the two parties very smooth and constructed a strong foundation for the agent to start providing the required service.

The customer quickly and easily requested the call transfer service and said:

“I want to execute the call transfer via my mobile to the service of *mojoud extra*” (*Mojoud extra service allows the customer to transfer his calls in a form of text messages while the mobile is shut down*).

##### ***Accessibility:***

The customer accessed the call center and answered by the agent within not more than twenty seconds. This was reported by the Automatic Voice Response system (AVR) in the call center. This time is considered very satisfactory.

***Reliability:***

The agent showed readiness to serve the customer who immediately submitted his request saying:

“I want to activate mojoud extra service, how can I execute this with my mobile?”

The agent confidently answered:

“You have to cancel all the transfers through the mobile settings then transfer the call using this method (\*, 21, \*, 4000, #).

The customer requested the agent to repeat this information and the agent responded to his request then the customer ended the call saying:

“Thank you, thank you”

Agent “thank you for calling”

I believe that the service provided by the agent to the customer in the first part of the call was good and reflected confidence of the agent to provide the service in addition to his reliability. This was apparent when the customer replied in the same moment "thank you ... thank you"

But the customer continued and requested another service and said:

“Brother, how can I utilize Qitaf Program (*STC customer loyalty program*) points I already gained from my landline telephone and transfer them to my mobile telephone?”

The agent answered with confidence:

“Yes, you can benefit of them through the AVR system by choosing option number 2”.

The customer thanked the agent and ended the call.

The call displayed capability and competence of the agent to provide a distinguished and reliable service to the customer.

***Display the right attitude:***

The call revealed that the agent has dealt very politely with the customer and tried to listen and listen to him as he repeatedly said:

“Yes, ... yes, .....yes”

Repeating of the word "yes" by the agent had a magic effect on the progress of the call and the customer was very pleased and expressed his satisfaction on the right manner he was served.

From listening to the discourse the researcher noticed that the agent has allowed the customer the chance and enough time to explain his request.

It was noticed that the customer has received the first service which was the call transfer instructions and ended the call then requested another service from the agent saying:

“Brother, how can I utilize Qitaf Program...?”

The agent answered politely and advised him with the service instructions.

***Responsibility:***

After listening to the discourse the researcher noticed that the agent exhibited readiness to serve the customer and meet his requirements when he said:

“How can I help you?”

And he repeated it many times within the course of the call. Also, after providing the customer with the first service he asked him:

“Do you need any other service?”

At the end of the call he responded to the customer’s second request although the later was about to end the call but the agent continued:

“Yes, ..... Yes, .....yes...etc.”.

Here, the agent displayed his readiness to accept the responsibilities and smoothly serve the company’s customers.

***Responsiveness:***

The agent showed excellent readiness during the progress of the call and responded to the agent properly. He started the call saying:

“How can I help you?”

This reply has actually triggered the positive attitude that the agent exhibited to the customer while he was requesting the service.

The agent repeated “yes, ..... yes, .....yes” in many situations within the discourse while the customer was explaining his request as if he was saying to him: I understood, continue your explanation, which reflects his attention and right response to the customer during the call. It drew my attention that when the agent provided the first service to the customer the later thanked him saying:

“Thank you, .... Thank you .... ”

Then the agent replied to the customer in a positive and friendly manner showing his readiness to provide him with further services and said:

“Do you need any other service?”

And the customer answered: “yes”.

The agent immediately responded to the customer's request. This proper response reflects good understanding of the agent of the importance of the company’s customers, respect of their requests and the true desire to serve them.

### ***Empathy:***

The researcher noticed that this call showed a very good feature which is the attention the agent paid to the customer's request and listening to him carefully. The agent demonstrated intimacy towards the customer when he introduced himself and repeated:

“How can I help you”, “do you need any other service?” and “yes, ..... yes, .....yes”.

All these good words which have been used during the discourse have had a very good and positive impact towards the customer's satisfaction on the providing the service and had created empathy on the call between the two parties.

Also he thanked the customer in more than one situation during the course of the call and showed his readiness to provide him with any other service.

### **The fifth call analysis**

#### ***Engaging with the call:***

This call lasted for one minute and fourteen seconds. The researcher listened to the discourse more than once. It was featured by a friendly and courteous dealing of the agent with the customer. The agent started the call:

Agent: “<<name>>, how can I help you?”

Customer: “welcome, how are you?”

Agent: “welcome, how can I help you?”

From the above conversation it appeared to the researcher that the customer was pleased of the good respect, treatment, and the easy engagement of the customer with the call and the good chance given to the customer to submit his request easily.

Customer: “I want to subscribe in the free internet through my mobile”

Agent: “you have to send SMS from your mobile to the number 2000 and immediately it will be activated”

It seemed to me that the customer succeeded to communicate his request and that there were synergy between the agent and the customer in the course of the call.

Beginning this call by the warm greetings exchanged by the agent and the customer has established proper ground for starting a successful call.

***Accessibility:***

The researcher noticed that access of the customer to the call center did not take more than twenty five seconds which I consider credit to the call center.

***Reliability:***

The customer explained his request and said:

“I want to subscribe in the free internet through my mobile”

The agent understood the customer's request and replied:

“You have to send SMS from your mobile to the number 2000 and immediately it will be activated”

But the customer wanted the call center to send him the setting directly and not through SMS message from his mobile, because he had a previous experience with this service where the settings have been sent to him directly from the center, he said:

“Two days ago I obtained the same service directly from the call center”

The agent immediately responded and said:

“Okay, I will respond to your request and send you the setting directly”

The agent added: “one moment please, what is the type of your mobile set?”

Customer: “Nokia 73”

Agent: “moments please”

From the course of the call it appeared to me that the agent understood the requested service, was confident enough of attending the required service, and displayed complete readiness to do so.

***Display the right attitude:***

After listening to the call more than once, the researcher noticed that the agent has dealt with the customer and handled the call perfectly. The agent started the call and said:

“How can I help you?”

In more than one situation the agent repeated nice and gentle sentences such as: “Moments please”, and “excuse me, if you don’t mind”

He treated the customer in the right manner because the customer’s request for internet was to be sent from his mobile via SMS to the number 2000. He advised the customer with this information:

Agent: “you have to send SMS from your mobile to the number 2000 and immediately it will be activated”

Although he was very gentle and polite during the call but the agent has improperly used some phrases such as "you have to ...” which may be misunderstood by the customer due to its imperative nature and to some extent its discourtesy. It would be better if he had replaced it with sentences such as "please if you may send ....."

But the customer insisted that the agent send him the internet setting directly from the call center saying:

“Two days ago I obtained the same service directly from the call center”

Here, the agent showed readiness to send the setting to the customer and asked him about the type of his mobile set in order to send him the appropriate setting. The customer replied:

“Nokia 73”

Agent: “moments please”

Although the agent has taken only one minute to search for the setting and send it to the customer, he repeated apology to the customer which indicates the right level of attitude and the cooperation that he has shown to the customer:

Agent: "sorry for the delay, moments please"

And he added:

"Thank you for waiting", "you will receive the message", and "thanks for calling"

Customer: "no problem, thank you"

The researcher thinks that the agent has exhibited a satisfactory level of treatment and demonstrated the proper standard that should be adhered to when providing any service through the call centers.

***Responsibility:***

At the beginning of the call, the agent showed ability to take the responsibility and exhibited confidence and willing to serve the customer. He started the call saying:

"How can I help you?"

The agent was qualified enough to provide the customers with the company's services. Beginning the call by "how can I help you?" was the key of the collaboration and reliability that the agent displayed to the customer in responding to his request.

The researcher noticed in this call that the service requested by the customer can be obtained through sending SMS to a certain number and the service will be activated without a need to call the center, as the agent said:

"You have to send SMS from your mobile to the number 2000 and immediately it will be activated"

But the customer insisted to receive the setting from the call center as it was the case in previous situations, and said:

“Two days ago I obtained the same service directly from the call center”

Here, the agent showed his readiness to bear the responsibility and respond to the customer request and he actually handled it.

***Responsiveness:***

The agent was very positive in this call although the requested service can be obtained through SMS to the call center as he said:

“You have to send SMS from your mobile to the number 2000 and immediately it will be activated”

But the customer requested the agent to send him the setting as happened in previous cases and informed the agent that he prefers this method of activation. He said:

“Two days ago I obtained the same service directly from the call center”

The agent immediately responded to the customer's request without hesitation although sending the setting by the call center would be better and faster than calling the center and waiting for a long time saying:

“What is the type of your mobile set please?”

Customer: “Nokia 73”

Agent: “moments please”

The agent responded and handled the customer’s request. He deserves to be thanked and praised for his excellent performance.

***Empathy:***

It appeared to the researcher that the agent has treated the customer respectfully. He started the call by greeting the customer and said:

“How can I help you?”

This positive and friendly beginning reflected to the customer a very good impression and image about the agent and the company in general. The agent responded to the customer's request although it could be obtained without calling the call center. The agent repeated in many situations:

“Moments please”

I have noticed so far that only this agent has thanked the customer at the end of the call and said:

“Thank you for calling; it is my honor to serve you”

Then he informed the customer that he will transfer him to the AVR to evaluate the standard of service provided to him saying:

“Please, I will transfer you to the AVR so that you evaluate the standard of service provided to you”

The researcher noticed that the agent has repeated some imperative sentences when replying to the customer such as "you have to send ... " which may be understood by the customer as an order although I did not feel that the customer has felt so but the agent could have been more courteous if he had said "could you please use the SMS to activate this service ... etc"

### **The sixth call analysis**

#### ***Engaging with the call:***

Duration of this call was two minutes and three seconds. The agent started the discourse by introducing himself and said:

“Asalam Alikoum (peace be upon you)”.

Unlike his colleagues, the agent did not start with the usual greeting that I have noticed in the previous calls “<<name>>, how can I help you?” and did not introduce himself to the customer which negatively affected engaging of the customer with the call who

immediately started explaining his request showing no enthusiasm or intimacy with the agent.

Customer: "if I subscribed in Jawalnet and consumed the maximum allowed limit, are they going to issue me a bill for one extra megabyte or what? If I want to activate the subscription, shall I wait for one month?"

It appeared to me during the discourse that the customer lacks enough information about the company's services and wishes to inquire and obtain accurate information. I think that the customer did not engaged deeply with the call and that the agent did not exert enough effort to make the customer reach this stage.

***Accessibility of the call center:***

As it was the case in the previous calls, access time was approximately thirty seconds according to the AVR readings. The result of this element is good and the customer accessed the call center very fast and within a standard time.

***Reliability:***

The customer started the call by explaining his request:

Customer: "If I subscribed in Jawalnet and consumed the maximum allowed limit, are they going to issue me a bill for one extra megabyte or what? If I want to activate the subscription, shall I wait for one month?"

The agent kept silent while the customer was talking. This may be a good feature i.e. good listening, but I was taken aback by the reply of the agent who directly said:

"Repeat the question, I did not understand"

Here I noticed that the customer stopped talking for a while and it seemed that his reliability on the agent was shaken and he was displeased with the agents reply.

When I listened to this call more than once, I was very surprised by the reply of the agent to the customer when he told him that he did not understand his request although it was very clear.

Silence continued between the two parties for about forty two seconds of the total duration of the call. I failed to justify or find out the reasons for this silence.

Once again the agent returned to give an example to the customer's case so as to fully understand his request and said:

“If you subscribed today in one Giga for thirty days and cancelled your subscription after ten days, you should wait for twenty days in order to subscribe again”

The customer immediately replied and asked for explanation.

Customer: “you mean that I should wait for twenty days and cannot cancel the subscription before one month?”

The agent once again confirmed the information to the customer and said:

“No you cannot cancel it .... I mean for example you have taken one Giga, and it was for one month and you have consumed only ten days, they will pay you back your money for the remaining twenty days”.

The agent added:

“You could not subscribe once again before expiry of twenty days”.

It did not appear to the researcher that the agent was sure enough, from the first moment, of the customers' problem but informed him that he did not understand his request without requesting more explanation and started discussion with the customer before he fully understands the problem at the beginning of the call.

From the following question of the customer and reply of the agent at the end of the call it was clear that the agent did not take any effort to know whether the service of the customer was prepaid or postpaid one.

Customer: “okay, can I upgrade this package from one Gigabit?”

The agent immediately replied saying:

“Only one Giga package and open subscription are available, there is no five Giga except in the postpaid service”.

The agent failed to understand the customer’s requirement. It seemed to me that he couldn’t understand the technical aspects of the request although the customer has explained his request very clearly. This may be attributed to either disqualification of the agent in the technical matters or his failure to comprehend what the customer explained during the discourse.

***Display the right attitude:***

Compared to the previous calls, I noticed in this call that the agent did not start with the usual greeting and confirm to the customer that he is at his disposal “<<name>>, how can I help you?”

Instead, he gave his name very quickly to the extent that I could not identify it unless after listening to it repeatedly which means that the customer also could not identify the agents’ name.

I also noticed that the agent requested the customer to repeat his question despite the clear explanation he made to enable the agent provide him with the required service. The customer and the researcher were very surprised by the reply of the agent when he said:

“Repeat the question, I did not understand”

The agent’s tone was imperative. The strange side in this call was that both parties kept silent for forty two seconds without any discussions. The researcher suggest that the agent after the lengthy listening to the customer, should have apologized to the customer and asked him in a courteously manner to further explain his request.

The agent did not show the proper attitude towards the customer as he asked him to repeat his question or the service required then started giving him examples while he could have simplified and eased the matter if he had taken enough time to request further information from the customer, allow him to explain his problem, and consequently understand his request and provide him with the required service.

In my opinion the customer was not served properly and the agent failed to give him any kind of assistance that he deserve, instead he requested him to wait for twenty days till his subscription expires, saying:

“..... You cannot subscribe to the service before expiry of the twenty days remaining from the first subscription”.

Usage of the phrase “you cannot ....” was improper and consequently the customer showed his dissatisfaction on this imperative tone he listened to instead of receiving polite apology and regret for not solving his problem.

At the end of the call the agent did not take adequate time to thank the customer but the customer took the initiative and thanked him saying:

“Thank you, God blesses you”.

The attitude of the agent during the call was unsatisfactory and he did not deal with the customer properly to solve his problem and meet his request but on the contrary the customer was more courteous and very respectful during the discourse.

***Responsibility:***

After listening to the call repeatedly, the researcher did not detect any evidence that the agent has shown ability to shoulder the responsibility of finding the suitable solution for the customer's problem on behalf of the company. In his first reply to customer he said:

“Repeat the question, I did not understand”

This incident occurred although the customer has spent thirty seconds explaining his request at the beginning of the call.

The call analysis did not show that the agent has tried or exerted any effort to offer the customer any options for attending to his request but instead he said to him within the course of the call:

“..... you should wait for twenty days till the expiry of the first subscription”

The customer tried to drive the agent towards other options or methods of solving the problem but it seemed that the agent was either not properly trained or wished to end the call as quickly as he can.

***Responsiveness:***

This call comprised of many important phases which indicated that the agent was not in a position to positively respond to the customer's needs. The beginning of the call was not encouraging when the agent did not greet the customer with the usual greeting "<<name>>, how can I help you?"

Such greeting encourages the customer to engage with the call in an amiable mood and explain his request easily. It also constructs a solid foundation for the two parties to positively engage with the call and meet the customer's requirement.

The researcher noticed that the customer immediately started explaining his problem at the beginning of the call but the agent reply was very strange and frustrating, when he said:

"Repeat the question, I did not understand"

The customer was surprised and kept silent for thirty to forty seconds as if he was saying "what shall I do?". The agent repeated the discourse of the customer and gave him an example to his case but the customer continued inquiring while the agent was speaking and said:

"You mean that I should wait for twenty days and cannot cancel the subscription before one month?"

At the beginning of the call the agent did not ask the customer to provide him with the complete information required to facilitate the search for proper solution of the problem as he said:

"Regarding prepaid service ....." then "the postpaid service can be upgraded to 5 Giga or open subscription".

I have noticed that the agent did not know at the beginning of the call whether the customer had prepaid or postpaid service. It appeared to me here that the agent understood

the problem of the customer and was aware of the alternative solutions but failed to respond to the customer and properly provide him with the needed service.

***Empathy:***

The agent did not show the required intimacy or warm greeting but started the call without introducing himself and said:

“Asalam Alikoum (peace be upon you)”.

He did not mention his name clearly while he should have started the call saying “how can I help you?” which gives the customer a very good impression and denotes his readiness and desire to serve the customer.

The disappointment of the customer which he did not show at the beginning of the call has increased when the agent replied to him and said:

“Repeat the question, I did not understand”

This reply increased the customer’s dissatisfaction and the researcher noticed that he kept silent for twenty to thirty seconds without any justification as if he was complaining of the this bad treatment and loss of his effort and time.

In my opinion, the agent has failed to greet the customer and listen to him properly but began giving examples of the customer’s problem although the customer did not ask for such comparisons or examples. The customer has already known what the agent will offer to him as he said:

“You mean that I should wait for twenty days and cannot cancel the subscription before one month?”

The agent immediately replied:

“Only one Giga package and or open subscription are available, there is no five Giga except in the postpaid service”.

After that the customer thanked the agent and ended the call saying:

“Okay, thank you”

Ending the call in this way was an indication to the customer’s dissatisfaction on the progress of the discourse and the service provided to him which did not meet his expectations. The researcher thinks that the reason for this situation was either:

1. The agent was not aware enough of the services and did not know how to provide them or:
2. He was unwilling to provide the service and needs more training on customers' treatment and requests handling procedures and practices.

### **The seventh call analysis**

#### ***Engaging with the call:***

The call lasted for only one and a half minute. The agent started the call and said:

“<<Name>>, peace be upon you, how can I help you?”

Customer: “welcome brother”

The agent received the call in the right way. He introduced himself, greeted the customer properly, and offered his assistance then the customer started explaining his request saying:

“I have assigned one mobile to obtain the offered discount but I did not get any discount on that mobile .... I do not know the reason”

Agent: “okay, assigned or (Esh loon) brother” (Esh loon is a slang phrase that means or what?).

The agent used a slang word (Esh loon) which means or what? It is familiar only in the central region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The customer faced difficulty in quickly understanding the meaning of this slang word. From the analysis of this call and the level of engagement of the customer with the agent, it appeared that the agent tried to be friendly and started by introducing himself and the usual greeting sentence approved by the center. But from the course of the call it appeared that the required level of synergy was absent between the two parties.

***Accessibility:***

Similar to the previous calls the twenty seconds access time to the call center was within the accepted limits and rated satisfactory.

***Reliability:***

It did not seem to me that the agent's discourse with the customer implied high reliability as he said at the mid of the call:

“The number you assigned to receive the discount may be wrong”

The researcher noticed that the customer was displeased of the above reply of the agent, who should instead of raising doubts on the customer's answer, have tried to request him politely to make sure of the number and say “please can you make sure of the required number?”

It seemed as if the agent did not trust the information given by the customer and tried to put him in the wrong but the customer replied:

“No, it is not wrong .... It is not wrong”

Agent: “okay, one moment till I make sure of the number, if you do not mind”, “do you mean the mobile you are currently talking from, brother”, “what is the number?”

Customer: “0123456789”

It is obvious that the agent was incapable of handling the customers' request. This was evident when he repeated asking the customer for information that he was supposed to be aware of particularly the customer's mobile number which was available in the system of the call center.

The agent replied: “yes correct, this number is correct”

The agent tried to get the mobile number but the approach and method of his request was inappropriate and consequently the customer replied:

“I know that it is correct but why they did not give me the discount, why, brother?”

I noticed that the customer was not pleased of the beginning of the call when the agent said to him “the number you assigned to receive the discount may be wrong”. The agent has made the customer angry and put him in a defensive situation. This was apparent particularly at the end of the call when the customer said “yes correct, this number is correct”

Here the customer seemed to have lost reliability and trust on the agents’ ability to solve the problem. When the agent failed to find any solution to the customer’s problem, he said to him.

“I found your complaint in the system but it was not replied so far ...”

And added: “wait with us and everything will be all right”

The researcher noticed that the agent did not explain to the customer why his problem was not attended and the justifications of the delay of the reply. Furthermore, he did not apologize and did not determine the period of time the customer should wait and did not refer him to any other department that may serve him in a better way. Accordingly the customer replied trying to end the call:

Customer: “God bless you, find me a solution to this problem because I am using the mobile but did not get any discount”

***Display the right attitude:***

At the beginning of the call the agent introduced himself and greeted the customer with the usual greeting sentence.

Agent: “<<name>>, peace be upon you, how can I help you?”

But it was noticed that when the customer explained his request in the middle of the call, the agent replied:

“The number you assigned to receive the discount may be wrong”

It appeared to me here that the customer was not pleased with what the agent said and therefore immediately replied:

“No, it is not wrong .... It is not wrong”

The agent should have politely requested the customer to provide him with the number he had assigned for the discount and should have not mentioned possibilities that may not be true because the customer felt that the agent was trying to blame him for giving a wrong number which was not the right attitude to deal with the customer in a customer focus culture.

There was a waiting period in the first minute of the call but I noticed that the agent did not request the customer to wait or thank him for waiting; instead he immediately began replying the customer's call.

The agent did not show a satisfactory attitude and the due attention to solve the customer's complaint before the end of the call and did not try at least to give him an appointment for solving it but instead said:

“I found your complaint in the system but it was not replied so far”

And added: “wait with us and everything will be all right”.

The above is a general statement that will not help to solve the customer's problem. The agent was supposed to have given the customer an accurate time for responding to his request and apologized to him on behalf of the company for the misunderstanding or transferred him to the concerned department or manager to handle his problem and end his misery.

It drew my attention that the agent tried to hold the customer responsible for not receiving the required discount saying:

“The number you assigned to receive the discount may be wrong”

This may be an improper attitude as the customer is always right and the agent should not draw a conclusion that the customer by providing wrong number was the cause of not getting the claimed discount.

***Responsibility:***

The agent did not show positive attitude to serve the customer and bear the responsibility of serving him on behalf of the company but instead and in more than one situation tried to raise suspects around the customer's information about his mobile number by saying:

"The number you have assigned to receive the discount may be wrong"

The customer immediately said:

"No, it is not wrong .... It is not wrong"

From the above reply of the customer it seemed as if he wanted to say he was not wrong but you are the one who did not provide me with the correct service.

It appeared that the agent failed to bear the responsibility and tried to put it on the shoulder of another party by saying:

"I found your complaint in the system but it was not replied so far" And added: "wait with us and everything will be all right"

The agent tried to get rid of the embarrassment and the critical position that the customer put him in when the later insisted that the number was correct and that the company failed to handle his problem. He blamed other departments of the company for delaying the reply. This sort of behavior is considered a big mistake and shows irresponsibility and lack of empowerment of the agent towards the customer.

The customer replied:

"Is it true that I have a pending complaint?"

Agent: "yes, yes, but I did not receive any reply so far"

In my opinion the agent has committed a big mistake by stating that there was another department in the company which did not reply to the customer. He should have known and understood the customer's problem from the beginning of the call without arguing with him and should have shouldered the responsibility of solving the customer's problem or referred him to the supervisor for quick solution instead of blaming others.

***Responsiveness:***

Through one minute and thirty seconds the agent appeared to be negative towards the customer's request and tried to ask him several questions and sometimes tried to make the customer uncertain of the mobile number subject of the complaint. The following parts of the call show the shortcomings in providing the service:

Agent: "I found your complaint in the system but it was not replied so far"

Agent: "the number you assigned to receive the discount may be wrong

.....wait with ....."

Agent: "yes, yes, but I did not receive any reply so far"

The above replies of the agent confirms that positive responsiveness was absent in this call.

***Empathy:***

The agent tried to be more empathetic but due to his inability to respond and solve the customers' problem he appeared to be negative towards the customer and did not exert the necessary effort to respond to the customer's request. I noticed this when the customer said:

"God bless you, find a solution to this problem because I am speaking but did not get any discount"

Agent: "I will do, you will be satisfied"

Failure of the agent to respond and exert enough effort to solve the customer's request or fix him an appointment for doing so, did not help to rate him empathetic with the customer. The researcher noticed that the customer was very courteous and polite during the call although the agent did not meet his requirement but tried to blame him at the beginning of the call by saying "the number you have assigned to receive the discount may be wrong"

## **The eighth call analysis**

### ***Engaging with the customer's call:***

This call continued for two minutes and twelve seconds. The agent started the call by introducing himself and greeting the very young mobile customer.

Agent: "<<name>>, peace be upon you"

Customer: "God bless you"

Agent: "welcome, how can I help you?"

The above introduction and exchange of greetings between the agent and the customer established strong foundation for a good and positive call. The researcher also noticed that the agent has given the customer his full attention despite his age and responded to him with the due respect.

In the thirty three second of the call the two parties kept silent. The agent did not request the customer to wait and did not thank him at the end of the waiting period. This may have negatively affected the customer's satisfaction on the progress of the call which will be discussed later. I tried to find out the justification of this silence of the two parties but failed to reach any logic reason.

### ***Accessibility:***

Similar to the previous calls, access to the call center was fast and easy and the access time was less than thirty seconds which is very satisfactory and should be praised.

### ***Reliability:***

Based on this customer centric element I will analyze and investigate the extent of reliability that the agent has exhibited to the customer through providing accurate data and proper exchange of information with him.

Let us start by knowing what the customer request was:

Customer: "I called one of the employees to activate the MMS service. He asked me to switch off my mobile so as to activate it and send me a message then it will be activated in my mobile"

The customer added: "but the MMS service was inactive in my mobile so far"

Agent: "what is the type of your mobile set?"

Customer: "N73"

Agent: "what, what?"

The customer repeated the answer: "N73"

The agent kept silent for thirty three seconds but did not ask the customer to wait and did not inform him with the reason for waiting. He immediately said to the customer:

"Okay, brother the setting will be sent to you"

Customer: "yes,"

Agent: "the setting will be sent to you"

Customer: "now... now?"

Agent: "yes"

From the above conversation it appeared that the agent did not ask the customer for any information that may help him to solve the problem but said:

"Okay brother, the setting will be sent to you"

The agent did not tell the customer how and when the settings are going to be sent to him and did not help him to understand the settings but the customer was the one who started explaining to the agent as will be shown in the second part of the call analysis. The agent failed to provide the customer with further explanation and instructions about the usage of the setting that will be sent to him from the center in SMS message. The customer may face difficulty in setting up the contents of this message in his mobile set and activate the required service.

***Display the right attitude:***

Analysis of the call did not indicate to me that the agent has not shown the right attitude except in the following part of the call in which he used inappropriate words:

Agent: "what is the type of your mobile set?"

Customer: "N73"

Agent: "what? what?"

In this part of the call the agent failed to listen and request appropriate information from the customer in the right way and with the right attitude but he was very courteous and friendly with the customer in the remaining part of the call. It was noticed that the agent treated the customer very respectfully during the course of the call in spite of his young age particularly in the following parts:

Agent: "Tal Omrak (Sir)"

Agent: "brother, we are at your disposal"

Agent: "samm (Sir)"

These friendly words are considered as credit for the agent.

***Responsiveness:***

The agent showed positive responsiveness but with some delay when he did not try to explain to the customer how to use the setting of the MMS as shown in the following part of the call:

Agent: "what is the type of your mobile set?"

Customer: "N73"

Agent: "okay brother, the setting will be sent to you"

In this part he failed to explain to the customer how to run the setting therefore, the customer asked him:

"If I received the setting, what shall I do next?"

Agent: “you will receive two messages brother, when you receive them God bless you, save them brother”

Customer: “yes”

Agent: “you may receive about two messages, the first one includes the pass word which you should insert in the second message and the service will be activated”

The agent committed an error when he raised doubts on the information provided by the customer and used the words “may and about”. The researcher noticed that these two words created negative impact and raised doubt of the customer during the discourse.

The agent should have informed the customer precisely and quickly explained to him what he was going to receive and how to install the setting and activate the required service.

Then the customer asked the agent about the pass word saying:

“What is the pass word?”

The agent immediately replied: “12345”

The agent should have provided the customer with the pass word before he asked for it because it is part of the service and complementary to the information he previously provided the customer with.

The customer once again requested information about the contents of the first and second messages and the agent replied:

“The first message includes the pass word and then you enter it in the second one brother”

***Responsibility:***

In the last part of the call when the customer requested activation of the MMS service some deficiency was witnessed in explaining and bearing the responsibility of conveying the required information to the customer and obtaining the information that help to serve him.

Agent: "what is the type of your mobile set?"

Customer: "N73"

Agent: "what? what?"

The customer repeated the answer: "N73"

The two parties kept silent for about sixty seconds during which the agent did not request the customer to wait or gave him any justification for this break.

Agent: "okay, brother the setting will be sent to you"

It appeared to me here that the agent did not take the responsibility properly because he failed to:

- Explain to the customer how the setting will be sent to him.
- Advise the customer with the reasons for not sending the setting.
- Apologize on behalf of the company for not sending the setting.
- Explain to the customer how to install the setting and activate it in his mobile set.

My above conclusion was supported by the following question of the customer who asked:

Customer: "if I received the setting, what shall I do next?"

The customer here was the one who requested the agent to tell him how to setup the setting and when he will receive it.

***Empathy:***

Although the customer was very young but the agent has shown courtesy during the call and selected very friendly words. He dealt with the young customer in the same way he used to deal with adults and used words of respect normally directed to the old saying:

"Tal Omrak (Sir)"

The researcher noticed this attitude in other parts of the call for example: "brother ....", "God bless you" and "Sir"

The agent has received the call of this young customer in the right way, courteously, and with the due respect. He started the call by introducing himself and greeting the customer.

Agent: “<<name>>, peace be upon you, how can I help you?”

After serving the customer he ended the call in the same manner and exhibited to the customer full respect and appreciation saying:

“Thanks for calling we are honored to serve you”

### **The ninth call analysis**

#### ***Engaging with the customer:***

This call continued for one minute and twenty seven seconds, the agent started:

Agent: “<<name>> peace be upon you, how can I help you?”

Although I listened to the call repeatedly but I couldn't identify the agent's name because he mentioned it very quickly and I think the customer also did not identify it. The customer seemed to be unhappy for not hearing the agent's name, he friendly replied:

Customer: “how are you brother?”

Agent: “welcome”

The agent's reply was acceptable but his voice tone was not calm or reflected courteous but was slightly high and indicates that he was capable of engaging with the customer in a friendly call.

I have noticed during the discourse that the agent interrupted the customer several times and did not listen to him properly as shown in the following part of the call.

Customer: “brother, the mobile bill amount is 1200 Riyals, when I went to pay through the ATM in the bank .....

At the middle of this speech the agent interrupted the customer and said:

“Yes .....yes .....yes”

I couldn't understand why he said that, unless he wanted to affirm the customer's speech, but the customer understood that he should repeat his complaint and continued:

Customer: "when I went to the bank to pay the 1200 Riyals I saw on the screen of the ATM that the due amount was 1500 Riyals"

He added:

"But I have paid 1200 Riyal and ask you to activate it brother"

The agent repeated asking in an improper manner for the same information that the customer has stated a while ago:

Agent: "what did the ATM screen displayed to you?"

Customer: "the screen displayed 1500 Riyals"

It looks to me that the agent was unsuccessful in managing the discourse in a courteous manner and did not try to give the agent the chance to explain his request or listen carefully to him but he was in a hurry trying to understand the customer's request and regardless of his feelings and his wish to explain his request in detail.

***Accessibility:***

Access time to the call center was good and took twenty five seconds only.

***Reliability:***

I have listened to this call more than once. It appeared to me that the agent has provided the required information to the customer and shown good level of reliability in addition to the skillful dealing with the systems particularly in the following part of the speech:

Customer: "but I have paid 1200 Riyal and I ask you to activate it brother"

From the following conversation it looks to me that the agent knows that the ATM of the bank displayed the total due amount and that the customer was free to pay the whole amount or part of it, and accordingly said:

“What the ATM screen displayed to you?”

Customer: “it displayed 1500 Riyals but last week it displayed about 1200 Riyals”

The agent immediately asked the customer to provide him with the mobile number and said:

“What is the mobile number?”

Customer: “one moment brother, the number is 123456789”

The agent informed the customer with the result and the following conversation started:

Agent: “you have paid 1200 Riyals and the bill amount was 1570 Riyals”

Customer: “one week ago it was 1200 Riyals ..... how come it has become 1570 Riyals within one week? Is it possible to activate it now brother?”

The reply of the agent was very responsive and proved his ability to deal with the customer and furnish him with the required service as he replied:

Agent: “don’t worry, we shall activate it”

The above reply confirms that the agent possesses the necessary technical and managerial background to deal with the customer and provide the proper service.

***Display the right attitude:***

Analysis of this call showed that the agent possesses satisfactory customer service skills and technical knowledge to deal with customers but in the following part of the call his voice tone did not reflect the intimacy and friendly feeling towards the customer. The following conversation proves this case:

Customer: “it displayed 1500 Riyals but last week it displayed about 1200 Riyals”

The agent replied to the customer in an imperative tense:

Agent: “what is the mobile number?”

I think it might be better for the customer and the company if he had said “would you please provide me with your mobile number” as it will reflect the respect and appreciation that the agent should exhibit to the customer.

I have listened to the call repeatedly and notice that there are some positive sides in the call that show the ability of the agent to display the right attitude as shown in the following conversation:

Customer: “ .....Is it possible to activate it now brother?”

Agent: “don’t worry, we shall activate it”

The agent here selected proper words and quickly responded to the customer’s request. The customer continued:

“When will it be activated, brother?”

Agent: “moments and we shall activate it”

Customer: “God bless you”

The context of the speech between the customer and the agent was very good and displayed the right attitude and intimacy that should characterize all calls with the customers of any service company. This excellent treatment should be considered and adopted by all customer service employees in order to improve the customer’s satisfaction level and boost the positive word of mouth about the company among the targeted audience.

***Responsibility:***

The agent did not show in the first part of the call and from the first moment his ability to shoulder the responsibility for providing the serve especially when he said:

“What the ATM screen displayed to you?”

He asked the customer the above question although he could have known this information from the system. The customer replied:

“But I have paid 1200 Riyal and ask you activate it brother”

Afterwards, the agent asked the customer about his mobile number although it was displayed in the system. He continued in an imperative tense:

“What is the mobile number?”

The agent replied to the customer and said:

“You have paid 1200 Riyal and the amount of the bill is 1575 Riyals”

This proves that the agent was capable of knowing the details of all the transactions of the customer without asking him. If the agent had provided the customer with the telephone number, due amount and paid amount information especially it was available at the call center system, the later would have more confidence on the agent, because I noticed that the agent was asking the customer to provide him with the same information.

The agent was not capable enough to bear the responsibility on behalf of the company in the proper or required standard.

***Responsiveness:***

The agent started the call improperly which affected the friendly and positive atmosphere that should be created during the call.

Agent: “<<name>> peace be upon you, how can I help you?”

Noting that he did not mention his name clearly and the customer positively replied:

“Peace and blessing of God be upon you”

Agent: “welcome”

The agent's reply was improper on the contrary to the customer's positive attitude. The agent should have greeted the customer in the same way or even better as replying with "welcome" only looks to some extent tough and unfriendly.

The agent did not check the system to get the information available in the billing systems of the company instead he wasted time trying to obtain information that he could get within very few seconds and accordingly make the call environment friendly and positive.

When the customer informed the agent that he had paid 1200 Riyals, the agent should have checked the system and known that the customer's debt was 370 Riyals and should have reactivated the service without involving in the call for one minute and twenty seconds that should have been concluded in thirty seconds.

***Empathy:***

It appeared that the agent has shown empathy to the customer although he sometimes interrupted the discourse and did not listen to the customer till he ends his speech for example:

Customer: "brother, the mobile bill amount is 1200 Riyals, when I went to pay through the ATM in the bank ....."

Here the agent interrupted the customer and said: "yes ....yes" and the customer continued and said:

"When I went to the bank to pay the 1200 Riyals I found on the screen of the ATM that the due amount was 1500 Riyals"

In the second part of the call the agent asked the customer in an imperative tense to tell him what his mobile number was:

Agent: "what is the mobile number?"

But in the end of the call the conversation between the two parties was friendly and the agent showed kindness towards the customer and the customer in turn used nice and courteous words such as:

Customer: "thank you brother"

Customer: "God bless you brother"

The agent replied to the customer in the same manner as shown in the following part:

Customer: "when will it be activated, brother?"

Agent: "moments and we shall activate it"

Customer: "God bless you"

Agent: "do you need any other service?"

Customer: "thanks, God bless you"

The agent should have ended the call and not the customer and should have said "we are honored to serve you; I will transfer you to the AVR service evaluation"

In my opinion, some parts of the call were positive and characterized by intimacy between the two parties. This may alleviate the deficiencies that appeared at the beginning of the call for example when the agent did not mention his name clearly.

### **The tenth call analysis**

#### ***Engaging with the customer's call:***

The call lasted for one minute and thirteen seconds. The agent greeted the customer:

Agent: "<<name>>, peace be upon you"

The agent mentioned his name but unfortunately I couldn't identify it clearly because he mentioned it very fast.

Customer: "peace be upon you, good evening"

Agent: "good and pleasant evening ...how can I help you"

Compared to the previous calls the researcher noticed that exchange of greetings between the agent and the customer continued for a long period of time. This can be considered a good indicator although the greetings took most of the time of the first part of the call.

The researcher noticed that the customer engaged in the mood of the call especially after the long greetings which made the customer confident that the agent will accept and respond to his request.

***Accessibility:***

In all the calls including this one, the researcher noticed that the access to the call center was fast and very good and took about 30 seconds. As a researcher I praise the results of this element.

***Reliability:***

The most important element of any call is to establish trust and confidence between the agent and the customer and communicate direct and in indirect messages to the customers to prove that the agent is able and willing to deal with the customers' requests and meet their expectations (Don peppers, 1993)

The call between the customer and the agent passed through many phases. It was noticed that the agent failed to receive and understand the customer's request properly noting that the customer seemed during the course of the call not aware enough with the technical features of the mobile service and settings as it appeared from the following part of the call.

Customer: "God bless you .... Is there a pass word?"

Agent: "yes"

Customer: "is this mobile of mine has a pass word?"

Agent: "a pass word of what?"

Customer: "for the MMs ...and I don't know what is it."

Immediately the agent replied: "927 for the MMS setting"

It appeared to me that the customer faced great difficulty in understanding the services provided by AL Jawal (*STC brand for mobile service*) including multimedia services (MMS). This is evident from the following part of the call:

The customer: "yes ..... yes"

Agent: "is it the setting of multimedia?"

Here both parties did not understand each other and the agent did not exert enough effort and time and concentrate on understanding the customer's problem. The call continued and each party tried to understand the other. The agent asked the customer what kind of pass word he requested:

Agent: "the pass word of what? .... multimedia setting?"

Customer: "I want the pass word ... is there a pass word to enter the program?"

The agent inquired once again:

"What program?"

Till this part of the call the customer's request was unclear and the agent did not try to ask the customer simple questions in order to understand his request and requirement. The customer replied:

"MMS program of the multimedia"

Agent: "927"

The customer once again inquired:

"What ... what?"

Agent: "927"

Now the customer started to explain to the agent his request while the time was running out, he said:

"I mean I want to open my MMS through my computer"

Here I think the customer explained his request clearly.

Agent: "you mean you have received a message in your mobile and you want to see it on the MMS site?"

Customer: "yes ..... yes"

It appeared here that the customer has found his long-pursued goal and made the agent understand his request after hard effort.

The agent started explaining to the customer how to open the MMS message through the website of the company saying:

"The pass word comes in the message that you are going to receive; it will not appear to me in the call center"

Then the agent explained to the customer in detail how to identify and use the pass word in the same message usually received by the customer, he said:

"You will receive letters or numbers in the same message that will be sent to your mobile ... then enter it in the website"

Here it appeared to me that the two parties faced many difficulties and the agent did not try to take into consideration the low level of the customer's awareness of the telecommunications technology and services and accordingly communicate the required information to him.

***Display the right attitude:***

I have listened to the call more than once. It seemed that the agent has shown unsatisfactory attitude and did not reply properly to the customer when he said:

"Is my mobile has a pass word?"

The agent replied in an improper tone and in a disapproval manner:

Agent: "a pass word of what?"

The way he replied to the customer was improper as the customer seemed to be unaware of the mobile service setting and needs more assistance taking into consideration his level of understanding of this technology.

I notice that the agent did not mention his name clearly at the beginning of the call although I listened to the call several times.

I noticed that excessive greeting words were exchanged by the two parties, for example:

Customer: "peace be upon you, good evening"

Agent: "good and pleasant evening ...how can I help you"

Customer in more than one situation: "God bless you ...."

Agent: "thanks, God bless you"

And so on .....

From the researcher's point of view there were no shortcomings in the call except the failure of the agent to understand the customer's request till the last third of the call. The agent should have requested further explanations from the customer in order to understand his request and handle it quickly and smoothly according to the required standards and procedures.

The agent did not give the customer enough time and effort or listen to him carefully but interrupted him in several situations, for example:

Customer: "shall I enter the letters ....."

Agent interrupted him: "enter into your computer the letters or the numbers that you will receive in the message"

The agent should have listened to the customer and allowed him enough time to explain his request, so as to fully understand it.

***Responsibility:***

The customer tried to communicate his request to the agent in the beginning of the call but due to his illiteracy in the mobile services he faced difficulty in explaining his request to the agent:

Agent: "how can I help you?"

This indicates that the agent was willing to assist the customer and bear the responsibility of serving him. The following conversation might support this conclusion:

Customer: "God bless you .... Is there a pass word?"

Agent: "a pass word of what?"

Customer: "for the MMS ..... I don't know what it is "

Agent: "927 for the MMS setting"

The agent has hurriedly provided the customer improper information as it appeared after listening to the call. He should have listened to the customer and gradually asked him simple and precise questions to understand his needs and serve him accordingly.

The conversation continued between the agent and the customer for a long period till the last third of the call when the customer said:

"I mean I want to open the multimedia MMS on my computer"

At this moment it appeared that the agent has understood the request of the customer and started taking the full responsibility of serving him when he said:

"The pass word comes in the message that you are going to receive; it will not appear to me in the call center"

The customer understood that the pass word he was searching for comes within the message in his mobile and he should enter it in the website of the company to start opening the messages saved there.

I did not observe any shortage of the agent as regards to his ability to shoulder the responsibility of serving the customer on behalf of the company but I noticed that he did not succeed in treating the customer and take into his consideration the customer's technical background and knowledge of using the new telecommunication services.

***Responsiveness:***

The call started by exchange of greetings and good expressions which made the call continues in a positive way:

Agent: "good evening"

Agent: "how can I help you?"

Customer: "God bless you .... Is there a pass word...?"

The discourse was generally positive but most of it especially in the first half ran in a vicious circle because the agent did not understand the customer's requirement and the customer did not clearly communicate his request to the agent. I have discussed this matter in detail within my analysis of the reliability element of this call.

In the last third of the call the agent began to understand the customer's requirement and the positive trend towards serving the customer has clearly appeared when he said:

"Enter in your computer the letters or the numbers that you receive in the message"

Then the customer understood what the agent meant.

As a researcher I noticed from the above conversation that the agent did not ask the customer proper questions in order to identify his requirements and serve him quickly and efficiently.

***Empathy:***

I did no notice that the agent was not empathic; on the contrary he used friendly and courteous words in most parts of the call except in rare cases. The following good examples support my position:

Agent: "good and pleasant evening ...how can I help you"

In the Arabic language this sentence is very friendly and polite. Nice and warm words have been used properly.

In another situation at the end of the call the agent thanked the customer very politely and requested him to evaluate through the AVR system the service provided to him. This happened only in two calls of the total ten calls that I have analyzed, he said:

Agent: "God bless you, any other service?"

Customer: "thanks, God bless you"

Agent: "thank you for calling; I will transfer you to the service evaluation through the AVR.

The end of the call was good and the customer seemed to be satisfied on his journey with the agent to obtain the required service.

### **Discourse Collective Analysis**

In this section the researcher analyzed the ten calls through several elements including:

- 1) Engagement with the call: which shows the capability of the agent to drive the customer into a positive call in order to understand his needs and start handling the request very easily?
- 2) Accessibility of the call center: through this element we can easily measure the call center respond to the customers' calls and also measure the waiting time of the customers till they are replied.
- 3) Reliability of the call: this element allows for assessment of the agent's capability to provide a reliable service and credible information to the customer on behalf of the company. Good results of this element contribute to increasing the confidence and creditability perception among the customers on their company.
- 4) Display the right attitude during the discourse: this element points out the capability of the agents in the call center to deal with the customers politely and courteously and communicate to them a positive message about the importance and attention

the company and its employees pays to its customers in all its touch points all around the company.

- 5) Responsibility of the customer service representative: taking the responsibility of providing the service to the customers on behalf of the company is one of the most important elements used to evaluate and analyze the ten calls to determine the capability of the agent to provide creditable services to the customers with self-confidence and bear this responsibility under all circumstances. It is very essential that this element be noticed by the customer through the call during handling of their requirements and needs.
- 6) Responsiveness during the discourse: it is the capability of the agent to serve the customers and respond to their requests and exhibit full response in handling their requests and meeting their requirements. Failure of the agent to serve the customers or lack of empowerment to do so is a vital factor and plays an important role in determining the customer capability to face the competition and become a real customer centric organization. This element revealed to the researcher the range of customer's capability to become more responsive to the customers' requests during the phases of the discourse.
- 7) Empathy during the discourse: exhibiting care and attention to the customer is very important to drive Saudi Telecom to be a customer centric organization. This element has great impact on the customers and the degree of their satisfaction to the services provided by the company through its concerned employees. Measuring this element in the ten calls through qualitative analysis allows the researcher to point out the call centers' agent capabilities related to delivering proper customer experience, paying attention to the customers, dealing with their various types respectfully, and handling their requests with the due attention during the discourse.

Through the qualitative analysis of the ten calls based on the above mentioned elements, the researcher found that there are weaknesses and strengths in delivering the proper customer services through the agents. Some discourses were characterized by responsiveness and considered ideal sample of customer treatments in a company that we can call a customer centric organization. For example, in the fourth call the agent was able to represent the company in the right way. The researcher noticed that the agent has exhibited keenness and full respect to the customer and accordingly presented an

impressive image of the company that highly values its customers and care for them. During the discourse the agent showed confidence and capability to serve the customers with high spirit and ideal treatment. As a researcher, I noticed that the agent possesses the right and sufficient information in addition to the proper training to provide reliable services in a good and responsive manner. The agent excelled in showing his competence to shoulder the responsibility of providing the service on behalf of the company and the customer responded and showed positive perception and satisfaction on the service provided to him. As a researcher, based on my analysis of the call through the seven elements, it seems to me that this call has common characteristics that should feature any company moving towards customer centricity.

On the contrary to my finding in the fourth call, I noticed as a researcher in the sixth call that the agent failed to treat the customer in the right and ideal method that enables Saudi Telecom to become a real customer centric organization. He started the call without the usual greeting and failed to listen to the customer or provide him with the required information. It seems to me that the customer did not engage with the call because it appeared to me in the discourse between the two parties that the agent has repeated in several situations in the call the sentences “I don’t understand” and “I don’t know” which negatively affected the confidence of the customer on the agent and his ability to provide him with the required service. The agent was unsuccessful in requesting the right information that enables him to serve the customer effectively. It appeared to the researcher in many situations within the call that the agent failed to exhibit the right attitude due to his imperative tone of speech and his frequent requests to the customer to repeat his question and explain the required service. It seems to me that the agent failed to hold the responsibility of serving the customer on behalf of the company and informed him to wait for 20 days to receive the service which I consider a very strange attitude that may be attributed either to the lack of sufficient and right training of the agent on the services and systems of the company or he is not the suitable person to work in front line customer service sections.

Empowerment releases employees “judgment, initiative and creativity in serving customer requirements and loyalty” (Scheuing, 1999). Similarly, Sarah (2000) stated that giving people responsibility for decisions affecting their work encourages a customer centric culture and continuous improvement. Based on this statement the researcher noticed that there is a lack of a clear vision and shortage in providing reliable information that make the

customer confident of the agent as well as the company and convince him that the service provided will meet or even exceed his demand and expectations. In the seventh and ninth calls the agents failed to present anything to prove that they are competent enough and fully empowered to serve the customers. In the seventh call the agent failed to obtain the necessary information from the customer furthermore, he raised doubts on the customer's information and in several situations asked him to make sure of the telephone number which implies that the customer is wrong. The same incident occurred in the tenth call where the agent seemed to be confused and failed to understand the customer's request or deal with him properly.

Clear business processes and procedures for the organization's front line employees are vital for their survival to let them be at the heart of the company. In other words, clear business processes and procedures are the key to a successful customer centric organization (Michael, 1997). According to this statement made by Michael (1997), the researcher noticed upon analysis of some of the calls that there was significant shortage in explaining the processes and procedures to the employees and when and where to apply them. This shortage caused most of the agents to provide the customers with wrong information or inadequate service. In the second call the agent could not explain to the customer that the mobile can be disconnected unless the owner personally calls the call center. Instead he wasted a lot of time arguing with the customer. In another situation in the first call the agent informed the customer to go back to the sales office in order to activate his telephone line while he could be able to provide the service if the processes and procedures were clear and aim at serving the customers and implement the customer focus strategy and adopt the first customer call resolution.

Denish *et al* (2006) and Craig (2006) have stated that customer centric organizations are characterized by two main factors, the behavior of senior managers and what the front line employees exhibit as they make choices about how to spend their time. Time spent among the customers is clear indication of the solid commitment of both leaders and employees toward customer centricity approach, so it is clear that treating the customer with the right attitude and being close to them to understand their needs and wants are the heart of customer centricity approach. The researcher has noticed through analysis of the ten discourses that there are certain strengths and weaknesses in dealing with the customers during the discourse. For example, as a researcher I noticed some signs of weakness of the agents' capabilities to exhibit empathy and the right attitude to the customers. In the first

and sixth calls I found that the agent tried to show respect and empathy with the customer. This weakness may be attributed to the lack of training, follow up, and customer focus culture. On the contrary to the first and sixth calls, the researcher thinks that the fourth and ninth calls set good models of perfectly handled calls as regards to exhibiting full respect to the customers, understanding their requirements and treating them in the right manner. The researcher noticed that the respect and empathy exhibited by the agents are very positive and satisfactory.

The researcher noticed common factors in the seven elements through which the ten calls were analyzed. It was evident that the reliability shown by the customers towards the services delivered to them during the discourses need to be studied excluding the fourth and ninth calls. It appeared to me in the remaining calls that the agents need sufficient training and full understanding of the technical and managerial processes and procedures of handling the customers' requests to be able to show high level of creditability and reliability when providing the company's services.

The researcher noted that most of the agents tried to show empathy towards the customers although in some calls the agents did not exhibit the right empathy especially in the third and ninth calls. The results of most of the remaining calls are good and the agents showed during the discourses distinguished levels of respect and response to the customers' requests. On the other side the researcher noticed that all the calls without exception were replied very quickly and the customers accessed the call center easily.

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## **6 Conclusion**

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The contact centers' role in a customer experience management strategy cannot be underestimated. Customer perceive that a company's ability to respond to a problem or request had higher influence on an excellent customer experience than any other attribute as show in figure (4) (Smith, 2006).

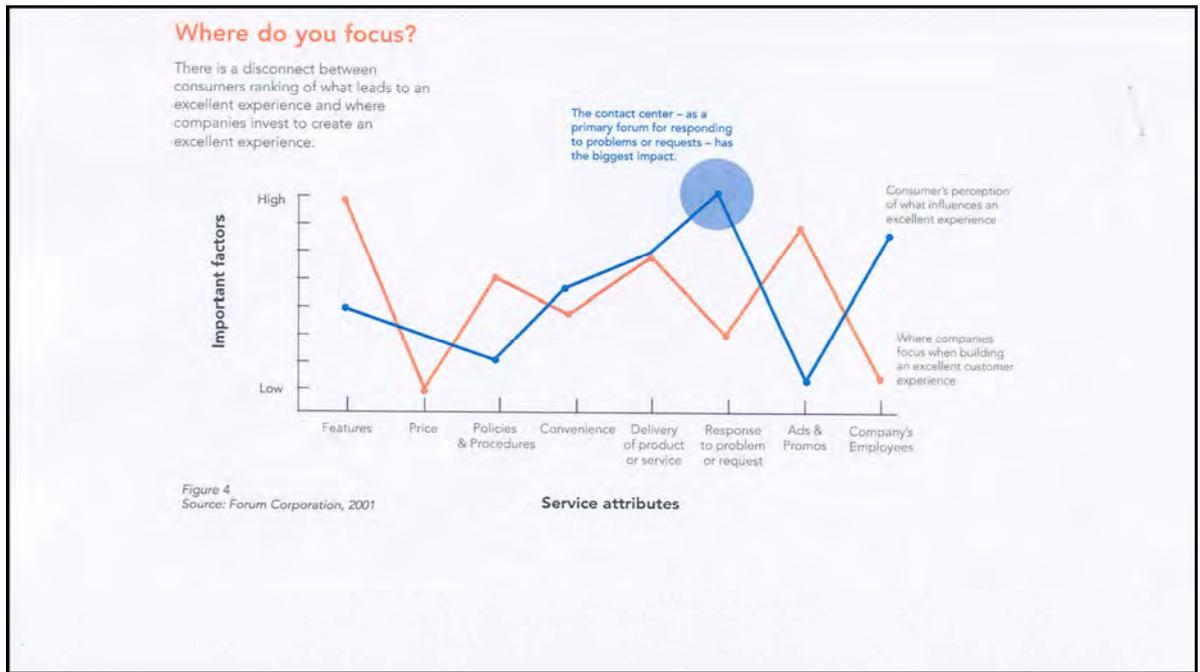


Figure (4): Customer experience impact (Smith, 2006)

When I think of this strategic importance of customer experience, and after what I have presented at the last section of this document, there are three major noticeable outcomes:

- 1) There exists a failure in meeting some requirements in the first part, such as mentioning employee's name or assuring good service. This can be attributed to oblivion or sometimes negligence. It can be resolved through further emphasis and repetition, along with introduction of the customer centricity concept to the management and employees of call centers through well tailored, regular and long term culture building programs.
- 2) The technical as well as the product knowledge of employees about the services need to be further enhanced, they need more awareness regarding other products and ability to explain them technically which assists them to sell or what so called "cross and up sell". This will finally serve the benefits of the stake holders who are concerned of bottom line. In spite of the fact that employees often meet the customer focus requirements in some parts of the discourse, and in spite of the fact that they thank calling customers, they still lack courtesy and quality of speech to some extent. This means that requirements such as thanking the customer for dealing with STC, or offering further assistance are dealt with by employees as sheer requirements, or mandates, whereas ideally employees should show a greater

level of liveliness and eagerness. This means taking the call out of the routine and elevating it one level higher in terms of relationship and intimacy with customers. A great emphasis is needed to enhance the skills of the agents through intensive training in customer experience awareness programs.

- 3) Ensure that all the agents are well trained and fully understand the practices and technical and administrative procedures of providing the services of the company through the call centers. As a researcher I noticed that this factor have great impact on the agents capabilities to deal with the customers and respond to their requirements positively and in an ideal manner.
- 4) The need to create a customer focus culture among the employees in the call centers is very crucial. I have noticed that some agents need behavioral training and development of their capabilities to treat the different kinds of customers in the right way and select proper words and express their respect and appreciation to the customer in addition to listening carefully to their all requirements.

Based on my sense making of the conversation, I have tried to do my best on the translation phase from Arabic to English, but I faced many difficulties in translating some slang words which were used by the agents and the customers (see appendix). I overcame these difficulties through my understanding of the discourse and the intended meaning.

The researcher also tried to enhance the confidence level of this document with which the conversation can be taken, by making the research processes as visible as possible to the reader. On the basis of this stage of the study the strongest conclusion is a reinforcement of the idea that employees at call centers are the corner stone of the success of any organization toward enhancing its customer experience with customers and this can only happen if they are given the right training, tools and trust to make every contact the right contact. "It is about having people who like people, who have personalities, and are willing to engage with customers and get beyond the formalities" (Smith, 2006). The customer experience will surely break down if the different communities that make up an organization do not understand the role that they must play to build and maintain it. The STC contact centers role in a customer experience management strategy cannot be underestimated. STC contact centers ability to respond to a problem or request has a higher influence on an excellent experience than any other attribute. The best customer experience are delivered by companies that so deeply employed their brand message and customer

priorities in their DNA that each and every agent can present the best the company has to offer to its customers (Smith, 2006)

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## **7 Limitation and Future Research**

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The material discussed here is obviously limited in being drawn from a small number of pre-recorded calls, derived from a questioning and analysis process which I controlled. As the conversations were initiated in Arabic and translated by the researcher into English, the researcher has made great effort in translating some words and sentences to explain the intended meaning. This may slightly affect the outputs of the research shown in this document.

In documents 4 & 5, the researcher will shed more lights on this study through more quantitative analysis and field surveys and interviews with larger number of employees and customers in order to explore more information that enrich the study and yield important factors that enhance STC performance and responsibility towards its customers and employees related to customer centricity.

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## 8 References

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Call number (1)

Agent: <<name>><sup>1</sup> Asalam alikoum

Customer: I want to ask about a subscribed number that got disconnected

Agent: What is the number of your mobile?

Customer: <<telephone number>>

Agent: What is the name of the owner?

Customer: <<name>>

Agent: ... or post paid brother

Customer: I have paid the first installment at the sales office and they informed me that my mobile will be reactivated within one hour, but it was not reactivated

Agent: You have to visit the office once again because the reactivation should be executed there as your account is not shown in the system

Customer: I called them and they told me in one hour time but it had been thirteen hours and it is still not connected

Agent: the reactivation should be made by them and your account number did not appear ... once you paid they should reactivate your telephone ... go back to the office

Customer: Ok

Agent: The payment and account number were not displayed in the system; you have to visit the office once again

Customer: Today I passed by the sales office and they said that the service will be connected in one hour, up to now it is not yet connected

Agent: No, no you should return to the office, they know how to reactivate it ... they should have reactivated your mobile immediately after payment of the installment

Customer: The bill was 584SR and I paid 285SR and the balance remaining is 299, I request reactivation of my mobile

Agent: Yes you check with them, you have to return to the office, they should have reactivated your telephone, because this is their job

Customer: Thanks appreciated

Agent: Any other help?

Customer: May God bless you

Agent: Any other help?

**THE END**

---

<sup>1</sup> Pease be upon you

## Call Number (2)

Agent: <<name>> <sup>2</sup>Asalam 3alikoum

Customer: Good evening

Agent: Welcome

Customer: I want to disconnect the mobile which was stolen from a colleague.

Agent: <sup>3</sup>Sawa or postpaid?

Customer: Postpaid.

Agent: The owner of the mobile should call us

Customer: I am with you

Agent: <sup>4</sup>Samm

Customer: I am with you. I am calling for my colleague, his Jawal is stolen

Agent: Your colleague's' mobile is stolen?

Customer: His mobile is out of reach

Agent: Who is the owner of the mobile?

Customer: <<name of the owner>>

Agent: what is the number of the stolen telephone?

Customer: <<0123456789>>

Agent: What is the full name of the mobile owner?

Customer: <<name of the owner>>

Agent: What is the ID number please?

Customer: Just for a minute, record <<ID number>>

Agent: Is this your mobile?

Customer: This is <<name of his colleague>> Jawal

Agent: Where is <<name of the owner>>?

Customer: He is in town and his Jawal is out of reach

Agent: Ask him to call us from any other mobile

Customer: He called from <sup>5</sup>Sawa mobile and they told him to call from postpaid mobile because he called from Sawa line

Agent: Did he call?

Customer: He called from Sawa Jawal and they asked him to call from postpaid Jawal

---

<sup>2</sup> Peace be upon you

<sup>3</sup> prepaid

<sup>4</sup> Yes, Sir.

<sup>5</sup> prepaid

Agent: He does not have land line?

Customer: No he does not have land line. I am his colleague I may replace him

Agent: We have nothing to do with you; the owner of the telephone should call himself so we can disconnect it for him my brother

Customer: He has values in Al Jawal now

Agent: Ask him to call us from a land line to validate his data

Customer: My colleague cannot call because he is in an area not covered by the network

Agent: You do not have a problem, let him call us and we will do it for him<sup>6</sup>inshallah

Customer: Thank you

**THE END**

---

<sup>6</sup> God willing

### Call number (3)

Agent: Welcome, how can I help you?

Customer: How can I get the SMS chat number of Sheikh Al Maghamis, can I chat with him through Sawa service?

Agent: How?

Customer: Can I chat with him via Sawa service?

Agent: What do you mean y Sawa?

Customer: There is Al Sheikh's mobile service

Agent: Do you mean MMS?

Customer: Yes

Agent: You will access all through Sawa or post paid Jawal, sister. There is no problem even Sawa access it sister

Customer: How can I get the SMS chat number of Sheikh Al Maghamis?

Agent: One minute if you don't mind, let me check it out for you. Thank you, I apologize I could not obtain the number of Sheikh Al Maghamis.

Customer: Yes

Agent: Sorry, it is unavailable here

Customer: Can I get this number from other department of the company which may have it?

Agent: This service is unavailable

Customer: The services at this mobile can I get it from other services?

Agent: Of what, we have many services sister. There are lots of subscriptions

Customer: Mobile subscription..... this ..... when introduced

Agent: Yes but until now it has not arrived sister; we have many services but ..... is unavailable

Customer: Okay, can I get the number of Al Majd TV channel?

Agent: Al Majd?

Customer: Yes

Agent: One minute please, sorry even Al Majd TV channel is unavailable

Customer: Thank you

Agent: Thanks for calling

**THE END**

### Call number( 4)

Agent: <sup>7</sup>Asalam Alikoum (peace be upon you)

Customer: How are you my brother?

Agent: How can I help you?

Customer: I want to execute the call transfer via my mobile to the service of Mojoud extra

Agent: Yes, ...yes ... yes ,you have to cancel all the transfers through the mobile settings then transfer the call using this method (\*, 21, \*, 4000, #)

Customer: Do I receive messages or not?

Agent: God willing

Customer: First of all what to do my brother before I issue the sim?

Agent: Try all transfers via set up

Customer: Yes

Agent: After that you get the sim and put it back again

Customer: Ok what if the mobile is waiting and it says that it is closed if someone called you, what to do my brother? What to transfer it to?

Agent: Waiting service

Customer: So now I cancel waiting service and transfer calls in case of no answer or what? Or busy number

Agent: Voice calls?

Customer: Yes

Agent: The 4000 will be activated

Customer: All calls

Agent: Voice

Customer: As I like brother, at the time it is busy only

Agent: If it is busy another time, if it is busy

Customer: Yes ok thank you

Agent: Do you need any other service?

Customer: Thank you thank you

Agent: Thank you for calling

Customer: Yes, my brother,

Agent: Welcome

Customer: Brother, how can I utilize Qitaf Program points I already gained from my landline telephone and transfer them to my mobile telephone

---

<sup>7</sup> Peace be upon you

Agent: Yes you can benefit of them through AVR system by selecting option number 2

Customer: Okay, thank you

Agent: Do you need any other service?

Customer: Thank you

Agent: Ask whatever you like and we have the honor to help you

**THE END**

### Call number (5)

Agent: <<name>>, how can I help you?

Customer: Welcome, how are you?

Agent: Welcome, how can I help you?

Customer: How are you?

Agent: Welcome

Customer: I want to subscribe in the free internet through my mobile

Agent: Do you want to subscribe in free internet?

Customer: Yes

Agent: You have to send SMS from your mobile to the number 2000 and immediately it will be activated

Customer: Only that? The other time they activated it immediately

Agent: Excuse me

Customer: Two days ago I obtained the same service directly from the call center

Agent: Do you want the set ups?

Customer: Would you send me the set up please?

Agent: Okay, I will respond to your request and send you the setting directly. One moment please, what is the number of the mobile?

Customer: It is the one I am calling from

Agent: What is the type of the mobile?

Customer: N73

Agent: Moments please

Customer: God bless you

Agent: So you have N73 mobile?

Customer: N73

Agent: Moments please

Customer: God bless you

Agent: Thank you for waiting; now you will receive the message, do you need any other help?

Customer: Thanks for you

Agent: Please I will transfer you to the AVR so that you evaluate the standard of service provided to you

Customer: No problem thank you

Agent: Moments please

Customer: Ok

Agent: General evaluation is with you, thanks for calling it is my honor to serve  
you

**THE END**

## Call Number (6)

Agent: Asalam Alikoum

Customer: <sup>8</sup>Waalikoum Asalam good evening

Agent: God bless you

Customer: If I subscribed in Jawalnet and consumed the maximum allowed limit, are they going to issue me a bill for one extra megabyte or what? If I want to activate the subscription; shall I wait for one month?

Agent: Repeat the question, I did not understand.

Customer: Yes

Agent: If you subscribed today in one Giga package for thirty days and cancelled your subscription after ten days, you should wait for twenty days in order to subscribe again

Customer: You mean that I should wait for twenty days and cannot cancel the subscription before one month?

Agent: No you cannot cancel it ... I mean for example you have taken one Giga and it was for one month and you have consumed only ten days, they will pay back your money for the remaining twenty days. You could not subscribe once again before expiry of twenty days.

Customer: Do I have to wait 20 days? Cannot I cancel it and subscribe in the same month?

Agent: For example you got 1GB for 30 days, canceled it after 10 days you will have refund for the 20 days and the new subscription after 20 days

Customer: Okay, can I upgrade this package from one Gigabit

Agent: Only one Giga package and open subscription are available, there is no five Giga except in the post paid service

Customer: Thank you, God bless you

Agent: Okay, Thank you

**THE END**

---

<sup>8</sup> And upon you

## Call Number (7)

Agent: <<name>> peace be upon you, how can I help you?

Customer: Welcome brother?

Agent: Welcome

Customer: I have assigned one mobile to obtain the offered discount but I did not get any discount on that mobile .... I do not know the reason.

Agent: Okay, assigned or <sup>9</sup>(Esh loon) brother?

Customer: Yes assigned but there is no discount

Agent: The number you assigned to receive the discount may be wrong.

Customer: No, it is not wrong, it is not wrong

Agent: <sup>10</sup>Samm

Customer: It is not wrong

Agent: Okay, one moment till I make sure of the number, if you do not mind. Do you mean the mobile you are currently talking from, brother?

Customer: Yes

Agent: What is the number?

Customer: <<telephone number>>

Agent: Yes correct; this number is correct

Customer: I know that it is correct but why they did not give me the discount, why brother? When I call they charge me over 2SR per minute I do not know why brother

Agent: I found your complaint in the system but it was not replied so far.

Customer: Is it true that I have a pending complaint?

Agent: Yes, yes

Customer: God bless you, find me a solution to this problem because I am using the mobile but did not get any discount.

Agent: wait with us and everything will be all right, do you need any other service?

Customer: May God bless you

Agent: You too brother, thanks for calling

Customer: peace be upon you

Agent: you too

**THE END**

---

<sup>9</sup> Or what  
<sup>10</sup> Yes, Sir

### Call number (8)

Agent: <<name>> peace be upon you

Customer: God bless you

Agent: Welcome how can I help you?

Customer: I called one of the employees to activate the MMS service. He asked me to switch off my mobile so as to activate it and send me a message then it will be activated in my mobile. But the MMs service was inactive in my mobile so far

Agent: What is the type of your mobile?

Customer: N73

Agent: What, what?

Customer: N73

Agent: Okay brother, the setting will be sent to you

Customer: Now ... now?

Agent: Yes

Customer: If I received the setting, what shall I do next?

Agent: <sup>11</sup>Samm

Customer: When I receive it what to do with?

Agent: You will receive 2 messages; when you first receive them you save them  
God bless you, save them brother.

Customer: Yes

Agent: You may receive about two messages, the first one includes the pass word  
which you should insert in the second message and the service will be  
activated <sup>12</sup>Tal Omrak

Customer: What is the pass word?

Agent: <<12345>>

Customer: Same number for the 2 messages?

Agent: The first message includes the pass word and then you enter it in the second  
brother

Customer: The same pass word?

Agent: Yes all are <<12345>>

Customer: Yes

Agent: Brother, we are at your disposal

Customer: <sup>13</sup>Yatik Alafia

---

<sup>11</sup> Yes, Sir.

<sup>12</sup> Sir

Agent: Any other service?

Customer: <sup>14</sup>Tislam thanks

Agent: Thanks for calling; we are honored to serve you

**THE END**

---

<sup>13</sup> God bless you  
<sup>14</sup> God save you

**Call number (9)**

Agent: <<name>> peace be upon you, how can I help you?

Customer: Peace and blessing of God be upon you

Agent: Welcome

Customer: Brother, the mobile bill amount is 1200 Riyals, when I went to pay through the ATM in the bank ...

Agent: Yes ... yes ... yes

Customer: when I went to the bank to pay the 1200 Riyals I saw on the screen of the ATM that the due amount was 1500 Riyals, but I have paid 120 Riyals and ask you to activate it brother.

Agent: What did the ATM screen display to you?

Customer: The screen displayed 1500 Riyals

Agent: What is the mobile number?

Customer: one moment brother, the number is <<mobile number>>

Agent: You have paid 1200 Riyals and the bill amount was 1570 Riyals

Customer: One week ago it was 1200 Riyals ... how come it has become 1570 Riyals within one week? Is it possible to activate it now brother?

Agent: Don't worry, we shall activate it

Customer: Thank you 1500 is not the balance

Agent: The bill amount yes; you have remaining 370

Customer: 370?

Agent: Yes

Customer: When will it be activated?

Agent: Moments and we shall activate it

Customer: God bless you brother

Agent: Do you need any other service?

Customer: thanks, God bless you

Agent: May God bless

**THE END**

**Call number (10)**

Agent: <<name>>, peace be upon you

Customer: Peace be upon you, good evening

Agent: Good and pleasant evening how can I help you?

Customer: God bless you, is there a pass word?

Agent: Yes

Customer: Is the mobile of mine has a pass word?

Agent: A pass word of what?

Customer: For the MMS and I do not know what is it?

Agent: 927 for the MMS setting

Customer: Yes, yes

Agent: Is it the setting of multimedia?

Customer: I did it long time ago

Agent: What program? What to do with MMS setting?

Customer: I want the pass word ... is there a pass word to enter the program?

Agent: What program?

Customer: MMS program of the multimedia

Agent: 927

Customer: What, what?

Agent: MMS setting

Customer: I mean I want to open my MMS through my computer

Agent: you mean you have received a message in your mobile and you want to see it on the MMS site?

Customer: Yes, yes

Agent: The pass word comes in the message that you are going to receive; it will not appear to me in the call center

Customer: The same message?

Agent: You will receive letters or numbers in the same message that will be sent to your mobile ... then enter it in the website

Customer: I put letters from the same message that was not shown?

Agent: Yes

Customer: Thanks, God bless you

Agent: Thanks, do you need any other service?

Customer: Thanks, God bless you

Agent: I will transfer you to the call evaluation

Customer: Thank you

**THE END**

# **Customer Centricity at Saudi Telecommunication Company (STC)**

## **An Investigation of User Perspectives on Customer Centricity At Saudi Telecom Call Center**

Document Four

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April, 2009

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## **1 Introduction**

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This document is aimed to explore an area of research, namely the level of customer centricity awareness at Saudi Telecom Company (STC) call center and gauge the skills of agents and supervisors in this concept, which is of interest to the researcher and which will benefit or interest all or some of the following parties:

- The researcher as a practicing professional
- The organization (STC) and managers
- The professional associations, trainers and developers
- Service companies that aim to enhance their customer experience capabilities delivered to the customers
- The academic communities

A number of specific research questions relevant to the general field of the research were identified and explored within section two of this document. These questions were and still currently perceived by the researcher as capable of sustaining research effort over significant period of the DBA program.

Discussions of the various academic fields appropriate to the research questions are outlined for the reader via a reasoned selection from this range of fields. A brief discussion of literature review of the main concepts of customer centricity, call center management and performance, and customer satisfaction is provided, leading to a set of working definitions of the key concepts to be adopted by the researcher.

A description of the organizational and managerial context of the research is provided as an introduction of the research questions and its foundation in the organizational life. This discussion is intended to highlight the importance of the research questions.

A broad research methodology is then described in chapter three. This chapter will discuss the research method applied to data; the methodology is influenced by both positivist and phenomenological approaches and includes quantitative approach to data collection and analysis. However, a quantitative customer experience method to investigate the research questions has been adopted and going to be discussed in detail.

The research plan includes the adoption of customer centric model through a frame work that is used called customer experience check list shown in table 1, which consists of

fourteen criteria that an agent's call should be evaluated upon. The supervisors' analysis and ratings of the pre-recorded calls between the agents of the call center and the customers are used. The sample construction and size are outlined for the reader in order to contextualize and conceptualize the entirety of the project. It is envisaged that this foundation of knowledge will enable the reader to analyze the research findings to optimum level and thereby unique the research design and implementation.

Section 3.3 provides a discussion of the design and implementation of the research instruments, structure of the research and assumptions.

The findings of the research are made clear in chapter four along with the description of the analytical technique applied to the raw data. The findings are analyzed in light of the working hypothesis and null – hypothesis, leading to a conclusive description of the outcomes at both personnel and organizational levels. These conclusions and further developed recommendations are proposed in the final section.

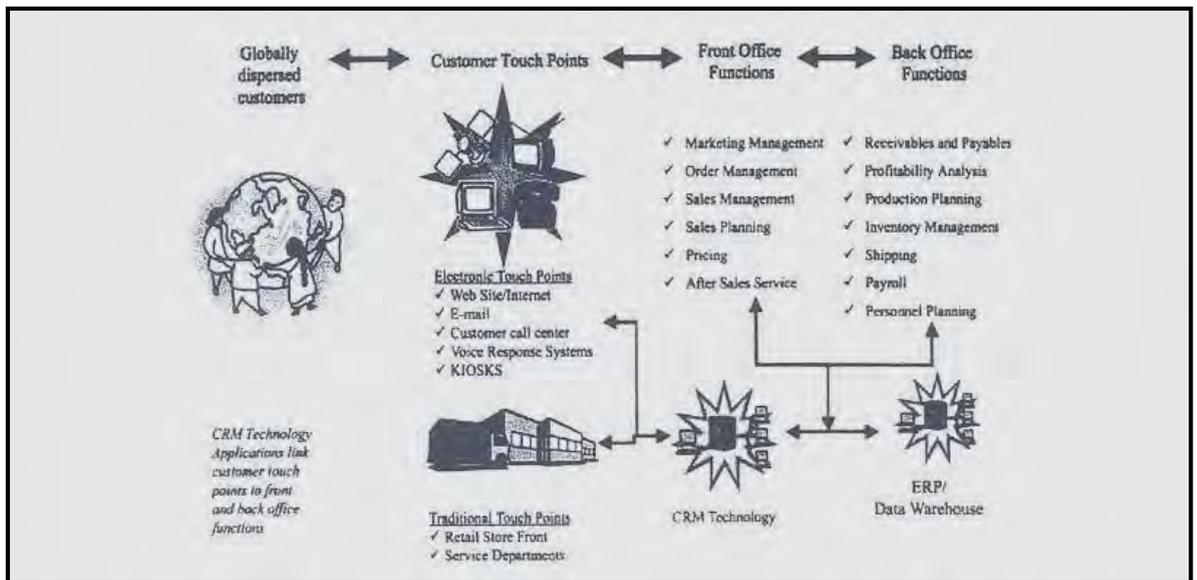
On a personal level, this piece of research has been undertaken with the desire to achieve the following objectives:

- To understand the relationship between theory and practice.
- To be able to understand and deal with the organizational change and ambiguity.
- To be able to develop communication tools that enable for effective communication with both the academic and organization communities and to act as interpreter between the two.
- To understand the actual situation of the level of the organization's staff through analyzing the pre-recorded calls using quantitative analysis.
- To develop critical, argumentative and phonetic skills.
- To practice writing in a scholarly manner appropriate to doctoral level.

### **1.1 Call center definition**

The Call Center Association (1999) defines a call center as "a physical or virtual operation within an organization in which a managed group of people spend most of their time doing business by telephone, usually working in a computer-automated environment".

Taylor and Brain (1991) defined the concept of call centers with three essential elements. First, the call center is dedicated operation with employees focused entirely on the customer service function. Second, those employees are using telephones and computers simultaneously and, third, the calls are processed and controlled by an automatic distribution system. The definition can be applied to a call center where relatively low skilled and low paid service workers are responding to customers' requests within a tightly controlled, heavily monitored and time-restricted system. In contrast, the definition can also apply to a call center where highly skilled, highly paid knowledge workers respond to calls from business customers about online service arrangements. STC Broadband Call Center Support is a good example of the call centers which need staff with skills higher than that of other call centers' staff. Despite the differences, both these types of call centers are fundamentally characterized by the integration of telephone and computer technologies, and one of each forms the basis of the data for study. One of the major elements within modern Customer Relation Management (CRM) concepts is call or communication centers that in many companies consolidate the communication channels phone, fax and email serving a geographically dispersed client base as shown in figure (1).



**Figure (1): Customer touch point and front and back office relationship**

In some organizations, Customer Relation Management (CRM) is simply a technology solution that extends separate databases and sales force automation tools to bridge sales and marketing functions in order to improve targeting efforts. Other organizations consider CRM as a tool specifically designed for one-to-one customer communications, a sole

responsibility of sales/services, call centers, or marketing department (Peppers and Rogers, 1993).

“CRM is about managing customer knowledge to better understand as serve them. It is an umbrella concept that places the customer at the center of an organization. Customer service is an important component of CRM, however, CRM also concerned with coordinating customer relation across all business functions, points of interaction, and audience.” (Bose, R., 2002)

CRM is an enterprise wide mindset, mantra and set of business processes and policies that are designed to acquire, retain and service customers. CRM in not a technology, through technology is a CRM enabler.

According to Waite (2001) strategically, the call center is the point of entry for most customer communication. This is where a customer can make an inquiry or contact and expect a meaningful response. The processes, technology and people with the skill, training and motivation, all exist to serve this relationship. Once available to do business, a company establishes and advertises an entry point where an inquiry from a prospect or customer can expected to be answered. Through the telephone it can be either by a response via a toll-free number (a call not charged to the customer) or an outbound telephone solicitation (where the company representative calls a customer or prospect).

As communication networks provide instant links to corporate and customer locations around the globe, companies, both large and small, are looking at new business considerations and geographical areas when setting up their operations (DeLottinville, 1994). Read (2005) explains, the call center industry is changing rapidly. In the digital economy the customers expect quick, efficient service whether they request a call back or dial a customer service representative. Today it is rare to find an industry that does not require a call center. In the past many dot com companies have neglected to establish brick and mortar call centers which resulted in lost sales and frustrated customers. As a result companies started to offer toll-free customer service numbers and if the company has not built its own call center, they have outsourced this function to third parties. Waite (2001) also explains that the world has entered a sea change in connection technology that is bringing a shift from separate telephone, data networks and address identification for physical delivery, to telephony and data converging into a single Internet protocol-based voice and data network, broadly described as the Internet. As Bennington, Cummane and Conn (2000) state the usage of new technologies facilities greater effectiveness and efficiency, more customers can be serviced at any one point in time. Customers can dial a

call center and ask about a product's features and price. If it is an existing customer one might want to check the account status or if the product does not work one can demand it to be fixed or replaced. The call center agent who takes the call may be hundreds of miles away, perhaps even in another country or continent. A call center can connect to wherever there are high-capacity phone lines. Today's technology lets agents sound so close, as if they are right next door.

## **1.2 Call centers overview**

Call centers have become a growth industry in the private and public sectors over the last decade (Creagh, 1998; Gilmore and Moreland, 2000). While call centers were almost unknown at the beginning of the 1990s, by 1998 there were estimated to be around 12,000 call centers in Europe, hosting around half a million agent positions (Richardson *et al.* 2000). A UK article cites that the call center industry is growing at 50% per year (Crome, 1998).

Due to their size, and the complexity of tasks undertaken within call centers (Gilmore and Moreland, 2000), there is a growing need for empirical findings to understand how to best utilize call centers from a management, employee and customer perspective (Feinberg *et al.* 2000). Studies on call centers have mainly been done in the United States and United Kingdom, exploring the quality of customer experience provided by call centers as well as customer satisfaction (Gilmore and Moreland, 2000; Tax *et al.* 1998).

Typically, teleservice operations are concentrating in call centers to save on costs (Richardson *et al.* 2000). By centralizing telephony operations, property requirements can be reduced and space in existing buildings can be utilized more effectively. Technologies are better utilized through centralization of a larger operation e.g. automated call distribution. Supervisory needs are reduced as monitoring is provided by the system. It is the cost of labor, however, that benefits the most by concentrating people at one site and increasing output (Richardson & Marshall, 1999; Richardson *et al.*, 2000).

All businesses are interested in providing information and assistance to existing and prospective customers. In recent years, the decreased costs of telecommunications and information technology have made it increasingly economical to consolidate such information delivery functions, which have led to the emergence of groups that specialize in handling customer phone calls. For the vast majority of these groups, their primary function is to receive telephone calls that have been initiated by customers. Such operations are known as "inbound" call centers.

Call centers are very labor-intensive operations, with the cost of staff members who handle phone calls (also known as "agents") typically comprising 60 – 80% of the overall operating budget. Inbound call centers may be physically housed across several different locations, time zones, and/or countries.

Inbound call centers make up a large and growing part of the global economy. While reliable industry statistics are notoriously hard to come by, the Incoming Call Management Institute (ICMI), a highly reputable industry association, regularly tracks published industry statistics from several sources. By the end of 2008, various studies cited by ICMI predict that:

- The United States will have over 47,000 call centers and 2.7 million agents.
- Europe, Middle East, and Africa together will have 45,000 call centers and 2.1 million agents.
- Canada and Latin America will have an estimated 305,500 and 730,000 agents respectively.

Meanwhile, the demand for call center agents in India has grown so fast that the labor supply has been unable to keep up with it: by 2009, the demand for agents in India is projected to be over one million, and more than 20% of those positions will be unfilled due to a shortage of available skilled labor.

When a customer calls a call center, various call handling and routing technologies will attempt to route the call to an available agent. However, there are often no agents available to immediately answer the phone call, in which case the customer is typically put on hold and placed in a queue. The customer in turn may abandon the queue by hanging up, either immediately after being placed on hold or after waiting for some amount of time without receiving service. Once connected to an agent, a customer will speak with that agent for some random time after which either the call will be completed or the customer will be "handed off" to another agent or queue for further assistance. The quality of the service is typically viewed as a function of both how long the customer must wait to receive service and the value that the customer attributes to the information and service that is received.

Call center managers are increasingly expected to deliver both low operating costs and high service quality. To meet these potentially conflicting objectives, call center managers are challenged with deploying the right number of staff members with the right skills to the right schedules in order to meet an uncertain, time-varying demand for service. Traditionally, meeting this challenge has required call center managers to struggle with

classical operations management decisions about forecasting traffic, acquiring capacity, deploying resources, and managing service delivery.

Given the size of the call center industry and the complexity associated with its operations, call centers have emerged as fertile ground for academic research. A recent survey paper (Gans, Koole, and Mandbelbaum, 2003) cites 164 papers associated with call center-related problems, and an expanded on-line bibliography (Mandbelbaum, 2004) includes over 450 papers along with dozens of case studies and books.

In recent years, the call center landscape has been altered by a wide variety of managerial and technological advances. Reduced information technology and telecommunications costs – the same forces that have contributed significantly to the growth of the call center industry – have also led to rapid disaggregation of information-intensive activities (Apte and Mason, 1995). For call centers, this has translated into increased contracting of call center services to third parties (commonly referred to as "outsourcing") and the dispersion of service delivery to locations across the globe ("off shoring"). In addition, advances in telecommunications technologies have enabled richer call center workflow, including increasingly intelligent routing of calls across agents and physical sites, automated interaction with customers while on hold, and call messaging that results in automatic callbacks to customers once an agent is available.

Also, as call centers now serve as the "public face" for many firms, there is increasing executive consideration of their vital role in customer acquisition and retention. Similarly, the managerial awareness of call centers' potential to generate significant incremental revenue by augmenting service encounters with potential sales opportunities has also been growing rapidly: for example, a recent McKinsey study revealed that credit card companies generate up to 25% of new revenue from inbound call centers (Eichfeld *et al.* 2006). However, for call center managers, there is significant additional complexity associated with managing this dual service-and-sales role without compromising response times, service quality, and customer satisfaction.

Finally, every call center manager is acutely aware that phone conversations between customers and agents are interactions between human beings. This suggests that the psychological issues associated with the agents' experience can have a major impact on both customer satisfaction and overall system performance.

### **1.3 The role of the researcher at STC**

Service companies especially telecommunication operators compete to acquire customers' satisfaction and loyalty. To win this battle they restructure their organizational structures, operations and work practices and procedures not only to meet their customer requirements and needs but to exceed their expectations. To achieve this goal companies should transform from product centric organizations to customer centric ones to ensure that all their activities are focused on customers and that their services meet and exceed customer expectations.

Saudi Telecom Company (STC), since its privatization nine years ago is striving to gradually transform from a product focus to a customer focus organization. It is known that transformation to customer centricity requires very long time, huge effort, and a competent leadership that develop a suitable and effective plan for each phase in order to reach the targeted goal.

STC has formed a steering committee to supervise its plan to transform to a customer focus organization; the researcher was a member of that committee and head of the culture change and transformation team. The company has completed many phases of the approved plan and achieved good results in the different sectors and services particularly the front line employees who received extensive training to develop their customer focus skills and the ideal method of treating STC customers, solving their problems and fulfilling the company's obligations.

The aim of the customer centricity program at Saudi Telecom is to create a customer centric culture among its employees and direct all the processes and procedures within the company towards customers' needs and wants. The customer centricity steering committee identified the strategic goals of the committee in three main objectives:

- Increase loyalty among STC customers and reduce the customer churn.
- Create state of the art customer management systems that are based on customer and market needs.
- Build a capable work force within the company who cares for and serves its customers with the best way through proper training and clear processes that concentrate on customer needs and wants.

The customer centricity program at STC is built upon a set of specially created learning materials for the employees such as front line ones who took great part of the effort and concentration. The learning material comprises of workshops, video and audio tapes, and mystery shopper exercises focusing on how to serve the customers with the best way and make them delighted of the services of STC.

Five years ago the researcher participated in the main committee as one of the key and active members. At that time the researcher had no experience of customer centricity. However, by reading a text written on the topic the researcher was able to develop theoretical knowledge base of the concept and the impact on organization. In addition, the researcher attended several workshops and seminars outside Saudi Arabia that covered the topic of customer centricity. He shared experience with some of the attendees and looked at their experience in this field. This knowledge, coupled with personal observations and readings, enabled the implementation of this research without great difficulty. The use of call centers' supervisors to analyze the pre-recorded calls of the front line employees with STC customers facilitated to the researcher the implementation of the research process as well as understanding the actual world of the sample under the study.

The experience and knowledge the researcher acquired when he was heading the STC culture change team work, being the first customer centricity program in the company, coupled with the significant results and good reputation he acquired have played a great role in attracting many companies in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to benefit of this experience. Accordingly the researcher responded to several invitations and given lectures on customer centricity at STC in many firms such as, Saudi Electricity Company, Saudi Water Company and exhibited his experience in this field and the successes achieved in STC. The customer centricity program at STC is considered the first program applied in Saudi Arabia following proper and ideal preparation. The researcher provided several advices to some service establishments in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia that are dealing with customers and intending to utilize the experience of STC and implement its customer centricity model taking into consideration the local social environment, customs, and traditions.

#### **1.4 Nature of the Problem**

Companies that work in a competitive market are clearly aware of the growing importance of customer centricity as a mean of differentiating themselves. Many companies have been

losing the battle with customer centricity for quite some time (Archrol & Stern, 1988). Because of this it has become increasingly significant for businesses to figure out how to keep customers happy and interested in doing business with them and how to keep loyalty at higher level. Many businesses spend great deal of funds each year not only to sell their services and products but to insure that those customers will come back, the reason that so much funds has to be spent on this is because customers are becoming increasingly more aware of scams and difficulties with businesses and they are much better educated now (Jackson *et al.* 1988).

Specifically the problem at Saudi Telecom company (STC) deals with the quality of services delivered to customers through front line employees such as call centers. The degree of customer satisfaction was recognized by STC management through periodical reports attesting to the quality of customer services encountered at STC touch points. The management of the company has decided to raise the level of customer centricity awareness across all company sectors especially among the front line employees. They brought companies specialized in this field and designed a comprehensive program that assures the implementation of such an aspiration. The customer centricity program has started four years ago and notable achievements have been seen by STC customers especially with call center agents as well as sales outlets.

The researcher has defined customer centricity in document two as "aligning the resources of your organization to effectively respond to however changing needs of the customers while building mutually profitable relationship" (Bailey, 2006). It is therefore a tool for organizational development via workforce development. Rackham *et al.* (1971) stated that one of the main reasons that business feels that customer centricity is so significant is due to the fact that maintaining a relationship with the customers that they already have is often a great deal cheaper than acquiring more customers. Many companies find that losing the customer that they have and the customers that are most profitable have very serious effects on their profitability. For example, many banks find that the top 30 percent of the customers that they have make up 100 to 150 percent of the total amount of profitability that they have (Zeithamal *et al.* 1990).

Customer centric organization trains each employee to treat each customer differently based on his wants and needs and communicates directly to the customer service staff that they must strive to become with the company's customers as if they are their personal

trusted advisors or the like, which can result in a successful creation of customer centric culture within the front line employees of the company. Rance (2007) added that organization that strives to become a customer centric organization should let the customer say what he buys, how it is designed, configured and packaged even how much he pays and when he pays.

The STC call center is an area where exceptional customer impression should be created to reflect the credibility and reputation of the company. Employees of call centers as well as their supervisors should be the key players in the delivery of STC services with warm and welcoming behaviors and attitudes to captivate customer's interest to enhance the desire to continue using STC services and create a positive word of mouth of these services delivered to them. Customer who calls STC call center and comes in contact with the employees of the call center should be able to develop feelings that this is an organization that treats customer with care and respect. However, this was not the case at STC call center. Being one of the higher management at STC my discussions with some selected managers and supervisors of call centers showed that repeated calls of the same customer have increased and customer recorded calls show some dissatisfaction of the services delivered by some staff at the call center.

The call center at STC is responsible for the delivery of appropriate and accurate service to first time customers seeking to get a new service and/or support of the existing services. However, as was noted from the researcher's view as one of the management in the company and the discussions with some supervisors and agents during the researcher's visits to the call centers and listening to some calls, the STC management was concerned with the lack of customer focus culture or customer centricity awareness among the front line agents which may result in poor customer service to STC clients. The management was concerned with the poor communication, inept behavior, and uncooperative attitude shown by the front line employees at the call center. There were barriers to the delivery of exceptional customer service.

The target population of this research was a group of pre-recorded call center calls. The population consists of 125 pre-recorded customers' calls with the call center agents. The researcher's role in this as one of the management of the company is to make frequent daily communication with customer service department members at the call center, call center site visits, program information and overall management concerns. The higher

management of the company gave the researcher full support for the development of the project and agreed to enable and affect the outcomes of a successful study.

### **1.5 The purpose of the study**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the level of customer centricity awareness among STC call center agents as well as the supervisors and develop a comprehensive plan and recommendations to improve the quality and skills of the agents and their supervisors by focusing on understanding and analyzing the relationship between the agents, supervisors and the customers through usage of the pre-recorded calls of previous interactions and services delivered.

By treating employees like valued customers, company leaders model their expectations for how employees should treat customers. Call center agents become collaborators in the development of new products and services and in the implementation of new technology. Employees' satisfaction is considered as important as customer satisfaction (APQC, 2001).

The quality of customer service extended to the public is representative of the organization's integrity and validity. The quantity of service as well as the quality of service should reflect the organization's values. The organizational values include care and commitment to the targeted customers in the delivery of telecom services as an example. Employees of the front line must show respect to the customer and what is the better way to do this, but must also treat all customers with respect. In molding behavior and attitudes, our culture and traditions teach that visitors to our home must be served with the best available to offer with care, respect, honesty and warmth. It is not the way the visitor came in the first place, but it is how the visitor felt on leaving. The impression should be a lasting one that will encourage and motivate the visitor to want to return for more of the same courteous treatment or generous service.

The objective of the STC call center department and its managers should be concentrated on developing a customer focused culture that would establish behaviors, attitudes, performance and expectation representative of the customer centric culture and values of the organization. When the call center managers stress the importance of customer service and practice what they preach, it permeates the organization and translates into operational programs. However, call center management alone cannot accomplish this commitment of

excellent customer service. It will take highly motivated and trained front line employees to deliver exceptional service and deliver positive customer experience (Bell, 2001).

Customer dialogue requires information exchange by both parties in the communicative process and it is the mean by which we know what the customer wants and needs. The communication process between the service provider and the customer can improve service quality especially when effective two-way interactions exist between the two parties. Ineffective communication between customers and the agents creates confusion, mistrust and inconsistency and reflects on overall service performance of the company. Poorly informed or misinformed employees may perform their jobs inadequately, affecting customer's service (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

### **1.6 The research questions**

The answers to several questions were important to envisage and improve the customer centricity among STC employees especially at the front line. Many of the pragmatic questions surrounding customer centricity at STC have or already being addressed, such as to what extent are the STC call center's agents and supervisors customer centric? How do STC call center agents treat STC customers during the calls? Do STC agents and supervisors possess an adequate knowledge of STC products and services?

The research topic, currently lends itself to a mixture of empirical, normative and conceptual type questions. It is hoped that these questions will become more focus as the entire DBA research plans unfolds.

- What should we do to help STC become a customer centric entity?
- To what extent are STC's call centers' agents customer centric?
- How do STC call center agents treat their customers during the calls and what is the level of customer experience delivered?
- Do STC call center agents possess an adequate knowledge of STC products and services?
- To what extent are STC's call centers' supervisors customers centric?
- Are STC call center supervisors capable of coaching, managing and enhancing the customer centricity awareness of their subordinates?

The researcher will address one major aspect of these questions within this document via a piece of structured quantitative analysis – based research, but before doing so will outline the conceptual framework and the general theory drawn from this.

The research is placed mainly within the quantitative research paradigm. As customer centricity concept is a phenomenological, the analysis of the pre-recorded calls between the agents and the customers will be exploration and insight rather than experiment.

As a researcher, a reflective position will be required through logical analysis of the agents' pre-recorded calls and according to a predetermined practice and table to show the most important factors that should be addressed and evaluated which represent a key part of the customer centricity culture for any company. The model used for customer centricity will be discussed in more detail in the following section of this document. Using the call center supervisors' evaluation of the pre-recorded calls handled by the agents in this document is adequate to the nature, the need based upon it and the deductive method we need to reach our final objective.

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## **2 Literature Review**

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This section will shed the light and give an overview of literature and models that are related to the research problem presented in the previous sections. This section will introduce the concept of customer centricity at call centers, call center performance and quality assurance, and the concept of customer satisfaction.

This section will explain the direct relation between the call centers that apply customer centric concept and the call center performance and quality of service delivered by the agents and to what extent it enables the organization to acquire satisfaction of its customers, increase their loyalty and retain them for long time with the company without churning to other competitors.

The more the call centers are customer centric in its operations, processes and staff the better the performance of these call centers and of course the company's customers are more satisfied and loyal.

The more the company concentrates on the heart of operational and marketing processes and activities the better it understands its customers' requirements and needs and become

in a good position to meet these requirements and exceed them which will be reflected in its performance and lead to achievement of its quality standards and acquirement of customers' satisfaction and loyalty.

## **2.1 Conceptual framework**

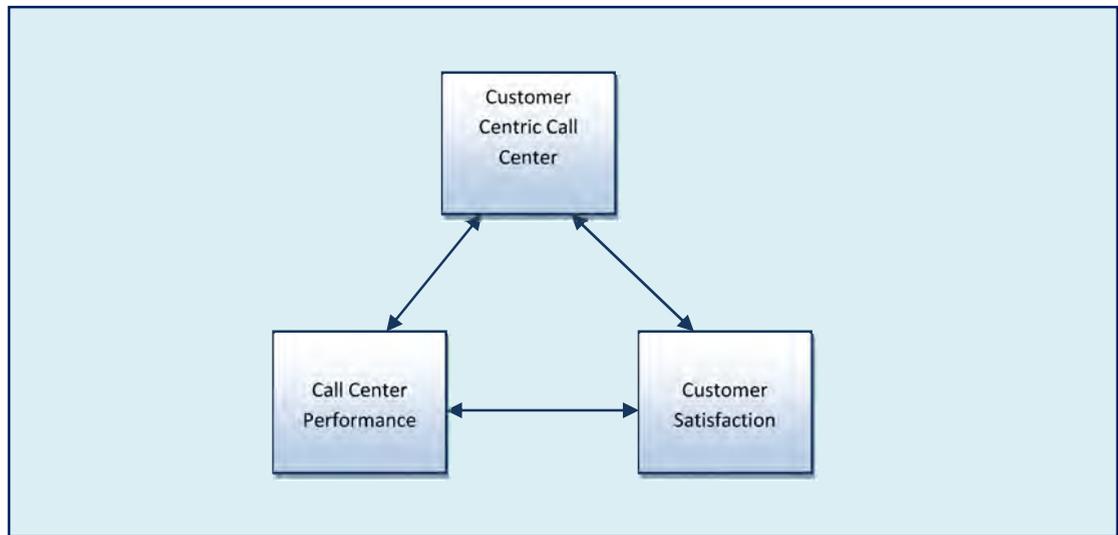
In most organizations, the call centers are the logical starting point for customer focused initiatives. They simultaneously provide a unique environment of control while also providing significant and meaningful base of customers who represent a full spectrum of needs and interactions. The call center often manages its interactions from the start to finish. The call center is also a data intensive environment, where most interaction attributes can be tracked and monitored in a controlled fashion. In this sense companies should look to the call center as an important step for customer centric initiatives. Companies can start customer centricity programs for their staff at call center and test them, fine-tune them, quantify their benefits and make cases for their wide-spread adoption throughout the organization.

Smart companies want to build strong customer base of loyal customers who are also advocates for the company. In order to drive competitive differentiation, companies must better integrate and align the way they treat customers at call centers as well as other touch points. Achieving this is a continual uphill battle as competitors increasingly raise the stakes customers' demands and expectations continue to rise largely through their experiences with a vast commercial world – but also through unrepentant brand marketing and well publicized customer focus programs. Given the vast number of experiences companies have to manage over channels, employees and vast customer basis, the key challenge is to create the right customer experience at the right time in real life operational model such as contact centers which considered to be one of the most important touch points at service organizations.

The researcher will discuss in this section the key concepts that he considers of great importance and establish a solid base of this document from which he will start. The researcher will explain these concepts in detail such as, customer centric call centers and its importance in enhancing performance and quality of services delivered by the call centers. The researcher will explain customer performance and quality assurance and its important role in enhancing call center activities and performance. Then the researcher will

discuss the importance of customer satisfaction and its impact on the organization, and its staff as well as the relation between these three concepts.

Figure (1.1) shows the three concepts and the relationship between them as they influence each other namely, customer centric call centers, call centers performance, and customer satisfaction.



**Figure (1.1) Conceptual Framework**

### ***2.1.1 Customer centricity and loyalty***

Literature on this kind of topic is significant, for reviewing it can give a good idea of everything that has taken place. It becomes necessary to see what has been addressed in the past so that a much more accurate picture of the present day and the future can be completed by the researcher. In order to do this properly, customer retention information must be discussed and examined so that it can be shown whether customer centricity has been the focus of business for some time, and whether it has been addressed correctly. If the retention of customers has not been the focus of a specific business, this could be why they are struggling with customer centricity now. Therefore, what researchers have to say on this specific issue is significant and must be examined. This will also allow for a much better idea of what should be studied in the future.

Unfortunately, the majority of the funds that is being spent by businesses is spent only to bring customers to the business and is not spent on keeping them. Because of this, a lot of customers will do business with a specific company but then they will not remain to continue this business relationship once that specific transaction is done. Now that this has

really come to light in recent years, more and more businesses are realizing that what it takes to keep customers is much different and more significant than what it takes to first get customers into a business (Jackson *et al.* 1988).

Jackson *et al.* (1988) added "because of this, businesses have to change the way that they look at customers and the retention strategies that they employ to keep them. There are customer centricity strategies that are largely used in any service industry. Some places offer coupons in an attempt to bring people into their business but then offer to give them discounts if they continue to utilize their services. Most airlines offer frequent-flier mileage programs where people who remain loyal to that airline can receive free or discounted trips. Some through the mail music businesses offer discounts depending upon the amount of music that is bought".

One of the things that most people learn in marketing is that it is often easier to get an individual to try a good or service from a specific company than it is to get them to continue to buy from that company. It is much harder to keep customers than it is to get them in the first place, and therefore it seems that more funds should be spent on retaining customers rather than getting customers to come to the business the first time (Jackson *et al.* 1988).

It appears that this would be a good way to build profitable and growing business, but many businesses seem to turn away from this idea or not realize its importance. Having customer service at call centers that is higher than the standard is one of the ways that people can be brought into a business and retained with the same company, but this customer service delivered through the call centers must grow into a bond between the customer and the business. This bond is called loyalty and it must be on the part of both the customer or customers and the business alike (Jackson *et al.* 1988).

Unfortunately in today's society there is so much going on and so many options to choose from that loyalty often appears to be a fleeting idea. There is no blind loyalty in any type of industry anymore and many customers no longer buy something simply because they have bought it there before or because it is a specific brand name. Customers today are much more educated and keep their eyes open for better deals. This is good for customers because competitors realize that they have to provide a better deal and do more for the customers that they have in order to keep them from going elsewhere.

Jackson *et al.* (1988) stated that most customers have come to expect excellent service at touch points such as call centers and since they feel that this excellent service is something that they should, by rights, be receiving they often do not see it as anything extraordinary. In the long run, excellent customer service touch point must be maintained but it will not necessarily keep customers. The only way to really win at the game of customer centricity is to enhance the loyalty that customers have to the business and how much profit for the business each customer provides while insuring that the service remains extremely high.

Customer loyalty is generally thought to be achieved when customers return to buy something that they have bought before from the same company. There are many other ways to measure loyalty statistically, but it basically boils down to a customer returning or/and continuing to a business even though there are so many other choices available (Jackson *et al.* 1988).

There are many ways to increase customer loyalty and it is significant to discuss some of them here. One of the best ways is to meet or exceed many of the service standards that others in the industry have established for customers. This is often a difficult thing to do but it is necessary if loyalty is to be kept (Rackham *et al.* 1971).

Customers who feel they can contact the call center and discuss and solve problems that they are having are more likely to remain with that business because they feel that they are actually cared about by the people that work there. It is also significant to look at customer value and customer satisfaction.

Saving profitable customers is not the only reason that customer centricity programs are so significant. They also allow business to collect a great deal of information about the customers that they collect through customers' contacts to the call centers. By using this data, businesses can better market to, target, communicate with, and understand the customers that they have and they can help to customize some of the future interactions that they have with these customers in such a way that the customer will feel more comfortable. Retention programs are often relatively inexpensive and make customers feel special and significant (Rackham *et al.* 1971).

In turn, this increases the buys that customer makes at the sale office and also helps the customer to recommend the company's service to others. Rackham *et al.* (1971) stated that many people look at customer centricity programs as being synonymous with customer

relationship management, but this is not the case. Williams *et al* (1990) showed that there are several types of customer centricity programs that are utilized by different businesses. One of these is the discount program where customers receive a discount because they have repeatedly bought from that store.

The customer centricity programs do have expense and difficulties, however some of the retention programs can be very expensive and often they offer discounts or rewards to customers who would have bought the product anyway even if they did not receive an incentive. (Williams *et al.* 1990) presented that over 87 percent of customers surveyed in one specific study indicated that they would have bought goods or services from a specific company even if they did not receive an intensive for doing so. Regardless of the benefits and the costs that come with the customer centricity strategy, the largest problem with retention programs is that they do not have enough directions.

Williams *et al.* (1990) revealed that there are typically four specific areas that need to be examined in order to help businesses improve the focus that they have on the customer and better enhance the customer centricity standards of their staff. The four areas are:

- The way that the organization thinks about customers and whether the success of the specific organization is centered on customers or has some other focus.
- The way that the organization works and whether its processes are designed to be centered around the customer.
- The way that a specific organization is structured and whether the form that the firm has taken actually follows the function to meet the needs of the customer.
- How the culture of the organization actually manifests itself and whether everyone who works with the firm listens to, thinks about, and responds appropriately to customers that the firm already has.

There are ways to overcome these hurdles but they must be recognized before they can be overcome and then they must be studied in order to assure that the difficulties that are being faced in a specific company are corrected so that customers become the main focus. Direct intervention is one way to improve the rate of customer centricity. It wasn't until 1990 that customer centricity and the significance of it were first quantified. A study was done then that indicated that the profits made in service industries were largely increased

in proportion to the length of time that a customer had been in a relationship with the company (Williams *et al.* 1990).

There is a strong link between customer centricity and customer loyalty that has been cited by many researchers. Williams *et al.* (1990) stated that there are six factors that are specific to improving the retention of customers and are often seen as imperative. These include:

- A commitment by the senior management.
- A culture in which all managers and employees focus all of the attention that they have on customer satisfaction.
- Information systems that deal with retention and analyze and track the reasons that people leave.
- Empowerment of various employees on the front lines such as call centers to take actions that are necessary to provide satisfaction for the customer and adopt first call resolution concept.
- A continuous program of development and training for the front line employees at call centers.
- Incentive systems for employees that are based on how many customers are retained.

One of the significant issues for customer centricity is that those who work at the front line in service to others should be empowered so that they are able to find effective and creative ways to solve customer problems without having to bring management into it all of the time. This issue will be shown later on this document through the survey conducted by the researcher. If personnel who work on the front lines are not informed about the performance of the organization and do not have problem solving skills and other basic knowledge they will not be able to do all that they can for customers (Bowen and Lawler, 1992). Allowing call center employees the power to do more and rewarding them based on the performance that they show can take customers who are potentially very angry and upset and turn them into customers who are loyal to the company.

It is significant to remember when looking at customer centricity that people seldom stop patronizing a business simply because of ordinary interactions that they deal with when they shop there but instead because of the failure of the specific organization to handle situations that could be potentially problematic to the satisfaction of the customer.

Personnel who come into contact with customers need to be able to think for themselves, take responsibility for their actions, and respond well to the pressure that often comes from customers who are angry or upset (Bowen and Lawler, 1992).

In order to keep customer centricity at a high level all people in the business should have training and support in empowerment, performance management, team building, coaching, and communication. This is especially significant for those who work on the front lines, but also significant for their managers as well. Bowen and Lawler (1992) added that businesses that work toward these policies and utilize these types of attitude have higher customer centricity and higher profit margins. They also get an added benefit in that they have an increase in the loyalty of their employees and a lower amount of job turnover.

In other words, if customers are happy with the way that they are treated they will return to the company. If employees are happy with the way that they are treated and the abilities that they have to solve problems and make others happy they will remain loyal to the specific store. For employees that are not able or not willing to perform service at the level that is desired there is a gap among what employees are providing to customers and what the customers feel that they need. This type is relatively common in service business because of many issues such as the control that a supervisor has over employees, the teamwork or lack of it in a specific organization, the perceived control issues that other have over employees, a bad fit between the job and technology available, conflicting roles for various employees, ambiguity of roles for various employees and a poor fit between an employee and a specific job (Bowen and Lawler, 1992).

The ambiguity in a specific role is significant because employees are often very uncertain about what is expected from them and how they should go about satisfying those expectations. They also quite often lack the skills or the training that they need to provide a customer satisfaction at its highest level and they are often unaware of the fact that their performance might not only be evaluated but also rewarded. In order to clarify the role that an employee has managers should utilize communication, competence, confidence, and feedback. Bowen and Lawler (1992) stated that when employees are given accurate information about the roles that they need to play and frequent and specific communication from their managers about what they are and not expected to do, they are much more interested in taking on the role they that have been assigned because it has been defined for them and more clearly understood. When they add to this current information about

services, products, and the expectations of the customers, they are able to do their job much more comfortably and efficiently.

### ***2.1.2 Call center performance and quality assurance***

The call center is an increasingly common and integrated part of the customer experience. Customer contact with most companies is conducted not through direct contact with the organization itself, but through call centers that are more often than not agencies which have been outsourced by the organization with which you have entered into a relationship. There are both positive and negative implications to this dynamic, both of which are directly related to the approach taken by the call center with respect to quality assurance, call respondent effectiveness, managerial oversight and overall performance evaluation success. With efficiency of a customer call center being the primary objective, the discussion in this document considers the shortcomings, opportunities and means to improvement for Saudi Telecom Company (STC) call center performance.

Today, the call center is impacted by a strange dynamic. As technologies allowing the handling of customers calls and technical assistance demands have improved, so too have many organizations de-emphasized the human aspects of the call center. This indicates that many such centers are simply missing the opportunities which are available to them for the integration of technological improvement with greater human relations approaches. To the point, Pietraszek (2006) stated that in recent years, key technologies such as voice recognition (VR), interactive voice response (IVR), call routing, customer information management, middleware connectivity, and workforce management have become more powerful and less expensive. Companies that invest in those technologies are seeing their operational expense fall down even as revenues grow. This is to suggest that there is a promising future for customer focus personnel due to these advances.

As this document will denote though, such promise is realized through effective and properly heeled management more than perhaps any other force. According to the Incoming Calls Management Institute, call center management is the key to driving a center to meet its demands effectively and enhance the customer experience delivered through the call center. The institute asserted that strong management with direct and instructive interaction with employees is necessary given the evaluative nature of the field. To the point, the Institute provides its definition of management within this specific context, telling that “incoming call center management is the art of having the right

number of well trained staff and supporting resources such as systems, processes and procedures in place at the right times to handle an accurately forecasted workload, at service level and with quality of customer experience.” (Cleveland and Mayben, 1997). This provides both a useful framework for managerial responsibilities and offers us a clear understanding for why direct managerial involvement with personnel and clear oversight of employee performance are necessary. As a field which is driven almost exclusively by human interaction, the degree to which human call center respondents are meeting expectations is something which falls to management to determine.

One of the most permeating challenges to effective management as well as to call center efficiency in a more general sense is that concerning the globalization of our economic and outsourcing to agencies with no geographical restrictions. To the point, today, we have seen and experienced the wholesale transfer for our customer service industry to fledgling globalizing economies such as that in India. Here, major computer retailers, cable company operators, wireless communication device providers and bank/credit cards merchants have attempted to maintain competitive advantages by commissioning outsourced call agents located in India. It their charge to replicate the experience of an American or European calling a support technician with an intimate relationship with the product in question. This is accomplished with, Friedman’s (2005) text reveals, intensive training in the adoption of linguistic, dialectic and etiquette-related behaviors designed to facilitate comfort for the callers.

Friedman (2005) indicates that “the Indian call center operators adopt Western names of their own choosing. The idea, of course, is to make their American or European customers feel more comfortable.” However, for the subjects described in Friedman’s book, this does represent the economic opportunity to the hundreds of thousands of young Indian post-graduates competing for the chance to answer phone calls from Americans and Europeans concerned with all manner of technical support or target marketing. This field has become amongst the most competitive entry-level positions in India. And in one sense that Friedman captures in the theoretical framing of his text, this is an opportunity for personal economic mobility which for the young student in India might have seen as extraordinary and rarified just a decade ago. This may hardly be said to be true today, where “450,000 Indians are answering phones” 24 hours a day and charged with responsibility of representing themselves as being located somewhere in the United States or Europe (Friedman, 2005).

Its economic properties aside, it has spelled no small degree of trouble for the effectiveness of outsourced call centers on a large scale. To the point, this has produced an incredible lack of quality service in the home country where the usability of the products has become increasingly distant from the quality of the customer support which customers received. One of the qualities of our technology which has helped to diminish the relevance of geographical distance to serviceability has been the institution of automated customer service. For customers who have been transferred and given insufficient options for contending with specific categories of problem, this has hardly been an added convenience. And the infallibly polite computerized operator is equally as unflappable or emotionally unresponsive as is the outsourced customer service representative. In a particularly telling passage where Friedman observes a woman in an Indian call center as caller after caller hangs up the phone in rage, customers can see that there is something about this experience that can be terrible and even unfair when proper management techniques have not been applied.

The growth of the companies that service its customer to the scope that the customer's closest contact with a service organization is an individual in a remote country who has been externally contracted to handle such calls has had the notable effect of diminishing the customer experience quality of this contact altogether, leaving management theory and performance evaluation techniques to pick up the slack. To those of customers contracted to such companies as Verizon, Comcast Cable or Dell Computers, the experience of calling in for help can serve to reinforce the sense that the American or European consumer is not of any value. The lower expense of service professionals through these twin mechanisms of automation and outsourcing has also produced a modern call center system that is bureaucratic, indifferent to the successful representation of the company to which it is externally contracted and ultimately only instructed to handle the sheer scale in the volume of calls which each of these companies receives but which it is too large and remote to field. As the customer service support has been outsourced, the customer convenience has also been outsourced as well. And this has been done to a problematic fault.

To many modern organizations, this is because there is some perceived demand to cut corners in such areas in order to focus on yielded profit from productivity. This is to say that there is a fundamental belief driving any number of larger organizations which suggests that customer experience is a secondary priority, with the bulk of strategy and resource being aimed at raising profitability on a sold product or service. However, this is

proving a false assumption, and indeed, one that we may argue is counterintuitive to what research tends to suggest. Namely, we find that “there is NO conflict between improved productivity and delivering customer service experience which improves customer satisfaction and retention. In fact 20% of call centers delivering consistent good to excellent service has high and improving production. The 80% of call centers caught in the downward spiral of delivering mediocre to really bad service is also found to have deteriorating productivity.” (Kjellerup, 2009). The correlation is among the more compelling findings in shaping or improving a call center. As we proceed with a discussion on the data-driven strategies which are most beneficial to measuring the effectiveness of the call center, it will be with the understanding that customer experience quality assurance must be tantamount amongst management’s goals.

Ways of measuring the effectiveness of customer service representative, technical support assistants or other call managers vary but there are a few instruments which have become increasingly standard as ways for comprehending the overall efficiency of a call center. Indeed, best practices for performance measure and evaluation tend to stress expediency and quantity in terms of measuring the overall functionality of a specific center. To this point, “answering a specified percentage of calls in a set number of seconds and percentage of abandoned calls are common measures used in Service Objectives and Service Level Agreements (SLO are expectations; SLAs are contracted requirements). The caller satisfaction survey (AKA customer satisfaction survey) is another common metric.” (Cookster, 2007). This latter instrument dictates that there is also an interest in measuring the experience of the caller, denoting a degree of focus on the subject of quality as a compliment to metrics concerning quantity.

This speaks to the larger demand imposed upon management of the call center to provide rigorous degree of oversight on the performances of personnel. Management and central supervisors’ roles are essential to observing data concerning the nature, flow and completion of calls. Indeed, research tend to reinforce the point that understanding data on call patterns is the key to identifying shortcomings in functionality, distinguishing call managers who are not meeting the demands of their positions and finding ways to refine efficiency. As this document advises the effective call center manager, “information is critical. Keep a thorough database of every call, when it arrived, how long it took to answer, how long it lasted, who answered it, how many times it was transferred and to whom, and (very important) the category of the call.” (Cookster, 2007). This idea of

understanding the calls ingredients according to category speaks to the larger importance of collective and, with nuance, evaluating the nature of call experiences both on the micro and macro-level. This calls for management that is hands on, and that is deeply conscientious of numerical goals and the measures to which personnel are expected to succeed.

This is why, increasingly, the manner in which evaluations are conducted is somewhat of an integration of information which is available through evolving computer technology solutions and the insight of effective and properly invested management. Thus, “today’s call center analytics tools don’t necessarily restrict themselves to counting calls and indicating how long they are. These tools accommodate not only quantitative data, such as average handle time, but also qualitative data, such as scores supervisors assign to the agents they evaluate” (Fleischer, 2007). To the point, many solutions for understanding call center performance, though performed through IT avenues, will demand that management plug its own numbers and evaluations into the formula. Thus, performance indicators will come to reflect an integration of qualitative and quantitative points as it characterized the effectiveness of short-comings of a call center.

The researcher thinks that adoption of quantitative tools exclusively will lead the organization to lose its customers due to the absence of control of quality of the service offered by the agents. Therefore, it is essential that beside the quantitative measures previously explained a qualitative measure be used by the organization, managers and supervisors at the call center to ensure that the service delivered exceeds customers expectations and that the customer experience at the these customer care centers raise the level of customers satisfaction and loyalty. The first call resolution is considered one of the most important indicators and widely used to measure the call centers quality of service. The researcher will discuss in this document the method of measuring and tracking customer experience at the call centers as well as measuring the range of understanding and awareness of the front line staff of customer centricity as regards to the extent it will enable STC to retain its customers and acquire their satisfaction and as a result grow its revenues and profits in the Saudi market. Cook (2002) stated that as contact centers grows, there is an increasing need to not focus only on the cost, duration and volume of calls, but more importantly on the quality of the calls, resolving the problem and satisfying the customer needs.

### *2.1.3 Customer's experience monitoring at call centers*

Companies today are interacting with their customers in a lot of different ways and places – online, over their devices, through partners touch points and of course through call centers. The largest organizations can have thousands or millions of customers interacting at all times of the day, often being treated by thousands of independently-minded representatives and agents. Considering the many variables impacting each of these transactions companies have their hands full trying to deliver exceptional quality of service to customers in the right time and place.

Positive customer experience is one of the main objectives of every business. Businesses recognize that keeping current customers is more profitable than having to win new ones to replace those lost (Leadership Factor, N. D.). Management and marketing theorists underscore the importance of customer satisfaction for a business's success (McColl-Kennedy and Schneider, 2000; Reichheld and Sasser, 2001). Accordingly, the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recognizes the role of customer satisfaction as the central component of the award process (Dutka, 1999). Some recent statistics demonstrate the benefit of good customer experience and the costs of poor customer experience on businesses.

Good customer experience has an effect on the profitability of nearly every business. For example, when customers perceive good service, each will typically tell nine to ten people. It is estimated that nearly one half of American business is built upon this informal “word-of-mouth” communication (Gitomer, 1998; Rec, 1991). Improvement in customer retention by even a few percentage points can increase profits by 25 percent or more (Griffin, 1999). The University of Michigan found that for every percentage increase in customer satisfaction, there is an average increase of 2.37% of return on investment (Keiningham and Vavra, 2002). Most people prize the businesses that treat them the way they like to be treated; they'll even pay more for this service.

However, a lack of positive customer experience has an even larger effect on the bottom line. Customers who receive poor service will typically relate their dissatisfaction to between fifteen and twenty others. The average American company typically loses between 15 and 20 percent of its customers each year (Griffin, 1999). The cost of gaining a new customer is ten times greater than the cost of keeping a satisfied customer (Gitomer, 1998). In addition, if the service is particularly poor, 91 percent of retail customers will not

return to the store (Gitomer, 1998). In fact, if the service incident is so negative, the negative effects can last years through repeated recollection and recounting of the negative experience (Gitomer, 1998; Rec, 1991).

The message is obvious – satisfied customers improve business and dissatisfied customers impair business (Anderson and Zemke, 1999; Leland and Bailey, 1995). Enhanced customer experience at any organization is an asset that should be monitored and managed just like any physical asset. Therefore, businesses that hope to prosper will realize the importance of this concept, putting together a functional and appropriate operational definition (McColl-Kennedy and Schneider, 2000). This is true for both service-oriented and product-oriented organizations (Sureshchander *et al.* 2002).

Positive customer experience is composed of several components from distinct sources (McColl-Kennedy and Schneider, 2000). Positive customer experience begins with clear, operational definitions from both the customer and the organization. Understanding the motivations, expectations, and desires of both gives a foundation in how to best serve the customer. It may even provide information on making improvements in the nature of business. This is the heart of research into customer satisfaction (Naylor and Greco, 2005). The importance of clearly defining the key concepts and elements of delivering distinguished customer experience at call centers provide a template by which information can be gathered about what is, and what is not, working. This includes both the hard measures – those that are more tangible and observable (i.e. number of complaints, average wait time, product returns, etc.) and the soft measures – those less tangible aspects (i.e. friendliness, helpfulness, politeness, etc.) (Hayes, 2002). These definitions often start with the most vague and general, and become more to the highly specified and precise examples. The bottom line is that in order to know about positive customer experience, one needs to know what to look for (Mitchell, 2005).

The organization needs to seek this information from both within and without. The organization requirements of customer focus are the internally based processes, components, standards, and criteria that a business strives to achieve. These are the performance goals and benchmarks set forth by the business, for the business. These are the elements of corporate culture (Hayes, 2002). Meeting or exceeding these is often an indicator of success or failure. At times, these original components of positive customer

experience/customer focus may overlap with those set forth by the customer; at others they may be divergent.

Those processes, components, and standards that are deemed important by the customer are another important source of information. In order for a business to meet the needs and desires of the customer, the business must know the needs and desires of the customer. This information is vital not only for successful business, but also for understanding and improving customer experience at any touch points. This important component helps to set the standards and components of satisfaction from perspective of the customer (Hayes, 2002).

Positive customer experience dimensions are developed from the previously identified requirements. These are the specific components that make up the requirements. For example, if a customer and organizational requirement is for customer service such as call center services, the good customer experience dimensions may include interactions, timeliness, responsiveness, and friendliness. These are the clusters that define the requirements (Hayes, 2002).

Critical incidents are the specific operations that relate to the good customer experience dimensions. These are often the concrete and measurable behaviors and actions of call center employees, groups, or organization. This may also include policies, procedures, and protocols in place within an organization (Hayes, 2002).

Customers increasingly expect their information to be available for every interaction, regardless of channel, over the course of their relationship (Shaw, 2005). This means if customers call on the first working day of the week, the company is aware of the online request they placed on weekends, and if they resolve a problem this year, the company knows about it next year. These expectations remain true as they speak to different agents, different departments, different service groups, and different channels.

Customers' needs and expectations are growing; they expect the same level of service over the web, over the phone, and through other channels. This means providing consistent and transparent treatment and "one company – one voice" type messaging across the phone, e-mail and non-call center locations. Customers will expect to be able to choose which channels and media through which they interact, and will expect services comparable to those they receive from other companies (Bernd, 2003).

Tangible performance in call center has been a long –standing historical focus, with many of the tangible measurements being the primary indices of the call centers' operation. Average wait time, average handle time, abandonment rate, etc. in customers terms these are represented in more qualitative measurements such as "the answer quickly or" they were able to resolve my problem efficiently. Customers expect service to be quick and efficient. Customers expect most transactions, from simple request to sophisticated ones, to be fulfilled instantly. Customer expects agents and service to always be available or to possess very specific skills. The tangible attributes of a call center are an ever-changing and ever-growing mix, and understanding them is a very crucial step towards the customer centricity journey of any organization (Bernd, 2003; Shaw, 2005).

On the other hand, Robert (2007) stresses that emotive performance with call center (e.g. how friendly agents are, how well they express concern for customers) are very essential to monitor and enhance the customer experience at every and each customer's touch point. Hiring the right people, training, incentives and communications are important tools to improve the emotive performance and enhance the customer experience of the contact center.

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### **3 Research methodology and procedures**

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The previous section showed how the literature has been conceptualized in this study and provided a visual explanation of emerged frame of reference. This chapter will cover the methodology used in this research. The selection of methodology is based on the research problem and the stated research questions.

#### **3.1 The purpose of the research**

When research problem has been identified, the research objectives and questions stated, it is necessary to indicate how the research objective would be achieved (Walliman & Baiche, 2001).

Early in any research study one faces the task of selecting the specific design to use. A number of different design approaches exist but, unfortunately, no simple classification system defines all the various designs that must be considered (Cooper and Schindler, 2003).

Research can be classified in terms of their purpose. Accordingly, Saunders, *et al.* (2003) mentioned that they are most often classified exploratory, descriptive or explanatory while Cooper and Schindler (2003) categorized in descriptive and casual.

This way the essential difference between descriptive and casual studies lies in their objectives. If the research is concerned with finding out who, what, where, when, or how much, then the study is descriptive. In a casual study, we try to explain relationships among variables.

Exploratory research is useful when the research questions are vague or when there is little theory available to guide predictions. At times, researcher may find it impossible to formulate a basic statement of the research problem. Exploratory research is used to develop a better understanding (Hair, *et al.* 1998). Exploratory studies are valuable means of finding out what is happening, to seek new insight, to ask questions and assess phenomenon new light. It is particularly useful if researcher wishes to clarify the understanding of a problem. There are three principle ways of conducting exploratory research: a research of the literature, talking to the experts in the subject, conducting focus group interviews (Saunders, *et al.* 2003).

In contrast to exploratory studies more formalized studies are typically structures with clearly stated research questions. Formal studies serve a variety of research objectives:

- **Description of phenomena or characteristics associated with subject population (the who, what, when, where, and how of a topic)**
- **Estimates of the proportions of population that have these characteristic.**
- **Discovery of association among different variables** (Cooper and Schinndler, 2003).

The purpose of this document is to conduct a descriptive study. The data has been collected through customer experience check list shown in table (1) and analyzed quantitatively. It is aimed to explain and understand the skills and capabilities of STC call centers' agents and supervisors of customer centricity concept and their level of using this to serve their customers.

### **3.2 The research approach**

The researcher has reviewed in document three a detailed study of the STC call centers based exclusively on qualitative approach and analysis of the elements of discourse between the agent and customers but, in this document the researcher will adopt the quantitative approach to complete his study.

Quantitative approach is the one in which the investigator primarily uses post positivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e. cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypothesis and questions, use of instrument and observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys and collects data on predictor mind instruments that yield statistical data (Creswell, 2003).

Quantitative research is frequently referred to as hypothesis testing research. Characteristically, studies begin with statement of theory from which research hypothesis are derived. Then an experimental design is established in which the variables in question (the dependent variables) are measured while controlling for the effects of selected independent variables. Subject included in the study are selected at random is desirable to reduce error and cancel bias. The sample of subjects is drawn to reflect the population (Newman and Benz, 1998).

The procedures are deductive in nature, contributing to the scientific knowledge base by theory testing. This is the nature of quantitative methodology. Because the experimental design requires tightly controlled conditions, the richness and depth of measuring for participant may be scarified. As validity concern, this may be a limitation of quantitative designs (Newman and Benz, 1998).

Generally things are described by providing measure of an event or activity. For example, how far are the customer service employees customer centric? Which services are most preferred? What advertisements are most effective? These are the questions that can be answered by descriptive research. Descriptive research designs are usually structured and specifically designed to measure the characteristics described in a research question (Hair, *et al.* 1998).

The object of descriptive research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events of situations. It is necessary to have a clear picture of the phenomena on which researcher wishes to collect data prior to the collection of the data (Saunders, *et al.* 2003).

Studies that establish casual relationships between variables may be termed explanatory studies. The emphasis here is on studying a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationship between variables (Saunders, *et al.* 2003). Explanatory studies are designed to test whether one event causes another (Hair, *et al.* 1998).

The purpose of this document is aimed to explain and envisage the customer centricity characteristics of STC call center's agents and supervisors; as a result it lends itself to be a descriptive research. The data have been collected through customer experience check list that consists of 14 elements shown in table 1, is aimed to understand the level of customer centricity awareness of STC call center agents as well as their supervisors.

Since the purpose of this document is to investigate the capabilities and skills of STC call center agents and supervisors customer centricity awareness, quantitative research is found to be more appropriate for this research.

### **3.3 The research strategy**

Research strategy will be a general plan of how researcher will go about answering the research questions that has been set by the researcher. It will contain clear road map and objective, derived from research questions, specify the sources from which the researcher intended to collect data and consider the constraints that researcher will inevitably have such as access to data, time, location, and ethical issues (Saunders, *et al.* 2003).

Customer experience through call centers influences customers' perception of the brand and is a key component of brand loyalty and can often override traditional marketing communication. A good customer experience contact center is based on strong relationship between dialogue, satisfaction and these drive customer retention. The key question that service companies are seeking to answer is how do you know if they are delivering a good customer experience? And how do you know where to improve? Organizations tend to measure customer experience by measuring customer satisfaction and they concentrate mainly to look for improvement in this area in one of two ways:

- Significant investment in CRM & IT systems
- Re-engineer their customer service processes and procedures

It is just difficult to determine what "a good" experience looks like as it is to define the best practice or what so called "wow" experience. Today, the comparison set that a

customer uses to determine whether he has had a rewarding experience with your firm may not match the competitive set we monitor. When it comes to customer experience, we compete with companies outside our industry outside the region, and probably outside our realm of experience (King, 2006).

There are three elements that influence customer experience namely, brand values through delivering consistent messages and experience, companies touch points such as call centers, where customers can interact with the company in different ways through different tools, finally is the organizational priority - which experiences are more important than others. For the purpose of this research, I will discuss the second component and its contribution to my company and its effect on STC customers and employees. I have adopted an approach in this document derived from both document two and three which assists the researcher to investigate the customer experience at any touch point such as call center. To process the customer experience investigation, the researcher developed a simple tool called customer experience check list shown in table 1, that defines the touch points which generate the experience such as call centers and then I have attached numerical values to the touch point's moment of truth "Experience Score" which represent the importance of each element in the customer experience check list. These elements have been assigned weights or values that show their importance and contribution to the customer satisfaction and enhancement of customer experience at specific touch point.

Peppers & Rogers (1996) cited the major customer experience characteristics of positive customer experience interaction. Table (1) shows a framework at the customer experience interaction for any call made to a call center. It contains fourteen criteria that an agent call should be evaluated upon. My process was to select randomly number of pre- recorded calls from STC call centers system and evaluate each call or what so called the "moments of truth" through the call center supervisors. The number of the sample and the targeted population will be discussed in the following section. Content of each call is going to be evaluated by the supervisors based on the customer experience check list elements shown in table (1).

I have assigned a weight for each criteria of the customer experience check list, ranging from 5, 10, and 20 points scale based on the importance of that criterion to the customer experience as well as its contribution to raising the positive customer experience (Peppers & Rogers 1996). The calls were to be established in Arabic language and I had to translate

them into English where I faced some difficulties in translating some Arabic acronyms. However, the discourse analysis of each call becomes easier to understand and evaluate if I kept in mind that I am trying to make sense of what the agent and customer felt and what the point of their interaction was.

		1	2	3	4
Date of the call					
Time of the call					
Total time to reach call center agent					
Total duration of the call					
<b>Customer experience elements (A)</b>	<b>Weigh</b>	<b>0=No 1=Yes</b>	<b>0=No 1=Yes</b>	<b>0=No 1=Yes</b>	<b>0=No 1=Yes</b>
Give name clearly	5				
Greeting the customer properly	5				
Asking the customer politely about the services that the agent can offer him as "How can I help you?"	5				
Listening to the customer's information inquiry without interruption	5				
Rephrasing the inquiry to confirm customer request and avoid making mistakes	5				
Assuring the customer that the agent will do his best to do whatever is needed	5				
Politely asking the customer for necessary information to identify him (Name of Customer, ID Number, etc.)	5				
Asking the customer to wait for a while to find the right information for his request or problem. Wait time should not exceed 30 seconds, after which customer should be notified of the extended time needed	10				
Finding the right information as soon as possible, providing the customer with the correct and sufficient information as fast as possible, getting back to the customer and thanking him for his waiting	20				
Asking the customer if there is any other service that the agent can offer to him	10				
Thanking the customer warmly for dealing with Saudi Telecom	5				
<b>Customer centricity (B)</b>	<b>Weigh</b>	<b>Grade From 1 to 5</b>	<b>Grade From 1 to 5</b>	<b>Grade From 1 to 5</b>	<b>Grade From 1 to 5</b>
Courtesy -1= not courteous at all &5= very courteous	5				
Quality of speech (Clarity, pronunciation...): 1=very bad &5= very good	5				
Overall evaluation: 1=very bad & 5=very good	10				

**Table (1): Customer Experience Check List**

### 3.4 The design of the research instrument and sample size

The selection of the customer centricity instrument which a practitioner chooses will depend upon a number of factors such as: what is it that you are attempting to measure? What is your particular understanding of the term customer centricity and more importantly, what is the understanding of the designer of the instrument? Do you believe the instrument to be a valid and reliable tool?

The population from which the sample group was taken was the pre-recorded calls of the call center system during the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2008 between 9:30 Am and 10 Am. As the study was mainly conversational analysis based research, where there was a need to make inferences from the sample about the population, random sample was used. In total the sample group of pre-recorded calls received at the call center during that time was 125 calls from a population of approximately 300 calls received. With margin error of 5% the sample size is considered to be well above the minimum sample size suggested by (Fisher, 2004).

The sample to a degree was in fact randomly selected. It was taken from the calls received during the aforementioned time which reached about 300 calls and 125 calls of them were selected through the Automatic Voice Response system (AVR). Then the researcher requested IT department to separate these 125 calls in order to be analyzed through call center supervisors using the customer experience check list model already explained in table 1. The 125 calls were distributed into five groups each group comprises of 25 calls and then 5 supervisors/ managers were randomly selected from the total 10 supervisors/managers of the center to analyze the calls based on the model already discussed. The researcher has explained to the supervisors/ managers the method of filling the model and stressed the significance of listening to the calls more than once before starting the analysis and evaluation of the calls' content. And in order to ensure that the supervisors/ managers fully understand the method of using this model to evaluate and analyze the calls allocated to each of them, the researcher analyzed an example call and thoroughly explained to the participant supervisors/ managers the evaluation and analysis process.

The researcher listed five similar calls in each of the five groups that are distributed to the five supervisors/managers in order to determine the similarities and differences between the supervisors/ managers' evaluation of the employees' calls and the service they delivered to STC customers and in the same time identify the employees and managers level of knowledge and awareness with customer centricity and/or customer focus. The reference numbers of the five similar calls are: 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 are shown in table (2). Analysis and results of the study of this sample will be shown separately in this document. Each of the five of this sample will be shown separately in this document. Each of the five supervisors/managers has completed the customer experience checklist evaluation of 25 calls within three days then the 125 checklists which include five similar calls known only by the researcher were collected. The researcher ensured a contact line with the supervisors

and managers to provide them with any assistance should they require further explanation or inquiry regarding the used model or the evaluated calls and thus answer the questions of the research raised earlier in this document.

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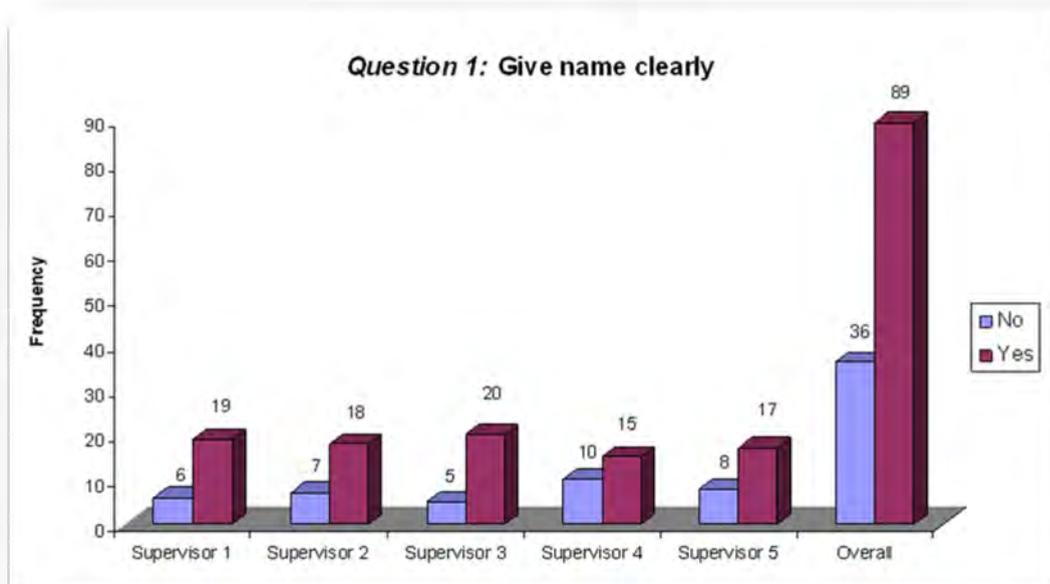
## **4 Results and Analysis of the Findings Including Customer Experience Check List Evaluation**

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In the following part of the document the researcher will evaluate the fourteen elements of the customer experience check list shown in table 1 to envisage the skills and capabilities of the call center agents and supervisors and gauge their level in providing the accepted level of customer experience to STC's customers. The researcher will also identify the differences and similarities among agents and supervisors pertaining to their abilities and understanding of customer centricity concept and the range of their reaction with customers when they are performing their duties in delivering distinguished services to STC customers according to the levels expected by the management. Accordingly a set of recommendations and general plans will be made by the researcher to enhance the current situation in the call centers and ensure excellent service to the customers.

### **4.1 Customer experience elements evaluation results**

It appeared to the researcher through evaluation of the first element "Give name clearly" of the customer experience check list that most of the agents of the call center understand the importance of giving their names at the beginning of the call to pave the way for a successful call with the customer and build good relation with him. Although this element looks very simple but performing it satisfactorily is considered one of the most important factors of building the customer focus culture in any organization.



Starting the call by giving the agent’s name clearly is a common element in all call centers worldwide because it makes the calling customer confident of the agent’s capability and competence to shoulder the responsibility of providing him with the required service.

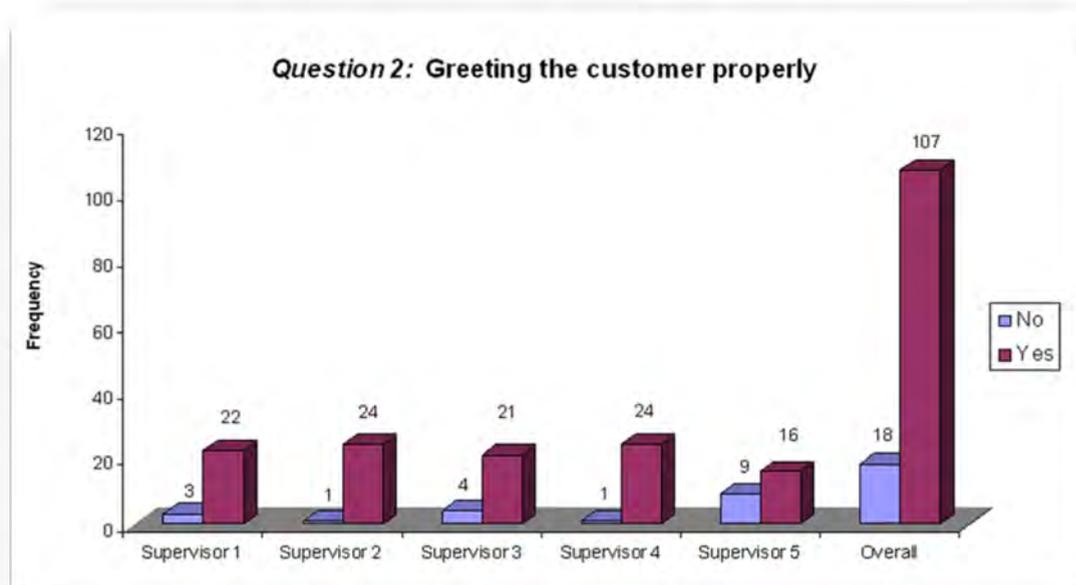
The researcher noticed that there was a positive correlation between the 5 supervisors in rating this element, and the overall rating was highly positive. Ratings on this element are not influenced by who did the evaluation, as there were no significant differences in the evaluation of this element across supervisors.

With the ANOVA test being not significant, this means that the supervisors rating on this customer experience criterion were not different from each other. In other words, no matter who the supervisor was the rating will be somewhat close. The mean rating distributions by supervisor can be seen in Appendix B. which show that supervisor four has the highest mean value (4) and followed by supervisor one, two and five.

Greeting the customer properly is the second element of the customer experience check list. It appeared that there are significant differences in the evaluation of this element across supervisors, which influenced the ratings. However, the overall rating was highly positive.

The ANOVA test performed on this criterion showed a significant test result.

This means that there are significant differences across the supervisors rating this criterion. Ratings ranged from 4.8 to 3.2 on the average.



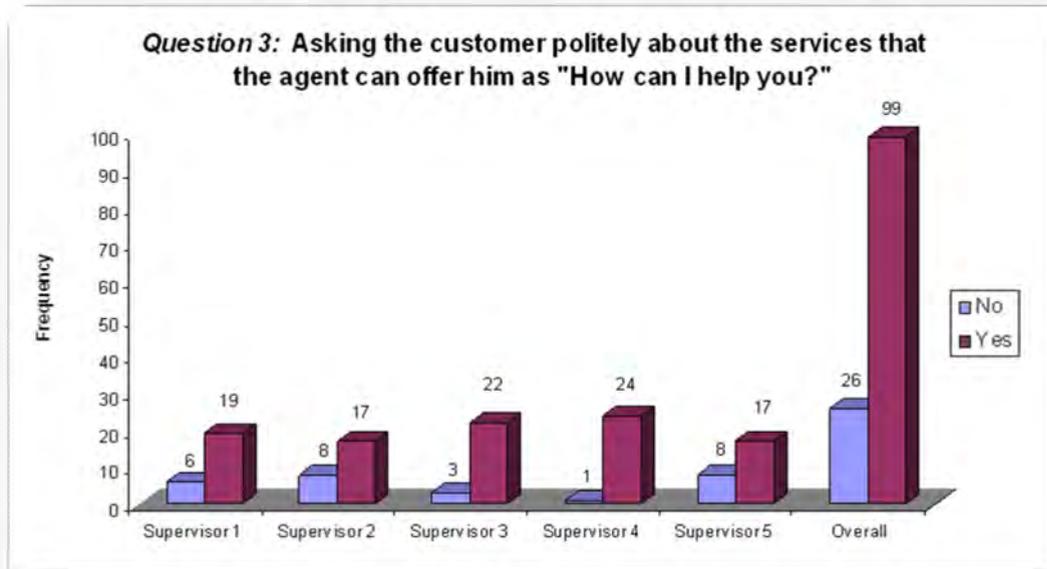
Majority of the supervisors rated the call center agents as properly greeting the customers (86%). Supervisor 5 registered the lowest average rating on this criterion (3.2). Therefore, such low average rating triggered the rating variability of the ratings to be significant.

This element represents a key factor of enhancing the customer experience and gives an indication to the level of what the front line employees have reached in understanding customer centricity or/customer focus importance to their companies.

Although the implementation of elements one and two looks easy, but both are considered very essential elements through which mutual respect culture and good relation can be established between the agent and the customer and reflect positive customer perception about the call center readiness, friendliness, and keenness to provide the required service effectively.

Peter Leppik, founder and CEO of Vocal Laboratories, a consulting company specialized in customer feedback says that companies need to make every effort to create the moment of truth at the first interaction with the customer as simple and warm as it can. Customer service at call center is an inherent part of every service sold today but in the same time it is also the hardest for customers to evaluate in advance (Ken, 2006).

Asking the customer politely about the services that the agent can offer him as “how can I help you” is one of the most important elements of the customer experience check list and it is considered the third element of the table.



The first impression is mostly considered the last and permanent one and if the agent expressed the willingness and positive attitude towards the customer he will form a concrete base of building the long lasting trust and confidence and signals that he is willing and capable to provide the desired service.

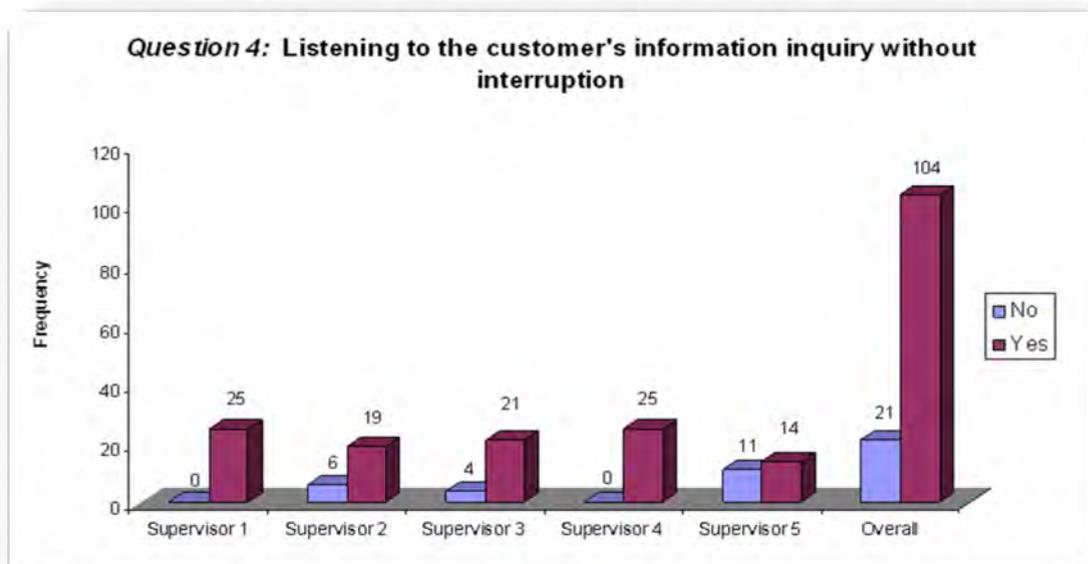
In this element of the customer experience check list it seems that there are no significant differences in the evaluation of this element across supervisors, which in result did not influence the ratings. However, the overall rating was highly positive. ANOVA detected no differences on supervisor’s rating with respect to this customer experience question. In other words, the ratings given to the call center agents by the 5 supervisors on the average are not far from each other. The highest mean value was for supervisor four followed by supervisor three and one while supervisor two and five have the same value.

This element represents the main factor in enhancing and enriching positive customer experience in any organization. It plays a great role in raising the efficiency of the delivered service and helps to acquire customers' satisfaction and confidence which positively affect the organization's status in the marketplace and its financial resources.

It appeared to the researcher that all the participant agents have shown distinguished readiness to prove to the calling customers that they are ready to support them and fulfill their requirements and accordingly the researchers view this element of the customer experience check list as a major item in the specifications of a customer focus call center.

In this respect, Ed Horrel, author of the *Kindness Revolution: The Company – Wide Culture Shift that Inspire Phenomenal Customer Service*, advises companies to move customer service out of the realm of merge gimmick to make it a central aspect of daily operations. Customers don't expect perfection, but they do want to feel they are in safe hands when they have problems and they want to feel important. Therefore, the little extra creates the kind of experience that draws people back, for example, Doubletree Hotels offer a warm cookie when customers check in and Nordstrom department stores empower sales representatives to make on the spot customer decision when they have problem (Ken, 2006).

There are significant differences in the evaluation of this element 4 (Listening to the customer's information inquiry without interruption) across supervisors, particularly Supervisor 1 and 4, which in result influenced the ratings. However, the overall rating was highly positive.



Significant difference on supervisor rating was detected by the ANOVA test to be significant here since Supervisor 5 gave a very low rating. Such low rating resulted to a

significant rating variability. Thus, on this customer experience question, Supervisor 5's rating is significantly different from Supervisor 1 and 4. Difference is by 2.2 points (5.0 - 2.8)

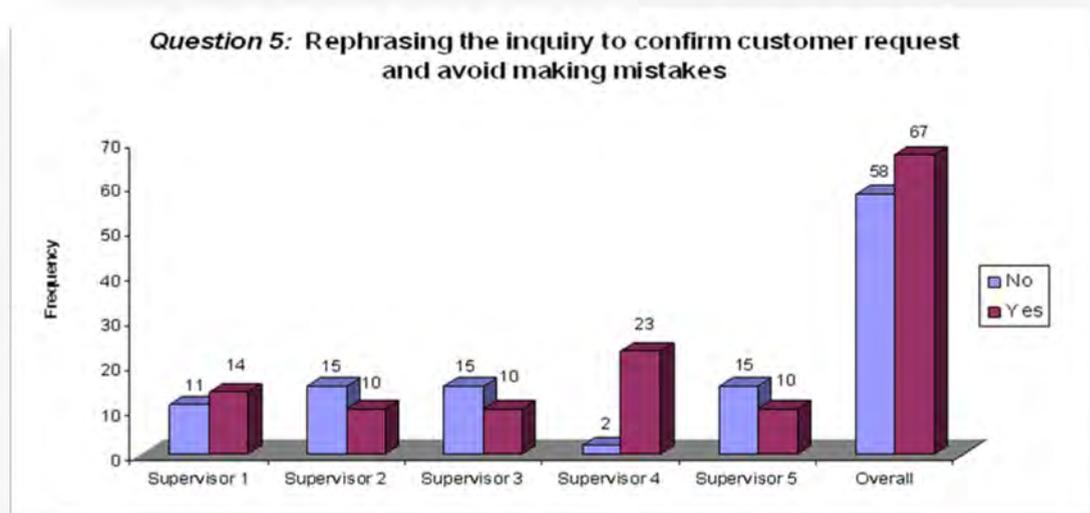
Listening carefully and seriously to customers' requests indicates that they are taken care of and appreciated and that they are considered important to the organization. This element is deemed one of the important customer centricity elements and one of the highly significant features that characterize the call center employees. The researcher noticed from the results of elements one to four that the call center agents in STC welcome the customers properly, introduce themselves clearly and listen to them carefully. This is an indicator to the satisfactory level of the agents' awareness with these four elements and its importance in improving the customers' experience in all centers. The researcher thinks that STC should maintain this level of awareness and do all the necessary actions to improve it within the call center agents which will definitely raise the level of customer satisfaction on the provided services taking into consideration that the first impression is lasting and accordingly we should obtain a good and positive impression of the customer from his first call or contact.

In the first four elements of the customer experience check list which are considered to be mechanized tasks that do not need further investigation, the researcher noticed that agents have performed fairly well.

Element No. 5 (Rephrasing the inquiry to confirm customer request and avoid making mistakes ) is considered to be one of the key elements of the customer experience in influencing the overall experience of customers, as it helps avoid making mistakes and wasting customers' time. This is accomplished by rephrasing customers' inquiries to confirm their requests. However, the researcher noticed that STC agents did not seem to perform well on this element, as three of the supervisors rated them negatively, confirming that this element is an area of concern and requires the higher management of the company to concentrate on extensive field training and coaching of the call center staff and selection of skilled trainers in the customer experience enhancement practices as well as other training materials.

On element five of the customer experience check list the researcher noticed that the tasks of the agent include more investigative activities and require more effort to provide the customer with the required service of this element. It appeared to the researcher that there

were significant differences in the evaluation of this element across supervisors that influenced the ratings. The overall rating did not have significant difference either.



Since Supervisor 4 gave a high rating on this question compared to the rest of the supervisors, rating differences for this question were found to be significant by the ANOVA test. It can be seen that most supervisors find that the call center agents are not performing well on this criterion, however, supervisor 4 considered it to be the other way.

The large disparity of ratings (2.6) was detected by the test statistic to be significant. Supervisor 4's rating was significantly different from the ratings of Supervisors 2, 3 and 5 (gave an average rating of 2 on this criterion).

Understanding customers' requests by the call center employees is an important phase of the service delivery process. Misunderstanding the customers' requests leads to delivery of poor service and generates negative customers' perception and trustworthiness.

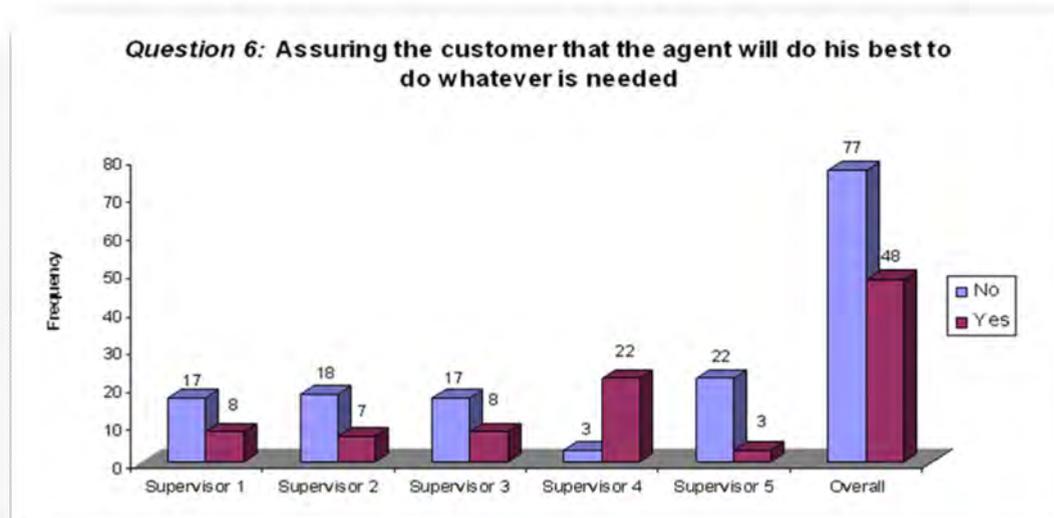
The researcher noticed that 46.4% of the agents did not rephrase the inquiry to confirm and well understand the customer's request. It seems that when the agents deal with the more complicated elements of the customer experience check list their performance level goes down. Many writers have emphasized the importance of listening carefully to the customers, understand their requests and achieve or exceed their expectations. To this point Bernd (2003) stated that positive customer experience involves more than just lavishing attention on your customers when they are at the touch points with you, you need to ensure that front line employees are delighting the customers and listening carefully to

them. Companies need to ensure that customer services employees, marketers, suppliers and partners do have the customers in mind and understand their needs carefully.

Here, the researcher noticed that the agents and supervisors when executing this element did not show any positive signs that indicate or prove their capability to understand and thus meet customers' requirement and needs. This phenomenon is very serious and has very negative impact on delivering the right customer experience level as well as the STC customer loyalty. It requires an urgent corrective actions including theoretical and practical training which will be discussed by the researcher in the research recommendations.

As I have mentioned earlier, the agents of STC call center perform very well in the simple routine tasks such as that of elements (1 to 4) while they are not performing well in the tasks that require more sophisticated effort and investigations.

The researcher noticed that element No. 6 of the customer experience check list (Assuring the customer that the agent will do his best to do whatever is needed), where the agent would assure the customer that he will do his best to do whatever is needed, was also rated negatively by the majority of the supervisors. It is strongly recommended that STC offers additional training to the call center agents in this element so that they will perform better and gain credibility and customers' trust. Stern (2004) stressed that professional treatment of the customers and putting them at the heart of the operation enable the company to gain its customers loyalty and raise the level of its marketing and sale operations and consequently ensure strong presence in the market place.



In this element of the customer experience check list the agents seem to fail in assuring the callers that they will do their best to meet their requests. The significant differences in the ratings of this element across supervisors had an influence on the overall ratings. The overall ratings of this element are in the negative.

Supervisor 4 seemed to be consistent in giving high ratings to the call center agents. While the other four supervisors evaluated the call agents to be poor on this customer experience criterion (low average rating), Supervisor 4 had a different perspective. Here, it seems to me as a researcher that supervisor 4 is not skilled and qualified enough to be a supervisor in the call center because his ratings to the agents in this element and the previous ones are inaccurate and he gave high ratings to all of them. In the following elements analysis we shall see whether he will continue rating the agents in the same manner.

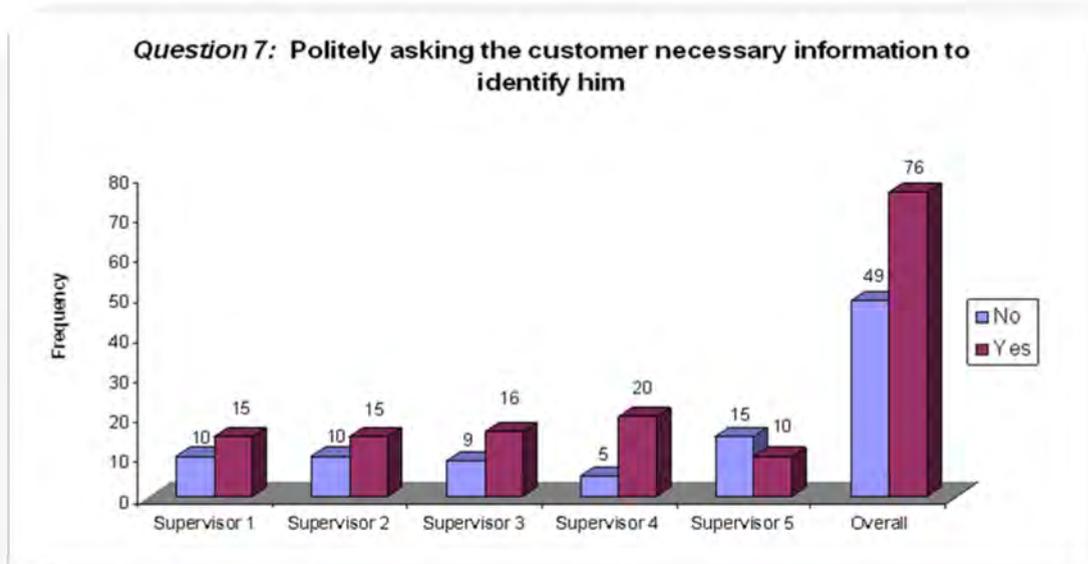
The wide disparity of average ratings across supervisors triggered the ANOVA test to find significance. Therefore, since significant rating differences were present, Supervisor 4's rating was significantly different from the ratings of Supervisors 1, 2, 3 and 5.

Upon review of the current situation of this important element of the customer centricity check list the researcher noticed considerable weakness in the level of agents as to delivering the services in a welcoming environment and paying the customers the due respect. Here, the organization should revise its adopted methods of showing respect and intimacy to the customers during their calls.

The main ways in which companies can manage customer satisfaction and reach customer loyalty refer to: understand what can go wrong, focus on controllable issues, manage customers' expectations, offer satisfaction guarantees , make it easy for customer to complain and understand them well (Ken, 2006).

Based on what Ken (2006) has stated above, it appeared to the researcher that STC call center employees did not fulfill the basic requirements of the positive customer experience, which include careful listening to the customers and understanding their requirements in addition to rephrasing the inquiry to confirm customers' requests and avoid making mistakes. This failure may be attributed to main reasons such as, the limitation of the call period, the lack of practical training of the call center agents moreover, the systems used by the agents to service customers may not be efficient enough to provide the needed information easily and in time. It appeared to the researcher that the call center agents find

it very difficult to handle the customer calls that require additional investigation and fail to treat the customers properly. This is noticeable in the last three elements while the contrary is apparent in the good results of the first four elements of the customer experience check list which do not require more investigation and considered as normal routine tasks.



Customer service call center is considered to be one of the most important touch points in the service industry, human and physical interactions that customers experience during their calls to the call center is very crucial towards building long lasting relationship with the company's products and services. Touch points are important because customers form perceptions of the organization and brand on their cumulative experiences (Kaplan *et al.*, 2001).

The researcher has noticed in the seventh element of the customer experience check list (Politely asking the customer necessary information to identify him ) the same inconsistency of the capabilities of the agents to deal with the complicated tasks that require more search and skills related to the different services features. In this customer experience criterion, Supervisors' ratings were not different from each other. They tend to give very close average ratings to the call center agents performance on this criterion, which narrowed the variability between ratings.

The results of this element gave the researcher good indication to the level of agents and raised the researcher's worries that the call center agents are unable to provide distinguished services to the customers and show satisfactory level of politeness when

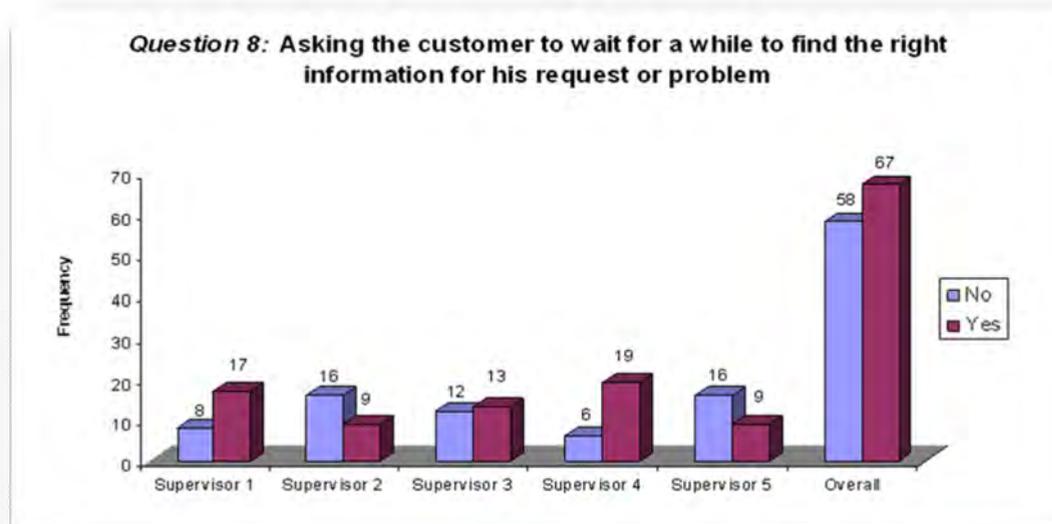
handling their requests which in turn negatively affect the organization image, its owners and shareholders value.

Saudi Telecom call center employees need to understand what the standards of delivering an acceptable customer experience are in order to perform consistently. Without clear processes, procedures and service manuals, the quality of the call center is left to the individual employee. In other words, without established customer service standards, the quality of customer experience can be in the hands of the worst firm's employees and supervisors. From question five up to this question the researcher found that customer service agents face difficulty in handling the calls and delivering the right level of positive customer experience to the callers. This may be related to many reasons including lack of adequate training, lack of basic instructions and service manuals as well as the poor preparation of the agents when launching new services packages that normally involve high technical features and certain settings. This was revealed to the researcher upon analysis of some calls particularly the ones that include questions about internet and mobile hand sets settings.

The treatment which the customers receive is dependent upon their expectations. If the level of treatment which the customer receives such as the respect of his time and not keeping him waiting for a long time during the call is beyond his expectation it will be considered to be excellent customer experience. But if the treatment during the call is less than his or her expectations this constitutes bad service experience. The genuine positive customer experience comes from contact centers staff who show that they care of the customer during the call holding time (Cook, 2002).

The researcher noticed that almost half of the supervisors rated the agents' calls in element No.8 (Asking the customer to wait for a while to find the right information for his request or problem) negatively; this means that either the agents are taking too long to get the information to customers, or they're unable to get the right information. As an improvement measure, STC must regularly update their agents with information related to various issues and the products and services STC offers to the market. This will eventually help shorten the time of customers' waiting for the agents to get the right information. Cook (2002) stresses that clear and specific procedures for delivering distinguished services to any organization represent a curtail factor that lead the organization to success and to be more customer centric that cares of its customers and employees in the same

time. Therefore, STC needs to implement the customer centric concept in all its systems and practices of work in the work centers which the researcher deems the main reason for the failure of the agents to obtain good results and scores in the elements subject of this document.



The researcher also found that there were significant differences in the ratings of this element across supervisors, which influenced the overall ratings to be slightly more positive than negative. This customer experience element question resulted in supervisor ratings possessing significant variability since the ANOVA test indicated significant differences. The differences in supervisors' rating that ranged from 7.6 to 3.6 on the average created a large rating disparity. Therefore, we can say here that Supervisors have different assessments on the call center agents in this customer experience element. More than half of the call center agents were assessed to be performing well, while the rest were assessed to be performing poorly.

Customer service training for front line and support staff at contact centers should include mixture of skills, teamwork, behavioral skills, process implementation and empowerment (Cook, 2002). This type of training needs to be addressed very well at STC contact centers. At the recommendations section of the research the researcher will discuss the appropriate initiatives to improve the call centers based on the outputs of this research.

The researcher noticed in this element great variation in the supervisors' ratings of their employees particularly in this element which may be attributed to the lack of experience

and the differences in the supervisors' skills and capabilities in this field. Here, also the researcher noticed that the agents perform poorly when the element includes sophisticated or to some extent difficult task. STC agents need more training in the call center activities to improve their customer focus capabilities and culture.

This element is one of the most important elements and plays a great role in the creation and establishment of customer centricity culture among the front line employees. The researcher noticed that there was no confidence on the level of customer focus culture of neither the employees nor the supervisors in this element. It is noticed that supervisor 2 has assessed only 9 agents to be positive and asked the customer to wait for a while to find the right information for his request or problem on the contrary to assessment of supervisor 1.

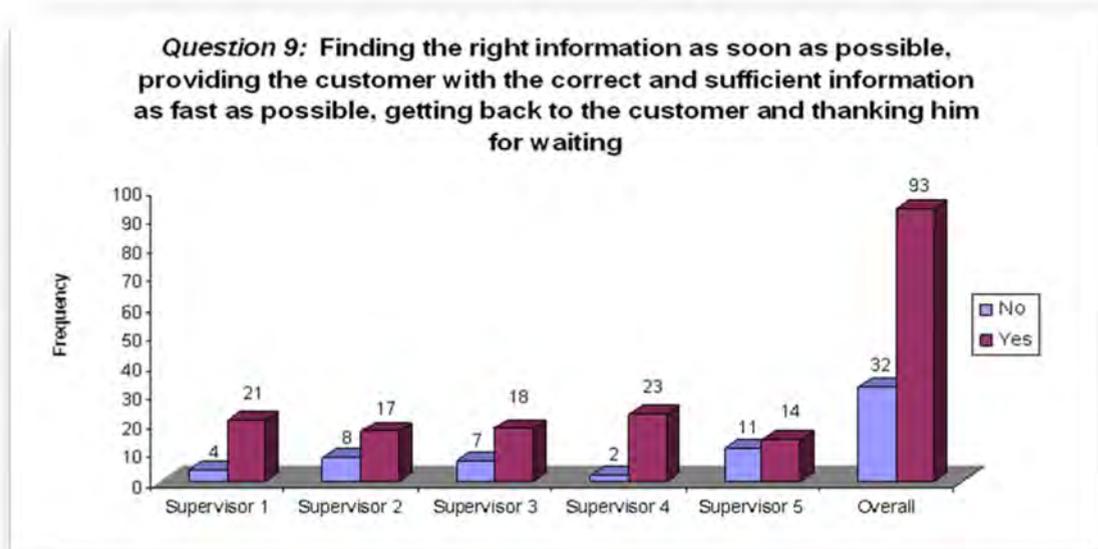
The researcher notice that in more than 50% of the calls evaluated by the supervisors the customer was not asked to wait for a while to find the right information for his request or problem and the agent did not apologize for keeping them waiting. This is considered a serious behavior that shows that the agents are not well aware of the importance of customers to STC and do not care for the customers' time which may be due to many reasons such as the limited duration of time set as an object for serving each customer or difficulty of obtaining the required information through the systems available to them.

Finding the right information as soon as possible, providing the customer with the correct and sufficient information as fast as possible, getting back to the customer and thanking him for waiting constitute the ninth element of the customer experience check list.

The components of this element are very essential in creating friendly and positive environment for the customers as well as delivering positive customer experience. It is used to evaluate the range of empowerment vested by the organization to its employees to assist them to serve the customers in a manner that fulfills their needs and requirements. The researcher observed significant differences in the ratings of this element across supervisors.

There is a fast growing movement among organizations interested in improving their customer centricity through a better understanding of customer interactions or touch points such as call centers. The goal of this movement is to provide better customer experiences and improve the customer relationships. By improving customer relationships, service

organizations improve market share, sales, and both customer and employee loyalty (Harvey, 2004).



In view of what Harvey (2004) stated above, the researcher noticed that STC call center did not move fast enough to cope with this trend and improve its services and customer experiences. This element is considered one of the key elements that help to establish and enrich customer centricity culture in any organization.

It was noticed by the researcher that in about 26% of the total calls the agent failed to provide the customer with the correct and sufficient information and that supervisor 5 has rated 50% of the evaluated calls as not been handle properly and resulted in bad customer experience. The variations in the supervisors' evaluation may be related to unavailability of the correct information, lack of training in the systems and unclear practices and procedures.

Ratings of supervisors 1 and 4 showed that most of the evaluated calls have been handled properly and the customers were served satisfactorily in accordance with this element and this may be due to the good standard of supervisors and employees of the this sample.

The tenth element of the customer experience check list is “Asking the customer if there is any other service that the agent can offer him”.

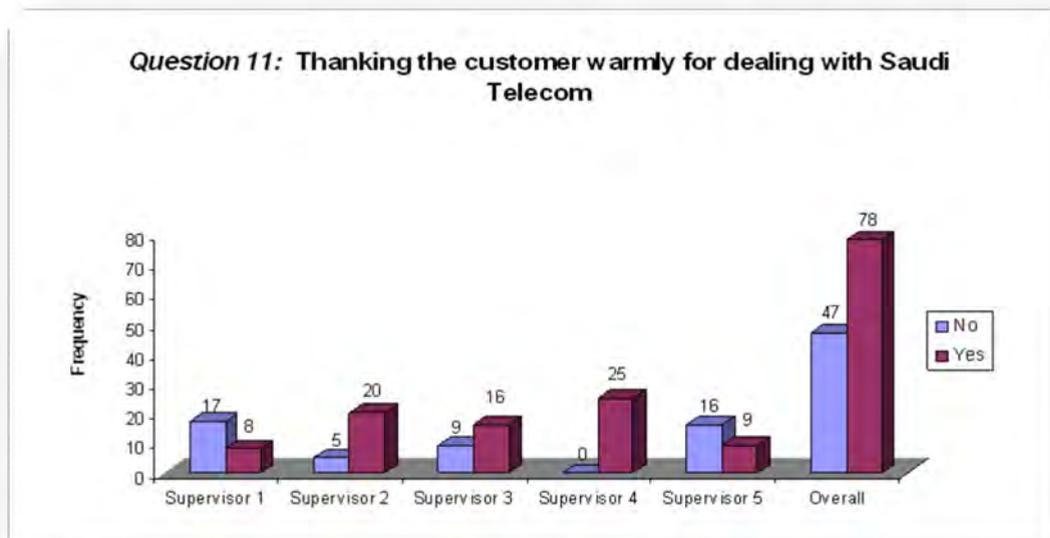


The phrase (is there any service that I can offer you) make the customers confident, trust the company and recommend its service to their friends and relatives through word of mouth which will positively improve its financial situation and increase its competitive advantage in the market place. Furthermore, this phrase has a marvelous spiritual effect on customers especially after being properly provided with the required service. Cook (2002) stated that “A customer is an asset that’s usually more precious than tangible assets on the balance sheet, you can usually buy balance sheet assets – there are lots of willing sellers. You cannot so easily buy customers”.

The result of supervisors’ analysis of this element of the customer experience check list revealed that in more than one third of the evaluated calls the agents did not show that they are ready and willing to serve the customer and did not ask him whether he needs any further service of the company. In fact, this gives the researcher an impression that the situation is very serious and that STC should consider rehabilitation of the call centers employees with emphasis on customer service and development of customers respect culture due to the significant role it plays in enabling the organization to compete in the marketplace and acquire customers satisfaction and loyalty. This element is vital in measuring the range of the front line employees’ abilities to show empathy and respect to the customers. Asking customers whether they need further services confirms the willing of the agent to deal with the customer once again and contributes to raising the level of cross and up sell of the various services and thus generates more revenue to STC. In this element it appeared that there were no significant differences in the ratings across

supervisors, which in result did not influence the overall rating that is highly positive. The overall rating distribution of this customer experience element seemed to be similar with element nine. However, since the weight of the item was smaller (10 points) the supervisor average rating exhibited closer values.

Thanking the customer warmly for dealing with Saudi Telecom is the eleventh element of the customer experience check list. By this element the agent ends his call with the customer and gives him the last impression about the company. The researcher noticed that in 47 calls the agents did not thank the customers for dealing with STC and that supervisor 1 stated that this element was executed properly in only 8 calls out of 25 which is very serious indication of the level of service and points to the need for behavioral training which includes courses covering the appropriate methods of customer treatment. The researcher thinks that there is a room to develop the call center agents' skills and improve their customer capabilities and focus culture because they need continuous training in addition to a creative work environment and a qualified supervisory staff to lead this mission.



Training the agents in the customer treatment skills and the new techniques of treatment adopted by similar companies reflects care and appreciation of the organization to its customers and consequently increases their trust and confidence and encourages them to communicate this to their friends and relatives through word of mouth.

Here the researcher noticed that there were some calls particularly the ones evaluated by supervisors 1 and 5, that the agents failed to undertake their duties and did not thank the customers or exhibit appreciation or respect to them for dealing with STC.

As mentioned earlier at the beginning of the analysis of this element results the researcher thinks that training the call center agents to observe this element will provide good opportunities to sell other services such as what called up sell and cross sell which all companies look for in order to increase its revenues and maximize the shareholders value. Implementation of this element requires joint efforts and team work of the call center management and the training and marketing departments of the company to introduce a work plan and training materials in the sale behaviors and the most important to decide immediate monetary incentives for the sale representatives who exceed the targeted sales. The call center management should pay great attention and concentrate its efforts to achieve this result and take the necessary actions to improve it continuously.

The researcher has noticed from the results of the elements of the customer experience check list that when the element tasks require administrative or technical skill or great effort of the agent and his supervisor, the element requirement were not well fulfilled. Some of the customers' inquires require the agent to use different systems of the company with enough understanding of the operational and administrative practices of the company's product such as the inquires included in element nine where the agents failed to meet customer's requirements according to the evaluation made by the supervisors which the researchers returns to the insufficient training in the systems, practices and procedures of delivering the company's services properly. The researcher also noticed that some elements that relates to the courteous dealing with the customers and responding to their requests in a creative manner such as element six and element eleven where the agents failed to deliver the required service according to the established standards. On the other hand the agents performed very well in some elements that may be considered general and very easy to implement such as elements one and two.

What do customers want or need regarding courtesy? What are the attributes of customer courtesy? Customers now define their expectations for courtesy to be much more than merely the absence of rudeness. Courtesy is expected to be a highly visible manifestation of an overarching mind-set within a firm to be customer-focused culture. The courteousness of call center agents has to be a pleasant reaction to a customer inquiry,

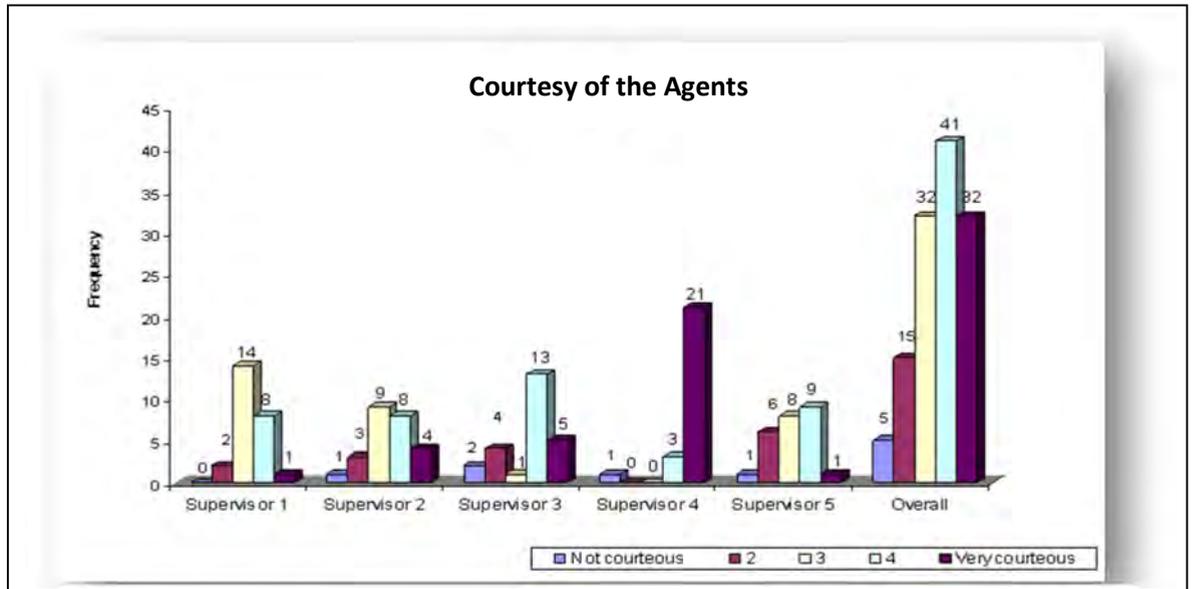
request, or complaint and more than that to be proactive in showing these behaviors when the company initiates the contact with customers (Harvey, 2004).

The researcher noticed at element twelve of the customer experience check list that only 32 calls from the total 125 calls distributed to the supervisors were rated very courteous and 41 calls were rated courteous i.e. 73 calls out of 125 calls were rated courteous or very courteous which represent 58% of the total calls where the researcher observed that the discourse between the agents and customers included from the side of the agents many phrases that reflect their respect, courtesy and friendly attitude towards STC customers. The researcher thinks that this percentage is very low and below the ambitions and objectives of the telecommunication service providers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia because in more than 42% of the total calls the agents failed to meet this crucial element of the customer centricity which negatively affects STC customers' satisfaction and their loyalty to the company taking into consideration that this poor performance may get worse over time.

Harvey (2004) stated that apology can be seen as the most sincere form of a customer focus and courtesy. Call center representatives should apologize of errors made by their company. To have the most impact, and to show that the company is going beyond purely tediousness, the apology must be personalized by clearly recognizing what happened to treat individual customers ideally coupled with what the company is doing to prevent root-cause recurrence to any customer.

The researcher may attribute the low level of courteous attitude in the studied sample to many reasons the most important of them is the lack of behavioral training in the new techniques and practices of dealing with customers during the discourse and the appropriate methods of apology of the difficulties that customers encounter when using the company services and products. Such behavioral skills training courses as well as the customer treatment techniques and etiquettes are very essential for building customer focus culture that will definitely makes STC a customer centric organization that puts its customers at the heart of its operations.

The poor level of the agents' courteousness may also be attributed to the short call duration

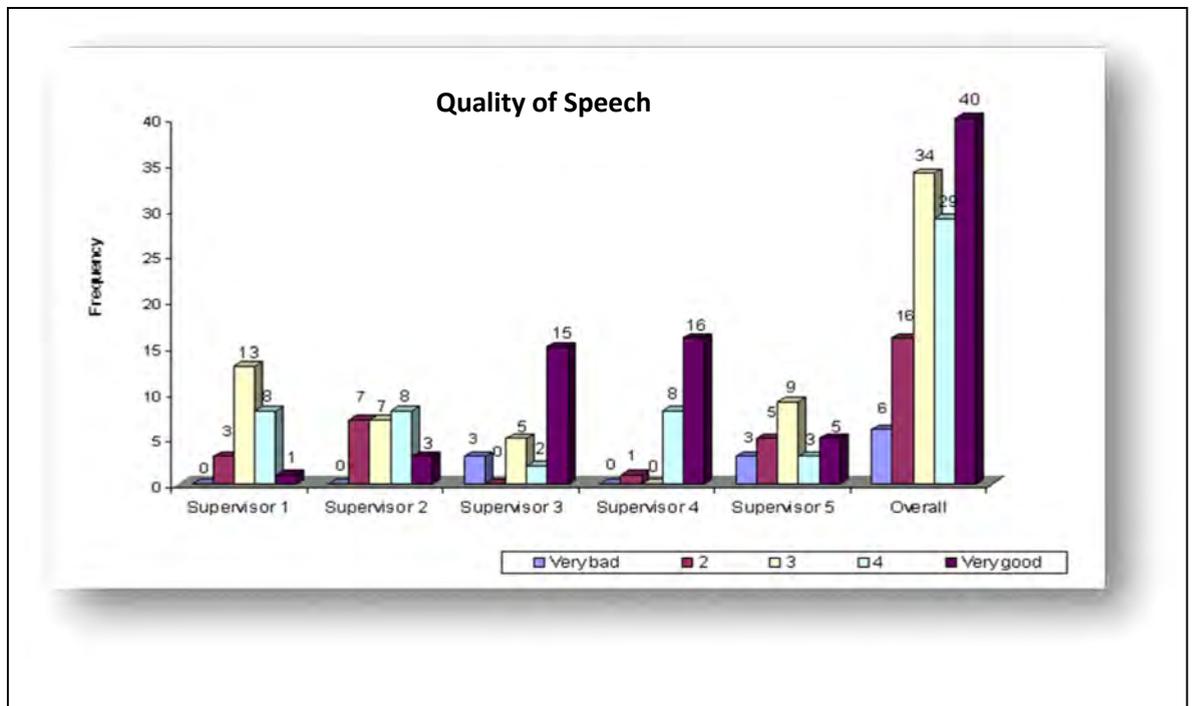


objective determined by the call center management within which the agent should serve the customer regardless to the quality of service or adequacy of this predetermined duration to provide the required service and show respect and courtesy to the customers which may cause the agents to concentrate on delivering the required service as soon as possible and achieve the call duration objective.

It is worth noting that the ratings by the 5 different supervisors of the agents on the level of courtesy are significantly different, which definitely influenced the overall ratings of courtesy to be significantly different as well. As a result, in the overall rating of courtesy, courteous was the highest. With a rating scale already used in the customer centricity elements, significant rating variability across supervisors is more evident as shown in the courtesy of agents graph. This observation was validated by the ANOVA test that ended to a significant result. Supervisors made different assessments of the call center agents in terms of courtesy, although the majority of the call center agents were considered at least moderately courteous. Moreover, the high average rating of Supervisor 4 (4.72) caused the rating differences to be significant.

This element is very essential to determine whether the agents possess adequate experience and customer focus culture and whether they care for the customers and show empathy and respect to them.

The quality of communication is the first measurement factor of a service. If the service provider listens sympathetically, feeds forward all information required, is able to handle emergencies, is easy to contact and communicate, and has excellent verbal skill, the customers feel important, distinguished, and heard (Stern, 2004).



The researcher found that the ratings of the thirteenth element of the customer experience check list show that the qualities of speech of the customer care agents were significantly different across the 5 supervisors, and influenced the overall ratings to be as very good. In terms of Quality, supervisors tend to have different ratings of the call center agents. With this, the average rating was found by the ANOVA test to be significantly different from each other. More specifically, Supervisor 4's average rating was significantly different from Supervisor 1, 2 and 5. Evaluation results of this element show the range of readiness of the call center agent to provide the customer with high quality service. Quality of speech element represents the cornerstone that makes the customers confident of the company, its employees and the delivered services.

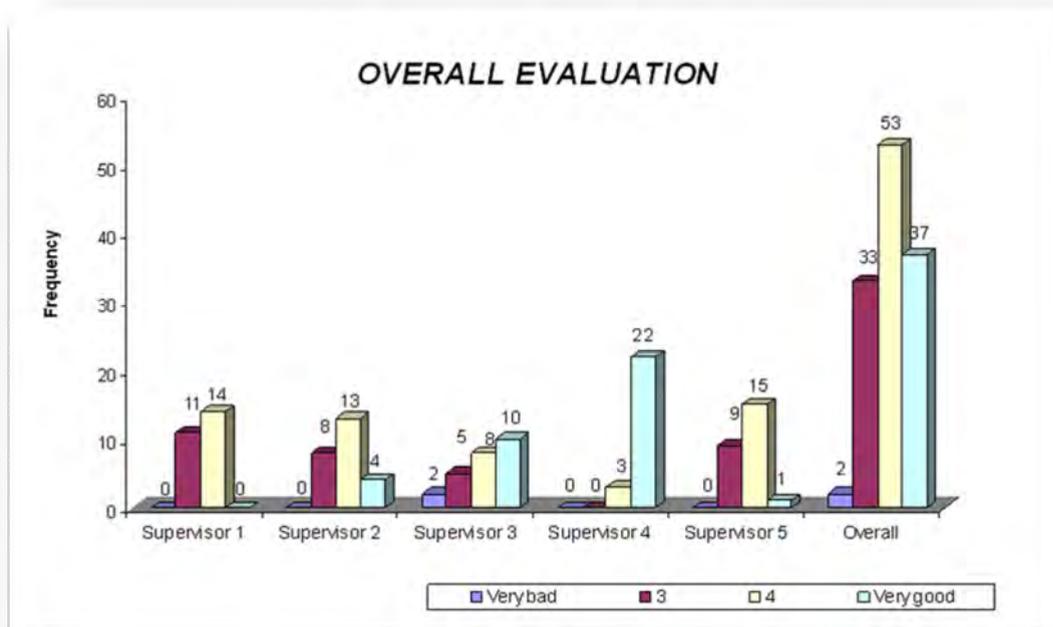
Through study of the overall rating of this important element of the positive customer experience components the researcher found that 69 calls were rated by the supervisors as good or very good and the remainder 56 calls which represent 45% the total calls were

evaluated as poor or very poor. This percentage of poor level of quality of agents' speech is very high and thus should be carefully investigated to identify the justifications of these unsatisfactory results of the quality of speech element which is deemed the corner stone of delivering high standard services that exceed our customers' expectations. This may be ascribed to the insufficient training in the proper speech practices and ideal methods of interacting with customers and providing them with the required information or service. In this area STC needs to develop a clear work action to point out the weaknesses of the agents especially the communication skills and take the necessary actions to enhance this element through continuous training and coaching that should be conducted by the supervisors and managers of the call center to ensure that the call center agents reach a satisfactory level of speech quality. The researcher also thinks that the call duration objective which was set by the call center management seems to be rather short and drives the agents to speak very quickly to customers in order to meet this objective and consequently the customers may face difficulties to understand them.

Cochran (2006) stated that a touch point such as call center is all of communication, human and physical interactions that customers experience during their relationship lifecycle with the service organization. Call centers are important because customers form perceptions of the organization and brand based on their cumulative experience. The key to deliver outstanding customer experiences is improving the quality of communication and consistency of touch points.

Through evaluation of the ratings of the 125 calls conducted by the supervisors the researcher noticed significant variations between the supervisors' ratings particularly supervisor 4 whose ratings were very inconsistent and vary from other supervisors' ratings. The researcher thinks that the inconsistency he observed in the ratings of the supervisors may be due to insufficient behavioral skills and the experience level of the supervisors. Therefore, a great effort should be exerted in this area to enhance the skills of the supervisors and in turn improve the agents' performance and abilities to deliver satisfactory level of service to STC customers. The researcher will discuss this matter at in the last section of this document.

The table below shows the ratings of the overall evaluation across the 5 different supervisors. The overall ratings were significantly different, which indeed had an influence on the overall ratings. Good scored highest in the overall ratings of the overall evaluation.



A similar story was observed on the overall evaluation since Supervisor 4 consistently gave a high average rating compared to the rest. This high average rating caused the differences among ratings to be significant. Hence, the ANOVA test resulted to significant differences. Supervisors 1-3 and 5 achieved close average ratings which were significantly different to the average rating received by Supervisor 4.

The researcher noticed that about 28% of the total overall evaluations of the elements shown in table 1 were rated as poor and very poor, meaning that 35 calls were rated by the supervisors below good which is considered by the researcher as a serious case that should be reviewed and corrected by the management of the call center by providing efficient supporting systems, comfortable work environment, and proper training materials. The researcher proposes in this respect that the call center management initiates a focus culture change program to enhance the behavioral skills of the agents and supervisors, to keep them acquainted with the services provided by the company.

The researcher included five similar calls in each of the five lists of 25 calls distributed to the supervisors for evaluation in order to determine and analyze the differences and similarities in the supervisors' ratings of these five similar calls based on the customer experience check list elements and point out the range of subjectivity in the ratings if any. Great differences in the ratings of these calls in the view point of the researcher mean that there are great differences in the supervisors' technical and management skills levels.

Analysis of the supervisors' ratings of these calls will enable the researcher to measure their level of awareness and knowledge of customer centricity culture taking into consideration the vital role they should play in building the customer focus concept among the call center agents which will be a very impossible mission if the supervisors themselves are not aware and capable of understanding the importance of this concept to their organization and its significant impact on the customers loyalty and satisfaction.

Cook (2002) showed that managers and supervisors are often as the main obstacle to improve customer experience in any service organization. It is critical to develop a service strategy which ensures the involvement of managers from the start of a customer experience enhancement programs. It is important to stress on the importance of managers and supervisors to be involved on building customer centricity culture and to show them that they are the key to achieve the radical change and enhance the customer focus culture in an organization.

Cook (2002) confirms that the role of the supervisors and direct managers of customer services is very crucial in enhancing the services of the organization and raising it to the level of the services in the leading companies. The researcher thinks that this applies to STC customer care managers especially in the strong competition currently witnessed in the Saudi telecom market and that their role is very essential to improve customers experience and enhance the quality of services. The researcher through this document will investigate and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the call center agents and supervisors and will continue his investigation in document five after collection of the customers' views on the extent of their satisfaction with the call center staff performance through the questionnaire that will be designed and distributed to them for this purpose. The researcher will correlate the findings of this document to the ones that he will derive through document five discussions then he will make his recommendations that will cover all parties and include his remarks on the call center employees and managers performance and the activities they undertake to deliver services to STC's customers along with the point views of the customers who interact with the call centers to obtain the services they need.

Through analysis of the five calls shown in table 2 it appeared to the researcher that similar ratings of the same calls were registered across the five supervisors, except supervisor five as his ratings were the lowest for all the calls. The researcher noticed that the ratings of

supervisor four are consistent across the five calls and that all of the calls were rated highly positive by two or three supervisors and negatively low by the rest. As shown in table 2, call 1 and call 2 were rated as very good or excellent by all the supervisors except supervisor 5 who rated the same calls as very poor. It was noticed that supervisor 5 rated all the calls as very poor except call 4 and call 5.

The researcher noticed inconsistency in the ratings of the five similar calls according to the customer experience check list elements already discussed at the beginning of this document. Some of the similar calls distributed to the supervisors were rated as excellent by the majority of them except supervisor one who rated the same calls as very poor. However, the same supervisor rated one of the calls as very good while three others rated the same call as poor and very poor as shown in table 2.

Supervisors	CALLS									
	First Call		Second Call		Third Call		Fourth Call		Fifth Call	
	Score	Rating	Score	Rating	Score	Rating	Score	Rating	Score	Rating
Supervisor 1	91	Excellent	84	Excellent	57	Poor	70	Very Good	86	Excellent
Supervisor 2	73	Very Good	83	Very Good	48	Very Poor	58	Poor	88	Excellent
Supervisor 3	100	Excellent	64	Excellent	77	Very Good	84	Excellent	46	Very Poor
Supervisor 4	85	Excellent	79	Excellent	84	Excellent	90	Excellent	95	Excellent
Supervisor 5	42	Very Poor	52	Very Poor	33	Very Poor	80	Very Good	88	Excellent

**Table 2: Ratings of supervisor evaluations**

The researcher noticed great differences between the ratings of the supervisors to the five similar calls assigned to each of them. Supervisor 4 rated all the five calls as excellent while supervisor 5 rated calls 1, 2 and 3 as very poor and supervisors 1, 2, and 3 rated calls 1 and 2 as excellent or very good as shown in table 2. The researcher also noticed that call 3 was rated poor and very poor by supervisors 1, 2 and 5 while supervisors 3 and 4 rated the same call as very good and excellent respectively. This apparent subjectivity and differences of rating is due in the point view of the researcher to the insufficient training and poor supervisory skill of some supervisors. Also it seems that the call center management did not concentrate on some major prerequisites such as the technical and supervisory skill and knowledge of the call center practices and procedures when selecting the supervisors of the call center. It seems that empty hands have nothing to give as the researcher has noticed that some supervisors are not qualified enough to evaluate the

agents and determine their level of understanding of the services provided by the company which plays major role in creating positive perception and good reputation of the company among the society.

Cronin (2003) commented that the most important role of the service supervisors are to get more experience in enhancing the customer experience of their service department through proper training and coaching of their staff and to ensure the availability of procedures for the services offered.

Establishing positive customer experience at the STC call center is very crucial step towards enhancing customer loyalty, gaining competitive edge and maximizing the shareholder value. This study suggests that a qualified agent and supervisor who have adequate knowledge of training and skills of customer centricity culture and services procedures and processes represent a strong mechanism to enhance customer psychological attachment to the firm.

The researcher thinks that STC should review the standards of selection of its customer care center's supervisors to ensure that they possess the required skills and knowledge of the call center systems, practices, and procedures as perfect supervision of the front line staff is a very essential task and have great impact on the performance of the call center agents and consequently the customers' experience.

#### **4.2 Answers to the research questions**

The following are answers to the client's provisional research questions:

##### **1) What should we do to help STC become a customer centric entity?**

Bailey (2006) stated that the first setup to become customer centric organization is to define what it means to your company. Rance (2007) added that organization which strive to become customer centric should let the customers say what they buy, how it is designed, configured and packaged, even how much they pay and when they pay.

Based on findings of the researcher and according to what have been stated by Bailey and Rance, STC should improve both the level of courtesy and the quality of speech. However, more focus should be on the quality of speech of its customer care agents. Courtesy can be a personal quality that can be expressed without the

need for training. In order for the agents to improve their natural courtesy even better, they should really value their customers and believe in what they do as a service to them. Quality of speech can be improved by raising the confidence level of the agents, which can be achieved by feeding them not only with the right information and knowledge about all STC products and services, but also the sense of responsibility towards their customers and further customized training in this area to enhance their skills of speech and dialogue conversation.

Analyzing and listening to the customers is a meaningful, but still initial step to fully satisfy them. In order for the company to become customer centric, it must consistently improve its operations and react to the customers' attitudes, also, circulating to the customers and showing them the result of the company reaction to the customers' attitudes (Ricci, 2003).

It appeared to the researcher that STC needs to develop a clear roadmap in order to achieve customer centricity in its call centers. Review of the customer experience check list revealed to the researcher that there is evident lack of clear practices and procedures of providing services and products of the company in addition to the immediate need to consolidate the automatic systems through which the customers are serviced to ensure that they support the agents to achieve the organization's goals. The call center performance indicators should also be reviewed and the front line staff should be well trained to enhance their skills and capabilities pertaining to respect of the customers' time and showing respect and confidence to them during the call. Selection of supervisors is very important as they are greatly relied upon to support the organization to achieve the objectives already discussed. They should be characterized with distinguished technical and managerial skills with the ability to convey the same to front line staff and consequently to the customers of the organization.

## **2) To what extent are STC' call center supervisors and agents customer centric?**

In light of what the researcher has found at the previous section (4.1), two third, one half, one half, and another one half did not assure to the customers that they will do their best to serve them, did not rephrase the inquiry of the customer to confirm customer request, did not ask the customer politely to wait for a while till

they find the right information, and did not thank the customer warmly for dealing with STC at the end of the call respectively.

The researcher noticed from evaluation of the elements of customer experience check list that particularly evaluation of the most important elements such as courtesy and warmly thanking the customer at the end of the call that there are significant differences between the evaluations of these clear elements that need no effort to measure what the agent has provided to the customer of the organization. This makes the researcher review the importance of the competencies of these supervisors and their qualification to occupy these positions. It seemed to the researcher that some of the existing practices should be reconsidered in order to achieve the company's objectives.

It is apparent here that great efforts are to be exerted by the higher management of the company to enforce customer centricity concept among the agents and supervisors through development of clear plans to enhance the technical and administrative operations in the call centers and launching a large focused cultural change program to be steered and followed up by the higher management of the company. Key performance indicators should be set to measure the range of cultural change achieved in these centers and its staff.

### **3) How do STC call center agents treat their customers during the calls and what is the level of customer experience?**

The researcher noticed that the agents have well performed the routine tasks such as the tasks of elements one, two, and three of the customer experience check list but they performed poorly in the complicated tasks that require more effort for example, the agents should improve their skill and capabilities on elements 5 (Rephrasing the inquiry to confirm customer request and avoid making mistakes), 6 (Assuring the customer that the agent will do his best to do whatever is needed) & 8 (Asking the customer to wait for a while to find the right information for his request or problem) of the customer experience elements. The researcher thinks that enhancement of the skill and capabilities of the call center staff is a basic requirement for building a customer centric environment within STC.

**4) Do STC call center agents possess an adequate knowledge of STC products and services?**

According to the ratings, yes they do possess fairly amount of knowledge of STC products and services. However, more new products and services are being offered to the market on a regular basis, and the agents must update their knowledge to include all related information about those new products and services to ensure they can deal with customers in a knowledgeable and professional way.

Referring to the evaluations of the supervisors of some calls subject of this study, the researcher found many shortcomings particularly in the elements that require more investigations and awareness of the services' features such as prices, internet settings and mobile handsets settings where the agents face difficulties and fail to respond to the customers' requests and provide them with the needed information. This may be attributed to two main reasons:

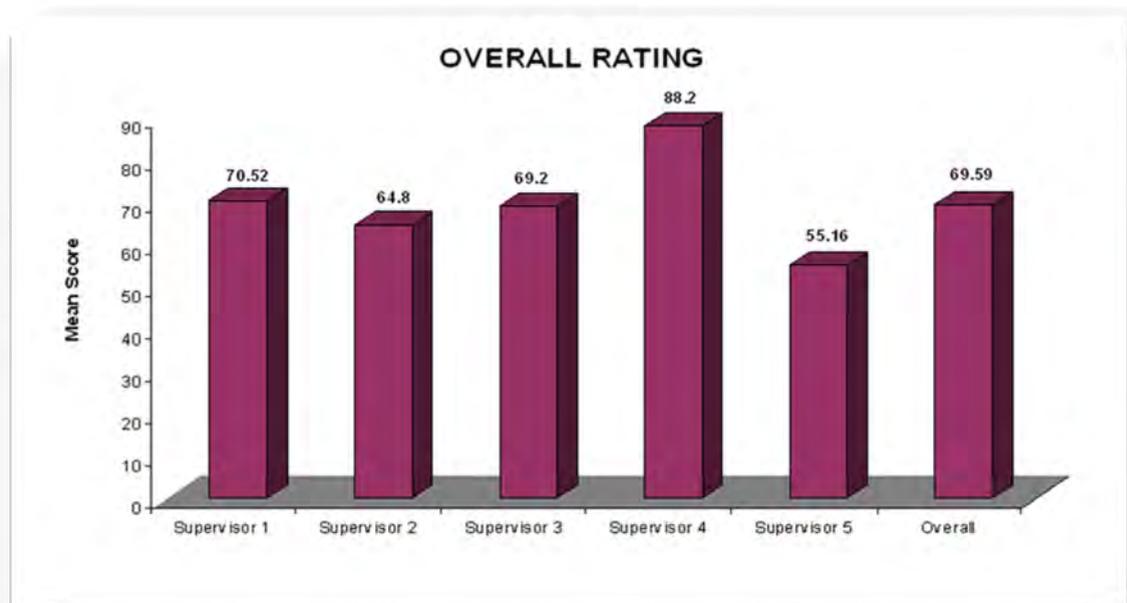
- Lack of efficient automated systems that furnish the agent with the required information to convey it directly to the customer.
- The agents are unknowledgeable of the features or specifications of the offered service either because they did not receive enough training in these services or they were not informed with them.

In order to correct this situation, STC should equip the call centers with high standard systems, clear procedures and skilled training staff. Customer relation management system (CRM) may be one of the solutions that can be relied upon to enhance the performance of agents in the call centers.

The researcher thinks that a clear practice and procedures should be introduced in the call center in addition to an automatically updated system to provide the agents with information about the new products and its features and the changes that will be made to them from time to time so that they keep aware with all products and services of the company.

**5) How capable are STC call center supervisors in coaching, managing, and enhancing the customer centricity awareness of their staff?**

Through study of the above overall rating chart, the researcher noticed that supervisors 1, 2, and 3 gave similar ratings to all of the customer experience elements and customer centricity components and that their ratings ranged from 64 to 70 scores. In the mean time the researcher observed that supervisor 4 gave the highest scores in his ratings which was 88 scores, in comparison to the rest of the supervisors and exceeded the 70 scores average overall rating. Here every employee wishes to be evaluated by this supervisor as he rated all calls with more than 88 scores. Supervisor 5 seems to give the lowest scores in his ratings with a total of 55 scores in comparison to the rest of the supervisors.



These significant differences between the five supervisors' ratings may be attributed to their different skills and understanding of the evaluation elements and the subjectivity in rating. The level of the supervisors' skills seems to be unsatisfactory and their selection for this task may have been made disregarding possession of the management and technical skills and abilities.

The overall rating which did not exceed 70 scores is absolutely unsatisfactory for a company operating in the current strong competition and relies heavily on delivering distinguished services to meet its customers' needs and requirements.

Here, it appeared to the researcher that it is very important for STC to rehabilitate the supervisors and agents of the call centers in order to meet its objectives and fulfill the

customers and shareholders requirements. This rehabilitation is necessary because of the poor performance of the supervisors in the managerial or technical functions that appeared from their evaluations of the five similar calls that are intentionally designed by the researcher to measure the performance of the supervisors in the call center. Accordingly, the standards of nominating supervisors to work in the front line offices should be revised and corrected to ensure selection of the best supervisors who contribute to development of the staff skill, follow up their performance and provide distinguished services to STC customers.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

Call centers are frequently the only customer interface for personal contact in many organizations, and agents as well as supervisors should have a keen interest in customer's responses to the service that such centers deliver. The findings of this document reveal the importance of the customer feedback and experience in these touch points.

Customer centric is concerned with being committed to customers, understanding their needs, creating value, and having the task of delivering positive customer experience as the primary objective. There is a question raised about how to build a culture that reflects these goals at call centers. This document highlights two major areas. First, the strong link to perceived positive customer experience quality indicates that attention to achieving an outcome, via positive interaction with service representatives (agents), is important. Call center supervisors and agents require special skills to identify customer problems, develop and explain solutions, and simultaneously show empathy and friendliness in telephony environment. To do so, the need of specialized training, practice, the right empowerment to solve problems in timely manner, and support from organizational processes and procedures, is to be met.

The second mean by which customer centricity focus might be conveyed concerns the center environment. If, as noted in other studies (De Ruyter and Westzels, 2000; Singh, 2000), call center managers and supervisors continue to emphasize productivity rather than quality, high level of perceived customer orientation are unlikely to follow. Efficiency related performance measures force call center agents to rush the calls and do not give them scope to listen to customers' needs and to concentrate on the individual problem solving that is likely to enhance customer centric culture at those important touch points.

Customer interaction and feedback at call centers provides a direct pathway affective commitment. Fullerton (2003) noted that call center management and agents should seek customers' evaluations of the quality of service delivered by them during the call, and supervisors should monitor the customer satisfaction and generate a frequent report that magnifies the outcome of every and each interaction. Cronin, (2003) added that the most important role of the call center supervisors is to get customer to complain. Customer complaints are well recognized as main source of quality improvement initiatives, and this document suggests that supervisors should develop a mechanism that guarantees that they interact and deal with customers' feedback.

Based on the findings of this study the researcher presents three main pillars which considered to be essential to enhance the level of performance of the agents and supervisors at STC call centers:

1) Processes and procedures

Clear processes and work procedures should be developed and innovated for the front line employees in addition to an effective follow up by the supervisors to ensure that practices and specifications of the new products or services of the company, the skills and knowledge on how to support STC agents to sell and explain the new services as well as new promotions to the callers are communicated to the agents at the call centers. The said information should be mechanized and easy to reach at real time and frequently updated.

2) Systems and support

Systems are the vital factors that drive agents' performance and enable them to undertake their duties perfectly. Accordingly, systems should be reliable and of a high standard and specifications. A technical support team should exist to provide the desired support when necessary in order to avoid losing agents times and frustrating the customers due to unavailability of service. The researcher recommends that STC seriously consider the adoption of CRM system which will ease the job of the agents and keep them knowledgeable of the new services and campaigns as well as serving the customer on time.

3) Human resources

Qualified and skilled managers, supervisors, and agents represent a very important resource that should be available in any successful call center, taking into consideration the sensitivity of these locations being the actual face of the organization. The call center staffs daily deal with hundreds of thousands of customers. You can imagine the negative impact on the reputation and image of the company that will be created should they fail to undertake their responsibilities satisfactorily. Therefore, the researcher emphasizes the importance of good and accurate selection of the agents based on high international standards, technical, and behavioral skills. Managers and supervisors of these call centers should also be carefully selected from the staff of the call center and should be the best in manners and experience so that they can be good leaders with strong characters.

It is known that working in the call centers makes the agents upset, exhausted and discontent due to the hard work environment that requires great effort from the agents in addition to the fears of health effects that may be caused by the continuous use of the headsets. Therefore, agents in the call centers increasingly request transfer to administrative positions particularly in STC.

The researcher will further discuss the above mentioned factors in detail in document five.

#### **4.4 Limitations and further research**

The researcher since the beginning of document one and up to document three has passed through several phases, document three reveals the subject of the study through qualitative approach to explore the call center agents level of customer centricity awareness and the strengths and weaknesses of STC call centers. It was followed by the current document four through which the researcher will study a sample comprising of 125 calls received by the call center agents and evaluated by five supervisors based on a customer experience check list shown in table 1. The researcher made many recommendations already shown in the previous section.

A significant limitation of this document and the previous one is that the customers' points of view were not taken so far. The previous documents have discussed and analyzed the current status of the STC customer care staff and measured their competencies and customer centricity skills against international standards applied in such cases. The

researcher believes that it very essential to take views of the customers who interact with STC call centers and use its services and thoroughly investigate their perceptions and level of satisfaction to the services and treatment they received in these call centers.

Another limitation relates to the studied sample size which needs to be larger and covers different work locations in addition to the need to use focus group tools to validate the results and have wider view of the total population and not be confined to the evaluations of the agents' calls that are conducted by the supervisors.

Further research activities will aim to determine the factors to understand both positive and negative aspects of call center work. The researcher made certain recommendations for future work:

- To study the effects of work organizations on call center operators.
- To study and conduct deeper analysis of the work content at call centers and try to identify the potential stressors.
- To study the effects of opening the opportunity for the females to work at STC call center and review the impact of this initiative in the overall performance of the call center.

As for the next part of the DBA research plan, it is suggested that a sample of participants from population (customers) are interviewed using structured interview process to ascertain the following:

- How far is STC customer-centric from the point view of the customers?
- How do STC's customers view STC call center staff to deliver their requests?
- To what extent do STC call center agents customer-centric from customers' point of view?

An interview will be conducted with the customers who used call center services in addition to a focus group of selected STC customers.

Document five results will complement the results already reached in this document and the full vision will be clarified to the researchers interested in this study. Exploring the point view of customers of the company who use its services and products through call centers will present a complete image for the researchers, concerned people and the similar companies as the internal situation of the company have been studied in addition to the

abilities of the call centers agents to provide distinguished services to STC customers investigated through documents three and four. Document five will continue focusing on the descriptive approach to complete the customers' point of view and consequently complete the circle and present a full image of the level of call centers at STC.

There may be another opportunity for the researchers in this field to develop this document through correlating the overall companywide culture and the subculture of the call center employees and drill down to envisage the similarities and differences among them. They will try to find out the effect of the macro culture of the company on the subculture of the call center and their relations on the customer of Saudi Telecom.

## **5 - Appendices**

### Appendix A: Ratings of agent performance by supervisors

Attribute	Frequency		Supervisor Evaluation
	Yes	No	
<b>Customer Experience Elements</b>			
1. Give name clearly	71%	29%	71% of the agents gave name clearly
2. Greeting the customer properly	86%	14%	86% of the agents greets the customer properly
3. Asking the customer politely about the services that the agent can offer him as 'How can I help you?'	79%	21%	79% of the agents ask the customer politely about...
4. Listening to the customer's information inquiry without interruption	83%	17%	83% of the agents listens to the customer information inquiry
5. Rephrasing the inquiry to confirm customer request and avoid making mistakes	54%	46%	54% of the agents rephrases the inquiry to confirm
6. Assuring the customer that the agent will do his best to do whatever is needed	38%	62%	38% of the agents assure the customers that the agent will do his best...
7. Politely asking the customer for necessary information to identify him (Name of Customer, ID Number, etc.)	61%	39%	61% of the agents politely ask the customers...
8. Asking the customer to wait for a while to find the right information for his request or problem. Wait time should not exceed 30 seconds, after which customer should be notified of the extended time needed	54%	46%	54% of the agents ask the customer to wait for a while...
9. Finding the right information as soon as possible, providing the customer with the correct and sufficient information as fast as possible, getting back to the customer and thanking him for his waiting	74%	26%	74% of the agents find the right information...
10. Asking the customer if there is any other service that the agent can offer to him	74%	26%	74% of the agents ask the customer if there is any other service...
11. Thanking the customer warmly for dealing with Saudi Telecom	62%	38%	62% of the agents thank the customer warmly...
<b>Customer Centricity (B)</b>	<b>TOP 2-BOX</b>		
Courtesy -1= Not courteous at all & 5 = Very courteous	58%		58% of the agents very courteous
Quality of speech (Clarity, pronunciation..): 1 = Very bad & 5 Very good	55%		55% of the agents have at least a very good quality of speech
Overall evaluation: 1= Very bad & 5 =Very good	72%		72% of the agents shows at least a good overall evaluation

## Appendix B: Mean rating distributions by supervisor

### LEGEND:

 Top 1	 Top 2	 Top 3
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CRITERIA	Supervisor					
	1	2	3	4	5	
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ELEMENTS (A)	1. Give name clearly				3.00	3.40
	2. Greeting the customer properly					3.20
	3. Asking the customer politely about the services that the agent can offer him as 'How can I help you?'		3.40			3.40
	4. Listening to the customer's information inquiry without interruption					2.80
	5. Rephrasing the inquiry to confirm customer request and avoid making mistakes					
	6. Assuring the customer that the agent will do his best to do whatever is needed					0.60
	7. Politely asking the customer for necessary information to identify him (Name of Customer, ID Number, etc.)					2.00
	8. Asking the customer to wait for a while to find the right information for his request or problem. Wait time should not exceed 30 seconds, after which customer should be notified of the extended time needed		3.60			3.60
	9. Finding the right information as soon as possible, providing the customer with the correct and sufficient information as fast as possible, getting back to the customer and thanking him for his waiting		13.60			11.20
	10. Asking the customer if there is any other service that the agent can offer to him					
	11. Thanking the customer warmly for dealing with Saudi Telecom	1.60				1.80
CUSTOMER CENTRICITY (B)	Courtesy -1= Not courteous at all & 5 = Very courteous	3.32				3.12
	Quality of speech (Clarity, pronunciation..): 1 = Very bad & 5 Very good					3.08
	Overall evaluation: 1= Very bad & 5 =Very good	7.12				7.36
<b>OVERALL MEAN SCORE</b>		<b>64.80</b>			<b>55.16</b>	

### Appendix C: Call summary

Call Considered for Analysis	Date of the call	Time of the call	Total duration of the call	Call ID	Supervisor Evaluating	CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ELEMENTS (A)											CUSTOMER CENTRICITY (B)			Score
						1. Give name clearly	2. Greeting the customer properly	3. Asking the customer politely ... "How can I help you?"	4. Listening to the customer's information inquiry without interruption	5. Rephrasing the inquiry to confirm customer request and avoid making mistakes	6. Assuring the customer that the agent will do his best to do whatever is needed	7. Politely asking the customer for ... (Name of Customer, ID Number, etc.)	8. Asking the customer to wait for a while ...	9. Finding the right information as soon as possible ...	10. Asking the customer if there is any other service that the agent can offer to him	11. Thanking the customer warmly for dealing with Saudi Telecom	Courtesy -1= Not courteous at all & 5 = Very courteous	Quality of speech (Clarity, pronunciation.): 1 = Very bad & 5 = Very good	Overall evaluation: 1= Very bad & 5 = Very good	
6	16.04.2008	10:43:00	1:55	4	Supervisor1	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	10	20	10	5	2	2	6	<b>70</b>
				39	Supervisor2	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	20	10	5	2	3	8	<b>58</b>
				72	Supervisor3	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	10	0	10	0	4	5	10	<b>64</b>
				99	Supervisor4	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	10	20	10	5	5	5	10	<b>90</b>
				104	Supervisor5	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	10	20	10	0	4	5	6	<b>80</b>
7	16.04.2008	10:00:00	1:24	5	Supervisor1	5	5	5	5	0	5	10	20	10	0	4	4	8	<b>86</b>	
				40	Supervisor2	0	5	5	5	0	5	10	20	10	5	5	5	8	<b>88</b>	
				74	Supervisor3	0	5	5	5	0	5	10	20	10	0	4	5	10	<b>84</b>	
				100	Supervisor4	0	5	5	5	5	5	10	20	10	5	5	5	10	<b>95</b>	
				105	Supervisor5	5	5	5	0	5	5	5	10	20	10	0	5	5	8	<b>88</b>
22411	16.04.2008	16:38:00	2:29	2	Supervisor1	0	5	5	5	5	5	10	20	10	0	3	3	8	<b>84</b>	
				36	Supervisor2	5	5	5	0	5	0	5	0	20	10	5	4	3	6	<b>73</b>
				71	Supervisor3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	20	10	5	5	5	10	<b>100</b>
				96	Supervisor4	5	5	5	5	5	0	5	0	20	10	5	5	5	10	<b>85</b>
				101	Supervisor5	0	5	5	0	5	0	5	0	0	10	0	4	2	6	<b>42</b>
32401	16.04.2008	14:25:00	2:28	1	Supervisor1	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	20	10	0	4	4	8	<b>91</b>	
				37	Supervisor2	5	5	5	5	5	0	5	0	20	10	5	4	4	10	<b>83</b>
				73	Supervisor3	5	5	5	5	0	5	5	10	20	0	0	4	5	8	<b>77</b>
				97	Supervisor4	0	5	5	5	5	0	5	10	20	0	5	5	4	10	<b>79</b>
				102	Supervisor5	0	0	5	5	5	0	5	0	20	0	0	3	3	6	<b>52</b>
32692	17.04.2008	14:12:00	2:51	3	Supervisor1	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	0	0	0	3	3	6	<b>57</b>	
				38	Supervisor2	5	5	5	0	0	5	5	10	0	0	0	3	2	8	<b>48</b>
				75	Supervisor3	5	5	5	5	0	0	5	0	0	10	0	2	3	6	<b>46</b>
				98	Supervisor4	5	5	5	5	0	5	5	10	20	0	5	5	4	10	<b>84</b>
				103	Supervisor5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	8	<b>33</b>

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**Customer Centricity at Saudi Telecom Company (STC)**

**An Investigation of User Perspectives on Customer Centricity**

**At Saudi Telecom Call Center**

**Document Five - Resubmission**

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**Document five is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the Nottingham Trent University for a Doctorate degree in Business Administration**

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## **1 Introduction**

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This chapter consists of five main sections. An overview of Saudi Telecom Company (STC) is discussed, followed by a brief explanation of the researcher's role in and contribution to STC on the subject of this study, customer centricity. In this section the researcher reviews the studies he has undertaken in the four previous documents and the recommendations made in each, with a brief overview of the methodological approach. This will provide a general idea about the subjects already discussed and link them to the study made in this document. The third section is an explanation of the problem being studied and a description of previously undertaken research. In section four the researcher sets out the three strategic questions to be answered through this research. In section five the researcher gives an overview of the document's structure and the topics that will be studied in this document.

### **1.1 An overview of Saudi Telecom Company (STC)**

Saudi Arabia has implemented plans to privatize many of its vital economic sectors that have previously been state run monopolies. One of the first areas targeted by the government was the telecommunication sector and, as a result, the Saudi Telecom Company (STC) was established on 21 April 1998, following Royal Decree No. M/35 and the Council of Ministers' Decision No. 135. This transferred the telecommunications sector from a division of the Ministry of Posts, Telegraphs, and Telephone to a Saudi joint stock company under the name of the Saudi Telecom Company (Al-Anssary, 1999). On 20 April 1998, the basic regulations for the company were approved in accordance with the Council of Ministers' Decision No. 213, and the company started providing telecommunications services throughout the kingdom in May 1998 (Al-Anssary, 1999).

Kotler and Keller (2006) state that companies are classified by the role they play in the target market; leader, challenger, follower, or niche player. They add that 40% of the market is in the hands of a market leader, 30% a market challenger, 20% a market follower, which is a company that is willing to retain its market share without rocking the boat, and the remaining 10% is in the hands of market niche players, who serve small fragmented market segments.

STC began as not only a dominant player in Saudi Arabia, but as the largest and most advanced telecommunications operator in the Middle East. Its challenge is to maintain that

position and establish a global presence. To do so will require a radical transformation from life as a government department.

## **1.2 Background and an overview of the researcher's contribution to the Telecom business environment in Saudi Arabia.**

### **Transition from state to private ownership**

Privatization brought with it competition for the first time. Competition in the Saudi telecommunications industry is currently between the incumbent operator Saudi Telecom Company (STC), Mobily and Zain in the mobile and broadband services, and Go in the fixed and broadband services. The model for attacking incumbents has been well defined in the UK and USA, and the level of competition will become ever fiercer each year. It is critical to understand that the battle will be partially over product capability but much more over customer service.

Shaw (2005) states that service companies such as telecommunication operators compete to acquire customers' satisfaction and loyalty. He adds that companies should transform from product centric organizations to customer centric ones to ensure that all their activities are focused on customers and that their services meet and exceed customer expectations.

STC's Strategic Annual Report (2008) reveals that the aim of the customer centricity program at Saudi telecom is to create a customer centric culture among its employees and direct all the processes and procedures within the company toward the customers' needs and desires. STC had formed a steering committee to supervise its plan to facilitate the transformation to a customer-focused organization, of which the researcher was a member of that committee and head of the culture change and transformation team.

### **Initial research**

When the researcher first participated in the main committee as one of the key and active members, it was as someone with no experience in customer centricity. J. R. Galbraith's book "Designing the Customer-Centric Organizations" gave the researcher a foundation of the theory and its impact on an organization. In addition, the researcher attended several relevant workshops and seminars outside Saudi Arabia, sharing these experiences with various

attendees to build understanding. This knowledge, coupled with personal observations and further reading, enabled the planning and implementation of an initial programme for STC.

### **STC as pioneer**

The planned transformation of the industry from state to private ownership in Saudi Arabia meant that many other companies in the Kingdom watched STC's pioneering of customer centricity with active interest. Its first customer centric program was seen to be producing significant results and gaining a good reputation. The researcher's experience and knowledge acquired in heading the STC's groundbreaking culture change team attracted attention and invitations from many companies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia keen on benefiting from this experience. Accordingly, the researcher delivered lectures on customer centricity at STC to many firms, such as Saudi Electricity Company and Saudi Water Company, and advised several service oriented companies to help them to utilize the experience of STC and implement their own customer centric models, taking into consideration the local social environment, customs, and traditions. The customer centric program at STC is considered the first professionally applied program in Saudi Arabia.

### **Internal communication in STC**

The STC house magazine is a key medium for communicating policy and motivational messages from senior management to the whole company. The researcher had a number of articles published over several years, and all of these highlighted the importance of the interaction between front line call center agents and customers, and the need for properly directing, training, supporting, and motivating agents in line with the needs of the customer centric policy. English translations of these articles are shown in appendix 1.

### **Building on this foundation through the DBA.**

The researcher fully recognizes that, successful though the initial programme has been, it is only the initial step in a long journey to transforming STC from a government department to a market leader through customer centricity. Through the studies involved in this DBA, the researcher will monitor the quality of service delivered by STC call center agents according to a scientific framework developed through what was learned from readings and discussions. It

will gauge the level of actual customer experience and perception toward the services offered and delivered through these call centers' interactions. Based on the learning from the DBA and the findings of the research, recommendations, feedback, and suggested actions that need to be taken will be submitted to STC management.

### **Why study customer centricity at Saudi Telecom?**

The changing expectations of the Saudi consumer concerning telecommunications services will be the single most important driver of Saudi Telecom's transformation in the coming years. Shaw (2005) believes that a customer centric transformation will require changes in organization, processes, thought of staff, and underlying technologies, but will ultimately help create a significant competitive advantage for the organization. This study of customer centricity at STC aims to highlight and investigate the sustainability of customer centricity's competitive advantage in Saudi Telecom contact centers and discuss its rationale and benefits.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not an exception to these global developments. The Kingdom opened its market to competition and privatized 30% of the previously publicly owned Saudi Telecommunication Company. The stakes were tremendous for Saudi Telecom and it is currently facing competition from new entrants Mobily and Zain. Both operators gained remarkable market share of around 51% not only due to their aggressive pricing but also because of some of the unsatisfied Saudi Telecom customers who were waiting for a new competitor (CITC, 2010).

The recent advances in information and telecommunication technologies present opportunities as well as threats to telecom operators. Cook (2002) states that customers want it all; cheaper solutions that are tailored to them, supported via seamless experiences in contact centers, and retail and online shops.

With more competition coming in and defensive multiple-play solution bundle offerings emerging, Saudi Telecom will find it more and more difficult to protect its best customers. Customer centricity will take on a different meaning for Saudi Telecom in this new era. Jay (2005) states that customer centricity is not another management fad but a strategy for making its best customers less sensitive to competitive offers by giving them a more compelling reasons to stay with Saudi Telecom.

In the same context, Shah *et al.* (2006) add that the business community has only recently realized the importance of customer centricity. He believes that less than 20% of marketing organizations among the Top 1000 global enterprises have evolved and added the appropriate processes and characteristics. The same report states that by the year 2007, marketers who devote at least 50% of their time to advancing customer centricity will achieve a marketing ROI that is at least 30% greater than that of rivals who lack such an approach.

Hopefully this research will greatly assist private Saudi companies, including STC, and government sector divisions looking at privatization to plan and be prepared for establishing a customer centric organization that focuses on customer service through the formation of task forces and teams. They will take care of customer needs and enhance the quality of service in order to be able to meet the fierce competition and survive in the marketplace, taking into consideration that these local companies will compete with international organizations, especially since Saudi Arabia has recently joined the World Trade Organization (WTO).

This research will add a strategic dimension, particularly in this phase in Saudi Arabia, which will enhance the knowledge of decision makers at the private and government levels with the importance of applying the customer centric approach, starting with building the organizational structures, procedures, practices, and regulations as well as a customer centric culture among the customer facing staff.

### **1.3 Problem discussion and previous research undertaken**

Since the start of document one in January 2007, the purpose in undertaking this research has been to gain an understanding on the level of customer centricity at STC by using fronts such as call center agents as the focus of the study.

As has been said, competition in the Saudi telecommunication market is becoming fiercer as all telecom operators are looking to increase their market share through attractive promotions and pricing mechanisms. Customers have more alternatives and choices. Number portability of mobile services has been allowed by law for two years, which makes it very easy for customers to switch providers the next day if they are badly treated by their current provider.

## **Overview of STC Call Centers and their activity**

STC currently provides telecom services to its customers through customer service offices, contact centers, STC's website, and other means.

The 2006 STC annual report shows that the total manpower of actual contact centers is around 3000 employees working round the clock shifts, receiving up to 1,000,000 calls daily. The front end Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) automatically processes 80% of these, while the agents handle the remaining 20%. In addition, more than 700,000 contacts are serviced through a text interface, or Short Message System (SMS) as it is more widely known in Saudi Arabia. Performance key indicators demanding high standards are applied in the call centers to report to management on the standards of service being delivered to STC customers.

The STC call center is the area where an exceptional customer impression should be created to reflect the credibility and good reputation of the company. Call center employees and their supervisors should be the key players in the delivery of STC services. Their warm and welcoming attitude should capture each customer's interest and nurture their desire to continue using STC services. The experience should spawn positive word of mouth from and between customers about the services delivered to them.

## **The STC challenge**

The problem and challenge for Saudi Telecom Company (STC) is to research and understand how to upgrade the performance of these front line agents to deliver a consistent best quality of service experienced by each and every customer.

STC management has recognized the degree of customer satisfaction being achieved through periodic reports on the quality of customer services encountered at STC touch points. Company management has decided to improve the level of customer centric awareness across all company sectors, especially among the front line employees. They hired companies specializing in this field and designed a comprehensive program that assures the implementation of such an aspiration. The customer centricity program started four years ago and limited achievements have been seen by STC customers, especially in the performance of call center agents.

## **The Contribution of the DBA through the researcher**

The knowledge gained through this DBA will be a major contributor in achieving the strategic company target of being a market leader through excellence in customer centricity.

### **Defining customer centricity**

Customer centricity is defined throughout this report as "aligning the resources of your organization to effectively respond to ever changing needs of the customers while building mutually profitable relationship" (Bailey, 2006, pp. 3-16). It is therefore a tool for organizational development via workforce development. Thompson (2004) believes that the retention of existing customers is considered to be one of the priorities in business. He adds that selling to the existing customers is nine times more profitable than acquiring new ones. For example, many banks find that the top 30% of the customers that they have make up 100-150% of their total profitability (Zeithaml, Pasuraman, and Berry, 1990).

This DBA is structured to comprise six separate documents. In the following paragraphs the researcher will describe documents one to four, which have already been completed and submitted. This script itself is the introduction to document five, whilst document six will comprise the researcher's reflections on what he has learned and how he has benefited from undertaking and completing the DBA.

### **Document one**

The researcher discusses the importance of this study, briefly explains its primary objectives, and reviews the current situation of STC in the Saudi market.

The introductory chapter contains a literature review on customer centricity and the concepts discussed in the research such as customer experience. This document sets out the main questions that the research will endeavor to answer through this study. Some of the political and ethical limitations that might be faced when undertaking this study are also flagged.

### **Document two**

The researcher discusses most of the important aspects of Saudi Telecom, such as company information and market circumstances. This document addresses the most important concepts

of the study, namely customer centricity and its importance to organizations, positive customer experiences and its role in the company's success, and the effect of employee satisfaction on the organization's performance.

In this document some of the linkages are explored between these concepts and their effects on each other and the organization, especially on the customer service side.

The researcher has designated a conceptual framework for this document. The four main topics that are discussed in this document are customer centricity, the role of customer experience, the role of employee satisfaction, and a review and evaluation of the contribution made in this study area.

The researcher concludes this document with his recommendations on the approach he will adopt to complete the subsequent studies, particularly the recommended approach for the methodology he suggests for completing the study.

### **Document three**

This document sets out the research recommendations qualitatively.

The first step of this research process involved studying the interaction between the agents of STC call centers and their customers in order to answer the proposed research questions. This document explains why conversational qualitative analysis was the proper approach to complete the research.

In this document ten pre-recorded calls between the call center agents and the customers are selected. Paul (1999) states that conversational analysis of the calls between the agent and the customer was deemed to be suitable qualitative approach, accordingly, the researcher has adopted it in this document, as it provided qualitative analytic descriptions of the organization (inter) action, abstracted from the content of these actions, which could not be achieved through the other approaches discussed in this document. In this document it would be possible to envisage and understand the quality of customer service and treatment being delivered by STC call centers through the evaluation of the conversations between the agents and the customers, and comparison with the most recent benchmarks used to enhance the customer experience.

In this document the customer experience framework developed by Peppers and Rogers (1996) is adopted. The framework contained fourteen criteria that an agent's call should be evaluated upon. The process used throughout this document was to randomly select ten pre-recorded calls from an STC call center and evaluate each. This was called the "moment of truth" using conversational analysis. Each call was evaluated based on the customer experience framework developed by Peppers and Rogers (1996)

Smith (2006) states that it is about having people who like people - people who have amiable personalities, and are willing to engage a customer and get beyond the formalities. He adds that the positive customer experience will surely break down if the different communities that make up an organization do not understand the role they must play to build and maintain it.

At the end of this document the current research leads to some important outcomes.

#### **Document four**

The purpose here was to investigate the level of awareness about customer centricity among STC call center supervisors and agents through a piece of quantitative research. A proposed comprehensive plan and set of recommendations was developed to improve the quality and skills of the call center supervisors and agents. The research discussed three main concepts and the relationships between them as they influence each other, namely customer centric call centers, call center performance, and customer satisfaction.

In this document a group of pre-recorded calls from the call center's incoming calls is selected and analyzed quantitatively based on the customer experience dimensions that are discussed in document two. The sample of this research was 125 pre-recorded customer calls made to call center agents. These calls were distributed to five call center supervisors. The analysis of these calls by the call center supervisors tried to establish the level of customer centric awareness among call center agents, and to develop a comprehensive plan and recommendations to improve the quality and skills of the agents and their managers based on the understanding of the relationship between the agents and the customers gained through the above analysis.

The purpose of this document was to answer the questions of this research, namely the following:

- What should STC do to become a customer centric entity?
- To what extent are STC's call centers' agents customer centric?
- How do STC call center agents treat their customers during the calls and what is the level of customer experience delivered?
- Do STC call center agents possess an adequate knowledge of STC products and services?
- To what extent is STC's call centers' supervisors customers centric?
- Are STC call center supervisors capable of coaching, managing and enhancing the customer centricity awareness of their subordinates?

The research concluded that qualified managers and supervisors represent a very important resource that should be available in any successful call center, taking into consideration the sensitivity of these locations being the actual face of the organization.

The research and evaluation of the prerecorded calls revealed noticeable weaknesses in the supervisors' skills related to customer centricity and detected clear variation between their capabilities. It appeared that some supervisors had significant weakness in some dimensions of customer centricity such as reliability, responsiveness, and proactivity. It was noticed that the results of the analysis indicated that supervisors would benefit from additional training to learn how to be more objective in their rating and reduce the range of subjectivity. This can be achieved through management, supervision, and staff evaluation training programs.

The research emphasized the importance of selecting both managers and supervisors based on international standards and technical and behavioral skills.

The researcher included five similar calls in each of the five lists of twenty-five calls distributed to the supervisors for evaluation. The purpose was to analyze and determine the differences and similarities in the supervisors' ratings of these five similar calls based on the customer experience check list elements, and to observe the range of subjectivity, if any, in the ratings.

The research showed great disparity in the ratings of these calls, which in turn showed that there were great differences in the supervisors' technical and management skill levels. Analysis of the supervisors' ratings of these calls enabled the researcher to measure the level

of their awareness and knowledge of the concept of customer centrality. This would clearly show their fitness for the vital role they should play in building customer focus among the call center agents. This will be an impossible mission if the supervisors themselves are not aware and capable of understanding the importance of this concept to their organization and its significant impact on customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Cook (2002) confirms that the role of the supervisors and direct managers in customer service is crucial in enhancing the services of the organization and raising it to the level of the services in the leading companies. The researcher thinks that this applies to STC customer care managers, especially with the strong competition currently in the Saudi telecom market, and that their role is essential in improving customer experience and enhancing the quality of services. Through this document the researcher investigated and analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the call center agents and supervisors, and continued his investigation in document five after collecting the customers' views on their satisfaction with the call center staff's performance through a questionnaire that he designed and distributed to them for this purpose.

The researcher noticed inconsistency in the ratings of the five similar calls according to the customer experience checklist elements already discussed at the beginning of this document. Of the supervisors to whom similar calls were distributed, the majority rated these calls as excellent, but one supervisor rated the same calls as very poor. However, the same supervisor rated one of the calls as very good while three others rated the same call as poor. This apparent subjectivity in the difference of rating calls was judged by the researcher to be due to insufficient training and poor supervisory skills of some supervisors. It also seemed that the call center management did not concentrate on some major prerequisites such as the technical and supervisory skills and knowledge of the call center's practices or procedures of various products when selecting the supervisors of the call center. It is a case of empty hands having nothing to give, as it was seen that some supervisors were not qualified enough to evaluate the agents and determine the level of their understanding of the services provided by the company and so could not play any role in creating a good reputation for the company.

Cronin and Joseph (2003) comment that the most important role of the service supervisors is to enhance the performance of their service department through the proper training and

coaching of their staff and to ensure the availability of procedures for the services offered. In this way they will enhance customer experience.

Following application of the research analysis tools used in this document, the researcher's findings were identified in relation to the research questions stated earlier. There were certain strategic conclusions in this document that seemed very important for the organization to work on, such as developing action plans to move the company along the customer centric approach.

At the end of this document it is recommended that clear automated procedures and processes should be introduced in the call center and that these should be updated automatically to provide the agents with information about STC's various services, features, and any other changes made.

#### **1.4 The research questions**

Answering several questions was important to understanding how to improve customer centricity among STC call center employees. Many of the pragmatic questions surrounding customer centricity at STC have already been addressed in both documents three and four: To what extent is the STC call center's agents and supervisors customer centric? How do STC call center agents treat STC customers during the calls? Do STC agents and supervisors possess an adequate knowledge of STC products and services?

The research topic in this study lends itself to a mixture of empirical, normative, and conceptual questions.

In documents three and four the research does not explore the viewpoints of the customers who used STC call centers nor gauges and determines whether the level of service quality delivered to them by the call center's agents met their expectations and needs. In the previous documents the research addresses the analysis of the prerecorded calls between the agents and customers to evaluate the level of the agent's performance during the call and evaluate the call center supervisors based on their ratings and the analysis of agents' calls with customers. Necessary recommendations are proposed in both documents. This document focuses on customers who frequently use call center services and get their opinions through both qualitative and quantitative measures.

In this document, three strategic questions are determined and are expected to be answered in this study through the above mentioned research approaches:

**Question one:** How do STC customers categorize and value the service experience delivered by the contact centers' agents?

The objective of this strategic question is to determine the many factors that directly contribute to enhancing the customer's experience when using an STC contact center.

Through this question, it was intended to obtain facts about the nature and quality of the service delivered by STC call center agents while they are servicing the customers and delivering the required services at the so called "the moment of truth".

**Question two:** To what extent do STC customers consider STC as a customer centric organization?

This question will help explore the customers' opinion of STC and how they evaluate or consider STC to be a customer centric organization that focuses on its customers, and how to build on customers' needs through its services and operations. Answers to this question will be reached through analysis of seven main dimensions related to the customer centric skills of the call center agents and easy access to the call center, which will be discussed in detail in chapters 3 and 4.

**Question three:** What do STC customers think STC should do to become a customer focused/centric entity?

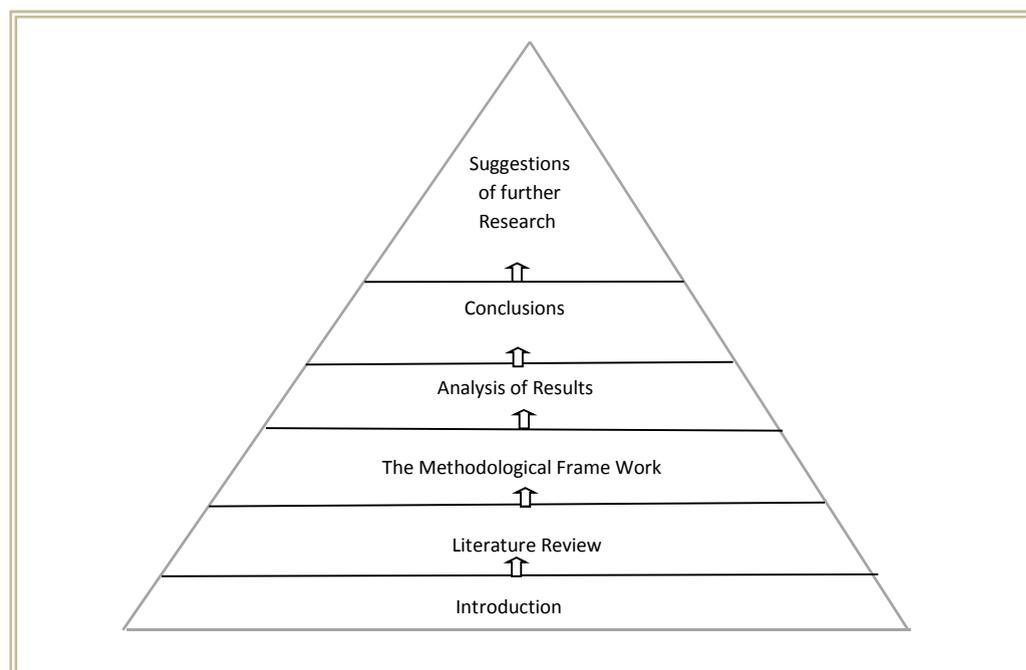
This is a strategic question to understand how to draw the strategic roadmap of STC in order to move it to a new level in taking care of and delighting its customers. The answers will be based on the input of the customers and their points of view as well as their wants and needs.

### **1.5 The structure of document five**

Document five is comprised of six chapters. In the first chapter the researcher sheds light on his contribution to the telecom business environment in Saudi Arabia, discussing the problem and submitting a brief review of Saudi Telecom Company (STC) using current selected

figures and statistics about the company. The structure of this document can be seen in Figure 1.1.

The literature review and the discussion of some major theoretical literature as well as major concepts in this document are presented in chapter 2. In chapter 3 the methodology and data collecting methods as well as the discussions and analysis of the research questions are presented. Chapter 4 contains the analysis of the results of both the field research's quantitative and qualitative studies. The fifth and the sixth parts of this study contain conclusions and discussions, general recommendations and recommendations to the organization. The seventh part includes limitations and suggestions for future research.



**Figure (1.1): Research process components**

## 2.1 Introduction

In the Introduction, the researcher set out the challenge for STC to respond to the new competitive environment in which it now finds itself. The researcher believes that a transformation of the organization to one that is customer-centric is fundamental to STC's future success. In this literature review, the researcher will begin by seeking out reading that supports his position. He will then go on to define customer-centricity, and reference this to the goals of his research, as set out in Section 1.4. This will lead to an understanding of the relationship between customer-centricity and the organization itself and from this to the importance of internal marketing in delivering the message of change to the individuals who comprise the organization, and the re-shaping of their culture and attitudes. From here the researcher will describe his reading related to the key behaviors of a customer-centric organization, how to build and implement such, and finally how to assess the effectiveness of the organization as it changes and moves through the transformation.

## 2.2 An overview of customer-centricity

In the introduction to the literature review, the researcher stated that transformation to a customer-centric organization is fundamental to the future success of STC. The researcher has therefore set out in this section to review and learn from literature that will provide an overview and then a detailed definition of customer-centricity. Additionally the researcher will review appraisals of contemporary company experience and industry best practice. The results are revealed in this section.

Drucker (1954, p.164) states that "it is the customer who determines what a business is, what it produces, and whether it will prosper or not." In the classical analysis of marketing, *Marketing Myopia*, Levitt (1960) posited that customer-centric definitions of a business are superior to product-centric definitions. Drucker (1954), Levitt (2004), and Kotler (1967) all advocate customer-centricity as being so integral to the daily operations of an organization that every initiative, strategy and program is directly driven by the customers' preferences, requirements and needs. In effect, an organization becomes a lean provider of customer responsiveness and

mirrors back to customers across all segments what their greatest preferences and needs are.

True customer-centricity is exceptionally difficult to attain and requires a focus on continual improvement through measured results (Shah *et al.* 2006) as well as a strong focus on changing the culture of an organization (Sharma, Mathur, and Dhawan, 2009). Product-centric organizations that are often highly driven by engineering, innovation and technology tend to use the term 'customer-centricity' in an attempt to persuade prospects, customers, channel partners and distributors that their products are, in fact, produced based on their needs (Galbraith, 2005). He adds that this consistent practice of attempting to re-label a product-centric organization as one that is customer-centric often results in customer expectations over time being met marginally, if at all.

Shah *et al.* (2006) state that in most organizations there is a continuous political battle between being product-centric or customer-centric with neither side entirely dominating at any given time. This presents a hybrid model of customer-centricity that many organizations founded by engineering-minded leaders begin to realize only when their organizations face severe price competition and commoditization (Galbraith, 2005). Tomovic *et al.* (2010) confirm that the greater the focus on pure technology, the greater the need for exceptional levels of continual innovation, often managed as a Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) process. Shah *et al.* (2006) add that purely product-centric companies are also more dependent on their platform partners' continued commitment to research and development, relying on them to ensure a high degree of customer-centricity in their product designs.

Researchers and theorists have often defined customer-centricity through analyses and comparisons to product-centric organizations. Starting with a comparison of the philosophies between product or customer centricism, the former is entirely focused on tangible, measurable attributes (Shah *et al.* 2006), while the latter is entirely focused on how to lead the customer's decision-making process to the product and effective customer service (Galbraith, 2005). Crosby and Johnson (2006) reveal that organizations credit this philosophical difference with entirely different approaches to innovation and new product development where the customers' preferences, perceptions, and unmet needs are taken into account in the new product development and introduction process. Tomovic *et al.* (2010) state that customer-centric organizations also seek to define their organizations by their alignment with customers'

future goals and objectives.

Customer-centric organizations have a business orientation built more on relationships with significantly less of a reliance on transactions (Sharma, Mathur, and Dhawan, 2009). Galbraith (2005) state that product-centric organizations, on the other hand, are highly transaction driven and reliant on the product features and functionalities of their systems to differentiate their products from the competitors'. He adds that this transaction mindset, coupled with the eventual commoditization of dimensions, can often lead to highly competitive market spaces that are eventually not profitable. In the frameworks that Kim and Mauborgne (2004) define, this would be equivalent to creating a 'red' ocean where profitability is often sacrificed in the name of increased unit volume over time. They indicate that spending purely on research and development is no guarantee to finding highly profitable, or 'blue' ocean, markets as it requires a more creative and unique perspective to find opportunities in the market and fully capture them based on insights from customers with unmet needs. This aspect of blue ocean strategies being driven by customer perspectives, preferences, unmet needs and wants further underscores its inherent value as well as its usefulness from a strategic perspective. The ability to find uncontested markets, which is a key aspect of blue ocean strategies, is predicated on how customer-centric an organization is (Kim and Mauborgne, 2004). They add that the concept of a blue ocean strategy is one of finding an untested market space and exploiting it not through massive amounts of research and development spending but through the development of innovative approaches to anticipating and responding to current and future customer needs. As a result, blue oceans (viz., uncontested markets) are often found by more customer-centric organizations instead of those that are product-focused and organized around transactions. Companies that have a high reliance on product-centric approaches when managing their businesses run the risk of entering red oceans (markets where price is used as a differentiator and a loss in profitability is common) (Kim and Mauborgne, 2004).

Selden and Colvin (2004) state that customer-centricity effectively sets the stage and mindset for embracing and even aggressively seeking out change in the name of customers' needs. They added that customer-centric organizations often have an organizational structure that reflects on how their customers think, morphing their organizational structures into segment and market based organizations. Examples of this include Dell Computer Corporation's focus on small and medium-sized businesses, universities and enterprises.

Chakravarthy and Lorange (2007) state that customer-centricity will also dictate whether an organization will be myopic and concentrate only on the internal factors critical for its own success, and in so doing perpetuate an inward-centric mentality, or concentrate on external factors and its accountability in delivering results to the customers. Removing outdated procedures that may get in the way of listening to customers, getting rid of outdated ideas on how to manage customer service, replacing obsolete support and service programs and removing any and all factors that can deter the customer data driving innovation must be addressed by senior management for lasting change to occur (Chakravarthy and Lorange, 2007). Zemke (2003), Peppers and Rogers (2008) and Cook (2008) all agree that it is an organization's top-level management that makes customer centricism a reality and success. They add that the company's leadership must be genuinely committed to change and must use all the tools at its disposal, including computer applications, to monitor the numerous factors that contribute to making the organization successful. They confirm that top-level managers must be open to innovation and experimentation and listen to their employees and customers, and leaders must make the hard decisions that permit customer centricism to become more than a theory. In evaluating the differences between product-centric and customer-centric organizations, Nolan (2009) states that the use of performance metrics is markedly different. He adds that the product-centric organizations focus on the profitability per product line, costs, and P/L by product group, as well as a focus on getting as many products out as possible in the shortest amount of time. This product-centric focus tends to push out any metrics having to do with customers and, as a result, often leads to bundling products, attempting to overstate the performance and value of features and the inevitable reliance on price over value. Nolan (2009) stresses that customer-centric organization metrics are more attuned to lifetime customer values, customer satisfaction measures (including the use of a customer-centricity index), and the development of ongoing customer relationships that are reflected in lifetime customer equity.

Kim and Mauborgne (2004), together with Nolan (2009) agree that over time, product-centric organizations tend to celebrate milestones that are focused entirely on the organization, with a new product launch being a critical one, instead of celebrating a customer's first use of the product or, better yet, the first customer satisfaction survey or questionnaire received with a perfect score.

Bailey (2006) adds that the first step toward becoming a customer-centric organization is to define what this means to your organization. He defines customer-centricity as "aligning the resources of your organization to effectively respond to the ever-changing needs of the customer while building a mutually profitable relationship."

Strikwerda and Stoelhorst (2009) believe that the differences between product-centric and customer-centric organizations become evident in how information and knowledge is used. In customer-centric organizations knowledge and intelligence are used to make every interaction with the customer as insightful and useful as possible. In conclusion, Shah *et al.* (2006) state that customer-centric organizations are operated to effectively and efficiently address requirements, preferences and expectations of their customers over time.

Strikwerda and Stoelhorst (2009) believe that, at best, product-centric organizations struggle to keep up and at times mimic the processes, systems, and procedures of customer-centric organizations yet find it difficult to scale up over the long-term. They state that ultimately the greatest differentiators a company has over the long-term are the value of its customer relationships through such touch points as call centers and the depth of insight they can provide, insights into how the organization can be improved and, ultimately, how loyalty can be attained. Studies by Reichheld and Detrick (2003), however, indicate that once an organization has been able to attain a high degree of customer loyalty, its services and customer acquisition costs drop significantly. They confirm that loyalty, when systematically and consistently pursued through the use of programs and a continual strengthening of the reciprocal relationships between companies and their customers, can have a very significant long-term financial impact on the organization in the form of cost reductions.

As a result of this reading, the researcher was able to identify STC's existing culture as being primarily product-centric, and to contrast this with the company's strategic goal of being customer-centric. This enables the researcher to begin to scope out the way to the required transformation.

### **2.3 The importance of customer-centricity to organizational effectiveness**

A key to achieving that transformation is the re-alignment of the organization. In this section, the researcher seeks to understand the links between the organization and the achievement of

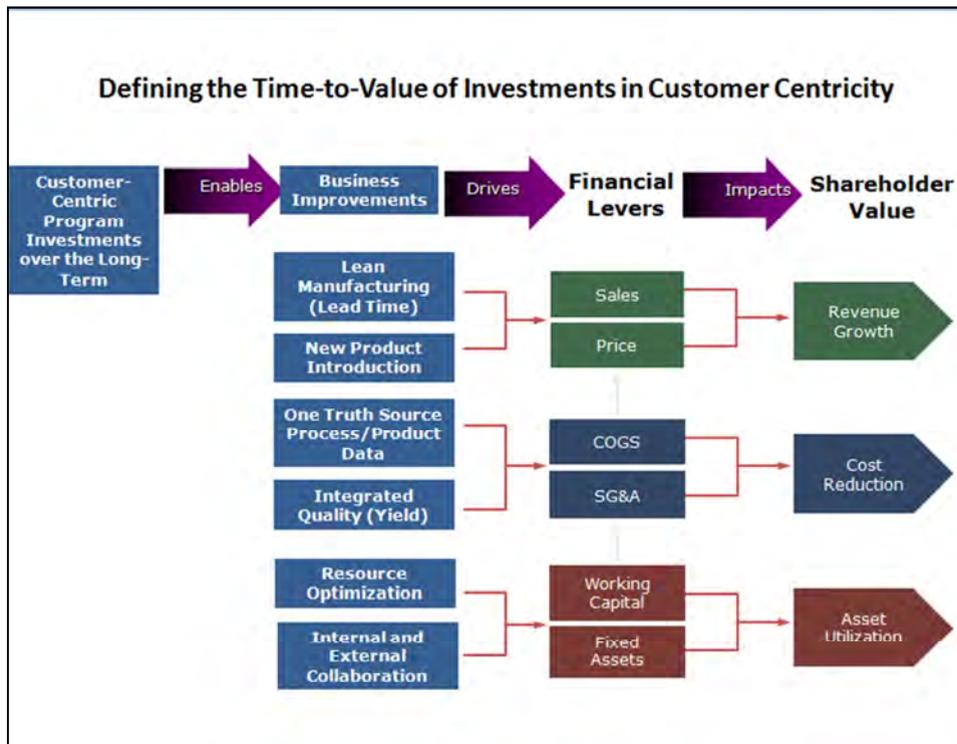
customer-centricity.

The measurable results of a customer-centric mindset often emanate from financial investment in business process improvements that are directly made as a result of the customers' unmet needs, preferences and requirements. These types of investments often occur at a very fundamental, systemic level in organizations in order to make their entire series of databases, systems and programs all align to the needs of customers (Reychav and Weisberg, 2009). The need to make customer-centricity a foundational element in any process improvements made is directly tied to eventual customer loyalty and achieved long-term cost reductions (Reichheld, Markey Jr., and Hopton, 2000). Investing in driving up loyalty by getting key customer criteria taken care of from a process standpoint can not only make an organization easier to do business with, but can also increase loyalty as well (Reichheld and Detrick, 2003).

As *Harvard Business Review* elaborates: "By describing the landscape of unmet customer needs and analyzing where new offerings have worked before, you can chart a path that will produce successful innovations time after time" (Anthony, Eyring, and Gibson 2006, p. 31).

An APQC (2001) report reveals that a customer-centric company focuses on the processes and technology that support and enhance a customer-centric strategy. They realize that process and technology changes are the cornerstone of becoming a truly customer-centric organization. In the same context, Shah *et al.* (2006) add that the true essence of the customer-centric paradigm lies not in selling services or products but rather in creating value for both the customer and the company. In other words, customer-centricity is related to the process of dual value creation.

Shook (2009) believes that customer-centricity plays a very critical role in organizational effectiveness, one that impacts the return on investment and hence shareholder value. Figure 2.1 shows the relationships of these factors and highlights why it is so critical for customer-centricity to drive organizational effectiveness investment strategies.



**Figure 2.1: Evaluating the value chain of time-to-value investments in customer-centricity**

Source: Based on analysis of Shah *et al.* (2006)

Dyer and Nobeoka (2000) and Shah *et al.* (2006) agree that improving organizational effectiveness begins by taking the perspectives and insights from customers and acting on them. In the case of such service providers as telecom providers who rely on call centers to capture orders as well as customer insights, being able to manage the variation in orders for off-the-shelf versus build-to-order, or highly customized services, is absolutely critical. As Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) note, today customers buy more than just a product; personalization and customization are necessary. Eric and Linda (2006) explain that a customer-centric organization sees customers as individuals, men and women who make their own lifestyle choices and who come from a variety of backgrounds. They added that marketing managers must look at the varied cultures and subcultures that make up the whole that is the marketplace. In the same context, Peltier *et al.* (2006) add that individual consumers will demand certain goods and services. Their inquiries will further stimulate the creation of new business models and permit companies to grow and eventually expand in new and possibly undreamed of directions. Shook (2009) states that customer-centric organizations

therefore mark excellence in understanding and reacting to changing market needs from a customer's perspective. Dyer and Nobeoka (2000) and Shah *et al.* (2006) conclude that customer-centric organizations have fully integrated processes that tie in customer understanding with all business functions. Processes in these organizations are also perfectly consistent and drive customer satisfaction and loyalty.

A Booz Allen Hamilton (2003) report stresses that companies must address customer needs and preferences across several areas, including target segments, local markets, shopping occasions and service categories. To deliver flexible offerings, companies are required to address four key steps: understanding target customers and their wants, needs and preferences; developing deeper insight into their customers' interactions; leveraging these insights to tailor products and services to the needs of target customers; and building a team of skilled sales employees and robust support systems and processes that can provide the level of service that meets different customers' needs. Reichheld and Detrick (2003) stress that the impact of customer-centricity on organizations ultimately makes them more profitable not only from the loyalty effect aspect, but also through their more effective and efficient processes in addressing customer needs.

As a result of the learning from the reading described in this section, the researcher understands that understanding and acting on customer requirements is fundamental to reshaping an organization so as to become customer-centric.

#### **2.4 Service quality and internal marketing**

Given the conclusion to 2.3 above that change has to be achieved by re-focusing and re-aligning the organization based on customer needs, then the researcher's next step must be to review literature pertinent to understanding ways of capturing the hearts and minds of the employees, and in particular, the role of internal marketing, and how service quality can be embedded in the transformed organization. The results of this reading are described below.

Baron and Harris (2003) confirm that service quality in organizations is considered to be as an antecedent to customer satisfaction.

In services, customer satisfaction takes place during the moment of truth – when the customer comes in contact with a front-line employee, such as in call center (Lewis and Entwistle,

1990). They add that at that moment of truth, the quality of provided service in the customer's judgment is the result of the discrepancy between customers' expectations and perceptions.

The importance of service has increased due to co-production within customers. They hold greater knowledge and skill to help create products and services (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000), therefore placing greater emphasis on the process of delivering good service quality.

The importance of service quality continually increases as more emphasis is placed on meeting the expectations of the customer. As the client increases the amount of involvement, it is more likely the individual will recognize flaws in the service provided. The effects of the miscues will vary depending upon the previous preconceived images of the firm by the customer. In order to handle this, the organization must understand what the customer expects, how he expects to receive it, and the opinion held by this individual prior to the service experience. Traditional marketing techniques must provide realistic goals that can be obtained by the organization (Gronroos, 2002).

Barney (1991) believes that traditionally, organizations focus on the technical quality of their services and products or simply what needs are being fulfilled and fail to address how they are fulfilling those needs. He adds that today, organizations attempt to create distinct, competitive, and positive customer experience advantages that the competition will have difficulty duplicating. This will allow the organization to obtain sustained success and create a new benchmark within the industry.

In order to achieve superior service quality, management must create an overall strategy with a strategic vision that identifies the target market, understands the customer's point of view, understands the abilities of the organization and provides a strong service delivery system (Metters, King-Metters & Pullman, 2003). Organizations must discover what the customer's value and how to best obtain customers (Ulwick, 2002), but service quality measurement is difficult because two customers rarely perceive similar outcomes.

Chase and Dasu (2001) stress that customers base their opinions on a few moments of the entire customer experience, often high or low points and the end result. The process consists of the interaction with the front-line employees, service quality and the perceived transaction time (Metters, King-Metters and Pullman, 2003). Therefore, all the steps in the customer's buying experience must be understood from both the organizational and customer experience (Lacobucci and Nordhielm, 2000), and the experience must end on a positive note with the

organization attempting to change a neutral experience into a positive experience (Morgan and Rao, 2003). "In service industries, positive customer experience is always influenced by the quality of interactions between customers and the personnel involved in the contact services" (Natalisa and Subroto, 2003, p. 86), and this is developed through the differences in perceived and actual quality during the service experience. The positive customer experience that is created by an excellent staff, efficient operations, convenience, competitive costs, and excellent image often leads to a repeat purchase (Jones, 2004). Organizations must ensure delivering the proper quality of customer experience at any moment of customer interaction in order to meet or/and exceed expectations, allowing customer knowledge to grow and loyalty to form. These expectations create the need for a customer-first mentality, which is often difficult when employees lack a willingness to fix problems. Organizations must determine the gap between perceived adequate services and desired states (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml, 1991).

Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990) find a lack of role clarity/ambiguity a key to the negative customer experience quality delivered to customers at any touch point, such as call centers. Front-line employees at call centers are frequently subjected to the conflicting demands of efficiency and customer service (Korczynski, 2002). Front-line employees who are clear about their roles are more likely to deliver better customer service quality than those with role ambiguity. Korczynski *et al.* (2000) and Broek (2004) add that training is essential, especially for technology driven environments such as call centers in telecom companies, as front-line employees need training in technical and interactive skills to provide distinguished service quality to the callers.

Bansal, Mendelson and Sharma (2001) state that because of the importance of delivering positive customer experience to the firm's customers, the service firm should inform their customer touch point employees of the customers' needs, train them in continual base, support them in order to acquire communication and recovery skills and make them feel comfortable and satisfied with their job. They confirmed that the above ascertainment emerged from the concept of internal marketing. In that respect organizations should build and develop marketing programs focusing on the internal market (employees) as well as the external market (customers).

According to Woodruffe (1995), internal marketing is treating both employees and customers with equal importance through proactive programs in order to achieve organizational objectives. Payne (1993) suggests that the key aims of internal marketing are the development of internal and external customer awareness and the removal of functional barriers to achieving organizational effectiveness.

Ballantyne (2000) reveals that internal marketing is "a strategy for developing relationships between staff across internal organizational boundaries. This is done so that staff autonomy and know-how may combine in opening up knowledge. Generally processes that challenge any internal activities that need to be changed; the purpose of this activity is to enhance quality of external marketing relationships" (Ballantyne, 2000, p. 43).

Baron and Harris (2003, p. 123) state, "there are numerous definitions of the concept of internal marketing". They quote Berry, who says "viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products and then endeavoring to offer internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization." (Baron and Harris (2003, p. 123).

Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) state that internal marketing can be cited as the mechanism for enabling the delivery of promises that are chosen via external marketing. Front-line employees, such as call center agents, must have the skills, abilities, tools and motivation to deliver. Kotler (1991) summarizes the link between internal marketing and external marketing in that the internal marketing is a prerequisite for successful external marketing. He continued that by satisfying the needs of its internal marketing customers, both employees and the organization as a whole might be better positioned to satisfy those requirements and expectations of its external customers.

Baron and Harris (2003) stress that companies that adopted the internal marketing concept are better off than others who did not. Better internal communication, reduced conflict and a spirit of innovation are seen as some of the advantages of this concept.

Internal marketing can assist in creating a working atmosphere and environment in which employees are valued and able to improve service delivery and business performance and foster long term competitive advantage through the creation of strong, organizational customer-focus culture (Ahmed and Rafiq, 2003). Peppers and Rogers (2008) and Zemke (2003) stress that customer centricism involves more than just making appeals to the consumer.

They added that customers are only satisfied if all their needs are being met, and all their needs can only be met if the customer service representatives are properly trained and cared for within the setting of the business. According to Varey and Lewis (2000) this is achieved through breaking down bureaucratic processes and barriers and facilitating efficient and flexible interaction between management departments and groups within the organization. They added that internal marketing might enhance employees' creativity, proactivity, innovation, performance and the delivery of a positive customer experience. Thus internal marketing appears to be a professional method of changing the attitudes and behaviors of employees, such as the customer service agents, so as to recognize the importance of meeting external customer's expectations and satisfying customer needs.

Ahmed and Rafiq (2000) state that the result of positive effect of internal marketing will mean that employees will input maximum performance effort rather than minimum performance effort to gain customer satisfaction and deliver the right customer experience. They added that internal marketing is a planned effort using marketing-like approaches directed at motivating employees, especially those who are on the front line for implementing and integrating organizational strategies toward customer-focus strategy implementation. That is, internal marketing is seen as encompassing the efforts of the organization to motivate and encourage employees to respond to the market, which includes being able to adapt quickly to (often unpredictable) changes within the external market place.

The recent definition of the concept of internal marketing stresses the importance of enhancing service quality. Shaw (2005) reveals that internal customers and suppliers each supply the other, invisibly connected but nonetheless connected in terms of input and output links in the value chain. Diagnosing these links within the organization from their starting point with external customers represents valuable opportunities for better service quality and more customer focused operations and activities toward customer needs and wants. In the same context, Hudson (2005) stresses that companies which are striving to establish a service culture should create a service culture that supports customer service quality through clear policies, procedures, reward systems and actions. He adds that companies need to make sure that the front-line employees should be empowered so that they can identify and solve customers' problems and complaints on the spot and make improvements in the work processes when necessary.

Successful marketing efforts are reliant upon the employees' ability to adapt to change quickly. This requires high quality communication so as to inform the employees as to the nature and importance of external changes. This can be deemed a typical internal marketing activity and generally requires firms to focus upon customers and adopt a customer-centric culture (Ahmed and Rafiq, 2002).

Hudson (2005) argues that there are five key internal marketing activities that will enable organizations to deliver distinguished customer service quality to their customers:

- Train and empower customer service employees to identify and solve customer complaints on time.
- Involve employees in product and service development and communicate with them properly to understand the product and service features based on customer needs.
- Develop reward systems that are based on customer satisfaction and delivering the proper customer experience at any touch point.
- Customer service employees, especially those who are working at the front line such as call centers, must have a customer service attitude and skills that enable them to treat the customer fittingly.
- An organization's general staff and customer service representatives must be enthused about the products and services of the company that enable them to sell them in the correct way.

The researcher has now developed an understanding of how to create a service quality orientation and how internal marketing can be used to deliver the right messages to all employees especially who are positioned on the front line to serve the company's customers such as the call center agents. Many of the concepts reviewed in this section would later be adopted by the researcher and revealed in the recommendations made in section 2.6.

## **2.5 The elements of delivering exceptional customer experience**

So far, the researcher has defined the concept of customer-centricity, reviewed industry experience and best practice and the criticality of aligning the organization to reflect customer requirements. It was now necessary to turn to literature that would reveal the practical steps by which an organization that would deliver exceptional customer satisfaction could be created. This is described during the review of literature in this section.

Clark (2006) states that no matter how wonderful a job you do of attracting new customers, you will not be profitable for long unless you have a solid customer retention strategy that includes delivering great positive customer experience in place. He continues that customers are not concerned with a policy statement or the promise of exceptional service; rather they remember how the organization's employees have treated them and what actions were taken to satisfy their needs at any touch point. There are several considerations for customer service employees of the organization who come into contact with customers.

Each of Zemke (2003), Peppers and Rogers (2008), Cook (2008), Senge (1990), Clark (2006) and Scott (2001) has discussed one or more of the seven main dimensions that customers traditionally focus on, as well as the expected positive behavior that can render a significant impression on customer service at any customer interaction point, such as call centers. The researcher will shed light on their contributions in this respect in the following paragraphs.

The first of the seven dimensions is reliability, which is by definition the ability of a service organization to deliver consistent performance over time (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985). This is an area in which call centers continue to struggle with significantly from the standpoint of performance.

Zemke (2003) states that reliability means keeping the promise you made to the customer and doing what you said you would do for them. It is important to keep in mind that promises are not only made directly and verbally but also through a myriad of delivery paths in various forms, such as call centers. He adds that organizations make direct promises to customers through advertising and marketing materials, in company correspondence and contracts and in service guarantees and policies published for everyone to see. In addition, customers will hold the company to indirect commitments – promises that customers believe are implied in the way the company talks about itself, its products and its services. To sum up, a reliable customer service call center has to provide services accurately, independently, and correctly from the first call no matter how the circumstances change. This dimension is critical for establishing trust and credibility in call center operations over time.

The second dimension of positive customer experience quality is responsiveness. According to Zemke (2003), timeliness has always been an important part of delivering great customer service. But in today's fast-paced society it has become even more important. From fast-food

restaurants to one-hour photo finishing shops, customers are demanding faster service than ever before. Companies that cater to time conscious customers are everywhere you look. Their success affects your customers' expectations of your willingness and ability to do the same. He adds that when customers see other organizations delivering faster and more efficient service they will demand it of your organization as well. If an organization is unable to be as responsive as its competitors, it runs the risk of delivering undesirable customer service or, at worst, losing customers to the competition. In call centers, the variation in how customers view time relative to the perception of call center representatives often becomes a critical issue (e.g. practically, a response within 60 seconds significantly improves customer satisfaction). In the case of customers on hold, wait times can appear to be significantly beyond the actual time itself. Peppers and Rogers (2008) and Zemke (2003) believe that this is a critically important area of service quality because customers will often rate an organization higher if they are more responsive and attempt to solve the problem through their own efforts rather than just putting the caller on hold while waiting to speak with an expert. Zemke (2003) adds that changing the perception of how long a wait is requires innovative approaches in keeping customers engaged.

The third dimension of customer experience quality is competence, which Cook (2008) defined as accurately identifying and meeting customer needs in a cost-effective way. British Telecom (BT), for example, decided to launch a project that ensures that quality is embedded into the company customer service culture. They started by identifying the managers and supervisors whose attitude, skills, and knowledge of its services needed further training and improvement. Cook (2008) and Zemke (2003) conclude that employees who are on the front line, such as those working at a call center, should possess the required competencies to perform tasks as well as have complete knowledge of all information related to the products and services.

The fourth dimension of customer experience quality is proactivity. Shaw (2005) and Peppers and Rogers (2008) agree that a proactive approach to customer care will improve business relations by 90%. They believe that the key element is training new and current employees in how to respond to customers properly. Cook (2008) also believes that proactive customer care makes a huge difference to a customer's perception of any business. Although reactive customer care has its merits, a business stands to derive greater benefits if it has trained

manpower that understands the significance of a proactive approach when dealing with customers.

In the same context, Thompson (2004) states that proactive customer care provides many benefits to the organization, such as greater customer satisfaction, reduced operational costs, greater efficiency, more up and cross-sell and improved services delivered to end users.

The fifth dimension of customer experience quality is courtesy and empathy. Bernoff and Li (2008) reveal that being courteous and empathetic toward customers shows them that you care about their situation that you take time to listen to their concerns and take actions that show you care. It is critical that empathy for customer-centricity permeates the organization as a philosophy of operations. Both Senge (1990) and Cook (2008) agree that recognizing the customers' emotional state helps an organization figure out the best way to effectively provide the service for which the customer is looking. "People see more of the systems within which they operate, and as they understand more clearly the pressures influencing one another, they naturally develop more compassion and empathy" (Senge, 1990, p. 190). Senge (1990) adds that to be truly empathetic with a customer, an employee should put himself/herself in the position of the customer. Freiberg (2005) states that an agents' attitude colors the way they react to customers because it has a direct effect on what they hear and how they respond. There are people who can find opportunity in any adversity. Outgoing and optimistic, they strive to make customer engagements fun. They inspire a contagious enthusiasm and make others around them feel better. He adds that customers sense this and react better to these types of people. He advises service representatives to be polite and exhibit an empathetic attitude toward customers.

The sixth dimension of customer experience quality is effective communication and problem resolution. Listening to the customer patiently with a positive expression, understanding his/her complaint and devising a shared recognition to resolve the problem completely are major tools that can be used to achieve effective problem solving objectives (Zemke, 2003).

Clark (2006) and Scott (2001) state that everyone makes mistakes. The key to rectifying a mistake is to be honest with customers, be effective in meeting their demands and take responsibility for whatever decisions you make. Accepting responsibility to effectively solve the problem also means being a team player and servicing the customer on behalf of the entire

organization. There can be no “it’s not my job” attitude. Clark (2006) and Scott (2001) suggest that when customers have a complaint the response must be to truly listen, then apologize and take effective action. They believe that in many instances the very act of listening (without interrupting) can be enough to diffuse the situation and make the person feel respected as a customer.

The seventh dimension of the customer experience quality is accessibility. Customers expect that they will have access to call center agents to answer their questions and concerns, whether on the phone, in person or over the web. The expectations of accessibility should be defined and taught to all employees in the organization. Zemke (2003) and APQC (2001) suggest that an organization should consider investments in infrastructure that are necessary to provide accessible customer service. This may mean adding more people, redesigning physical facilities or changing the organization’s hours of operations. Whatever the initiative, the goal should be to allow for maximum customer accessibility.

Rieger (2006) states that improving customer experience of the services delivered to the organization’s customers through any touch point such as call center will strengthen the engagement of its customers. He reveals that according to a study by Gallup Research, fully engaged customers deliver a 23% premium over average customers in regard to the share of wallet, profitability, revenue, and relationship growth, while actively disengaged customers represent a 13% decline on the same measures. Furthermore, workgroups that are in the top 25% based on their levels of customer engagement outperform the rest on measures of profit, sales, and growth by a factor of 2:1. Engaging the customer is one of the first steps in providing customer service that will make a lasting impression on the customer. It is worth mentioning here that O’Reilly (2006) states that customer-centric organizations are continually looking at how they can create value by streamlining the processes and systems that reach their customers to the extent that the development of customer advisory councils and periodic communication is not enough in a Web 2.0 world. Bernoff and Li (2008) add that what is needed in such an environment is the use of social networking applications that can engage customers constantly so that listening becomes interactive, effectively creating conversations. The use of social networking as a means to stay connected with customers and continually fuel customer-centricity in an organization is critically important.

Lundin, Paul, and Christensen (2002) believe that in many ways, “being there or attentiveness” is the culmination of all of the previous customer experience elements mentioned. However, it is also a state of mind. It means that customer service representatives such as call center agents are present at that time, at that moment, for the customer and that his/her needs take precedent over any other function. Customers will easily recognize when they are the sole focus of an employee’s attention.

Selland (2006) reveals that satisfying customers can be a tricky endeavor when organizations are faced with multiple complaints, demands, personalities and angry customers. When these situations arise the best course of action is to address them honestly and expeditiously. Employees should listen to the customer’s concern, empathize with his/her situation and take action to rectify the situation.

Rohbacher (2001) states that an analysis of customer service elements in regard to Internet and telephone service should be conducted. With the hyper expansion of the “virtual” economy, more and more customer transactions are taking place in a virtual environment. These customers also expect great customer service. Just as with face-to-face transactions, customers expect virtual transactions to contain the essential elements of positive customer experience. Rohbacher (2001) adds that according to a survey, 43% of customers were satisfied with e-mail as a customer service vehicle and only 34% were satisfied with Web sites in general as a mode of customer service. These numbers indicate the need for organizations that do business in an online environment to better adhere to desired customer service principles.

Peppers and Rogers (2008), Zemke (2003), Clark (2006), Klein (1999), Selland (2006), Rohbacher (2001) and Scott (2001) all agree that customers are only satisfied if all their needs are being met, and all their needs only can be met if the customer service representatives possess the skills, capabilities and traits of the seven customer-centric dimensions addressed in this section.

The reading in this section has enabled the researcher to define a conceptual model of how a well-organized and efficient customer-centric organization would behave. The next stage is to review literature that will develop an understanding of how to make the concept a reality. This is described in the following section.

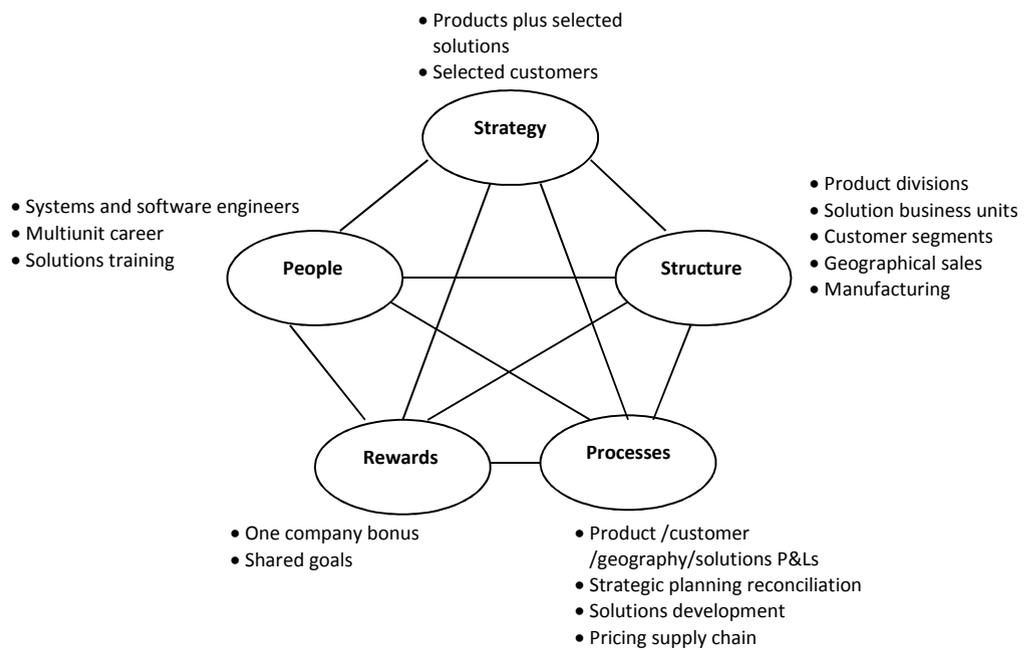
## **2.6 Building a customer-centric organization**

It is the aspiration of many organizations to become customer-centric, which involves many of the elements that this approach will consider, such as customer service programs, marketing and management. The discussion in this part of the research will focus on how to create a customer-centric organization, and show that to do so require dedication, time, commitment and significant effort.

Hamel and Prahalad (1994) state that in their quest to become customer-centric organizations, firms must realize that it is not enough just to take care of the customer today; they must think beyond today and plan for what the customer will desire tomorrow. Organizations must do more than anticipate customers' stated needs. They must become proficient at anticipating unarticulated needs and desires. At the heart of becoming a true customer-centric organization is the ability to create value for the customers whenever they come into contact with the organization. Reichheld (1996) suggests that in order to be profitable, organizations must create value for their customers, a process that lies at the core of all successful enterprises. He adds that value creation generates the energy that holds these businesses together, thus their very existence depends on it.

Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger (1997) reveal that organizations that become customer-centric understand that their business is no longer about the product or service that they once provided; it is now about the customer who uses the product or service provided by the organization. Customers do not buy products or services - they buy value. Customer-centric organizations ask questions differently. Their values, mission, and organizational structures exist for the customer, not for the organization or its owner.

Jay (2005) cites an example for a company called Chipco, which is a product-centric company in the semiconductor industry. Chipco had gone through several restructuring programs in its attempt to become a customer-centric organization. It eventually adopted the Star Model Structure, as shown in Figure 2.2. This model started with strategy and then completed the model design by moving from strategy to structure, to processes, to rewards and then to people.



**Figure 2.2: Chipco' solutions star model**

Source: (Jay, 2005)

The strategy consists of a product and service oriented strategy along with selected solutions for the selected customer segments. The structure is a combination of product divisions at the back end, and business units and customer segments at the front end. Business processes have been added for solution development, pricing and supply chain management. The reward system has been modified to reflect a “one company down” model. Finally, the career paths for Chipco's employees have been redesigned to generate leaders for the new business unit. The overall restructuring of this firm was led by the top management and communicated to every employee in the firm (Bailey, 2006).

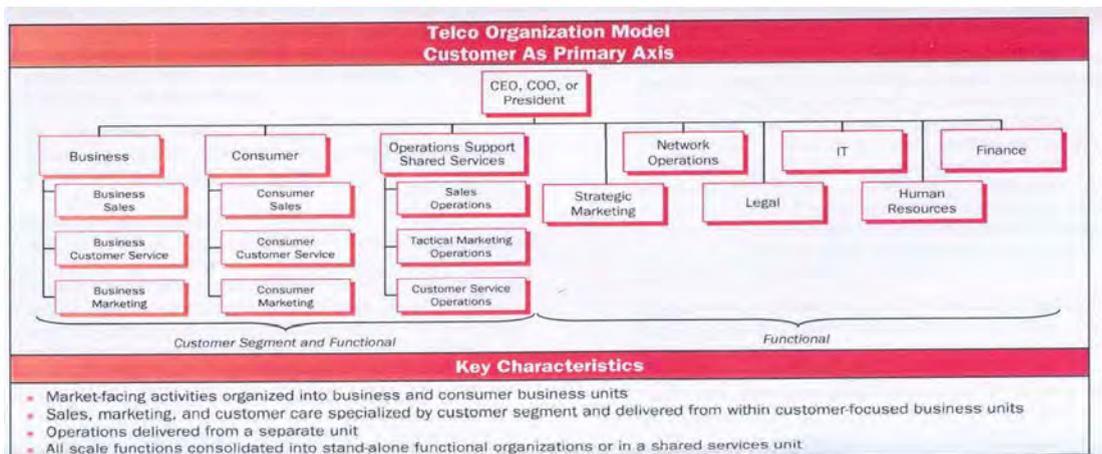
Mitreanu (2006), on the other hand, proposes an important basic step that a company must take in its efforts to become a customer-centric company. He recommends three main steps in the move to customer centricity. The first step is employee training, as everybody should think in terms of customer benefits rather than product features. The second is to refine the organizational structure, which includes fine-tuning the information channels and allowing knowledge about the customer to flow freely throughout the organization. The final step is to

ensure the existence of the right market approach between the company's products' and services' approach and customer behavior.

Raul *et al.*'s (2004) framework offers another perspective on building customer-centric companies. According to his framework, shown in Figure 2.3 below, there are design principles that telecommunications service providers should keep in mind during the design phase of a customer-centric organization:

- Differentiate customer experience through a new, open and transparent approach.
- Redesign distribution and customer management around a solutions based approach.
- Develop a segmentation process that differentiates your customer based on his/her needs.
- Pull away from competitors by getting execution right the first time.

Getting these four principles to work will result in a vast organizational transformation.



**Figure (2.3): A customer-centric operating model for a telecommunications provider**

Source: (Raul *et al.* 2004)

These organizations are no longer organized around functional or product areas; instead, customer segments are the primary axis. "Building a customer-centric organization, in our experience, requires repositioning the business around an optimized continuum of tailored solutions. To achieve these repositioning, telecom providers need to shift from a product-

centric mindset to full service providers. The telecommunications company of the future will provide tailored bundles of products and services to anyone, anytime, anywhere, anyhow" (Booz Allen Hamilton, 2004).

The researcher has now established the concept of customer-centricity, and how it differs from the product-centric model, which is STC's current orientation. He has gained an understanding of how to use internal marketing to change the attitudes and culture of the employees. He has gone on to define the attributes of the model customer-centric organization and, in the last two sections, has used the literature review to develop an understanding of how to translate concept to reality. This now brings the researcher to a point where he must seek to understand how to measure the effectiveness of an organization, and specifically a call center, in delivering the necessary performance and positive customer experience associated with customer centricity. This is covered in the following section.

## **2.7 Assessing call center performance**

Some aspects reviewed in this section have already been referenced earlier, such as the seven dimensions of customer-centricity. These are now discussed in measurable terms as the researcher builds his understanding of how to build a suitable model.

Measurement is both the first and the last step in producing superior service. There is little sense in creating extensive measurement systems until all other elements of the service are in place or until there is something to measure. But drafting an effective strategy, the first step toward better service, is difficult without some measure of current service performance. Measuring service performance or quality is quite different from measuring product quality because service is an experience (Klein 1999). Klein (1999) adds that the best measurement systems focus on the three aspects of service: process, product and customer satisfaction. Measuring elements of the service profit chain provides an overall indication of how an organization is doing, particularly in areas important to the business, such as customer service. It is important that the methods of measurement be understood and consistent from period to period. Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger (1997) believe that organizations that have constructed elaborate measurements and methods often find that there is a cost of maintaining them and they are difficult to understand, defeating their usefulness and guaranteeing that they will fall into disuse. With so much competition in the marketplace, customer loyalty is at a

premium. The best way to ensure customer loyalty is by consistently delivering positive customer experience.

Zemke (2003) states that customers have different needs and expectations and that it is a challenge to fulfill all of them consistently. Doing so requires a professional approach, strong behavioral skills and specific customer relationship methods. Customers generally expect quick responses and a service that makes them feel esteemed.

Peppers and Rogers (2008) devise the following customer service quality mathematical formula: Customer service quality equals actual performance according to the customer's perception, minus the customer's expectations of the authority's performance level.

What this means is that the customer experience function is directly correlated with the organization's actual performance as much as it is tied with the customer's expectations of the organization. Peppers and Rogers (2008) added that although customers have a preconceived notion of the service they will receive from an organization, the "first interaction" has the greatest impact on the customer's perception. Therefore organizations have a short window to ensure that their customer's experience and first interaction leaves him/her with a positive impression.

Many organizations rely on a series of methodologies for measuring call center performance. One of the better-known methodologies brings together a Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach to make sure that there is a balance of operational and customer-centric metrics to ensure that customer' preferences and attitudes are captured. One of the primary factors in the exceptionally rapid growth of customer service quality metrics as a methodology for tracking call center performance and quality assurance is its ability to factor in the attitudes of the call center representatives themselves (Ramseook-Munhurrun, Naidoo, and Lukea-Bhiwajee, 2009).

Meeting the demand of its members for processes, performance standards and benchmarks such as those described above have long been the role of the TM Forum. The TM Forum is a leading industry association focused on enabling best in class IT for service providers in the communications, media and cloud service markets. The Forum provides business-critical

industry standards and has more than 700 corporate members in 195 countries (TM Forum 2011); STC is a member of the TM Forum.

- Preferred Access
- Customer Time Spent
- Usability
- Accuracy
- Availability

The TM Forum then listed a number of metrics for each of a number of high-level processes. The TM Forum's 'Customer Management' process is related to call center activities, for which 7 metrics have been listed under five topics. 'Preferred Access' measures the proportion of total contacts using a particular channel in order to understand the distribution of call handling across channels. 'Customer Time Spent' measures the average customer call waiting time as well as the average handling time to complete a customer request. 'Accuracy' measures the percentage of calls that are resolved first time round. 'Usability' measures the volume of customer requests and their distribution per category. Finally, contact availability measures the call abandonment rate of the call center.

The researcher has mapped these five topics and seven metrics to see the fit with the seven dimensions of positive customer experience discussed previously in this section by Zemke (2003), Peppers and Rogers (2008), Cook (2008), Senge (1990), Clark (2006) and Scott (2001). Table 2.2 below shows the result, together with additions from other sources that will be explained below.

Positive Customer Experience Dimension	TM Forum Related Metric Topic	Metric	Source	
			TM forum	Others
Reliability	Accuracy	% First Call Resolution	TM Forum (2011)	-----
Responsiveness	Customer Spent Time	Mean Customer Call Waiting Time	TM Forum (2011)	-----
Effective Communication and Problem Resolution	Customer Spent Time	Mean customer request closure time	TM Forum (2011)	-----
Competence	(None identified)	Number of hours per year of career and skill development training per employee	-----	APQC (2001)
		Percentage of employees trained	-----	APQC (2001)
		Training days per employee per year	-----	APQC (2001)
Proactivity	(None identified)	Cross-sell/ up-sell conversion rates	-----	Bustos (2009)
Courtesy and Empathy	(None identified)	[Positive Customer Experience Checklist- See Table 2.3 Below]	-----	Peppers & Rogers (1996)
Accessibility and Ease of Use	Preferred Access	Distribution of Contact Handling Across Channels	TM Forum (2011)	-----
	Usability	Volume of Customer Requests	TM Forum (2011)	-----
		Distribution of Customer Requests	TM Forum (2011)	-----
	Availability	% Calls Abandoned	TM Forum (2011)	-----

**Table 2.2 Customer experience metrics**

As can be seen in Table 2.2 above, the TM Forum has used a different nomenclature to describe topics addressed by its metrics to the dimensions of positive customer experience as proposed by Zemke (2003), Peppers and Rogers (2008), Cook (2008), Senge (1990), Clark (2006) and Scott (2001). However both the TM Forum’s topics and the dimensions of positive customer experience reference similar metrics, indicating the difference is only superficial. For instance, Zemke (2003) states that timeliness has always been an important part of delivering great customer service; this maps directly to the TM Forum topic of ‘Customer Time Spent’.

This combined set of metrics from the TM Forum and the seven dimensions of Zemke (2003), Peppers and Rogers (2008), Cook (2008), Senge (1990), Clark (2006) and Scott (2001) has been further complemented by inputs from Bustos (2009), APQC (2001) and Peppers and Rogers (1996).

Bustos (2009) provides the cross-sell/upsell conversion rate as an appropriate measure of the success in convincing customers to buy additional products and services. This provides a

metric by which to measure performance against the proactivity dimension. The APQC study (2001) provides a series of metrics to measure call center agent training, and these provide appropriate measures of performance against the competence dimension. The final dimension to be mentioned is that of courtesy and empathy which, as already explained in the section on culture, is of special importance in Saudi Arabia. Senge (1990) defines courtesy and empathy in terms of friendliness, consideration, politeness and respectfulness of agents.

Peppers and Rogers (1996) determined fourteen elements, shown in Table 2.3, which they believe formulate a standard for measuring the customer experience quality of the call that the agent should observe during his interaction with customers, with emphasis on courtesy and empathy. These elements start with the importance of giving their name clearly and ending with quality of speech during the call with the customer. Rather than embed these in Table 2.2, the researcher has referenced these fourteen elements, shown in Table 2.3 below.

Positive Customer experience Check List of Call Center Agents
• Giving one's name clearly
• Greeting the customer properly
• Asking the customer politely about the services that the agent can offer him as "How can I help you?"
• Listening to the customer's information inquiry without interruption
• Rephrasing the inquiry to confirm customer request and avoid making mistakes
• Assuring the customer that the agent will do his best to do whatever is needed
• Politely asking the customer for necessary information to identify him (Name of Customer, ID Number, etc.)
• Asking the customer to wait for a while to find the right information for his request or problem. Wait time should not exceed 30 seconds, after which customer should be notified of the extended time needed
• Finding the right information as soon as possible, providing the customer with the correct and sufficient information as fast as possible, getting back to the customer, and thanking him for waiting
• Asking the customer if there is any other service that the agent can offer him
• Thanking the customer warmly for dealing with Saudi Telecom
• Courtesy
• Quality of speech (Clarity, pronunciation)
• Overall evaluation of the agent's performance

**Table (2.3): Positive customer experience checklist of call center agents (peppers and rogers, 1996).**

The researcher believes that the specific set of measures and metrics shown in Table 2.2 will best suit the objective of defining an appropriate set of key performance indicators (KPI's) for STC call centers and will then measure them on the journey of transformation to being customer-centric – a journey which it is acknowledged will take several years.

## 2.8 Discussion

This literature review sought to evaluate the researcher's position that the future success of STC lies in its transformation into a customer-centric organization, thereby responding to its

new, competitive environment.

STC has traditionally been dominated by engineers in a technology-based culture resulting in a more product-centric rather than customer-centric organization with heavy dependence on platform vendors. The product-centricity of STC is evident in its reliance upon product features and functionalities as it competes for market share in a 'red ocean' where price is used as a differentiator with subsequent loss in profitability. To truly become a customer-centric organization and move into a 'blue ocean' of uncontested markets, the senior management of STC will have to model the behaviors it expects from the organization. Again, cultural issues and norms will be active here in what has typically been a tall-structured organization. Metrics, which have usually focused upon products, will have to be modified so that they are more customer-focused. However, it must be acknowledged that there is evidence that STC is moving towards customer-centricity, albeit slowly. More recently the organization witnessed a celebration of its one millionth broadband customer; a milestone not entirely focused on the organization. Likewise, the recent introduction of first call resolution and customer evaluation metrics as key performance indicators within the call centers also demonstrates the desire of STC towards being a more customer-centric organization.

The researcher notes that to improve organizational effectiveness through customer-centricity, STC will need to take perspectives and insights from customers and then act on them. The first step towards achieving this involves understanding customers' needs and expectations and then modeling products and services to meet these needs and expectations, rather than expecting customers to develop a liking for existing products and services.

It is the researcher's view that currently STC is more focused on the technical quality of its products and services rather than trying to understand what customer needs are being fulfilled and how. In order to obtain sustained success, STC must attempt to differentiate itself using positive customer experience advantages that will prove difficult for competitors to emulate. As customer experience within call centers is based upon the quality of interaction between customers and staff, STC must address in turn, the needs and expectations of its front-line employees. In 2011, STC introduced a certified technical training program for its broadband support staff in what is considered to be a technology-driven environment (STC, 2011). STC senior management also approved an occupational health and safety review for its staff to

ensure they are satisfied with their work environment (STC, 2011). Such activities focus on the internal market of STC, with a view to satisfying the external market that is customers. Specialized internal electronic magazines also attempted to communicate the needs and expectations to front-line STC staff, so that they recognize their customers' wants and know best how to deliver a positive experience. Furthermore, needs and expectations are being communicated to internal support organizations within STC to produce more customer-focused operations. This, combined with efforts to automate trouble-shooting procedures, will enable front-line staff to solve customer problems in real-time and thus improve the customer experience.

However, in order to truly deliver distinguished customer experience, STC will need to increase the involvement of staff in product and service development and develop real reward systems that acknowledge the delivery of a positive customer experience at a customer touch point. This will result in more enthusiastic customer-facing staff who will inspire confidence in the customers that interact with them.

There is extensive discussion as to what dimensions constitute the elements of delivering exceptional customer experience. Zemke (2003), Peppers and Rogers (2008), Cook (2008), Senge (1990), Clark (2006) and Scott (2001) discussed seven customer experience dimensions that enable organizations to enhance their customer experience delivered to their customers namely; reliability, responsiveness, competence, proactivity, courtesy and empathy, effective communication and problem resolution and accessibility. Other authors have added the dimensions of customer engagement, acceptance of responsibility and attentiveness. It is the researcher's view that elements of these additional three dimensions present themselves in one or more of the seven dimensions proposed by Zemke (2003), Clark, 2006), Cook, 2008), Senge, 1990), Scott, 2001) and Peppers and Rogers (2008). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the researcher has adopted the seven dimensions proposed by Zemke (2003) and Peppers and Rogers (2008) as the basis for building a customer-centric call center at STC.

The researcher acknowledges that merely being aware of manifested customers' needs and expectations is not sufficient to become a customer-centric organization. Rather an organization such as STC needs to be able to anticipate unarticulated needs and expectations of customers. In evaluating the various approaches proposed by authors, the researcher has

adopted the approaches of both Bailey (2006) and Raul *et al.* (2004). Both approaches have similar characteristics and are very much related to the existing environment and aspirations of STC. For instance, transparency is one of the newly founded values at STC. Recent segmentation efforts at STC have aimed to differentiate customers as per their needs and there is increasing emphasis in resolving customer problems first time round. Further details on this topic will be explored in both chapters 3 and 4, including a road map of how STC can become a customer-centric organization.

In the past, STC did construct elaborate measurements and found they were costly to maintain and difficult to understand, such that they fell into disuse - an example being a churn analytics model to predict customer cancellations. The Balanced Scorecard was one methodology that was adopted by STC but became difficult to track as the number of metrics far exceeded those proposed by the proponents of the Balanced Scorecard approach. STC is currently in the process of introducing a more customer-focused set of metrics and parts of the call center organization recently conducted workshops with its front-line staff supervisors explaining these new metrics with a view to factor-in the attitudes of the call center representatives themselves. The TM Forum (2011) listed a number of call center customer management metrics which were aligned to the seven dimensions of positive customer experience proposed by Zemke (2003), Peppers and Rogers (2008), Cook (2008), Senge (1990), Clark (2006) and Scott (2001). Peppers and Rogers (1996) also suggested 14 elements shown in table 2.3 that a customer service representative should adhere to in order to guarantee a favorable level of quality during a telephone interaction with a customer. The researcher is of the view that the customer management metrics listed by the TM Forum (2011) combined with the 14 elements of Peppers and Rogers (1996) are aligned with the researcher's adopted seven dimensions to gauge the level of customer-centricity in STC call centers.

The conceptual model of delivering positive customer experience service quality based on these seven dimensions is shown below in Figure 2.4.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

The first step in the journey toward customer-centricity for an organization such as STC is to define and understand what it means to the organization. The definition of customer-centricity

that the researcher has elected is to "align resources of 'your organization' to effectively respond to the ever-changing needs of the customer, while building mutually a positive relationship" (Bailey, 2006, p. 3). The researcher will break that definition down into three parts, as follows:

- 1) Aligning organization resources.
- 2) Responding effectively to the ever-changing needs of the customers.
- 3) Building a mutually profitable relationship.

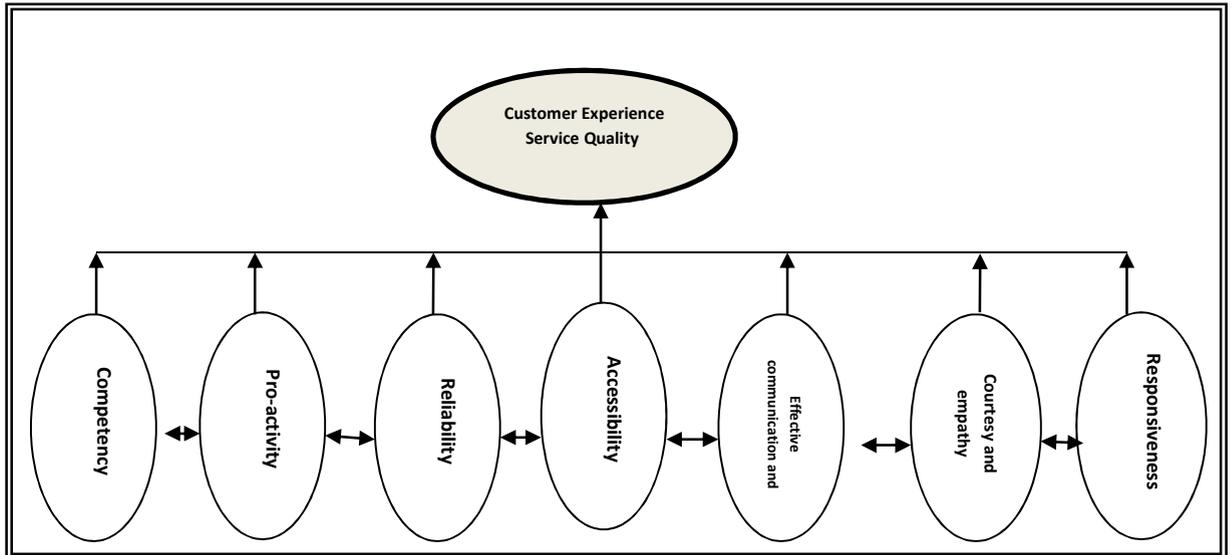
Aligning the resources of an organization means ensuring that all personnel in the firm develop and maintain excellent interpersonal communication skills.

In order to respond effectively to the ever-changing needs of the customers, organizations need to obtain customer input, perspective and feedback to support of the voice of the customer. The tools that can be used to attain such requirements are transactional surveys to measure customer satisfaction, observe customer behavior, and obtain input from front-line employees and mystery shopping experiences (Bailey 2006).

Finally, becoming customer-centric does not mean that an organization becomes a doormat for the customer. If the relationship for both the customers and the organization does not remain profitable, it is not going to last for long

In line with this definition, the researcher has adopted this conceptual model (Figure 2.4) as the base for building the research methodology, and this will further be discussed in the next chapter. The advantage of this model is that it outlines the customer-centric behaviors required across the organization and helps to shift away from the current product-centric mindset of STC. It embodies the dimensions of customer experience interaction quality and stresses the role of front-line staff in meeting customer needs and expectations. This in turn will push STC to undertake internal marketing activities so that front-line staff understand the behaviors expected from them whilst equipping them with a conducive work environment and supporting systems and tools in line with the fundamental principle 'happy staff = happy customers'. Petter *et al.* (2002) note that anything that tends to raise the self-esteem of employees or makes them feel that they are personally useful to the organization is important in furthering the concept of a customer-centric organization. As Jones (2004) notes, positive

customer experience is a factor of excellent staff, efficient operations, competitive cost and excellent brand image.



**Figure 2.4: A conceptual model of delivering positive customer experience**

### **3.1 An introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the necessary methods for the present research study. Research methodology refers to the procedural framework within which the research is conducted (Remenyi *et al.* 1998). This chapter will present how the current study was designed and orchestrated, and will provide a clear and complete description of the specific steps that were taken by the researcher to address the research problem and answer the three main research questions laid out in chapter 1. This chapter will discuss the following topics: the research purpose, research tradition in general, and the research approach and strategy. The final section will discuss the sample size selection, instrumentation, and methods of data analysis.

### **3.2 The research purpose**

Studies can be classified in terms of their purpose and, according to Yin (2003), it is possible to pursue three different kinds of research depending on the nature of study and based on the type of information needed. These are exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (causal) research.

Creswell (2009) believes that, as the term suggests, exploratory research is often conducted because a problem has not been clearly defined as yet, or its real scope is as yet unclear. He adds that it is a research design in which the major emphasis is on gaining ideas and insights. It is particularly helpful in breaking broad, vague problem statements into smaller, more precise sub problem statements. In the same context, Yin (2003) states that exploratory research is intended to help researchers formulate a problem in such a way that it can be researched and suggest a testable hypothesis.

Yin (2003) adds that the chief purpose of exploratory research is to reach a better understanding of the research problem. This includes helping to identify the variables that should be measured within the study. When there is little understanding of the topic it is impossible to formulate hypotheses with some exploratory studies. The exploratory research

simply allows the audience to gain more insight and understanding of something that she/he does not know enough about. For example, just because we know that mobile smart phones or 3 G exist, it does not necessarily mean that we understand how they work or the features related to each of them. Exploratory research can help to explore such an ambiguous matter.

In the same context, Zikmund (2000) reveals that the results of exploratory research are not usually useful in themselves for decision-making, but they can provide significant insight into a given situation. Although the results of qualitative research can give some indication as to “why,” “how,” and “when” something occurs, it cannot tell us “how often” or “how many.”

As the name suggests, descriptive research is concerned with describing a phenomenon within its context. Typically this research is based on already existing theories and hypotheses. It is appropriate to use it when a problem is clearly structured and the researcher does not intend to connect causes and effects but aims to answer who, where, and how. In short, descriptive research must have an impact to lives of the people around you (Creswell, 2009).

On the other hand, Robson (2007) adds that the objective of descriptive research is to describe an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations. In addition, Saunders and Thornhill (2003) state that in this kind of research it is necessary to have a clear picture of the phenomenon on which the researcher wishes to collect data, prior to its actual collection.

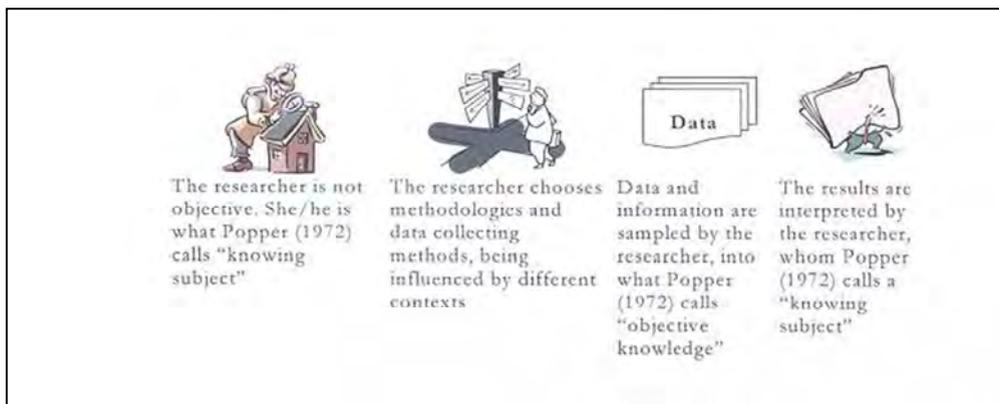
Creswell (2009) and Robson (2007) explain that the principal difference between exploratory and descriptive research is that, in the case of the latter, specific research questions have been formulated before the research is undertaken. When descriptive research is conducted the researcher must already know a great deal about the research problem, perhaps because of a prior exploratory study, and be in a position to clearly define what he/she wants to measure and how to do it. They add that descriptive research provides data about the population or universe being studied. But it can only describe the “as is” who, what, when, where, and how of a situation, and not what caused it. Therefore descriptive research is used when the objective is to provide a systematic description that is as factual and accurate as possible.

The model that is going to be evaluated in this paper is based on previous theories and the variables and patterns drawn from them. The picture of customer centricity at call centers is clear and the description of the extent of association between variables is going to be

conducted. Therefore, based on the above mentioned explanations by Creswell (2009), Robson (2007) and Yin (2003), this study is going to adopt a mix of descriptive and exploratory research tools through the adoption of two research instruments: a standard survey questionnaire and a focus group study. These two instruments will assist the researcher in answering the proposed research questions.

### 3.3 Research traditions and paradigms in general

Research may be defined as seeking answers and solving problems in order to expand knowledge. These processes should be systematically conducted. Bell (2006), among others, notes that a researcher needs methodologies, i.e. methods to approach the subject, in order to explain the research results scientifically. The researcher's ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises have together influenced his chosen approach in this study. Principles and beliefs about what a human being is, the nature of reality, and how knowledge is gained form all these. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2003), these form the filter through which the research results are interpreted. This can be visualized as in Figure 3.1.



**Figure (3.1): Objectivism and choices in scientific work**

The figure illustrates how the researcher has a pre-understanding and faces several choices in scientific work. All this affects the results. Popper (1972) discusses objectivism in research in his book "Objective Knowledge".

Blaikie (1993) states that the root definition of ontology as "the science or study of being" and develops this description for the social sciences to encompass claims that exist, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other. Closely coupled with

ontology and its consideration of what constitutes reality, epistemology considers views about the most appropriate ways of enquiring into the nature of the worlds and what is knowledge and what are the sources and limits of knowledge (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008).

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2003), there are differences between the different epistemological traditions (i.e. three paradigms in the theory of science and research): interpretivism, positivism, and realism and their quantitative and qualitative traditions. However, most of the differences depend on the politics of the research and on the paradigms having different objects for research. Anderson (1979) takes this a step further and states that the difference between the positivistic and interpretivist paradigms is more than two different technical or methodological approaches. They are two completely different views of life, as the overview in the next section shows. However, epistemological realism is considered in between the previous two paradigms where realists believe that universals, or concepts, mirror what exists in actual life (Fisher, 2004).

Thiselton (2009) revealed that interpretivism paradigm can be broadly translated as 'interpretation' and originates from the interpretations of the Bible and other sources. Interpretation can vary from "reading" a traffic sign to a deep understanding of a human being and her or his situation in life. He adds that it investigates how we read, understand, and handle texts, especially those written in a time or context different from our own. In the same context, Jones (2000) confirmed that Interpretivism refers to the study of the interpretation of written text, especially texts in the area of literature, religion, and law.

Willis (2007) states that interpretive ontology is subjective. The belief, unlike the positivist, is that knowledge is relative to the observer. Reality is not something that exists outside the observer, but rather is determined by the experiences, social background and other factors of the observer. He adds that because of this sociological law is not a constant, but a relationship between changing variables. The epistemology of interpretive is the subjective. In the same context, O'Donoghue (2007) addresses that the inquirer in interpretivism becomes part of an interaction of communication with the subject of the inquiry. The findings are the result of the interaction between the inquirer and the subject.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) stress that the focus of the interpretivists on their researchers is on understanding the meanings and interpretations of 'social actors' and to

understand their world from their point of view is highly contextual and hence cannot be widely generalized. Griffin, (2003) states that the interpretive orientation to research is interactive and cooperative, and without privileged point of observation. He adds that the research design is a fixed structure that allows for reliable and valid answers to research questions, research is conducted according to precise protocol.

Schunk (2008) states that positivism is a philosophy that holds the only authentic knowledge is that which is based on actual sensual experience. The positivist view is sometimes referred to as scientific (natural science) ideology. Anderson (1979) adds that positivism originates from “philosophy positive” (i.e. about what is real and true).

Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2001) stress that the positivistic theory is based on ontology of being a reality. The reality slant of positivism is also known as determinism. The positivist knows that a reality is "out there" to be defined and categorized. They add that the hard sciences from the time of Newton and Decartes have traditionally elided on the positivistic approach. The positivist hopes to be able to approximate "reality" in a detailed generalization or theory on how reality operates. The theories of a positivist generally take the form of cause and effect laws describing the outside reality.

Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) add that positivism relies on an object epistemology. The observer remains distant and does not interact with the observation or experiment. They stress that values and any other factors that might lead to bias are to be carefully removed so that the cold, monological gaze of science can be used to analyze the data. The positivist is an objectivist. The methodology of positivism is experimentation and manipulation.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) explain that positivism is based upon values of reason, truth and validity and there is focus purely on facts, gathered through direct observation and experience and measured empirically using quantitative methods – surveys and experiments and statistical tools.

Miller (2007) argues that positivistic approach is an appropriate approach for examining exterior data that can essentially be utilized in an objective fashion. The positivism is an appropriate philosophy for viewing social trends and changes. The nomological or scientific gaze is limited in its perceptions and can best be used for determining when and to what extent

groups in the society interact. While, Willis (2007) adds that the interpretivist, on the other hand, wants to know why things are happening in a particular society. The subjective approach allows communication with the cultural background of a society and an understanding of why things operate. The interpretivist is subjectivist in nature, as opposed to the objectivist view of positivism. "Interpretivists contend that only through the subjective interpretation of intervention in reality can that reality be fully understood" (Davison, 1998, pp. 2-3).

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) reveal that realism born from a frustration that positivist researchers were over-deterministic, and that interpretivism was so totally subjective. Reality takes aspects from both interpretivists' and positivists' positions. They add that whilst realism is concerned with what types of things there are, and how these things behave, it accepts that reality may exist in spite of science or observation, and so there is validity in accepting realities that are simply claimed to exist or act, whether proven or not. Healy and Perry (2000) stress that within a critical realism framework, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are seen as appropriate for researching the underlying mechanisms that drive actions and events. Chia (2002) on the other hand state that realists take the view that researching from different angles and at multiple levels will all contribute to understanding since reality can exist on multiple levels and hence realism may be seen as inductive for theory building.

Epistemological realism stresses that concepts have a reality that is independent of how people talk about them. Therefore the concepts that we used when discussing management are real (Fisher, 2004). Robson (2007) adds that the epistemological realism is a subcategory of objectivism, holding that what we know about object exists independently of our minds.

With this belief epistemological realists can discuss management theory and marketing concepts such as customer centricity and/or customer focus in an organization. As customer centricity or customer focus concept have an independent existence, it can be measured and organizations that are customer centric can be recognized.

In this document the researcher is looking to find and search for real data that reflects the level of customer centricity in the researcher's organization and study STC through the use of specific tools and measurements which lead to certain conclusion, as well as recommendations, that enhance the market position of this company. The researcher has adopted a multi-strategy approach that is predominantly quantitative but also used qualitative

elements to help confirm and obtain better understanding of quantitative outputs. Accordingly, the researcher is able to conclude that this study adopts realist stance. The researcher has chosen the realist methodology approach due to many reasons such as:

- The type of questions the researcher asked can only be answered in a realist manner and not by an interpretivist approach.
- The realist position of the researcher recognizes that positivistic covering laws cannot answer these questions.
- A realist position enables the researcher to look for both patterns and association and also to consider how human sense making and interpretation influence behaviors and outcomes.
- As the researcher hopes that this study will have practical benefit for his organization and its customers and in order to convince the STC to implement the recommendations arising the study STC will be most easily to be convinced by realist research approach.

### **3.4 The research approach (quantitative versus qualitative traditions)**

Creswell (2003) revealed that researchers start a project with specific assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry. Researchers must make claims about what is knowledge, what values go in (axiology), how we write about it (rhetoric), and the processes for studying it (methodology).

Axiology is the science of value. The word axiology is derived from two Greek roots "axios" (worth or value) and logos (logic or theory), meaning the theory of value. While the rhetoric of the social sciences is the study and practice of argumentation and proof making, it is the art of using language to communicate effectively and persuasively (Creswell, 1994) and (Anderson, (2006).

Values reflect the personal beliefs of the researcher and because we all have our own personal values, shaped by both our cultural and socio-economic background, these will inevitably impinge our choice of methods and on the outcomes of our analysis. Thus, no researcher can approach his study value-free. Creswell (2003) states that if a researcher wishes to be entirely objective he must attempt to suppress the impact of values as much as he can, but this is

extremely difficult. So we must acknowledge that research outcomes will, to some extent, always be values-dependent.

Once the focus of the research project has been defined the decision is made to select a paradigm – qualitative or/and quantitative. "The quantitative is termed the traditional, the positivist, the experimental, or the empiricist paradigm. The quantitative thinking comes from an empiricist tradition established by such authorities as Comte, Mill, Durkheim, Newton, and Locke" (Smith, 1983). The qualitative paradigm is termed the constructivist approach or naturalistic (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The interpretative approach (Smith, 1983), or the positivist or postmodern perspective (Quantz, 1992), began as a countermovement to positivist tradition in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through such writers as Dilthey, Weber, and Kant (Smith, 1983) and (Creswell, 1994, p. 4).

Creswell (2009) reveals that in quantitative research the aim of the researcher is to find out the relationship between one thing (an individual variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) in a sample. He adds that the objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories, and hypotheses pertaining to phenomena. Quantitative research is generally approached using scientific methods that include the collection of empirical data.

Denzin & Lincoln (2003) reveal that the word qualitative, such as in "qualitative studies," implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not necessarily experimentally examined or measured in terms of quality, amount, intensity, or frequency. Creswell (2009) and Denzin & Lincoln (2003) agree that qualitative researchers look for answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning from different experiences.

Denzin & Lincoln (2003) revealed that qualitative researchers use content, discourse, archival records, statistics, tables, and graphs for analysis. They also use the approaches, methods and techniques of ethno-methodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, interviews, cultural studies, survey research, and observations. On the other hand, Yin (2003) adds that the notion of a qualitative research strategy should be used in human and social sciences where there is a need for proximity and more confidence in the study's subject. It can be used for individuals, groups of individuals, or organizations.

However, Yin (2003) argues that both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses, and neither approach can be held to be better than the other one. The best research method to use for the study depends on the study's research purpose and the accompanying research questions.

The main purpose of this research is to envisage the level of customer centricity of Saudi Telecom call center agents from the point view of the company's customers who usually use this touch point to obtain the service they require.

This paper will primarily adopt the quantitative approach in order to obtain objective and representative outputs of the research. However, as suggested by Yin (2003), the qualitative approach will be used as well to triangulate and confirm the research findings and to gain more understanding of the "why" in addition to the "who, what and where".

As a result, the researcher will mainly use the structured questionnaires in addition to a focus group that will help to obtain a better understanding of the quantitative results then will analyze the collected data in the form of numbers, patterns, and interpretation of discussion seeking to find out the customers' perception towards the services offered to them via the STC call center agents. The results will be expressed in numbers and words and/or interpretations derived from both the structured survey and focus group respectively.

### **3.5 The research strategy**

The research strategy will be a general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research questions that have been set out. It will contain a clear road map and objectives derived from research questions, specify the sources from which the researcher intends to collect data, and consider the constraints that will inevitably affect the study such as access to data, time, location, and ethical issues (Saunders, Lewis, and, Thornhill, 2009).

Shaw (2005) explains that customer experience through call centers influences customer perception of the brand and is a key dimension of brand loyalty that can often override traditional marketing communication. Peppers and Rogers (2008) add that a positive customer experience with a call center is based on strong relationship between dialogue and satisfaction, which drive customer retention. The key question that service companies are seeking to answer is how do you know if they are delivering the right level of customer experience to

their customers and how do you know where, when, and how to improve? King (2006) states that organizations tend to measure customer experience by measuring customer satisfaction and they concentrate mainly on looking for improvement in this area in one of two ways: significant investment in CRM & IT systems or re-engineer their customer service processes and procedures.

He adds that it is just as difficult to determine what "a good" experience looks like as it is to define the best practice, or what so called "wow" experience. Today the comparison set that a customer uses to determine whether he has had a rewarding experience with your firm may not match the competitive set we monitor. When it comes to customer experience, companies compete with companies outside its industry and the region, and probably outside its realm of experience.

Shaw (2005) adds that there are three elements that influence customer experience, namely brand values through delivering consistent messages and experience, the moment of truth with a company's touch points where customers can interact with the company in different ways through different tools, and the organizational priority - which experiences are more important than others. For the purpose of this study I will discuss the second dimension, its contribution to the researcher's organization, its effect on STC customers and its competitive position in the market.

According to Yin (2003) there are five primary research strategies in the social sciences: experimental, surveys, archival analysis, histories, and case studies. Each strategy has its own advantages and disadvantages depending on three conditions:

- The type of research question posed.
- The extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events.
- The degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events.

Table 3.1 displays these conditions in each of the three columns and shows how each of the five strategies is related.

Research Strategy	Form of Control Research Question	Requires Control over Behavioural Events	Focus on Contemporary Events
Experiment	How/Why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who/What/Where/How Many/How Much	No	Yes
Archival/Analysis	Who/What/Where/How Many/How Much	No	Yes/No
History	How/Why	No	No
Case Study	How/Why	No	Yes

**Table 3.1: Situations or different research strategies**

Source: (Yin, 2003, p. 6.)

Robson (2007) reveals that the most important condition in selecting a research strategy is to identify the type of research question being asked. "Who," "what," and "where" are the categorization scheme for these types of research questions. He adds that two possibilities are needed to investigate by asking the "what" question. First, some types of "what" questions are justifiable for conducting an exploratory study and the goal is to develop a pertinent hypothesis and propositions for further inquiry. Yin (2003) states that any of the five research strategies can be used in a situation using an exploratory survey, experiment, or case study. The second type of "what" question is actually from the "how many" or "how much" line of inquiry and the outcomes from particular situations.

Since questions in this research are based on "what" question and this "what" question is actually a form of "how many," and the investigator has no control over the actual behavioural events, and according to Yin (2003) and Robson (2007) the survey is found to be a more appropriate approach in gaining a better understanding of the research area. Survey through structured questionnaires and focus groups are more appropriate methods for quantitative and qualitative study respectfully.

Peppers and Rogers (2008) cite the major customer experience characteristics of positive customer experience interactions, which have been discussed in both documents three and four and addressed in more detail in chapter 2 of this document. There are seven main dimensions

which characterise a positive moment of truth, or positive customer experience interaction, with the customer service agent at any service organization: reliability, competence, responsiveness, accessibility, effective problem resolution, courtesy and empathy and pro-activity, which have been discussed in detail in the literature review and will be discussed in chapter 4 through analysis of respondents' feedback covering these seven dimensions.

The researcher adopted the seven customer experience dimensions of a positive customer experience as stated by Peppers and Rogers (2008) along with the suggestion of Yin (2003) for the researchers who intend to explore and answer the “how” and “what” and accordingly decided to use the survey strategy as a general framework of the research and a source to answer the questions of this study. The researcher primarily adopted the quantitative approach, supported by the qualitative approach, through a standard survey questionnaire and a focus group held with selected customers who responded to the questionnaire in order to add further in-depth analysis and confirm the research findings.

### **3. 6 The research instrument**

Crawford (1997) notes that there are a number of steps involved in the development of a research instrument. These include deciding the information required by the researcher, defining the target respondents and selecting the method with which to reach them, deciding on question content and wording and ensuring the questions are in a meaningful order and format. Crawford (1997) also suggests checking the length of the questionnaire and pre-testing it prior to developing the final survey form.

The researcher needs to understand customers' perceptions of the customer experience level at call centers operated by STC. The researcher determined three strategic questions to be answered at the end of this study and already explained in section 1.4.

The researcher aims to target existing STC customers, resident throughout the various regions (Central, East, West and South) of Saudi Arabia, who have used either the 902 or 907 call centers.

Based on what the researcher reviewed and shown in section 3.5 and according to Robson (2007) and Yin (2003) view that if the research or study questions are based on "what" question, the appropriate approach in gaining a better understanding of the research area is the survey. Crawford (1997) adds that the method of contact will influence not only the questions

the researcher is able to ask but also the phrasing of those questions. Crawford (1997) further states that as a general rule, the more sensitive or personal the information, the more personal the form of data collection should be. Since the survey will concentrate on customers' experience of STC call centers, there will be little or no sensitive information gathered. As a result, and based on Yin (2003), Robson (2007) and Crawford (1997), the method selected by the researcher for the survey will be direct distribution of the questionnaires to the targeted audience.

Crawford (1997) stresses that no question should be included unless the data it gives rise to is directly of use in testing one or more of the hypotheses established during the research design.

The researcher constructed the questionnaire questions based on the discussions he has made in the literature review in chapter two and the conceptual model he prepared in section 2.8 in addition to the works of (Peppers and Rogers (2008), Zemke (2003), Cook (2008), (Peppers and Rogers (1996), Scott, 2001) and Senge (1990).

Peppers and Rogers (1996, 2008) and Zemke (2003) works particularly the positive customer experience check list prepared by Peppers and Rogers (1996) shown in table 2.3 are the most important resources from which the researcher derived and constructed the questions of the study. The seven dimensions of the positive customer experience namely, reliability, competence, responsiveness, pro-activity, courtesy and empathy, accessibility, and effective communication and problem resolution represent the foundation on which the researcher built the study questions. In chapter two the researcher discussed these seven dimensions in detail and explained the importance of each dimension in building a customer centric call center and its strategic role in creating the right customer perception of the call center callers as well as the importance of that the employees, regulations and procedure of call center be focused on these seven dimensions in order to build right culture and prepare the proper environment to deliver the required service to the customers of the company according to their needs and expectations.

According to Crawford (1997) and Yin (2003), survey questions can be classified into three forms: Closed, open-ended and open response-option questions. Closed questions offer a number of advantages, namely:

- They provide the respondent with an easy method of indicating his/her answer – he/she does not have to think about how to articulate his/ her answer
- They 'prompt' the respondent so that the respondent has to rely less on memory in answering a question
- Responses can be easily classified, making analysis very straightforward
- They permit the respondent to specify the answer categories most suitable for their purposes

As a result, the researcher shall construct the questionnaire primarily using closed questions. However, as Crawford (1997) notes, there are also a number of disadvantages associated with closed questions:

- They do not allow the respondent the opportunity to give a different response to those suggested
- They 'suggest' answers that respondents may not have considered before

Therefore, in addressing these limitations of closed questions, the researcher shall use a few open-ended questions. These open-ended questions shall allow the respondent to answer in his/her own words, with no influence by any specific alternatives suggested by the interviewer. They may also reveal the issues that are most important to the respondent, and this may in turn reveal findings that were not originally anticipated when the survey was initiated. Finally, respondents will be able to 'qualify' their answers or emphasise the strength of their opinions (Crawford 1997). In order to complete a research study that can help the reader to understand the situation of STC customer care center, the researcher managed to link each of the seven dimensions of customer centric call center to the research questions based on the discussions formed in chapter two mainly by (Peppers and Rogers (1996, 2008), Zemke (2003), Cook (2008), and Senge (1990) as well as the researcher's interpretation of these discussions which the researcher has clearly shown in chapter two of this study particularly in sections 2.7 and 2.8.

In the following pages the researcher will explain the methodology he adopted to develop the questions of the study in line with the seven dimensions of positive customer experience which enabled the researcher to reach the required results of the study through which he was able to answer the questions of the research. In doing so, the researcher has followed the

following process in the selection of questions: The researcher's process for constructing the questions for the survey was as follows:

Step 1: Review definitions of each of the seven positive customer experience dimension as stated by Peppers and Rogers (1996, 2008), Zemke (2003), Cook (2008) and Senge (1990) in order to set the context for the questions.

Step 2: Review quantitative measures of each positive customer experience dimension using metrics such as those proposed by TM Forum (2011) and cited in Chapter 2 of this document. This is the first step in translating the theoretical dimensions as put forth by the various authors into meaningful questions that can be analyzed quantitatively.

Step 3: Draw and construct questions based on key themes using the researcher's experience in the telecom industry and understanding of the call center context.

Step 4: Conduct an expert review of questions constructed for each positive customer experience dimension to establish construct and content validity.

The researcher will define below each of the seven positive customer experience dimensions based on the discussions already made in the literature review of this study.

### **Reliability**

The reliability dimension of a positive customer experience interaction with the call center assists the researcher in finding out whether the agents of the call center are dependable, accurate and perform as promised. Zemke (2003) states that the reliability customer experience dimension reveals the position of the firm toward performing the service to the customer right the first time. It also means that the company honors its promises.

Zemke (2003) adds that the reliability dimension confirms trust and confidence of the customers in the company such that they perceive it as an excellent service provider that services its customers in the proper time and place and responds to their needs and expectations. Peppers and Rogers (2008) state that customer care centers should be characterized by key features such as building confidence between the customers and the organization through delivering the required support and meeting their requirements. In addition, APQC's (2001) report states that a customer centric organization is always precise in

providing its services, resolving customer problems on time and properly from the first call. The report added that customers prefer to do business with such an organization and rate it higher among its rivals.

Metrics for the reliability dimension would include those related to first contact resolution as well as percentage of orders delivered by committed date (TM Forum, 2011).

First Contact Resolution means the agent provided enough assistance to the customer such that he resolved his/her query satisfactorily during the first call and did not feel the need to call the call center again (TM Forum, 2011). However there may be cases where the agent was unable to resolve the query during the call. In this case the agent would make a promise to the customer of a resolution either by himself or another support team in the near future. For instance, in the context of STC, there may be a need to send a field technician to visit the customer premises and resolve his problem. Though the 'call' would now be out of the control of the call center, the agent would still be required to set the expectation of the customer in terms of when to expect resolution by another party. Whether these resolutions have been completed by the committed date will in turn, influence whether customers consider the STC call center as a reliable customer-facing touch point and the optimum channel for resolving their complaints. Being able to resolve the customer's query during the call, or setting an accurate expectation where another support team is required will count towards the overall performance of agents. In line with these objectives, the researcher proposes the following 5 questions to understand customers' perception of reliability within his conceptual model for positive customer experience:

- 1- The range of assistance provided by the agent.
- 2- The agent's answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement.
- 3- STC call center is considered the best customer-facing touch point.
- 4- STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints.
- 5- At the end of your interaction with the customer care center, how do you rate the overall performance of the agent?

### **Responsiveness**

Responsiveness is considered to be an important measure that gauges the level of willingness and readiness of the employees to provide the desired service and involves timeliness of

service (Cook, 2008). Zemke (2003) and Peppers and Rogers (2008), as cited in chapter two of this study, assert that responsiveness is a critically important area of service quality, as customers will often rate an organization higher if the company is more responsive and attempts to solve the problem within a reasonable time and with its own efforts, rather than just putting the caller on hold while waiting to speak with an expert. Peppers and Rogers (2008) and Zemke (2003) add that when customers see other organizations delivering faster, efficient and execute and fulfill their request within a reasonable time they will demand it of your organization as well. If an organization is unable to be as responsive as its competitors, it runs the risk of delivering undesirable customer service or, at worst, losing customers to the competitors.

Zemke (2003), Peppers and Rogers (2008) and Cook (2008) stress that organizations should prove responsiveness in providing their services to customers either through their call centers or other channels and should show understanding of customers' needs and wants, responding to them accurately and on time. Additionally, call center agents should show understanding and confidence that they will do their best to provide the required services.

Metrics for responsiveness include mean customer call waiting time and mean time difference between customer requested delivery date and planned delivery date (TM Forum, 2011).

Call waiting time includes the time spent by the customer whilst waiting to speak to an agent, as well as the time taken by the agent to resolve the customer's query. Therefore it is important that a call center agent endeavors to understand the customer's inquiry reasonably quickly and then serve the customer promptly in line with his/her requirements. Responsiveness also includes the agent displaying an attitude of willingness to resolve the customer's problem and assuring him/her that he will do his best to complete his/her request. This willingness to help is also indicated by the agent encouraging a customer not to hesitate in contacting the call center whenever he/she faces a problem. A responsive call center will be seen by customers as being the best customer-facing touch point and the optimum channel for resolving their complaint. In this regard, the following 7 questions will be applied to the responsiveness dimension:

- 1- The range of the agent's understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration.

- 2- The agent's answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement.
- 3- The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you.
- 4- Did the agent assure you that he would do his best to execute and fulfill your request?
- 5- Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have any problem?
- 6- STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.
- 7- STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints.

### **Competence**

Competence has been defined by Cook (2008) and discussed by the researcher in detail in chapter two of this research as the agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by his organization and is the most crucial dimension of creating a positive customer experience at any touch point of the organization. Peppers and Rogers (2008), Zemke (2003), Clark (2006) and Scott (2001) all agree that customers are only satisfied if all their needs are being met and their needs can only be met if the customer service representatives possess the right skills, knowledge of the services offered and prove to the customer that they are professional enough to meet their requests. Cook (2008) and Zemke (2003) stress that customer care staff should be equipped with the necessary information and systems to enable them explain and provide support for the services required by callers. Peppers and Rogers (2008) confirm that the availability of systems and service information makes call center agents competent enough to serve their customers properly.

Metrics for this dimension would include the number of qualified contact personnel who have undergone formal training APQC (2005). An agent with the required level of knowledge would be found to have a higher first call resolution rate and spend less time for problem resolution.

The agent's knowledge of an organization's products and services is the first indication of his level of competence. Professionalism is an enhancement of existing knowledge and is related to formal qualifications or training received. A competent agent would know how to

effectively use the systems available and then impart the requested information to the customer. If agents are perceived by customers to be competent, they will consider the STC call center as the best customer-facing touch point. Competency of the agent will also affect the overall opinion of the customer when evaluating his performance. The researcher has therefore applied 6 questions in order to understand how customers view the competence of call center agents:

- 1- The agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by STC.
- 2- The professionalism (technical and customer care) of the agent.
- 3- The availability of the requested information with the agent.
- 4- The ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services.
- 5- STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.
- 6- At the end of your interaction with the customer care center, how do you rate the overall performance of the agent?

### **Proactivity**

Shaw (2005) and Peppers and Rogers (2008) are cited in chapter two indicating that a proactive call center agent will improve business relations by 90 percent. Peppers and Rogers (2008) and Cook (2008) state that customer care employee who provide services to the customers through the call centers or other outlets should take the initiative and offer the customers the services that may suit their needs and wants but they are not aware of. This will help them to obtain the services that fulfill their requirements and meet their expectations and in the meantime increase the cross and up- sell activities of the company significantly contributing to its productivity and improving its financial and commercial performance. In the same context Cook (2008) stresses that a proactive customer care agent makes a huge difference to a customer's perception of a business when the concerned employee advises the customer to obtain new services that may be of higher quality and more suitable for him or when the employee advises the customer to use another, more attractive and easy channel to obtain the service such as the web.

Thompson (2004) states that the proactivity dimension of a customer centric call center depicts whether the agents offer any other services related to the customer's inquiries. It also evaluates the capabilities of the agents in performing cross and up-selling activities.

A metric for this dimension may be the rate of successful cross or up-selling activities undertaken by call center agents (Bustos, 2009).

In this dimension, the researcher seeks to establish the perceived level of proactivity of STC call center agents in taking the initiative to offer services more suited to the customer and persuading him/her to subscribe to them. Such cross and up-selling activity typically involves an explanation of the benefits, details and prices of the services being offered to the customer. Proactivity can also be gauged by establishing whether STC call center agents make customers aware of alternative sales and support channels, such as the STC Online customer portal, encouraging customers to register with the portal and explaining the benefits of doing so. As a result, the researcher has constructed 6 questions in order to understand customer perceptions of agents' proactivity:

1. Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry?
2. If yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services?
3. Did the agent inform you of the details and prices of the offer?
4. Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services ([www.stc.com.sa](http://www.stc.com.sa))?
5. Did the agent ask you to register with STC Online services?
6. Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online services?

### **Courtesy and Empathy**

As discussed in chapter two, the researcher noted that this dimension plays an important role in delivering the optimum customer experience at call centres. Senge (1990) reveals that it is related to whether the agents were friendly, considerate, polite and respectful. As demonstrated in the literature review of this study, Senge (1990), Cook (2008) and Peppers and Rogers (1996) agree that recognizing the customer's emotional state helps an organization decide the best way to effectively provide the service for which they are looking. They added that being courteous and empathetic toward customers shows them that you care about their situation, take time to listen to their inquiries and take actions that show you care. Cook (2008)

stresses the importance of training the customer care center agents on the methods and skills of dealing with upset customers and how to serve them and regain their satisfaction.

Courtesy and empathy may be tracked using metrics related to customer complaints regarding insolence of contact personnel. They may also be tracked by carefully designed quality assurance checklist, which ensures all agents adhere to a minimum set of standards when speaking to customers.

Peppers and Rogers (1996) in particular, outlined in their positive customer experience checklist of call center agents shown in table 2.3, a number of elements that contribute to providing distinguished service to customers and create a positive customer perception of the company and its services. These include the agent greeting the customer with the customary Islamic greeting and clearly stating their name at the beginning of the call, politely requesting customers to wait while processing requests and thanking them for doing so, calmly responding to angry customers, thanking customers for their call and overall attitude and courtesy. The overall attitude and courtesy experienced by customers will influence whether they consider the STC call center to be the best customer-facing touch-point. In the light of these guidelines and logic, the researcher constructed 9 questions:

- 1- The range of courtesy and attitude of the agent during the discourse with the customer.
- 2- The ability of the agent to deal with the customers in a proper way when they got angry.
- 3- Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly?
- 4- Did the agent greet the customer saying As-Salam Alaykum (Peace be upon you)?
- 5- Did the agent ask the customers to wait till he processes their request?
- 6- Did the agent thank the customer for waiting a long time?
- 7- At the end of the call did the agent thank the customer for dealing with STC?
- 8- STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.

9- Based on the customer call with customer care center agent how do they rate the courtesy of the agent?

### **Effective Communication and Problem Resolution**

Clark (2006) and Zemke (2003) reveal that listening to the customer patiently with a positive attitude, understanding his/her complaint, and devising a shared recognition to resolve the problem completely are major tools that can be used to achieve effective problem solving objectives.

Clark (2006) and Scott (2001) add that when customers have a complaint the response must be to listen, truly listen, then apologize and take effective action. They believe that in many instances the very act of listening (without interrupting) can be enough to diffuse the situation and make the person feel respected as a customer. Scott (2001) stresses that the key to rectifying a mistake is to be honest with the customers and effective in meeting their wants and needs. Peppers and Rogers (2008) state that engaging the customer is one of the first steps in delivering positive customer experience at any touch point of the organization. They add that to engage with customer, you need to listen and communicate properly with your customers. Selland (2006) agrees with the above authors that satisfying customers can be a tricky endeavor when organizations are faced with multiple complaints, demands, personalities, and angry customers. When these situations arise the best course of action is to address them properly. Employees should listen to the customer's concern, empathize with his/her situation and take the necessary measures to rectify the situation.

Metrics to track effectiveness of communication and problem resolution include those related to the elapsed time to complete handling of customer requests as well as the percentage of repeat calls by customers (TM Forum, 2011).

Effective communication and problem resolution includes the agent understanding the customer's inquiry reasonably quickly. Call duration time can also be reduced if the agent speaks clearly so that the customer does not misunderstand him or ask him to repeat himself. Furthermore, interrupting a customer whilst talking will add to the handling time of the call, as the customer may have to repeat himself/herself or get frustrated in trying to explain his/her query to the agent. By repeating the query to the customer, the agent can ensure he has

correctly understood the customer's request and resolve the customer's problem first time round without the customer having to call back. If customers consider STC call center agents to be effective communicators and problem solvers, they will think favorably of the call center as a touch point, which will in turn attract new customers. The researcher constructed 6 questions to cover this dimension of customer-centricity.

- 1- The range of the agent's understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration.
- 2- How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the agent in terms of his voice clarity and correct pronunciation?
- 3- Did the agent listen without interrupting you?
- 4- Did the agent repeat your question after listening to you?
- 5- STC call center is considered the best customer-facing touch point.
- 6- STC call centers are considered the best in KSA in attracting new customers.

### **Accessibility and Ease of Use**

This dimension of customer centricity involves approachability, ease of contact, and ease of use of the call center. It includes easy access to the service by telephone (lines are not busy and they do not put you on hold). It also includes limited waiting time to receive service. The ease and smoothness of using the IVR system is also an important factor that makes the call center reachable and user friendly (Scott, 2001). Accessibility goes to the heart of what call centers do, which is, in essence, matching supply and demand in real time. (Cook, 2008) and (APQC, 2001) state that any service organization should ensure that its call center is accessible and easy to use to get the services needed.

Peppers and Rogers (2008) state that a customer centric call center is rated very high by customers who consider it the optimum channel for interacting with the company to obtain the services they need. APQC (2001) maintains that distinguished call centers are always highly rated by its customers due to the satisfactory services they obtain and the professional treatment they receive and consequently, they prefer it to other sale channels.

Availability of live call center agents in terms of hours of operation is an example of a metric used to gauge accessibility of call centers. Another metric to measure contact availability would be the percentage of abandoned calls (TM forum, 2011). Accessibility of a call center can also be measured by customer usage, since an inaccessible call center would see few customers able to or opting to use it as a contact channel. The (TM forum, 2011) measures distribution of contact handling across channels in order to understand preferred access by customers and volume of customer requests to track usability.

In an accessible call center, customers would feel that their query is submitted and handled with relative ease and speed. This would depend upon how quickly the agent can identify the customer, which means he should ask the customer for identifiable information in order to retrieve his details. Since the agent's efficiency personifies the accessibility of the call center, his overall performance will be a determining factor in how the customer views the call center as a touch-point and its effectiveness in attracting new customers (APQC, 2001). Upon this basis, the researcher has constructed 6 questions in order to assess customers' views regarding accessibility of STC call centers:

- 1- The range of the agent's understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration.
- 2- Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number etc.?
- 3- The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you.
- 4- At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent?
- 5- STC call center is considered the best customer-facing touch point.
- 6- STC call centers are considered the best in attracting new customers

Last but not least, the researcher conducted a very important exercise that validates the content discussed earlier for the seven dimensions and the related questions to each dimension. Construct validity is the degree to which a test measures an intended hypothetical construct (Agosta *et al*, 2008). According to Pinar (2002), construct validity is the most theoretical form of validity and is designed to establish validity where no other measure exists.

Content validity is the extent to which items in a scale represent the content that is being measured (Human Services Research Institute, 2008). Pinar (2002) states that content validity is concerned with whether or not the questions (items) asked cover the content area satisfactorily, i.e. the completeness of the instrument.

In order to confirm construct and content validity of the research instrument for this study, the researcher conducted an expert review of the questionnaire. Two experts, Mr. Mahmoud Makki and Dr. Abdullah Al Harthy were organized to review the research instrument. Brief biographies of each expert are included in Appendix 29. Both experts were selected for their expertise in marketing, sales, culture change management and strategic management. Each expert was provided with the questionnaire, chapter two and chapter three of this document. Both experts were asked to read the aforementioned documents and asked to provide their views on whether the questionnaire measured what it set out to assess, whether the scale domains had been accurately defined, whether these were the types of customer centricity dimensions that should be included in the scale, whether the questionnaire was consistent with current knowledge and best practices, and whether any other dimensions of customer centricity should be included in the scale. They were also asked for their opinion on whether each question was related to the assigned customer centricity dimension.

Upon completion of the review by both experts, the researcher gathered, reviewed and presented their comments, as documented in Appendix 30. Regarding construct validity, both experts agreed that the questionnaire measured what it set out to assess, the scale domains had been accurately defined, the correct types of customer centricity dimensions had been included in the scale, the questionnaire was consistent with current knowledge and best practices. However, Mr. Makki has suggested that a further study be conducted in the future to better assess the call center's "reliability" pillar, and more specifically the "consistency" component of reliability by asking the same questionnaire to a sub-set of customers that have actually regularly called the call center then assess how consistent their "good" or "bad" experience is. The researcher will show the expert suggestion in chapter seven of this study. They also agreed that each question was related to the customer centricity dimension it had been assigned to by the researcher.

## **General Questions**

In addition to questions related to the seven dimensions of customer-centricity as outlined in the selected conceptual model, the researcher sees it necessary to gather some background information in order to understand the respondents better whilst seeking any common patterns that may arise. In this context, the researcher has constructed a number of general questions and these are detailed as follows:

- 1- Whether the respondent has ever called an STC customer care center
- 2- How long has the respondent been using STC services
- 3- How often does the respondent call the call center
- 4- When did the respondent last call an STC call center
- 5- The sex of the respondent
- 6- The regional background of the respondent
- 7- The education level of the respondent
- 8- The age of the respondent

Finally, the researcher has provided the respondent with an open question, where the respondent is free to note any remarks or comments he/she may have with regards to the STC call center. The advantage of such open questions, as stated by O'Cathain and Thomas (2004), may sometimes be a bonus in the main study because they may increase response rates and identify issues which complement responses to closed questions.

Crawford (1997) and Yin (2003) state that opening questions should be easy to answer and not in any way threatening to the respondents. Furthermore, the first question is crucial because it is the respondent's first exposure to the interview and sets the tone for the nature of the task to be performed.

The researcher introduced himself to the respondent as a DBA student conducting a research on the concept of customer centricity and the extent to which it has been applied in the STC customer care centers.

The opening question seeks to establish whether the respondent has ever called an STC customer care center. If the respondent has done so, he/ she is invited to complete the remainder of the questionnaire, else the survey is terminated at that point.

According to Crawford (1997), respondents may feel it disconcerting to keep shifting from one topic to another, or to be asked to return to some subject they thought they gave their opinions about earlier. Therefore, questions should flow in some kind of psychological order and questions on one subject should be grouped together (Crawford 1997).

The first group of questions is related to the agent's performance. The second group of questions is related to the agent's behavior. The third group of questions is related to the STC call center and the final group of questions is related to the overall impression of the agent in the view of the respondent.

Crawford (1997) notes that it is natural for a respondent to become increasingly indifferent to the questionnaire as it nears the end. Therefore, important questions should be included in the early part of the questionnaire with potentially sensitive questions left to the end (Crawford 1997). The researcher has asked questions related to the agent's performance and behavior in the early part of the questionnaire with questions related to information about the respondent himself/ herself at the end.

A questionnaire that is too long or exhaustive may lead to unanswered questions. The questionnaire constructed by the researcher will have 10 sections and a total of 43 questions. It is envisaged that the questionnaire will take a respondent less than 10 minutes to complete.

After preparing the first draft of the questionnaire, ten questionnaires were handed out to some of the customers who visited STC retail offices. They were asked whether the questions made sense to them and were easy to understand. Following explanation and simplification of some technical terms used in the questionnaire, the questions were refined and an improved copy of the questionnaire was developed based on the feedback of the respondents as shown in appendix (2).

### **3.7 The data collection – sample selection and data analysis**

Data collection is a fundamental step in research. In data collection, sampled data are collected through various means that provide a basis for analyzing the market behavior of a general demographic from which the data are sampled.

Bell (2006), together with Kotler and Armstrong (1996), declare that secondary data is information collected from former existing studies and literature gathered for purposes other than the problem at hand. They continue to explain that the main advantage of secondary compared to primary data is that it is fairly inexpensive and can be gathered more quickly.

There are two major approaches to gathering information about a situation, person, problem, or phenomenon. Sometimes the information required is already available and only needs to be extracted. However, there are times when the information must be collected. Based upon these broad approaches to information gathering, data are categorized as: secondary data are collected from secondary sources such as government publications, personal records, and censuses (Kumar, 2005), and primary data are collected through observation, interviews, and/or questionnaires (Hair *et al.* 2006). According to Creswell (2009) the data collection procedure in qualitative research involves four basic types: observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials.

A questionnaire was prepared to understand the perception of STC customers about their experience with STC call centers. The questionnaire (as a tool for collecting data) was distributed to the customers of STC who used the call center services, with the assistance of front-office employees of STC retail offices in the different regions of the country during working hours. The respondents were allowed 10 to 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaires that were then immediately collected from them in the same locations upon completion.

A survey is a procedure used to collect primary data from individuals. The data sought can range from beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of the services offered by STC call center agents to general background information on individuals such as gender, age, and education. Surveys are used when the research involves collecting information from a large sample of individuals (Samuel *et al.* 2003).

The basic idea of sampling is that by selecting some of the elements in a demographic, researcher may draw conclusions about the entire population. There are several compelling reasons for sampling, including low cost, greater accuracy of results, greater speed of data collection, and availability of sample selection (Cooper and Schindler, 2003).

Selection of the sampling method to be used in a study depends on a number of related theoretical and practical issues. These include considering the nature of the study, the objectives of the study, and the time and budget available. Traditional sampling methods can be divided into two categories: probability and non-probability sampling (Samuel *et al.* 2003)

Probability sampling is most commonly associated with survey-based research where the researcher needs to make inferences from the sample about a population to answer the research questions or to meet the research objectives (Saunders, and Thornhill, 2003). Sampling elements are selected randomly and the probability of being selected is determined ahead of time by the researcher. If done properly, probability sampling ensures that the sample is representative (Hair *et al.* 2006).

Non-probability sampling provides a range of alternative techniques based on researcher subjective judgment (Saunders, and Thornhill, 2003). In non-probability sampling the selection of elements for the sample is not necessarily made with the aim of being statistically representative of the population. Rather the researcher uses subjective methods such as personal experience, convenience, and expert judgment, and so on to select the elements in the sample. As a result, the probability of any element of the population being chosen is not known (Samuel *et al.* 2003).

Graziano and Raulin (2007) state that while conducting the research, it is often impossible, impractical, or too expensive to collect data from all the potential units of analysis included in the research problem. Thus a smaller number of units, a sample, are often chosen to represent the relevant attributes of the whole set of units, the population. They add that due to the fact that samples are not perfectly representative of the population from which they are drawn, the researcher cannot be certain that the conclusions will generalize to the entire population.

The purpose of this research is to explore the customer centricity skills of STC call center agents from the point view of the customer who used and/or interacted with the call center. Samples for the study have been selected from the customers who called STC call center. As a result, the sample of the study was selected using non-probability techniques and was based on the explanation of Samuel *et al.* (2003). The researcher sees that there are probability elements in the sample that can't be entirely considered non-probability sampling.

The size of the sample is related on the size of the margin of error, which the researcher is prepared to accept, and the size of the targeted population from which the researcher is going to extract the sample. The total number of customers who are using STC call center services is 3.5 million customers (STC, 2009) and the researcher is accepting a 5% margin of error. As a result, the number of completed questionnaires should not be less than 384 questionnaires to be collected as shown in Table 3.4 (Fisher, 2004).

As the researcher has discussed in the previous paragraph, the size of sampling should not be less than 384 completed questionnaires. The researcher decided to distribute 800 questionnaires to STC customers who used call center services so that it would be possible to get a response rate around 40% to 50%. 461 of the questionnaires were collected within three weeks, which represented a response rate of more than 50%. Buglear (2001) suggested that 40% and over for a survey response is very good.

Population	5%	3%	2%	1%
50	44	48	49	50
100	79	91	96	99
150	108	132	141	148
200	132	168	185	196
250	151	203	226	244
300	168	234	267	291
400	196	291	343	384
500	217	340	414	475
750	254	440	571	696
1000	278	516	706	906
2000	322	696	1091	1655
5000	357	879	1622	3288
10000	370	964	1936	4899
100000	383	1056	2345	8762
1000000	384	1066	2395	9513
10000000	384	1067	2400	9595

**Table 3-4: Estimating margin of error on sample survey results.**

Source: Fisher, (2004)

To select the sample of the focus group participants 46 customers who responded to the questionnaire were invited to participate, six of them showed desire to join the focus group. This number of participants is considered reasonable as the required number of participants in a focus group ranges from six to ten participants and a larger number of participants would make it difficult for the moderator to control the discussion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

The researcher also prepared a room well equipped with tool kits containing pencils and writing pads that support managing the discussions. The participants were received on Tuesday 23/7/2009 at 6: 30 pm, led to the discussion room, served with refreshments and coffee then thanked for their response and briefed on the purpose of the session, the subject that would be discussed, and the expected duration of the session. The researcher requested permission of the participants to record the discussion and they all showed consent. The discussion lasted about two hours.

The researcher opened the session by raising the first question about the participants' perceptions of the call center services and the agents. The group continued discussing and answering the remaining questions of the focus group shown in appendix (3).

At the end of the focus group session the researcher offered gifts to the participants to express his thanks and gratitude for their participation in the session.

For quantitative data analysis, Spss and the statistical tools of Microsoft Excel were used for data input and analysis. The statistics' results were presented in graphical form with a detailed description.

In the demographic analysis section the researcher analyzed the result from different dimensions to facilitate the comparison of customer satisfaction belonging to various levels of education, age, gender, region, patronage, and duration. For every dimension it is important to test the factor in terms of the levels (groups).

A factor is an independent treatment variable whose settings (values) are controlled and varied by the experimenter. The intensity setting of a factor is the level (Pham, 2006).

In this study the level of satisfaction is called a factor. The different groupings of customer settings or values are called levels (groups), and education is graded in four levels (groups) – secondary or less, B.S, Master, and PHD. For the ages, region, patronage, and duration there are four groups for each while for gender there are only two groups (Male, Female).

In order to test if there is some relationship between gender and the customer satisfaction rate, it is not enough to calculate the means but the difference between two means (male and

female) should be calculated to conclude whether it is an essential difference or a slight difference that cannot be relied upon.

Pham (2006) states that the t-test compares the actual difference between two means in relation to the variation in the data (expressed as the standard deviation of the difference between the means). As a result, the researcher adopted the t-test to find out the sort of the relationship between the variables such as gender and customer satisfaction rate.

By default, the t-test assumes there is no relationship ( $H_0$ ) between gender and the customer satisfaction rate. Cooper and Schindler (2007) reveal that if the p-value associated t-test is small (less than 0.05) it means that there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis. So the researcher may conclude that there is no relationship between gender and the customer satisfaction rate. They add that if the p-value associated t-test is not small ( $> 0.05$ ), there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and the researcher may conclude that there is a relationship between the gender and the satisfaction rate.

In the case of education, age, region, patronage, and duration afterwards there are four groups. The researcher wanted to test if there was some sort of relationship between, for example, education level and the customer satisfaction rate, but the difference between more than two means (secondary school, B.S, master, PHD) should be calculated to conclude whether there is or is not an essential difference between the two variables.

ANOVA (analysis of variance) as defined by Cooper and Schindler (2007) is a general technique that can be used to test the hypothesis that the means among two or more levels or groups are equal under the assumption that the sampled populations are normally distributed. Fisher (2004) adds that the ANOVA test is used to test whether differences between two groups are significant or not. As a result, ANOVA analysis will be adopted by the researcher for the levels of education, age, region, patronage, and duration afterwards since there are more than two groups.

By default, ANOVA assumes the means of all groups are equal. So there is no relationship between the education (or age or region) and customer satisfaction.

Then the p-value (probability value) is calculated to decide whether there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. As a general rule, if a p-value is greater than 0.05 it means that

ANOVA's assumption may be right. So the researcher may conclude that there is no relation between education, age, or region and satisfaction rate. While if the p-value is lower than 0.05 then ANOVA's assumption can be rejected. Then all we know is that at least 2 groups are different from each other. But this is not enough to give the opinion of the direction of the relationship. In this case further analysis should be performed. So the researcher will perform a multiple comparison test.

Internal reliability of research is the ability of a research instrument to measure what is purposed (Cooper and Schindler, 2007). The researcher conducted a Cronbach Alpha analysis for each question for each dimension separately to ascertain whether the questions in the same category are testing the same thing. The results shown in appendix (4) reveal that each dimension scored more than 0.8, which confirmed the reliability of the questions' dimensions. For the content validity the researcher's assessment was made via expert review of the research instruments, as explained in section 3.6. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

Mean value (average) and standard deviation were calculated in order to improve the research result. The researcher has then explored and analyzed the data based on the respondents' results from the four main regions of Saudi Arabia, namely central, eastern, western, and southern regions.

The standard deviation is also an important parameter as it gives the study an indication of the average distance from the mean. A low standard deviation would mean that most observations cluster around the mean. A high standard deviation would mean that there was a lot of variation in the answers. A standard deviation of 0 is obtained when all responses to a question are the same (Zikmund, 2000).

After collecting all the data the process of analysis can begin. To summarize and rearrange the data, several interrelated procedures are performed during the data analysis stage and the results were analyzed for each region separately and the total for the four regions is also presented. The researcher used descriptive statistics to describe the basic features of the data gathered from the questionnaire in various ways to provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with pictorial presentation analysis they form the basis of the quantitative analysis of data.

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## 4 Analysis of the Survey Results

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STC needs to assess its current competition position now that external competitors have penetrated the Saudi market and are targeting STC customers.

Measuring, analyzing, and evaluating the STC customers' experience at one of the most important touch points, such as the call center, is considered very crucial to STC in this phase, for it involves guiding and providing recommended actions that will help the company prevent its current customers from succumbing to the allure of competitors, who would thereby gain new customers.

So it is important to recognize the customers' points of view of the three main questions mentioned in chapter 1: To what extent are the STC call center's agents and supervisors customer centric? How do the STC call center agents treat STC customers during the calls? Do the STC agents and supervisors possess an adequate knowledge of STC products and services?

This will help the researcher to explore the customers' points of view about STC and how they evaluate or perceive STC as a customer centric organization that focuses on its customers and builds all of its services and operations around the customers' needs.

Meeting the objectives, which focus upon collecting the customers' feedback, depends on the availability of data related to the customers' perceptions. Therefore the researcher adopted two main research techniques, qualitative and quantitative methods, through the following research tools:

- 1- A proper questionnaire was designed and distributed to different customers.
- 2- A focus group was conducted with specific selected customers.

In order to understand the problem clearly and make appropriate recommendations, the researcher used descriptive statistic presentations to describe the basic features of the data gathered from the survey and the focus groups. The analysis presentations will include graphical displays of the data that summarize the data or facilitate comparisons.

This chapter is divided into six parts. The first one is an analysis of responses to the questions asked. In this part the researcher will summarize all of the survey questions and then analyze them separately based on customer feedback to each question. At the second part is the analysis of the results by dimension, where the researcher is going to analyze the survey according to the seven dimensions. The questions on the questionnaire distributed to the sample respondents were linked to each dimension of customer centricity. The researcher distributed these questions between these seven dimensions and then analyzed each dimension separately. Cronbach's Alpha (used as a measure of the internal consistency or reliability of a psychometric test score for a sample of examinees) was then applied for every dimension to ascertain whether questions in the same category were testing the same thing. The third section presents the demographic analysis, which helps the researcher compare customers' responses with different levels of education, age, gender, and region, and reveals an overview of commonalities and differences. It sheds light on the common factors among the customer responses as well as the differences.

The fourth part is the analysis of the focus group study (qualitative method) based on the seven customer experience dimensions. The fifth part includes the research's major findings and will list the major findings that the researcher derived from the previous analysis of the quantitative study.

#### **4.1 Analysis by question responses**

In this part we provide a five-part brief explanation of responses for each question:

1- Demographic questions (five questions)

This part consists of questions and data related to a survey of education, residence, gender, and occupation that provides a consumer set identifying those people who use the call center.

2- Evaluation of agents

In this part the questionnaire is designed to depict the level of courtesy, quality of speech, and overall performance of the agents. It also reveals the respondent's perception toward the relative performance of the call center against in the country.

3- Behavior analysis of agents

In this part the questionnaire depicts the call center agents' skills (e.g. communication and listening) and gauges their capabilities to effectively serve customers during the call.

4- Evaluation of STC call center agents

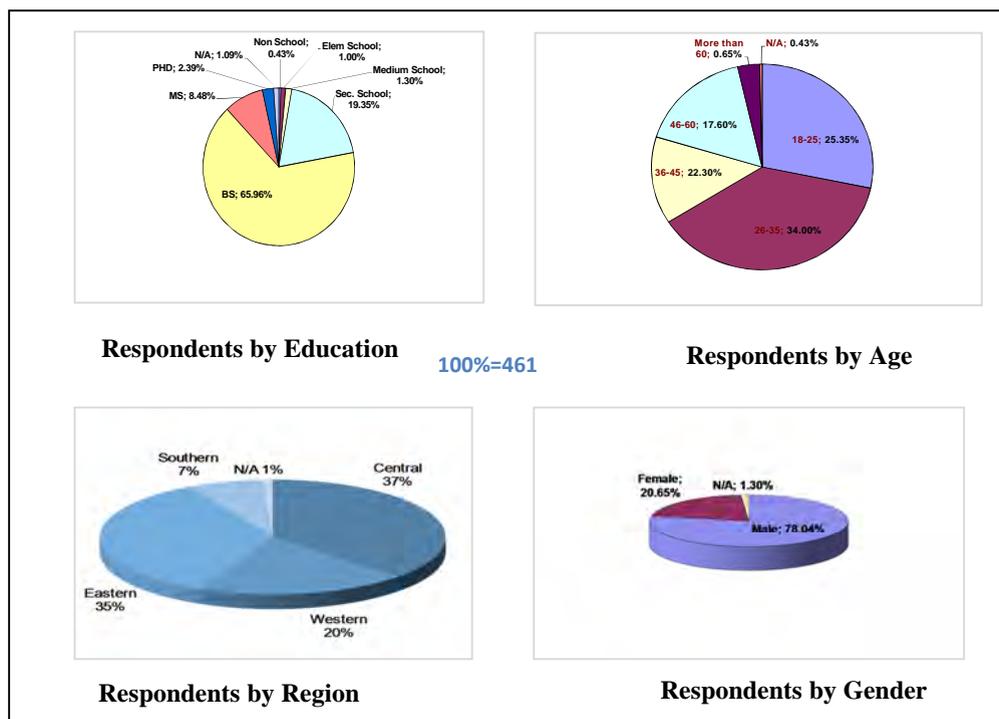
In this part, the questionnaire evaluates the respondents' perception on the level of support and reliability of the call center as a whole. For example, it assesses whether the STC call center is perceived as the best call center and/or if it effectively and efficiently processes customer complaints.

5- General evaluation of the agents

In this part, the questionnaire evaluates the agents' courtesy, quality of communication, and the overall performance.

For every question a series of statistical techniques (e.g., mean, rank, and standard deviation) were used. The resulting Cronbach's Alpha co-efficient score of 0.86, the details of which are shown in appendix 4, indicate a strong reliability of the research.

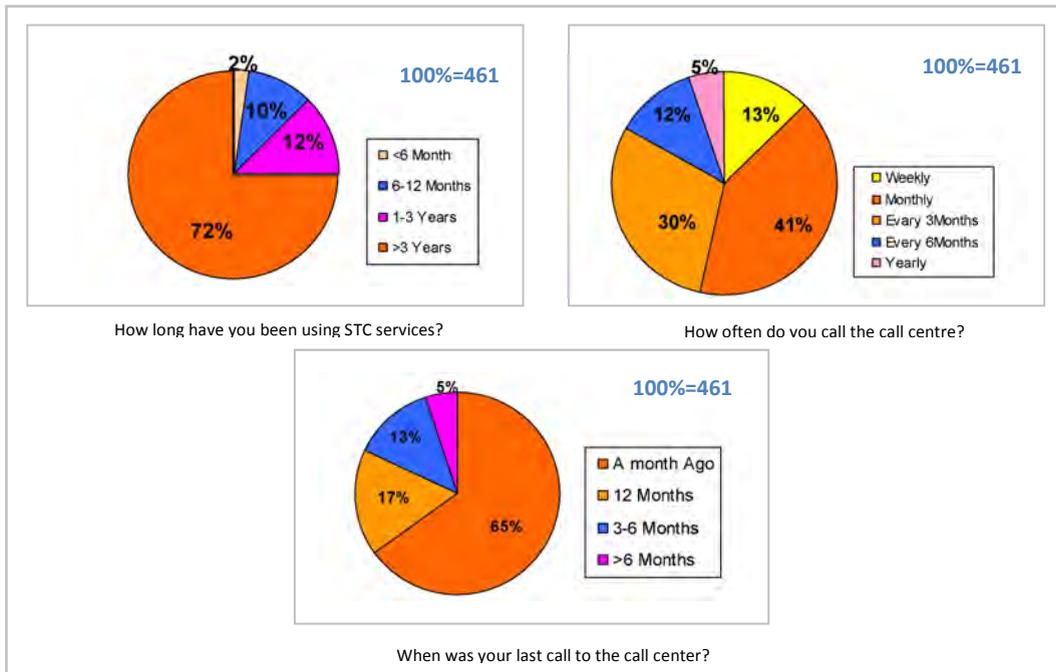
**Analysis of demographic questions**



**Figure 4.1: Respondents' demographics**

Demographic questions are related to a customer's region, gender, and education, and the time and frequency of calls to the call center.

Based on Figure 4.1, the profile of respondents is determined to be men between the ages of 26 to 45 who live in central, eastern, and western regions of Saudi Arabia and have a bachelor's degree.



**Figure 4.2: Respondent profile for using STC and call center services**

Figure 4.2 illustrates the time profile of users: more than 70% call in once a week or once a month; 65% have generally used the call center during the previous month; and 72% have used its services for the last 3 years, which shows high loyalty to the STC call center.

### Evaluation of agent professionalism

To measure the agents' service knowledge and professionalism, customers rated the following ten questions either “Very Bad,” “Bad,” “Fair,” “Very Good,” or “Excellent.”

Q1	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by STC.	9%	25%	32%	21%	13%	3.08	62%	1.16	461

Responses to Q1 indicate that call center agents do not have an adequate knowledge of STC’s services. Therefore training is required to enhance their knowledge.

Q2	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The range of assistance provided by the agent.	16%	24%	30%	17%	12%	2.83	56%	1.2	461

Responses to Q2 reveal the agents' lack skills and abilities for customer support, which can be the result of:

- 1) A lack of agent knowledge of the job function.
- 2) A misunderstanding of customer requirements.
- 3) A lack of desire to work.

Q3	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The range of a courteous attitude of the agent.	8%	19%	39%	25%	8%	3.28	66%	1.21	461

Responses to Q3 indicate that agent courtesy is fair or above 70%; however, it needs to be improved to provide better customer service quality.

Q4	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The professionalism (technical and customer care) of the agent.	12%	25%	30%	24%	10%	2.92	58%	1.16	461

Responses to Q4 indicate that 47% of agents are not “professional” because respondents do not perceive them as being either critical listeners or communicators. With periodic monitoring and training, call center agents can improve their performance in this area (discussed in the next chapter).

Q5	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The range of the agent's understands of your inquiry within a reasonable period of time.	12%	21%	31%	25%	11%	3.03	62%	1.17	461

Responses to Q5 clearly indicate that 64% of the call center agents did not understand the customer's inquiry. This is a critically important aspect of call center service given the fierce competition in the Saudi telecom market (discussed in the next chapter).

Q6	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The agent answers your question and fulfills your requirement.	19%	21%	30%	19%	11%	284	57%	1.25	461

Responses to Q6 similar to responses to Q5 as 70% of the respondents thought that agents did not fulfill their needs or requests.

Q7	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when you got angry.	17%	24%	28%	22%	17%	2.85	57%	1.23	461

Responses to Q7 indicate that 41% of agents did not cope well with angry and/or occasionally abusive customers. When customers get angry professional agents should deal with them in a professional way in order to absorb the anger of customers and turn it into satisfaction.

Q8	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The length of time that the agent took to serve you.	37%	20%	24%	12%	7%	2.31	46%	1.26	461

Responses to Q8 indicate that 57% of the customers thought that service time was too long. This can be attributed to the lack of efficient processes and training.

Q9	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The availability of the requested information with the agent.	12%	28%	28%	23%	10%	2.91	58%	1.16	461

Responses to Q9 indicate that 40% of the call center agents were not equipped with the relevant information to meet customer queries. It is essential to provide agents with accurate

information concerning STC's products and services as well as with the appropriate tools for customer servicing in order to ensure STC's growth in the market. The next chapter will discuss several remedies for this important topic.

Q10	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
The ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services.	16%	24%	30%	17%	12%	2.84	57%	1.25	461

Responses to Q10 indicate that 40% of the call center agents were unable to explain the services. This was mainly due to a lack of knowledge and communication skills. The next chapter will discuss how to improve call center on these frontiers.

In short, clear improvements need to be made concerning the agents' knowledge, communication, and interpersonal skills; processes and procedures in qualification; and analyzing customer inquiries in order to provide a shorter response time and a more competitive call center service. Operators need to adapt strategies to ensure that customer care is clearly present at the center of their offer model in the Saudi market. In the following chapters the researcher will discuss remedies to improve the call center experience in these areas.

The following eighteen questions were designed to extract the customer's perception of the agent's behavior during the call servicing.

Q1	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly?	38%	10%	51%	3.52	70%	0.93	461

Responses to Q1 indicate that 38% of the agents did not provide their names. The researcher will discuss procedures to ensure that names are communicated to customers in order to establish trust at the beginning of servicing.

Q2	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the agent greet you with "As-salaamu alaykum" (Peace be upon you)?	11%	7%	82%	4.37	89%	0.66	461

Responses to Q2 indicate that 82% of the agents greeted the customers with the official greeting of “As-salaamu alaykum” (Peace be upon you), a very good result that shows the customers received amicable and friendly treatment.

Q3	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the agent ask you to provide your personal information such as your name, ID number, etc.?	36%	5%	60%	3.87	77	1.25	461

According to Q3 responses, 60% of the agents asked for the customer’s name in order to establish authenticity and to initiate a one-on-one relationship, an important differentiator, with the owner of the phone service.

Q4	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the customer care center agent ask you about your query or requirements?	6%	5%	89%	4.7	94	0.67	461

According to Q4 responses, 89% of the agents explicitly asked questions. This is a critical first step in call center servicing.

Q5	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the agent listen without interrupting you?	22%	5%	73 %	4.2	84%	0.82	461

Responses to Q5 indicate that 73% of the agents critically and constructively listened to the customers’ inquiries. This is an important aspect of call center servicing.

Q6	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the agent repeat your question after listening to you?	45%	10%	44%	3.25	66%	0.95	461

According to Q6 responses, if necessary, 44% of the time agents repeated the posed question to ensure that he/she was fulfilling the right customer inquiry for better servicing.

Q7	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the agent assure you that he/she will do his best to execute and fulfill your request?	28%	7%	65%	3.97	79%	0.89	461

Responses to Q7 indicate that 65% of the agents assured customers that they would fulfill their requests and answer their questions. As a result, the latter showed confidence and trust in the process. As this assurance is critical for high quality servicing (28% lack this), the researcher will discuss corrective actions in the following sections.

Q8-Q9	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the agent ask you to wait till he/she processes your request?	17%	4%	79%	4.4	80%	0.76	461
Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time?	35%	10%	55%	3.6	72%	0.93	

Responses to Q8 and Q9 indicate that 79% of the agents politely asked callers to wait online until the service asked for had been delivered; however, 35% of the agents did not thank customers when the servicing time exceeded the normal time. Corrective actions and procedures are in line, as “thanking the caller for his/her extra patience” is key to establishing a high quality customer experience.

Q10-Q13	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry?	36%	58%	6%	2.92	59%	0.94	461
If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he/she persuade you to get the offered services?	16%	62%	21%	2.4	51%	0.74	461
Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer?	26%	65%	9%	2.7	54%	0.87	461

According to Q10-Q13 responses, only 6% of the agents had explicitly and clearly offered the customers extra services; and only 21% of them persuaded the customer to purchase them. Detailed product/service information was provided only by 9% of the agents.

Q14-Q16	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services (www.stc.com.sa)?	21%	73%	6%	2.5	49%	0.81	461
Did the agent ask you to register on STC Online Services?	14%	80%	6%	2.2	45%	0.72	461
Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online Services?	11%	83%	6%	2.1	42%	0.64	461

According to Q14-Q16 responses, only 6% of the agents did ask the customer explicitly and clearly recall STC's online capabilities and services (e.g., visit, registration, and walkthrough). Online activity is an important channel for customer self-service and can also provide valuable company product and service information.

Q17	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
At the end of the call, did the agent thank you for dealing with STC?	25%	8%	67%	3.97	79%	0.86	461

Responses to Q17 indicated that 67% of the agents clearly thanked customers dealing with STC, which shows courtesy in the process, an important building block for high quality customer servicing.

Q18	No	I don't know	Yes	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				5	%		
Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have another problem?	12%	40%	40%	3.23	67%	0.93	461

Responses to Q18 indicate that only 40% of the customers feel strongly that they were encouraged to reuse the STC call center's services as a result of their total experience. This metric is an important KPI for call center value proposition, word-of-mouth marketing, and corrective measures that need to be taken.

### Evaluations of STC call center agent questions

The following questions evaluate to what extent the call center is an adequate customer facing point when it comes to fulfilling the customers' needs and wants.

Q1	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
STC's call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	18%	17%	29%	27%	9%	2.92	58%	1.23	461

Responses to Q1 indicate that 35% of the customers feel that the call center is not a good or effective facing point for meeting their needs.

Q2	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
STC call centers are the optimum channels for resolving customer complaints.	12%	19%	24%	30%	15%	3.19	64%	1.24	461

Responses to Q2 indicate that 45% of the customers think that the call center is effective and efficient when dealing with their inquiries. 31% think that the channel itself is not a good choice for meeting their needs.

Q3	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
STC call centers are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers.	31%	22%	27%	16%	4%	2.4	48%	1.19	461

Responses to Q3 indicated that only 20% (a relatively low number) of customers clearly think that the call center is a good means for attracting new customers.

### General questions for evaluating STC agents

Through answering these three general questions, the customers evaluate the courtesy, quality of speech, and the overall performance of the agent.

Q1	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
Based on your call with the customer care center agent, how do you rate the courtesy of the agent?	7%	24%	32%	24%	7%	3.11	62%	1.12	461

As we can see, 31% of the respondents think that the agents were courteous enough when fulfilling their requests. This is a relatively low number for this important KPI.

Q2	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the agent in terms of his/her voice clarity, correct pronunciation, and so on?	5 %	15%	38%	31%	11%	3.11	62%	1.15	461

As seen above, 80% of respondents think that the quality of the agents' speech and clarity was fair and above, which suggests that there were no barriers in terms of core communication.

Q3	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Very Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						5	%		
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center, how do you rate the overall performance of the agent?	8%	23%	33%	26%	10%	3.09	61%	1.09	461

As noted, 31% of respondents rated the agent's performance as bad or very bad, which is not a low percentage. Unfortunately this is an important KPI for customer satisfaction. Cronbach's Alpha achieved a score of 0.86, indicating the reliability of the survey, the details of which are provided in appendix 4.

#### 4.2 Analysis of the results by customer experience dimensions

The objective of this part is to analyze the survey according to the seven customer experience dimensions:

1. Reliability
2. Responsiveness
3. Competence
4. Proactivity
5. Courtesy
6. Effective communication and problem resolution

## 7. Accessibility

These will be used to position STC's call centers as "customer-centric" channels. Certain statistical techniques are leveraged, like Cronbach's Alpha, to validate the research and analysis. The researcher has discussed the importance of these dimensions for an organization seeking to become customer centric and, consequently, acquiring a more competitive advantage.

The questionnaire scoring structure of this section is based on five levels. Some questions started with "strongly disagree," which is (1), and ended with "strongly agree," which is (5). Other questions started with "Bad," rated as (1), and ended with "Excellent," rated as (5). However, one question had three levels, starting with "Yes," which is (1), and ending with "I don't know," which is (0). A Likert scale method, which is the most popular method, was applied to analyze the survey results. It measures the extent to which a person agrees or disagrees with the question. The most common scale is 1 to 5. Often the scale will be 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=not sure, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. So it was like scores of the service that the company offers to the customers. For example, when asking if the agent was professional, if the customer's answer is strongly disagree he will score 1 out of 5, while if the customer strongly agrees, he will score 5 out of 5. Since most questions range from 1 to 5, all the answers will be out of 5. For those questions which have only three choices (Yes, No, Don't Know) the researcher adjusted the scale to be out of 5 in order to have the same scale for all the answers. For example, if the answer to a question is "No" then the average answer will be calculated as follows:  $1/3 * 5 = 1.7$  out of 5.

At the end of this chapter the researcher will discuss the results of the seven dimensions and draw certain findings and recommendations for enhancing the quality of service and achieving the goal of the organization.

### **Analysis of the reliability dimension**

Zeithaml, Pasuraman, and Berry (1990) reveal that reliability provides dependable service accurately from the first time, irrespective of circumstances. The reliability dimension received a mean score of 2.96 and a standard deviation score of 1.2. When compared against the other six dimensions of a customer centric call center, reliability ranked four out of seven.

Q. No	Questions Related to Reliability	Mean (out of 5)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	The range of assistance provided by the agent.	2.83	1.2
2	The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	2.84	1.25
3	STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	2.92	1.23
4	STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	3.19	1.24
5	At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3.09	1.09
<b>Total for Reliability</b>		<b>2.96</b>	<b>1.2</b>

**Table 4.1: An overview of the responses to the reliability dimension questions**

This dimension is linked to five questions, as shown in Table 4.1 with a detailed analysis in appendix 5. Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.83 suggests a reliable test, the details of which are provided in appendix 4.1. As the reliability dimension of customer centricity attained an overall mean score of 2.96, this locates it in the “good” category when applying the score mechanism of the survey. It appeared to the researcher that the five questions related to this dimension did not attain the “good” score, which means customer satisfaction with the services provided by the STC call center agents, noting that some questions, such as Q2 in Table 4.1, had the lowest score (2.84) while the question as to whether the STC call centers are the optimum channels for resolving customer complaints did not exceed 3.19, which is rated as “good” according to the research question categories.



**Figure 4.3: Survey summary with details by percentage**

Zemke (2003) states that one of the essential dimensions of delivering a positive customer experience at a call center is to be reliable and dependable as well as to keep the promises made to customer. Figure 4.3 shows responses by percentage to each question of this dimension.

Reliability involves a consistency of performance and dependability. APQC (2001) showed that reliability of call center agents includes knowledge and behavior of employees who convey a sense of confidence that the service outcome will match the customer's expectations. Consistency messages are considered critical to customer centricity.

The messages include the range of assistance shown to the customers, the time it took to fulfill the customer's request, and the customer's perception of the performance level of the agents and the systems. Based on the results from the survey the researcher suggests that call center agents may be finding it difficult to provide the appropriate services for customers at the right time, as shown in Q1 and Q2 of Table 4.1. This may be linked to the inadequate training and systems that are supposed to help the agents perform their work properly.

Based on the results from this current dimension survey (reliability), the range of assistance provided by the agents to their customers and the agents' fulfillment of the customers' requirements are not being met properly, and therefore need to be enhanced dramatically. The respondents were also able to add more comments by answering an open question, and these further details of customer perceptions are reviewed in appendix 6.

The researcher may attribute this to the lack of on-the-job training, and poor control and supervision of the agents' performance in addition to the limited key performance indicators that focus only on quantity (as opposed to quality), such as the average call time. This makes the agents end the customer's call as quickly as possible so that they can meet the three-minute call time objective (as it appeared to me) in the call center performance report issued during July 2009 (STC, 2009a).

### **Analysis of the responsiveness dimension**

The responsiveness dimension is considered one of the vital dimensions for effective call center operation. Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and provide the company's services (Zeithaml, Pasuraman, and Berry 1990).

Q. No	Questions Related to Responsiveness	Mean (out of 5)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.03	1.17
2	The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	2.84	1.25
3	The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.31	1.26
4	Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request	3.97	0.89
5	Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have any problem	3.23	0.93
6	STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch	2.92	1.23
7	STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints.	3.19	1.24
<b>Total for Responsiveness</b>		<b>3.08</b>	<b>1.13</b>

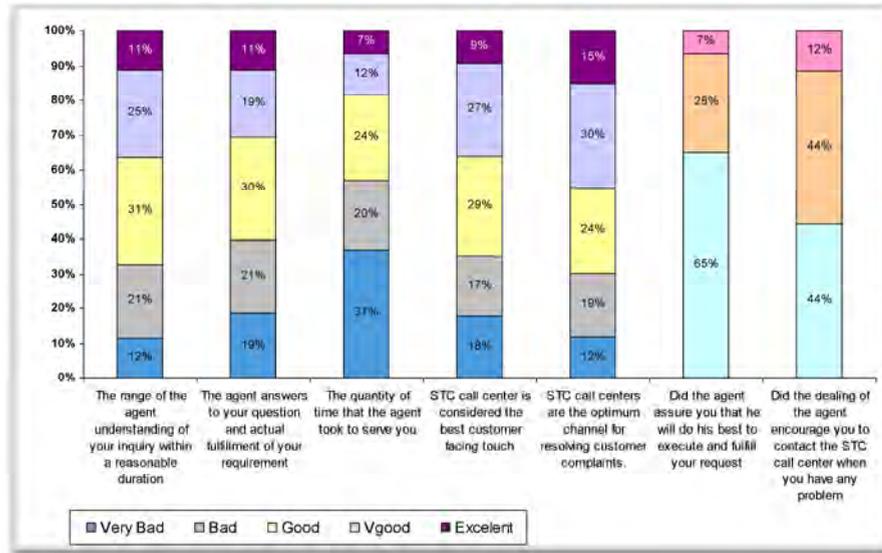
**Table 4.2: An overview of the responses to the responsiveness dimension questions**

The customer centric dimension of responsiveness received a mean score of 3.08 and a standard deviation of 1.13. When compared against the seven customer centricity dimensions. Responsiveness ranked third out of seven. This dimension is linked to seven questions on the questionnaire, as shown in the third chapter. Table 4.2 provides an overview of the responses to the questions pertaining to this dimension. A further analysis of this dimension appears in appendix 7.

As the customer centric call center responsiveness dimension attained an overall mean of 3.08, this places it in the “good” category when applying the score mechanism of the survey. However, certain questions in this dimension attained mean scores that locate them in the “bad” category, namely Q2 and Q3. The responses to this dimension, shown in Table 4.2, state that there was a clear split in responses, as Q2, Q3, and Q6 achieved a score that was below the mean score of this dimension as well as lower than the other questions of this dimension, which ranked in the “good” category. Again, this issue is a reminder based on earlier research that the call center agents appear to be operating in an environment that requires more robust training, processes and procedures, and a CRM system that support them while servicing STC customers.

Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.73 indicates a high reliability test, the details of which are provided in appendix 4.2.

Figure 4.4 shows the data of the responsiveness dimension's questions by percentage.



**Figure 4.4: Survey summary with details by percentage**

Thompson (2004) reveals that customers have always expected a responsive touch point experience. Customers expect call center agents to demonstrate three major behaviors related to their expectations for responsiveness.

First is a responsive attitude, which is characterized by the willingness of the agents to adapt to the customers' needs. Second is defined as the ability of the company to respond to customer requests on time. This means not only to be seen as responding quickly to the request but also being agile and able enough to react to changes in an individual customer's requirement. Third is the pre-empting of customer requests through the "market responsiveness offer" available in the touch points of the company, such as a call center. The responsive company senses market needs and responds with an appropriate touch point to meet those needs.

As shown in Figure 4.4, the researcher noticed a clear repetition of a common problem among most of the respondents: the time allocated to the agent to serve the customers. Q5 (the amount of time the agent took to serve you) reveals that 57% of the customers responded in the "very bad" and "bad" categories, which shows that respondents have a major concern about the time it takes the service to meet their requests.

Figure 4.5 supports the results derived from Table 4.2 and Figure 4.4 and reveals that only 64% of all respondents felt happy with the level of responsiveness of STC's call center agents.

This result falls in the category of “good” for this research, which coincides with the results of the overall mean of this dimension, which, as shown in Table 4.2, is 3.08.

STC’s management expects the call center agents to respond effectively and listen to what its customers are saying. This includes repeating the customers’ words back to them and asking questions instead of making assumptions.

According to the analysis of the open ended question that comes at the end of the questionnaire, most respondents believed that agents did not do their best to serve customers; however, some respondents believed that the agents did their best but were hampered by various problems associated with the system and regulations.

Further details of the respondents' input regarding the open-ended question can be found in appendix 8 of this document.

#### **Analysis of the competence dimension**

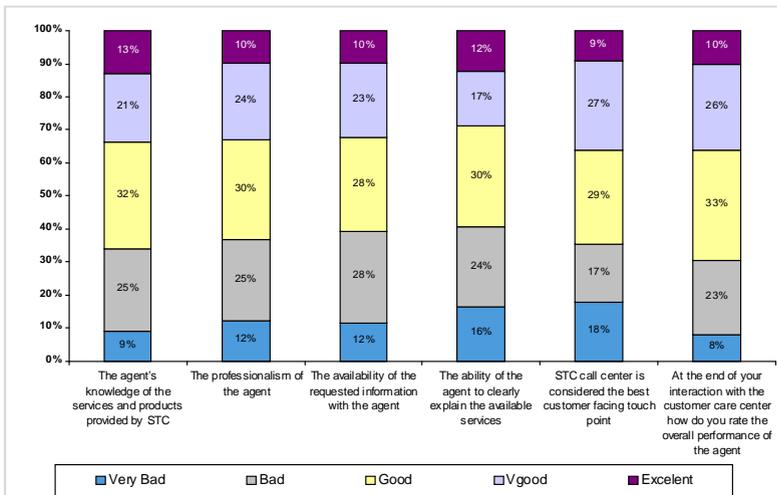
Competence can be defined as the possession of the required skills needed to perform tasks, complete knowledge of all information related to products and services, and the ability of the agents to find the proper solution for any customer requests and/or incidents professionally and with the least amount of time and effort expended (Zeithaml, Pasuraman, and Berry 1990).

As the competence dimension of customer centricity at the call center attained an average score of 2.95 and a standard deviation score of 1.17, it was ranked fifth out of the seven dimensions. This implies that there is not enough evidence that STC’s call center agents are delivering the proper and expected level of competent service quality to their customers in regard to this dimension.

Q. No.	Questions Related to Competency	Mean (of 5)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	The agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by STC	3.08	1.16
2	The professionalism (technical & customer care) of the agent	2.92	1.16
3	The availability of the requested information with the agent	2.91	1.16
4	The ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services	2.84	1.25
5	STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.92	1.23
6	At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3.08	1.09
<b>Total for Competency</b>		<b>2.95</b>	<b>1.17</b>

**Table 4.3: An overview of the responses to the competence dimension questions**

Table 4.3 provides details. As we can see, 50% of the respondents revealed that agents were not able to clearly explain the available services to the customers who called the call center, while 37% of the respondents showed their dissatisfaction with the agent's ability to demonstrate that they are professional enough to deliver the services required, as shown in Figure 4.5. The result received showed a Cronbach's Alpha co-efficient score of 0.74, which makes it very reliable. Detailed results of the Cronbach's Alpha are shown in appendix 4.3 of this document.



**Figure 4.5: Survey summary with details by percentage**

Looking at the six questions asked on a more detailed level, Q2 (the professionalism [technical and customer care] of the agent), Q3 (the availability of requested information with the agent),

Q4 (the ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services), and Q5 (the STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point) attained lower mean scores than the overall mean of the competence dimension.

Customers expect an organization to place at its touch points, such as call centers, personnel who are knowledgeable, competent, and capable of explaining the products and services offered by the organization.

Thompson (2004) demonstrates that knowledgeable contact persons at call centers should possess the following traits:

- Know all available products and services
- Understand customer needs and wants
- Propose the best match of available services to customers (This is linked to proactivity skills, which will be discussed in the following parts of this chapter)

Cochran (2006) adds that organizations must choose the critical training programs that drive customer focus and enhance their employees' competencies. He lists ten training topics and stresses one of the most important topics: how to present a professional appearance and attitude. The open-ended questions in appendix 9 support the findings related to employee competence.

### **Analysis of the proactivity dimension**

Discussing alternative products, services, and channels with customers during their service time, a procedure that is designed to inform them of alternatives that they may be interested in trying or are not aware of is considered a main attribute of proactive customer service skills (Thompson, 2004).

The call center customer centricity dimension of proactivity received a mean value of 2.79 and standard deviation of 0.78. When comparing its mean against the other six customer centricity dimensions, proactivity was ranked last, seven out of seven, making it the lowest scoring customer centricity dimension in this study.

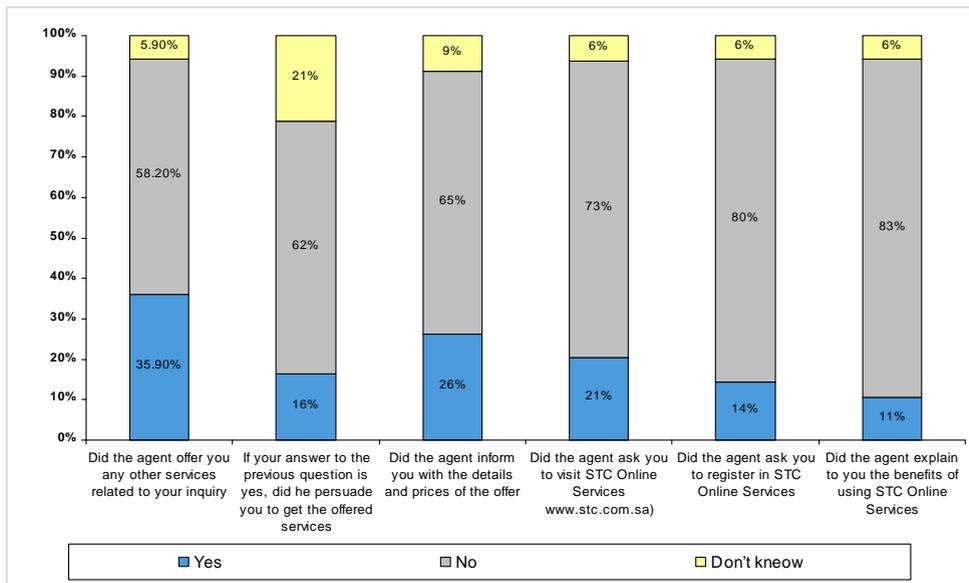
Table 4.4, which features six questions, details the proactivity dimension with additional data in appendix 10.

Q. No.	Questions Related to Pro-activity	Mean (out of 5)	Standard Deviation(SD)
1	Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry	2.92	0.94
2	If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services	2.4	0.74
3	Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer	2.7	0.87
4	Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services www.stc.com.sa)	2.5	0.81
5	Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services	2.2	0.72
6	Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online Services	2.1	0.64
<b>Total for Pro-activity</b>		<b>2.79</b>	<b>0.78</b>

**Table 4.4: Overview of the respondents to proactivity dimension questions**

Cronbach's Alpha co-efficient score, in this case 0.63 (details shown in appendix 4.4), makes it reliable. However, the reliability of this dimension is less than that for the other dimensions. The call center customer centric dimension of proactivity attained an overall mean score of 2.79, which places it in the “bad” category and at the lowest level in the “good” category when applying the scoring mechanism of the survey. This means that customer service agents at the call center are not well prepared to step in and meet the customer requests as expected.

From Figure 4.6, the researcher is able to draw important conclusions related to this dimension. For instance, 73% of the customers responded that agents did not ask them to visit STC’s online services instead of calling the call center, and 65% of the respondents stated that agents did not provide them with the requested information concerning service prices and details.



**Figure 4.6: Survey summary result with details by percentage**

More than 60% of the respondents stated that agents either did not offer or persuade them to buy other STC services (cross-sell and up-sell skills activities).

As shown in Figure 4.6, the overall average at the proactivity dimension is 50%, which should be a major indication to STC’s management that it needs to improve this situation by enhancing the skills and capabilities of its agents. Being proactive is about anticipating situations and dealing with them appropriately when they arise.

A proactive call center can perform various cross-sell and up-sell activities. It can also guide customers to alternatives designed to solve their problems online so that they do not need to call the call center.

Moreover, a proactive call center detects and resolves problems and then contacts the customers with the solution before they initiate any service calls. By proactively taking steps to address problems as they occur rather than in response to customer complaints, businesses can maintain goodwill.

Gianforte (2003) stresses that when customers call the company's call center it is often hard for them to find answers about their inquiries about the company's products and services. Customers who feel confident that they can find what they need when they call the call center are less likely to use other competitors’ services.

The researcher, through a review and analysis of the responses to the questions concerning the proactivity dimension, has found critical shortcomings that the management of STC should reconsider as soon as possible and take the necessary actions to correct.

One of the most important skills of a call center representative is to take the opportunity to offer the customer, along with the help of CRM systems, any new services provided by the company that may suit his/her requirements, financial situation, or future needs.

### **Analysis of the courtesy dimension**

The courtesy dimension measures the politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of the call center’s personnel. Call center agents need to exert their effort to be friendly and polite with each and every customer (Zeithaml, Pasuraman, and Berry 1990; Thompson, 2004).

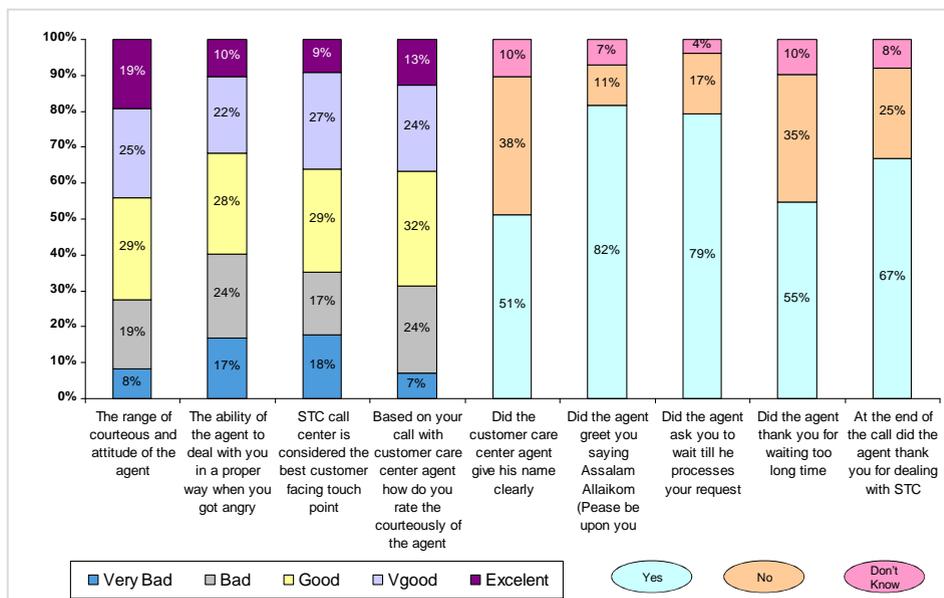
The customer centric dimension of courtesy attained a mean score of 3.55 and a standard deviation score of 0.99. When compared against the other six dimensions, courtesy ranked number one out of seven, as seen below. Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.71 shows a high reliability (details in appendix 4.5).

Q.No.	Questions Related to Courtesy	Mean (out of 5)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	The range of courteous and attitude of the agent	3.28	1.21
2	The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when you got angry	2.85	1.23
3	STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.92	1.23
4	Based on your call with customer care center agent how do you rate the courteously of the agent	3.11	1.12
5	Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly	3.52	0.93
6	Did the agent greet you saying Assalam Allaikom (Peace be upon you	4.37	0.66
7	Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes your request	4.4	0.76
8	Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time	3.6	0.93
9	At the end of the call did the agent thank you for dealing with STC	3.97	0.86
<b>Total for Courtesy</b>		<b>3.55</b>	<b>0.99</b>

**Table 4.5: An overview of the responses to the courtesy dimension questions**

Table 4.5 details nine questions (further information in appendix 11). The courtesy dimension attained an overall mean score of 3.55, which places it at the higher level of the “good” category when applying the scoring mechanism of the survey. This dimension is considered the best dimension among the seven dimensions.

When looking at figures 4.7 and 4.8 of the customer responses, the researcher noticed that 41% of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the ability of the agents to deal with them properly during the call when they got angry, while 65% of the respondents considered the STC call center to be an inadequate customer touch point for many reasons. This low score may be due to the weakness of STC agents' skills in the courtesy dimension as well as the other six dimensions of the research. According to the data, 38% of the respondents revealed that STC agents did not give their names clearly, while 65% of the respondents stated that STC agents did not apologize for keeping them on hold while they tried to find a solution to the problem.



**Figure 4.7: Survey summary results with details by percentage**

Details of the customers' input to the open-ended question are shown in appendix 12.

The above survey results have implications for developing a customer centric call center at STC. Thompson (2004) stresses that courtesy is considered to be a highly visible sign of an overreacting mindset within an organization's customer service center that is trying to be customer focused and help solve the customer's complaints. It appeared to the researcher that some of STC's agents lack the proper courtesy skills; therefore, comprehensive training programs on ideal customer treatment techniques (e.g., courtesy), which play a significant role in obtaining customer satisfaction and retaining them, need to be designed and implemented.

Based on Zemke and Woods (1999), call center agents should speak with the customer slowly, especially in giving their names, and should be very careful to pronounce their words properly and clearly. Call center agents should speak with natural inflections, that is, they should stress key words and make their voices fall when ending a statement or rise when asking a question.

**Analysis of the effective communication and the problem resolution dimension**

The definition of effective problem resolution is to listen to the customer’s requests patiently, understand the complaint, share recognition of it, and resolve the problem completely.

The effective communication and problem resolution dimension achieved a mean score of 3.36 and a standard deviation score of 1.08. When compared against the other six dimensions, effective communication and problem resolution based on call center feedback ranked number two out of seven. Table 4.6 reveals an overview of the responses by question for this dimension (further analysis can be found in appendix 13 of this document).

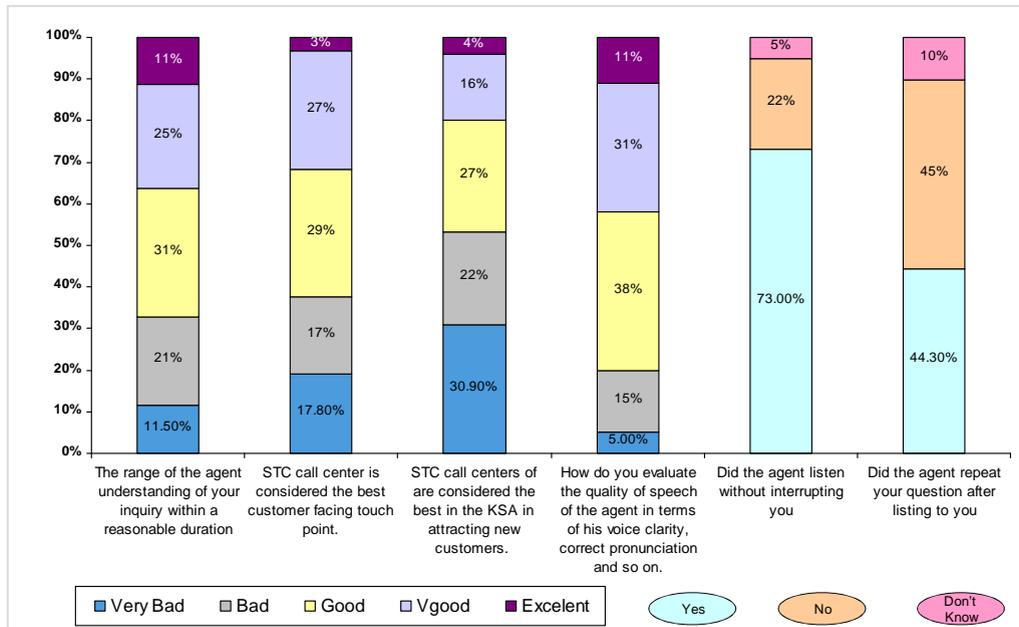
Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.89 makes the test very reliable (more details in appendix 4.6).

Q. No.	Questions Related to Effective Communication and Problem Resolution	Mean (out of 5)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.05	1.17
2	STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	2.92	1.23
3	STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers.	2.4	1.19
4	How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the agent in terms of his voice clarity, correct pronunciation and so on.	3.11	1.15
5	Did the agent listen without interrupting you	4.2	0.82
6	Did the agent repeat your question after listing to you	3.25	0.95
<b>Total for Effective Communication and problem Resolution</b>		<b>3.36</b>	<b>1.08</b>

**Table 4.6: An overview of the responses to the effective communication and problem resolution dimension questions**

As this dimension attained an overall mean score of 3.36, this places it in the “good” category based on the scoring mechanism of the survey. Looking at figures 4.8 and 4.9, the researcher noticed that 33% of the respondents did not consider the STC call center to be an optimum call center that offers the best customer service across Saudi Arabia, while 35% of the respondents stated that the call center touch point is not the best one when compared with other STC touch points, such as retail offices and STC portals. The responses of the question related to the

skills of the agent in repeating the customer request after listening to it indicated customer dissatisfaction given that 45% of the respondents revealed that the agent did not repeat the customer's request to make sure of the details of this request.



**Figure 4.8: Survey summary with details by percentage**

Cook (2002) states that "if the processes within an organization are inefficient, bureaucratic and unfriendly to the customer, then no amount of skill will help. To overcome such as these, companies are training staff in continuous improvement skills – for example recognizing the causes of the problems and identifying straightforward ways to solving them" (Cook, 2002, p.181).

Customer service call center agents are required to listen to the customer patiently, with a positive expression, understand the complaint, share recognition of it, and resolve the problem completely. Keeping customers satisfied means not only filing orders and billing inquiries or for services rendered, but also resolving issues and complaints quickly and efficiently.

It appeared to the researcher in the previous analysis of this dimension that customer service agents lack adequate coaching, supervision, close follow-up, and development of their communication skills with customers and the proper methods of proactive problem solving. These can be dealt with through specialized training courses and field workshops supported by

simulation systems designed to teach them how to identify their weaknesses and solve them in a way that ensures distinguished service to STC customers.

An analysis of the open-ended questions is provided in appendix 14. Blacharski (2006) reveals that most customer problem resolution is simply done by asking appropriate questions with the right navigation by agents.

### **Analysis of the accessibility dimension**

Accessibility and the ease of use is defined as easy to reach and easy to use. A call center needs to be approachable, making it easy for customers to talk to one of its agents when they have a problem (Zemke and Woods, 1999).

The accessibility dimension of the call center’s customer centricity attained a mean score of 2.93 and a standard deviation score of 1.14. When compared against the other six dimensions, the accessibility dimension ranked number six out of seven. Table 4.7 provides questions related to this dimension (further details can be found in appendix 15).

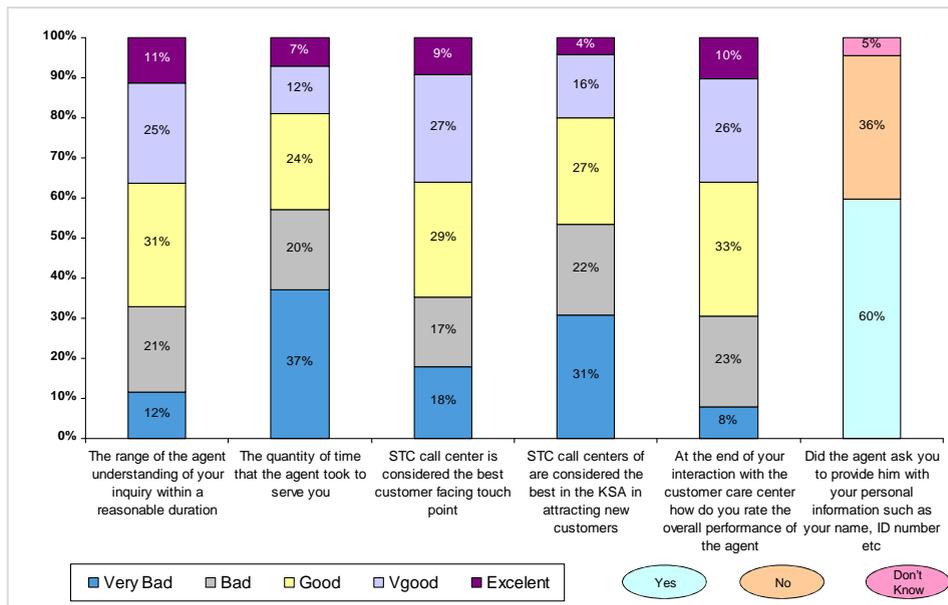
As the call center dimension of accessibility attained an overall mean score of 2.93, this places it in the “bad” category. This implies that STC customers experience difficulties in accessing its call centers, connecting with the agents, and using its services.

Q. No.	Questions Related to Accessibility	Mean (out of 5)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.03	1.17
2	The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.31	1.26
3	STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.92	1.23
4	STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers	2.4	1.19
5	At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3.08	1.09
6	Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number etc	3.87	0.93
<b>Total for Accessibility</b>		<b>2.93</b>	<b>1.14</b>

**Table 4.7: An overview of the responses to the accessibility dimension questions**

Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.74 makes the test reliable (further details in appendix 4.7). In relation to the survey findings derived from Figure 4.9, the researcher noticed that 57% of the survey

respondents were not satisfied with the amount of time the agent took to serve them, while more than 52% did not consider the STC call center to be the best one when compared to the similar ones operating in the Saudi Arabian market. The researcher's findings on this dimension revealed that only 30% of the respondents were asked to provide the personal information (e.g., ID number, name, and other related information) necessary to provide the desired service.



**Figure 4.9: Survey summary with details by percentage**

Open questions and responses indicate further problems (discussed in appendix 16).

Customer centric contact centers must accommodate the customers with regards to when and how the customer wants to do business with them. For example, they may want call center services to be available in their preferred access channel or to use e-mail late at night and then call in the morning. With the increasing number of customer requests to be served 24/7 and 365 days a year, customer centric call centers must adapt themselves (APQC, 2001).

Customer service has become a fast in-and-out experience. Customers can talk to someone whenever they need to. It may be a different agent every time, but that agent understands his/her need, their value as a customer, and handles the questions after the first contact has been made. Customers can have access to their services, information, and account whenever

they want it and determine if and when they want to speak to an agent to verify information. It has become a service on demand (Zemke and Woods, 1999).

Call centers need to maintain an acceptable average speed to answer each call. Based on the worldwide benchmark this should not exceed 15 seconds. Easy accessibility to call centers can be improved through proper staffing mechanisms as well as by empowering customer service representatives with the authority and accountability to resolve customer concerns at the right time, with the right attitude, and during the first call. Call center agent training, standardized call monitoring, and implementing a new voice recognition system will certainly contribute to enhancing the call center's accessibility dimension.

It appeared to the researcher, based on the previous analysis of this dimension and the comments of the respondents to the open ended question on the questionnaire, that customers of the company confront difficulty in accessing the call center easily and in using the technologies available there, such as the interactive voice response (IVR). Such an experience will negatively impact the reputation of the company and its customers' loyalty and satisfaction in both the long and short term.

The previous analysis revealed to the researcher that there is an obvious weakness in the range of assistance provided to the customers during the servicing time. Furthermore, the researcher observed a noticeable weakness in the performance of the responsiveness customer experience dimension, a situation that he mainly attributed to the length of time that the agent took to serve the customers. In the same context, the researcher witnessed a considerable weakness in the competence of the call center agents, which he attributed to the low level of the agent's technical sales skills and knowledge of the company's services. The researcher noticed that the agents of the call center did not possess the necessary skills to undertake any cross-sell or up-sell of the company's new services. This was obvious during the analysis of the proactivity customer experience dimension.

### **4.3 Demographic analysis**

A demographic analysis sheds light on the survey result from a different dimension, for it is based on the education, age, patronage, and gender of those who responded to this study. In

this section the researcher will show, according to the gathered demographic data, the respondents' points of view and how they perceived their experience with STC call centers.

This part of the document is going to present the demographic analysis for each of the seven dimensions of customer centricity discussed thoroughly in the earlier chapter of this document. The data will be presented as follows:

- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of age
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage duration and frequency of calling the call center
- Comparison of the customer experience rate in terms of gender
- Survey's summary result with an average percentage by region

#### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education**

Customers were classified into four levels (groups) of education: secondary school or less, B.S., M.S., and PhD The researcher will present and discuss customer experience perceptions of the respondents for the aforementioned seven dimensions of positive customer experience (e.g., reliability, responsiveness, and so on). Thus this subsection will be divided into the following topics:

- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for reliability
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for responsiveness
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for competence
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for proactivity
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for courtesy

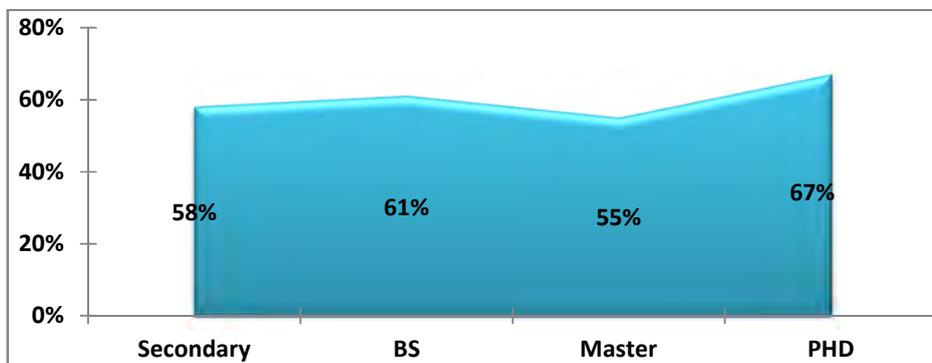
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for effective communication and problem resolution
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for accessibility
- Summary of results of call center customer experience perception by the education level of the customers for all dimensions

For every comparison the researcher conducted a two-step analysis:

- 1- Comparing the total percentage for every group.
- 2- Applying the analysis of variance between the groups' ANOVA test in order to determine if there is relation between the customer's education level and his/her positive customer experience rate.

#### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for the reliability dimension**

The purpose of this process is to compare the customer call center experience in terms of the reliability of the agents' ability to deal with customers having different levels of education.



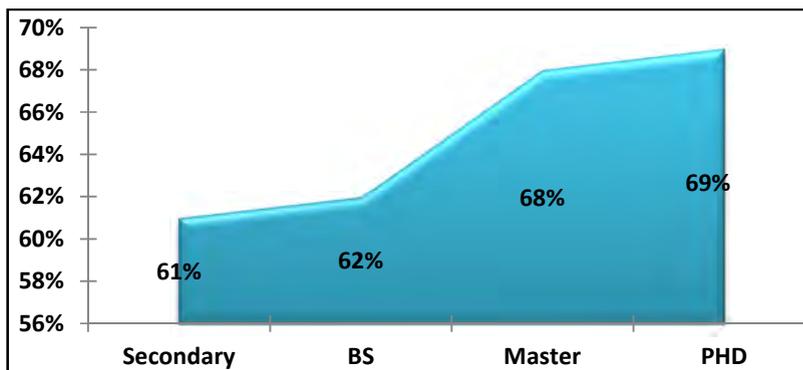
**Figure 4.10: Customer experience rate in terms of education for the reliability dimension**

Figure 4.10 (with details in appendix 17) reveals that customers who have a PhD perceived call center agents as being more reliable than other education groups, such as those who have a B.S. in statistical techniques, such as the ANOVA test and/or a t-test (assesses whether the means of two groups are *statistically* different from each other), confirmed that this perception differential is statistically valid. Details of these statistical tests are provided in appendix 17.

In summary, customers with a PhD have a higher positive customer experience perception in terms of the agent's reliability than the others. As the percentage of customers with a PhD did not exceed 2.5%, their impact in the general perception of the sample is very low. Their satisfaction may be due to their clear and well-determined requests, which enabled the agents to deal with them more easily and quickly.

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for the responsiveness dimension**

Figure 4.11 reveals that positive customer experience for call center services increased with the level of the respondent's education; however, this does not mean that customers with a higher level of education have a higher positive customer experience rate. The researcher adopted the ANOVA test to confirm this relationship between the two variables, namely the level of education and a positive customer experience. Detailed results are shown in appendix 17.

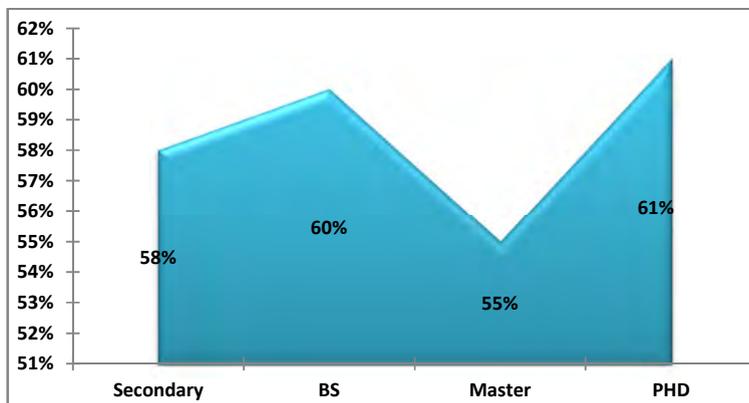


**Figure 4.11: Customer experience rate in terms of education for the responsiveness dimension**

The result, as presented in appendix 17, shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not high (significant) and that the means of the groups are almost equal. So the researcher finds it difficult to claim that there is a relationship between the respondents' education level and a positive customer experience perception for the responsiveness dimension.

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for the competence dimension**

As shown in Figure 4.12, customers with a PhD or a B.S. have a higher score for the agent's competence than other education levels.



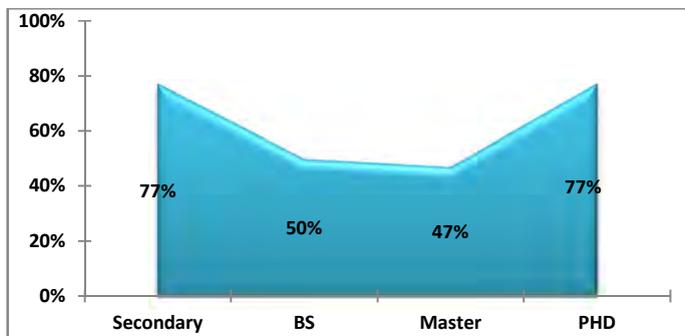
**Figure 4.12: Customer experience rate in terms of education for the competence dimension**

The ANOVA test was applied to determine if there is some sort of relationship between the education level and the positive customer experience perception rate. ANOVA assumes by default that there is no relationship. The result, as indicated in appendix 17, shows that the differences between the groups (period) are significantly high and that the means of the groups are not equal. So the null hypothesis should be rejected. According to the t-test, as shown in appendix 17, B.S. and PhD holders have a more positive customer experience perception rate in terms of the agent's competence than others. It appeared to the researcher that the higher the education of the respondents the higher their positive customer experience rate and satisfaction on the provided services. The researcher may attribute the B.S. and PhD holders' satisfaction of the agents' competence to that of the higher the education of the respondent making their requests more clear, which enabled the agents to respond more easily and serve them quickly.

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for the proactivity dimension skills**

As shown in Figure 4.13, customers with PhD or B.S. degrees showed a higher score for the agent's proactivity skills.

The ANOVA test was applied to determine if there is some sort of relationship between the education level and the positive customer experience perception rate. ANOVA assumes by default that there is no relationship.



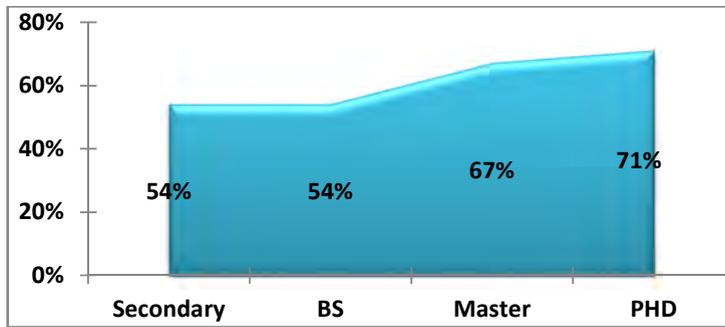
**Figure 4.13: Customer experience rate in terms of education for the proactivity dimension skills**

The results given in appendix 17 show that the differences between the groups (period) are significantly high and that the means of the groups are not equal. So the null hypothesis should be rejected. The t-test in appendix 17 concludes that customers holding a PhD or a secondary school degree have a higher positive customer experience perception rate toward the agents' proactivity skills than the others do, as shown in Figure 4.13.

Here the researcher noticed that although the percentage of PhD holders did not exceed 2.5% of the total sample, they showed a higher positive customer experience perception rate toward the agents' proactivity skills similar to the respondents holding secondary school degree. The researcher relates this result to PhD holders being more realistic or their requests being very clear and easy for the agents to respond to. The researcher finds it difficult to explain or interpret the result of the respondents holding a secondary school degree. This may require further study and deeper analysis.

#### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for the courtesy dimension**

As shown in Figure 4.14, the positive customer experience perception rate increases with the level of education for the agent's courtesy.

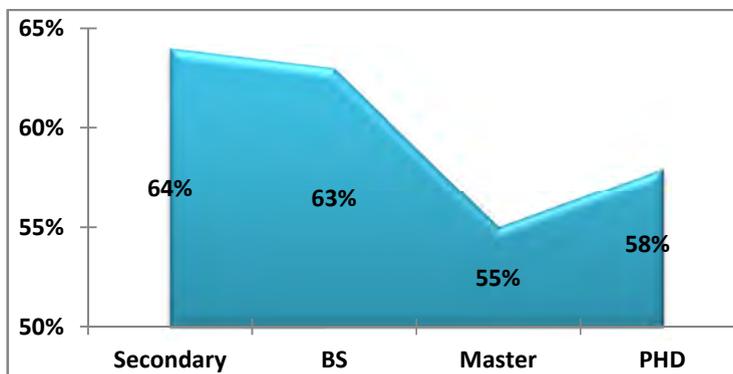


**Figure 4.14: Customer experience rate in terms of education for the courtesy dimension**

The results, as shown in Figure 4.14, reveal that the differences between the groups (period) are significantly high and that the means of the groups are not equal. So the null hypothesis should be rejected. The t-test in appendix 17 concludes that the positive customer experience perception rate increases as the education level increases for the courtesy dimension. This may be due to higher education helping the respondents to fully understand the technical services and clearly explain their requests.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for the effective communication and problem resolution dimension skills**

Figure 4.15 revealed that respondents with a lower level of education have a higher perception score for effective communication and problem resolution.



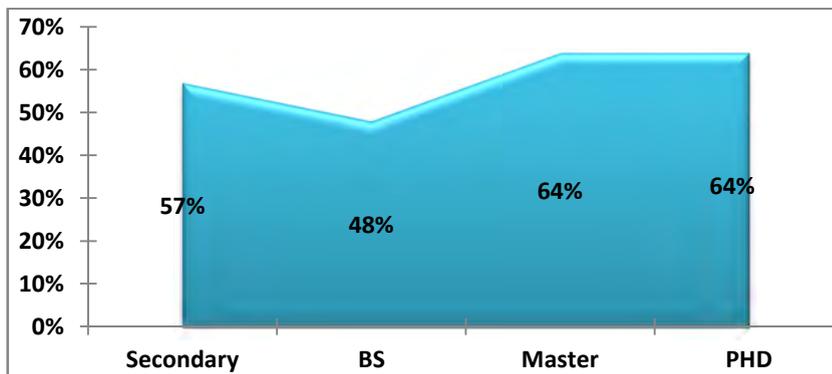
**Figure (4.15): Customer experience rate in terms of education for the effective communication and problem resolution**

The ANOVA test was applied to determine if there is some sort of significant relationship between the education level and the positive customer experience perception rate. ANOVA assumes by default that there is no relationship.

The result, as given in appendix 17, shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. So it is difficult for the researcher to claim that there is a relationship between the education level and the positive customer experience perception of call center services at STC for the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills.

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of education for the accessibility and ease of use dimension**

Figure 4.16 shows that customers with a high level of education (M.S. and PhD) have a higher perception score with regards to call center accessibility.



**Figure 4.16: Customer experience rate in terms of education for the accessibility and ease of use**

The ANOVA test was applied to determine if there is some sort of relationship between the education level and positive customer experience perception rate. ANOVA assumes by default that there is no relationship.

The result, as seen in Figure 4.16, shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. As a result, it is difficult for the researcher to claim that there is a significant relationship between the education level and customer perception of call center accessibility.

Table 4.8 summarizes the above discussion regarding whether the level of customer education has an effect on the experience perception of the customer who called the call center in terms of the seven dimensions.

Dimension	Relation with education level according to ANOVA	Result
Reliability	Yes	Customers with a PhD have a higher customer experience perception rate.
Responsiveness	There is no relation between education level and call center positive customer experience.	
Competence	Yes	Customers with a B.S. or a PhD have a higher customer experience perception rate.
Proactivity	Yes	Customers with a PhD or a secondary school degree have a higher customer experience perception rate.
Courtesy	Yes	The customers' customer experience perception increases as their education level rises.
Effective problem resolution	There is no relation between education level and call center positive customer experience.	
Accessibility	There is no relation between education level and call center positive customer experience.	

**Table 4.8: Summary of the results of customer experience perception by the education level of the customers**

### **Comparison of the call center positive customer experience perception rate in terms of respondent's age**

In this section the researcher will discuss the customer experience perception level of customers of different ages. Customers were classified into four levels (groups) of ages: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, and 46 and over.

The level of positive customer experience perception will be analyzed for all seven dimensions of positive customer experience. This section will be divided into the following parts:

- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's reliability
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's responsiveness
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's competence
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's proactivity
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's courtesy
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills.

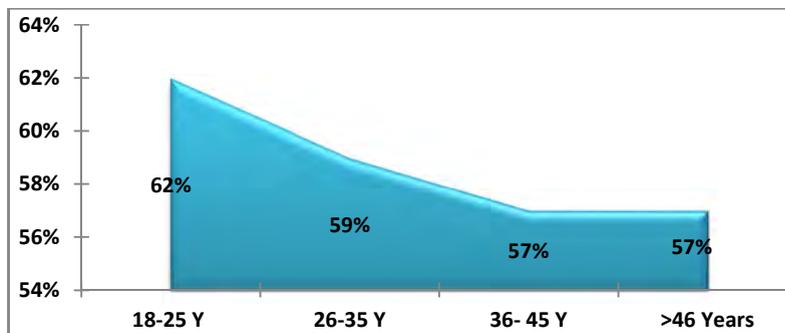
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's accessibility
- Summary of results of customer experience perception rate by the age level of the customers.

For every comparison the researcher conducted the following two-step analysis:

- 1- Comparing the total percentage for every group.
- 2- Applying the ANOVA test in order to determine if there is a significant relationship between age and customer call center experience perception.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the reliability dimension**

Figure 4.17 shows that customers aged 18-25 have a higher score of agent's reliability



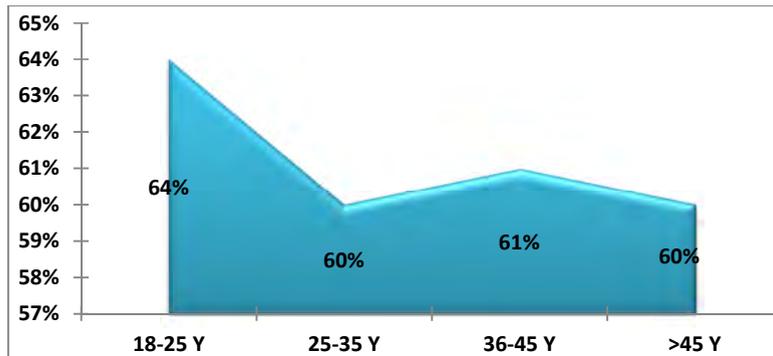
**Figure 4.17: Customer experience rate in terms of age for the agent's reliability**

The ANOVA test was applied to determine if there is some sort of relationship between the age and positive customer experience perception rate.

The results, as shown in appendix 18, reveal that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. As a result the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between the respondent's age and positive customer experience perception of the agent's reliability.

**Comparison of the call center positive customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's responsiveness**

Figure 4.18 shows that customers aged 18-25 who used STC's services have a higher score for the agent's responsiveness.

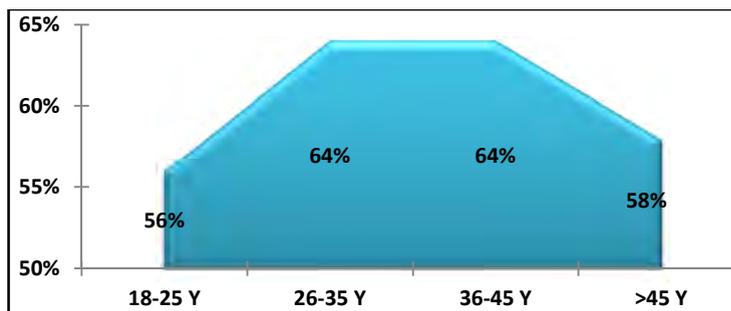


**Figure 4.18: Customer experience rate in terms of age for the agent's responsiveness**

The ANOVA results revealed that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. As a result, the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between age and the positive customer experience perception for the agent's responsiveness.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's competence**

As shown in Figure 4.19, customers aged 25-45 have a greater customer satisfaction with the call center agents' competence.



**Figure 4.19: Customer experience rate in terms of age for the agent's competence**

The results of the ANOVA test in appendix 18 show that the differences between the groups (period) are significantly high and that the means of the groups are not equal, rejecting the null hypothesis. Since customers aged 26-35, as well as those aged 35-45, have a higher score than others the researcher conducted a t-test to identify where the difference lay.

Applying the t-test to customers aged 26-35 and other groups, as in appendix 18, showed that the p-value denoted very significant differences ( $<0.05$ ).

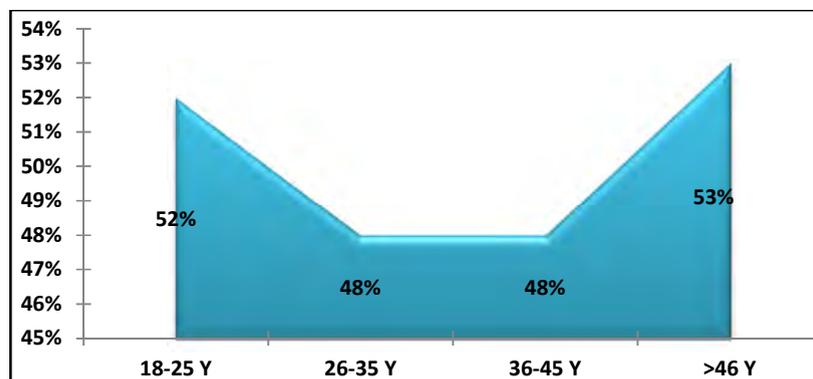
Applying the t-test between customer ages showed that the p-value denoted very high differences ( $<0.05$ ). So the researcher may conclude that customers aged 26-45 are more satisfied in terms of competence. The researcher attributes this to the services provided suiting their age category. A significant drop in positive customer experience satisfaction rate in term of competence can be noticed in respondents aged more than 45. The researcher believes that this is a positive indication because most customers are within this age category. On the other hand, respondents aged 18-25 did not show the same satisfaction rate and this result needs to be investigated as they represent a very important category of the company's customers.

As a result, the researcher noticed that there could be a relationship between customer's age and positive customer experience for competence dimension.

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's proactivity**

Figure 4.20 shows that customers aged 46 and over have a higher perception score for the call center agents' proactivity.

The result of the ANOVA test in appendix 18 shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and the means of the groups are almost equal. As a result, the researcher noticed that there is no relationship between age and positive customer experience for the proactivity dimension.



**Figure 4.20: Customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's proactivity**

### Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's courtesy

Figure 4.21 shows that customers aged 18-25 have a higher perception of the call center agents' courtesy.

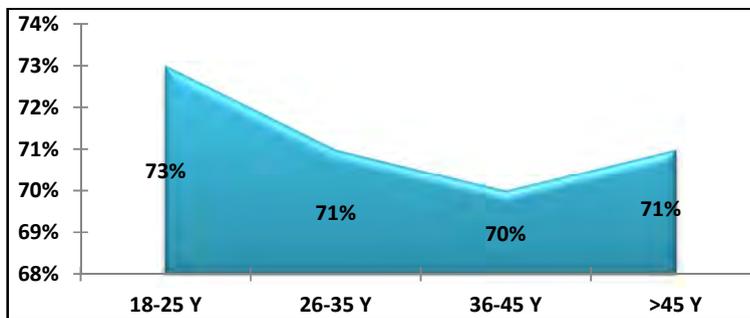


Figure 4.21: Customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's courtesy

The ANOVA test analysis in appendix 18 shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and the means of the groups are almost equal. As a result, the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between customer's age and a positive customer experience for courtesy dimension.

### Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills

Figure 4.22 shows that customers aged 18-25 have a higher positive customer experience perception for the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills.

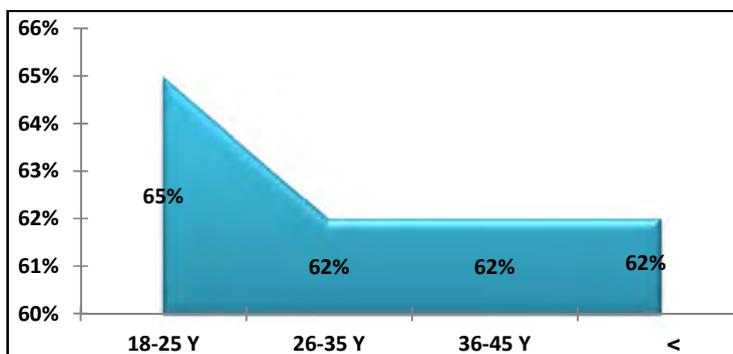
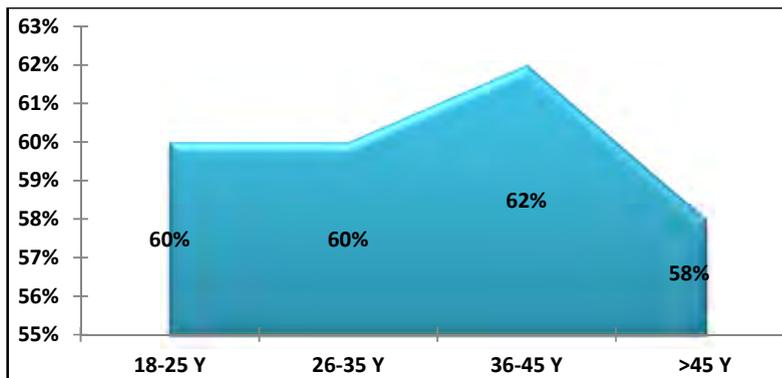


Figure 4.22: Customer experience perception rate in terms of age for the agent's effective problem resolution skills

The result of the ANOVA test in appendix 18 shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and the means of the groups are almost equal. Accordingly, the researcher concludes that there is no relationship between age and positive customer experience perception for effective communication and problem resolution dimension.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of respondent's age for the agent's accessibility**



**Figure 4.23: Customer experience perception rate in terms of respondent's age for the agent's accessibility**

Figure 4.23 shows that customers aged 18-25 have a higher positive customer experience perception score for accessibility.

The ANOVA test analysis shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and the means of the groups are almost equal. Accordingly, the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between a customer's age and a positive customer experience perception for the accessibility dimension.

Dimension	Relation with age according to ANOVA	Result
Reliability	There is no relation between the age and call center positive customer experience.	
Responsiveness	There is no relation between the age and call center positive customer experience.	
Competence	There is no relation between the age and call center positive customer experience.	
Pro-activity	Yes.	Customers aged 36- 45 have a more positive customer experience perception rate.
Courtesy	There is no relation between the age and call center positive customer experience.	
Effective communication and problem resolution	There is no relation between the age and call center positive customer experience.	
Accessibility	There is no relation between the age and call center positive customer experience.	

**Table 4.9: Summary of the customer call center positive experience perception by age**

Table 4.9 summarizes the above discussions regarding whether customer's age has an effect on a positive customer call center experience in terms of the seven dimensions of positive customer experience.

### **Comparison of the customer call center experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center**

Here the researcher is going to discuss the positive customer experience perception level in terms of the patronage, duration, and frequency of using the company's call center. There are four periods (groups): less than 6 months, 6 months to 1 year, 1 to 3 years, and more than 3 years. The level of positive customer experience perception will be analyzed for all of the seven dimensions of positive customer experience. This section will be divided into the following parts:

- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center and the agent's reliability.
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center and the agent's responsiveness.
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center and the agent's competence.
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center and the agent's proactivity.
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center and the agent's courtesy.
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center and the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills.
- Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center and the agent's accessibility.
- Summary of results of customer call center customer experience perception by the patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center.

For every comparison, the researcher conducted a two-step analysis:

- 1- Comparing the total percentage for every group.
- 2- Applying the ANOVA test in order to determine if there a relationship between patronage duration and frequency of calling the call center and call center customer experience perception.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the reliability dimension**

Figure 4.24 shows those customers who have used STC’s services for 1 to 3 years have a greater positive customer experience perception for reliability.

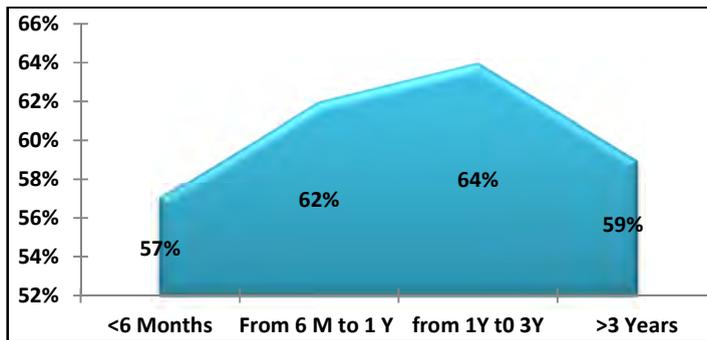
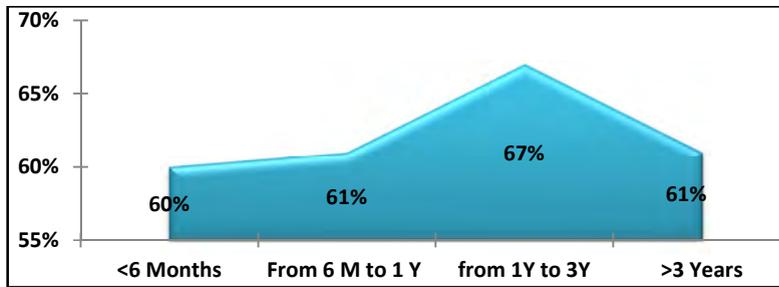


Figure 4.24: Customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the reliability dimension.

The result of the ANOVA test (appendix 19) shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. Accordingly, the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between period of use and positive customer experience perception of the agent's reliability.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the responsiveness dimension**

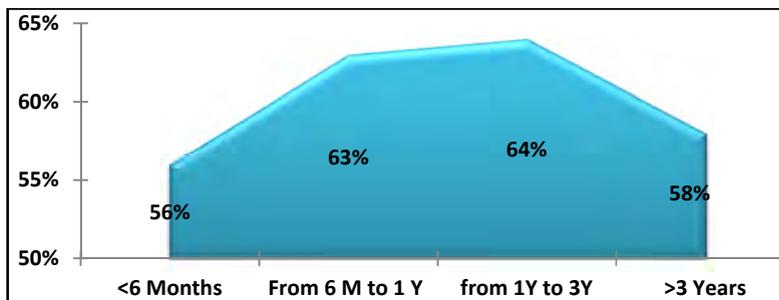
Figure 4.25 shows those customers who have used STC’s services for 1 to 3 years have a greater perception of the agent's responsiveness.



**Figure 4.25: Customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency for responsiveness**

The result of the ANOVA test (appendix 19) shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. Based on this result, the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between the period of use and positive customer experience perception for the agent's responsiveness.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the competence dimension**

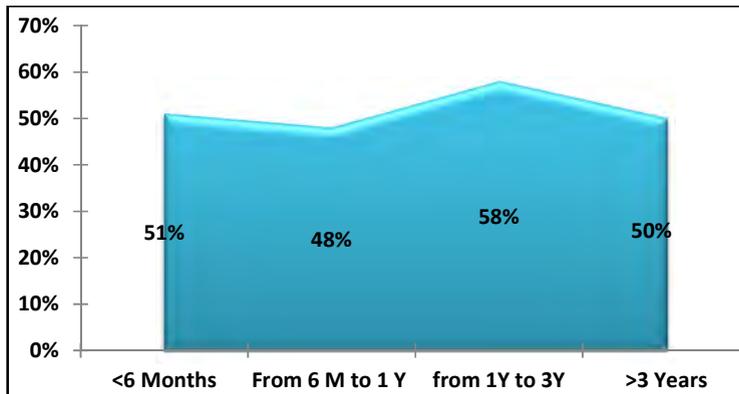


**Figure 4.26: Customer experience rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the competence**

Figure 4.26 reveals that customers who have used STC's services for 1 to 3 years have a higher perception score for the agent's competence. The result of the ANOVA test (appendix 19) shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and the means of the groups are almost equal. As a result, the researcher concluded that there is no relation between period of use and positive customer experience perception for competence.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the proactivity dimension**

Figure 4.27 shows those customers who have used STC's services for 1 to 3 years have a higher score for proactivity.

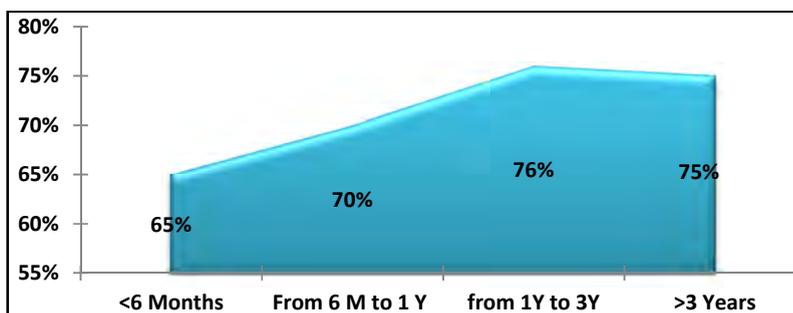


**Figure 4.27: Customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the proactivity**

The result of the ANOVA test shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. Accordingly, the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between the period of use and a positive customer experience perception for the agent's proactivity.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the courtesy**

Figure 4.28 shows that customers who have used STC's services for 1 to 3 years have a higher perception score for courtesy.

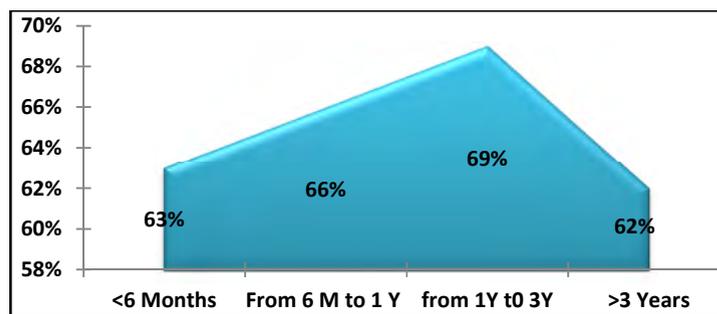


**Figure 4.28: Customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the courtesy**

The result of the ANOVA test shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. Accordingly, the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between the period of use and a positive customer experience perception for the agent's courtesy.

**Comparison of the call center positive customer experience rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills**

Figure 4.29 reveals that customers who have used STC services for 1 to 3 years have a higher perception score for effective problem resolution.

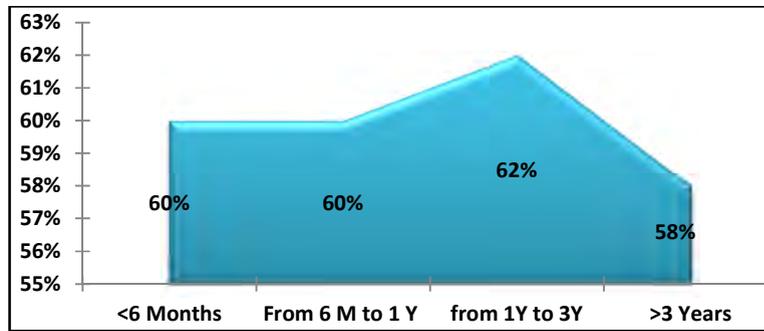


**Figure 4.29: Customer experience rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills**

The result of the ANOVA test shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. Based on this result, the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between period of use and positive customer experience perception for the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center for the agent's accessibility**

Figure 4.30 shows that customers who have used STC's services for 1 to 3 years have a higher score of positive customer experience perception for the agent's accessibility.



**Figure 4.30: Customer experience perception rate in terms of patronage, duration, and frequency**

The result of the ANOVA test shows that the differences between the groups (period) are not significantly high and that the means of the groups are almost equal. As a result, the researcher concluded that there is no relationship between period of use and positive customer experience perception for the agent's accessibility.

Table 4.10 summarizes the above discussions and analysis regarding whether patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center effect a positive customer experience perception in terms of the seven dimensions of positive customer experience.

Dimension	Relation with patronage, duration, and frequency according to ANOVA	Result
Reliability	There is no relation between patronage, duration, and frequency and a positive customer experience with the call center.	
Responsiveness	There is no relation between patronage, duration, and frequency and a positive customer experience with the call center	
Competence	There is no relation between patronage, duration, and frequency and a positive customer experience with the call center	
Proactivity	There is no relation between patronage, duration, and frequency and a positive customer experience with the call center	
Courtesy	There is no relation between patronage, duration, and frequency and a positive customer experience with the call center	
Effective communication and problem resolution	There is no relation between patronage, duration, and frequency and a positive customer experience with the call center	
Accessibility	There is no relation between patronage, duration, and frequency and a positive customer experience with the call center	

**Table 4.10: Summary of results of call center customer experience by patronage, duration, and frequency of calling the call center**

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of the respondent's gender**

The researcher will now discuss the satisfaction level of both male and female respondents. The level of satisfaction will be analyzed for all of the seven dimensions of the positive customer experience. So this subsection will be divided into the following parts:

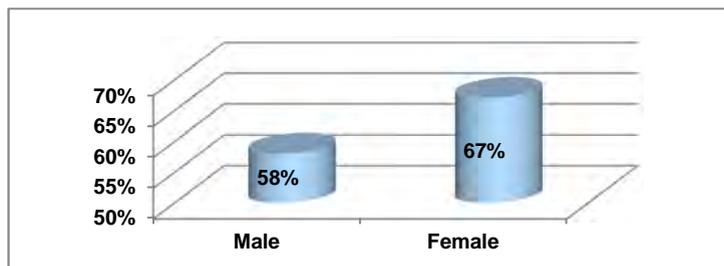
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's reliability
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's responsiveness
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's competence
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's proactivity
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's courtesy
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills.
- Comparison of the customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's accessibility
- Summary of results of customer experience perception by gender

For every comparison, the researcher conducted the following two-step analysis:

1. Comparing the total percentage for every group.
2. Applying a t-test in order to determine if there a relationship between gender and the call center customer experience perception.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's reliability**

Figure 4.31 reveals that female customers give a higher positive score of their experience of the agent's reliability.

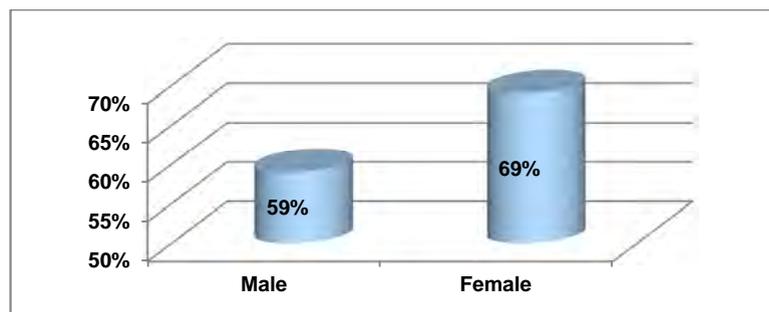


**Figure 4.31: Customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's reliability**

The p-values of the t-test (appendix 20) reveal very significant differences. Accordingly, the t-test assumption must be rejected and the researcher concludes that women have a higher positive customer experience perception rate than men in terms of the agent's reliability. Females represent about 20% of the sample of this study and the satisfaction they showed might be due to the agents who answered their calls possessing more competence and better skills than the others. The researcher thinks that this is a positive indicator because females represent half of society.

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's responsiveness**

Figure 4.32 shows that female customers give a higher positive score of their experience of the agent's responsiveness.

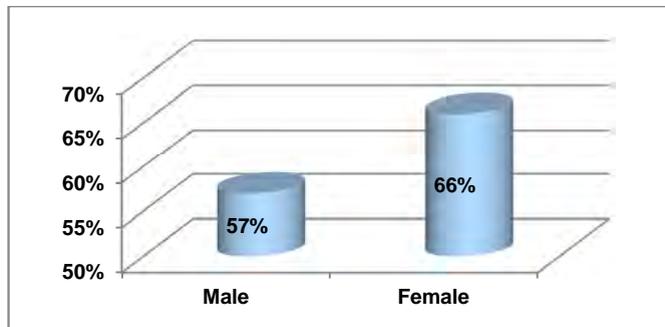


**Figure 4.32: Customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's responsiveness**

The result of the t-test showed that there is no relationship between gender and the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of the agent's responsiveness skills.

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's competence**

Figure 4.33 shows that female respondents have a higher score of positive customer experience for the agent's competence.

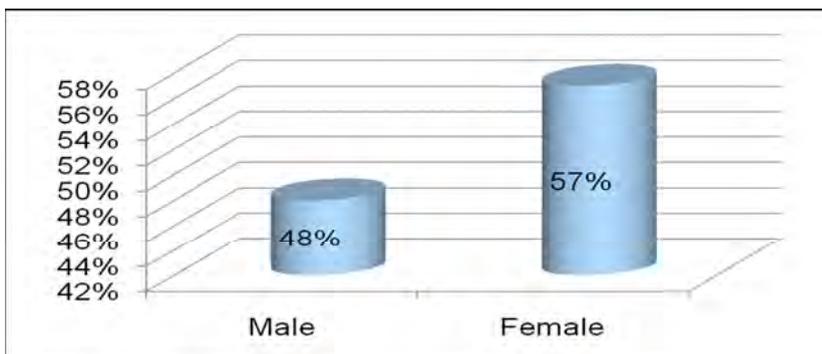


**Figure 4.33: Customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's competence**

The result (appendix 20) of the t-test showed that there could be a relationship between gender and the call center customer experience. As a result, the researcher concluded that women have a higher customer experience perception rate than men in terms of the agent's competence. The researcher noticed a great similarity between this dimension and the previous one where the females showed higher customer experience perception rate, which the researcher attributes to that the agents who reply to the calls of this category are more qualified and skilled than others.

**Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's proactivity**

Figure 4.34 reveals that female respondents have a higher positive customer experience score for proactivity of the call center agents.

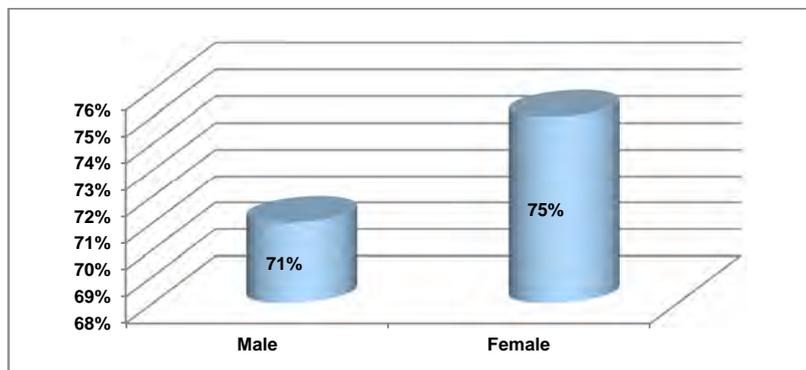


**Figure 4.34: Customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's proactivity**

The result of the t-test (appendix 20) shows that there is no relationship between gender and a positive customer experience perception rate in terms of the agent's proactivity.

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's courtesy**

Figure 4.35 shows that female respondents have higher perception score for the agent's courtesy.

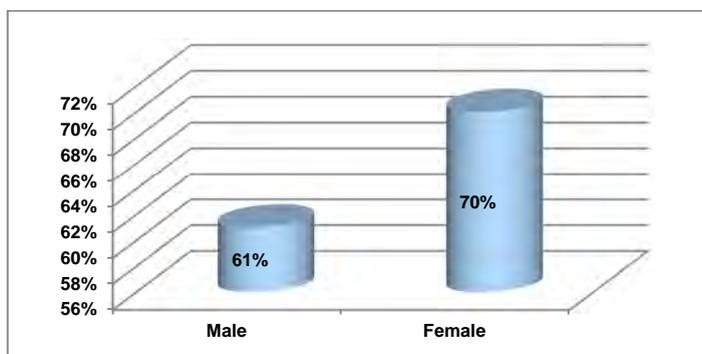


**Figure 4.35: Customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's courtesy**

The result of the t-test (appendix 20) shows that there is no relationship between gender and positive customer experience rate in terms of the agent's courtesy.

### **Comparison of the call center positive customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills**

Figure 4.36 shows that female customers give a higher positive score of their experience of the agent's effective problem resolution skills. However, this does not mean that female customers have a higher positive customer experience rate. This can be proved through the t-test.



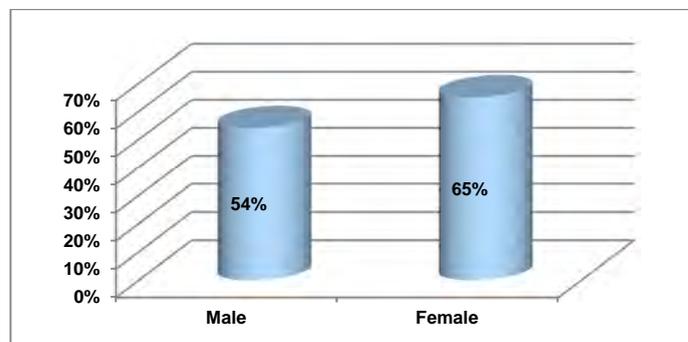
**Figure 4.36: Customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's effective problem resolution skills**

The t-test was applied to determine if there is some sort of significant relationship between gender and a positive customer experience perception rate.

The result of the t-test (appendix 20) shows that there is no relationship between gender and a positive customer experience perception rate in terms of the agent's effective communication and problem resolution skills.

### **Comparison of the call center customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's reliability**

The purpose of the t-test is to compare the customer call center experience in terms of the agent's accessibility for two groups of customers: men and women. Figure 4.37 shows that female respondents have a higher perception score for the agent's accessibility. However, this does not mean that female customers have a higher positive customer experience rate. This can be proved through the t-test.



**Figure 4.37: Customer experience perception rate in terms of gender for the agent's reliability**

The t-test was applied to determine if there is some sort of significant relationship between gender and positive customer experience perception rate. The result of the t-test (appendix 20) shows that there is no relationship between gender and a positive customer experience perception rate in terms of the agent's accessibility.

This part includes a summary of the above discussion regarding whether gender has an effect on customer experience perception in terms of the seven dimensions of positive customer experience.

It appeared to the researcher that only two of the seven dimensions of the call center quality of customer experience have a significant relationship with the respondent's gender: reliability

and competence. The female segment showed a higher positive experience perception of the call center reliability and competence, and they perceive the call center agents to be more reliable and competent.

Dimension	Relation with gender according to ANOVA	Result
Reliability	Yes	Women have a higher positive customer experience rate than men.
Responsiveness	There is no relation between gender and customer experience perception.	
Competence	Yes	Women have a higher positive customer experience rate than men.
Pro-activity	There is no relation between gender and customer experience perception.	
Courtesy	There is no relation between gender and customer experience perception.	
Effective problem resolution	There is no relation between gender and customer experience perception.	
Accessibility	There is no relation between gender and customer experience perception.	

**Table 4.11: Summary of results of customer satisfaction by gender**

#### **Summary of results of the call center customer experience perception rate by region**

Table 4.12 shows that there is no significant relationship between the six dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, proactivity, courtesy, effective communication and problem resolution, and accessibility) measured and the regions in which the respondents of this research reside. T-test p-values denoted very high differences ( $<0.05$ ). As a result, there is a significant relationship between the competence dimension and the respondent's region. Respondents living in the southern region showed a higher positive customer experience perception for competence than respondents living in the other three regions, namely the central, eastern, and western regions. More details of the results are shown in appendix 21.

Dimension	Relation with respondents' region according to ANOVA	Result
Reliability	There is no relation between the region and a positive call center customer experience.	
Responsiveness	There is no relation between the region and a positive call center customer experience.	
Competence	Yes.	Customers living in the southern region have a higher satisfaction rate than others.
Proactivity	There is no relation between the region and a positive call center customer experience.	
Courtesy	There is no relation between the region and a positive call center customer experience.	
Effective communication and problem resolution	There is no relation between the region and a positive call center customer experience.	
Accessibility	There is no relation between the region and a positive call center customer experience.	

**Table (4.12): Summary of results of customer satisfaction by region**

#### **4.4 Analysis of the focus group study (qualitative method)**

The role of the qualitative research for this study is to triangulate and/or confirm and compare the research information gathered from this focus group with the previous results explained by the quantitative research. Additional goals are to probe for a further explanation of some issues that arose in the quantitative study, answer the research questions, and suggest areas for further investigation. The methodology of this research is explained in chapter 3.

The input and discussions of the focus group were analyzed and categorized by the researcher based on the seven call center customer centricity dimensions discussed in chapter 2 and the first part of this chapter (the quantitative study).

The researcher video recorded and then translated the focus group discussions from Arabic into English. This took a very long time and a great deal of effort due to the branching of the discussions and the difficulties the researcher faced in translating some slang Arabic words used by some of the participants. However, such words were translated from Arabic according to the general concept and context of the sentence.

The researcher will categorize the outcome of the focus group based on the seven dimensions to ensure the integrity of the analysis, as well as the accuracy of the diagnosis of the research problem, and to make it easier for the reader to see the link between the quantitative and qualitative studies.

Greene, Caracelli, & Graham (1989) addressed five main purposes to use mixed research methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) namely, triangulation, complementarily, development, initiation and expansion.

Greenbaum (1998) adds, "Focus groups are used in two ways for theory applications – triangulation and confirmation" (Green Baum, 1998, p.8). He argues that focus groups are an effective tool when a researcher wants to compare different results from different sources or methods, also known as triangulation. Triangulation is used to compare the findings gathered from the focus groups with the researcher's other methods such as structured survey. Bogdan and Biklen (2006) add that triangulation is a powerful tool that facilitates the validation of data gathered through cross confirmation from more than two sources.

Whereas the researcher has conducted the focus group study following the quantitative method and that the focus group participants were selected from the questionnaire respondents, the researcher can conclude that he used the qualitative method (focus group) to compare its findings with the findings of the quantitative method (triangulation) and contrast them with each other.

### **Reliability customer experience dimension**

There was almost unanimous agreement by the focus group participants that STC call center agents need to be supported with more information and acquire a wider knowledge base of the new services and products of the company, particularly in regard to the Internet via mobile instructions, new mobile model settings, and e-mail settings of various models (e.g., BlackBerry). The six participants in the focus group session expressed their concern with the call center and the agents. In addition, all of them commented upon the clear lack of knowledge they witnessed when they call the agents, especially when they ask about the new services launched by the company.

The following quotation of one of the participants illustrates this clearly:

*The agent doesn't know what to do [to devise a solution]. I feel that he only transfers my bulletin and puts it on the computer because he lacks technical skills.*

Key improvement needs to be done based on the feedback of the participants in this study group, which is the selection of competent and capable staff to answer some selected requests of customers who need special skills and capabilities from special agents.

The targeted customers should also be notified of information and technical features about these new services. Such action will directly help increase the company's sales or its so-called cross-sale and up-sale.

The researcher noticed that there is great similarity between the outcome of this dimension in the research and the outcome he has drawn in the first part of this chapter through quantitative study, particularly the parts related to the importance of taking immediate action to improve the call center agents' skills and keep them aware of updated information on the new products and services the company offers and provides to its customers.

The detailed findings of the focus group related to this dimension can be found in appendix 22 of this document.

### **Responsiveness customer experience dimension**

The majority of the focus group respondents showed concern for the responsiveness of the STC call center agents. The majority of the participants felt that the agent wanted to "get rid of them" during the call and does not communicate professionally. As the researcher mentioned in the first part of this study, this may be attributed to the short handling time set as an object by the call center management that puts agents under pressure to fulfill a particular quota. As a result, the agent's annual performance rating is based on his/her success in achieving this objective.

The focus group participants also stated that the agents lack information and knowledge, saying that agents' knowledge is not enough, far below any satisfactory level, and devoid of even the basic skills needed to respond to customer problems or provide the correct support.

They also revealed a number of specific issues they dislike when dealing with an STC agent during a call. First and foremost, participants talked about the agent's tendency to end the call as quickly as possible. Second, they felt that the agent lacked certain technical knowledge of some of the product's features as well as their ability to fix some important problems, such as GPRS and broadband connection. Third, a majority of the respondents stressed the feeling that agents are not motivated enough to serve them as they expect to be served.

Overall there is a significant lack of responsiveness and knowledge of customer requests. The researcher thinks that most of the outcomes of this focus group coincide with the outcomes already discussed in the quantitative study, and therefore stresses the importance of taking urgent action to enhance the performance of agents and their skills related to their ability to focus on the customer during his/her call. This will give the customer the feeling that the agents are capable of responding to his/her request in the correct way and can thus fulfill his/her needs and requirements.

More detailed findings of the responsiveness dimension of this focus group study can be found in appendix 23 of this document.

### **Competence customer experience dimension**

The competence of call center agents in this study refers to the ability of agents to provide the desired services to the callers, and convey trust and confidence during their interaction with the customer. The agent possesses competence as long as the requisite skills, ability, and knowledge are a part of his/her skill set, thereby enabling the person to perform effectively within a certain workplace environment.

A majority of the participants feel that agents do not have basic education capabilities and skills. They reveal that the agents' sale skills are far from satisfactory. Some of them added that agents lack the basic skills to understand how to solve problems.

The following quotes are selected from different participants to demonstrate this issue:

*Careless in answering our calls. Official can't understand.*

*They have a big problem. For example, if I call and tell him that the DSL is down, he just tells me to wait 24 hours and the problem will be solved.*

*STC services have problems, and the end-users are not satisfied. If they are satisfied they will not place so many calls (100,000 daily, I heard).*

All of these remarks of the focus group participants emphasize the importance of building and developing the agents' skills and were repeated in all of the dimensions discussed in the first part of this study.

The researcher thinks that it is imperative for STC's management to give these remarks due consideration and take the necessary measures in order to enhance the skills and capabilities of the call center agents through continuous training, the introduction of high standard IT systems, the development and implementation of effective procedures and processes, and the enforcement of the principle of empowering them.

The full focus group findings can be found in appendix 24 of this document.

### **Proactivity customer experience dimension**

Being proactive is about anticipating and taking charge of situations. A proactive call center is considered a marketing arm for the company able to guide customers to alternative channels to

solve their problems without the need to call the call center. In addition, proactive agents go the extra mile and propose certain services to the callers of which they may not be aware.

The focus group revealed that the STC call center hardly attracts any new customers for new services and stressed the importance of enhancing the agent's capabilities to solve existing problems before making them attract new customers for new services. The following quote demonstrates this issue clearly:

*If the employee gave me good service and at the end of the call told me about the new services, this could make me think about those services and also could attract new customers. But such conduct cannot be found.*

The researcher thinks that providing customers with full information about new services through various media channels will make it easy for the agents to convince customers and nudge them toward subscribing to the new services after being provided with the basic services they requested.

The proactivity dimension discussed in the first part of the study attained a mean score of 2.79 and, according to the score mechanism of the study, was ranked in the “bad” category. Most participants of the focus group and respondents to the questionnaire stressed the importance of enhancing the skills of call center agents so they solve customers' problems as well as the importance of providing agents with sufficient knowledge, technical instruction, and information about the features of the new services and products so that they can service the customers of the company properly, fulfill their requirements, and meet their needs according to their financial capabilities.

Details of the focus group findings for this dimension can be found in appendix 25 of this document.

### **Courtesy customer experience dimension**

A courteous call center agent is key to customer satisfaction. In fact, a positive customer experience plays a vital role not just in retaining customers but also in attracting new customers through word-of-mouth referrals.

The researcher noticed that all participants had acknowledged that agents start with the greeting “As-salaamu alaykum” (Peace be upon you) and are polite while listening to the call. However, some of them noted that it was hard to understand the agent’s name because they mention it very quickly.

Other participants expressed anger at the failure of agents to listen carefully to their inquiries:

*They need to learn how and when they must listen to the customer during the call.*

The researcher noted that some participants observed a remarkable haste in the speech of the agent when asking customers certain information related to the services they required, which also makes the customer sometimes respond hastily and causes him/her to lose control of the discourse and fail to fully understand the agent. The following quote of one of the focus group participants demonstrates this observation:

*He (the agent) wants to finish the call quickly to get rid of us.*

*He (the agent) doesn’t let me complete what I want to say. He just wants to take the information quickly.*

The researcher noticed that the participants unanimously agreed on the politeness of the call center agents. In the meantime, most of the customers were dissatisfied with not being allowed enough time to speak to the agent, the quick speech of the agent during the call, and the noticeable weakness of the agent’s capabilities and skills in delivering the services required by the customers during the call. The researcher referred to these remarks in his analysis of more than one of the dimensions in the first part of this study.

Some respondents revealed that agents did not seem to show any "empathy" toward customers and that their main job seemed to be recording calls without serving the customer properly.

Some participants of the focus group think that the STC has trained the call center agents only in politeness.

One participant said that he faced some situations during his call with the agent where the latter was very polite; however, he was taken aback when the agent told him that his problem or request was beyond his control and that he is incapable of resolving it.

More details of the focus group findings for this dimension can be found in appendix 26 of this document.

### **Effective communication and problem resolution customer experience dimension**

A majority of the participants at the focus group session were unhappy with the agent's communication skills. Participants noted that agents lacked important communication skills and were not well trained to fulfill their obligations. One quote that demonstrates this issue is shown below:

*Some of them don't even know how to speak. You can't understand what he said.*

The researcher noticed that many participants complained that when they communicate with the agents some agents do not understand their requests and thus they find themselves compelled to hang up and redial the call center in the hope of finding another agent who may be better than the previously called one. One of the participants stated:

*Yes, this happened to me. I wanted a service and the official didn't understand me, so I called again to talk with another one.*

Here, the participants at the focus group session revealed that agents need some freedom and empowerment to resolve customer problems. The researcher raised this remark in the first part of the study, as well as in both chapters 3 and 4, and stated that the STC needs to urgently establish an empowerment system and procedures for its call center agents and another regulation for the accessibility to follow up the implementation of these regulations and authorities in the right way.

In order to respond to customers and solve their problems it is essential that the level of an agent's communication skills be very high because the main objective of effective communication is to start by solving the customer's complaint and providing him/her with service that meets his/her expectations. The researcher noticed that the participants of the focus group almost unanimously agreed on the weakness of the skills and abilities of call center agents to solve the customers' problems to their satisfaction.

Some participants stated that the reasons for the agents' inability to resolve their technical problems and provide them with some of the new technical services they required, such as a BlackBerry, is related to the poor technical, sales, and marketing skills and knowledge of the agents coupled with low education levels. Below are some quotations from the participants:

*The agent did not understand me. He did not understand the service so he referred me to another official.*

*In my opinion, some employees at the STC call center have a weak knowledge of services as well as weak education (he meant "qualification").*

Some participants in the focus group session mentioned that they encountered difficulty when calling the STC call center and that the employees are unspecialized and had no experience or background in some of the services requested by the customer:

*There are a lot of services at the STC. You feel that these officials are not specialized in these services or in the service that you want.*

*This gives you the feeling that the agents of this company are not qualified. They must have the same knowledge.*

Most participants revealed that the front-line employees of the company need training in the new services prior to advertising or offering these services to customers. Accordingly, the STC call center management must ensure that all agents are prepared and well versed in the new products, service features, and technicalities. One participant remarked:

*STC should make sure that agents understand new services properly before it launches them.*

More detailed information from the focus group for this dimension can be found in appendix 27.

The researcher recommends that the current customer complaints handling procedures should be reviewed to include clear empowerment and authorization within a general frame of action in addition to an IT system to follow up the resolution of customers' complaints within a predetermined amount of time. The researcher also thinks that it is very important to develop a complaint escalation procedure to ensure the resolution of the customers' problems within the

objective time, even through escalation or involving the higher management of the company. The researcher found a great similarity between the findings of the focus group in this dimension and the outcome of the quantitative study in the first part of this research, as all participants agreed that this dimension of effective communication and problem resolution requires more development and concern from STC's management.

### **Accessibility and ease of use customer experience dimension**

Accessibility involves approachability, ease of contact, and ease of use. It means that the service offered by the company is easily accessible by telephone (lines are not busy) and that the waiting time for callers to be handled by agents is not too long.

When the moderator opened the discussions of the focus group on the accessibility and ease of use of the call center, one participant did not hesitate to interrupt the moderator, saying:

*Calling the call center is a “nightmare.” It is very frustrating for customers to wait for several minutes just to reach an agent.*

*It is not free; agents have a lot of calls per day.*

*I called the call center. I waited for 10 minutes to be answered by an agent ... it is a real problem.*

The discussions of the participants in this dimension were very strong and sometimes very acute, which indicated to the researcher that the moderator had reached an important and sensitive point that the participants apparently had been waiting to discuss, as one of the participants said when he was comparing the STC call center with the Saudi banks' call centers:

*Compare STC with the bank. When you call the bank you don't wait for more than 2 minutes, but [when you call the] STC you can wait for more than 25 minutes.*

All participants in the focus group session emphasized the importance of taking urgent action to enhance the accessibility dimension of STC call centers. Some of the participants repeated their earlier comments that STC agents are not knowledgeable enough to resolve their complaints. The following quote demonstrates this:

*I called about six months ago to resolve my problem. I waited, but even I did not find a capable agent.*

When the moderator asked the respondents whether they consider the STC call center to be a good touch point for the company, a majority of them answered that call centers need to be developed and that STC's management should concentrate on enhancing this dimension.

Some participants said that they rely greatly on the short message services or "alternative channels" instead of calling the call center because they are aware of the long period of time needed to access a call center agent.

The participants made many remarks on the accessibility and ease of use dimension; however, these remarks generally focused on the time expended to access a call center agent so that he/she can respond to their requests. Some of them may have exaggerated the difficulty they encountered in reaching a call center agent, as one of them said:

*I called hundreds of times and got no answer.*

This may be attributed to the participants' desire to shed a strong light on the problem in order to draw the attention of STC's management and bring about a dramatic change as fast as they can.

Some participants related the huge volume of calls made to the call center agents to the high volume of problems they face with STC services and products, to which they think STC management should pay due attention.

The researcher noticed that the participants' outcomes did not completely differ from the outcomes of the quantitative study shown in the first part of this chapter, whereas this dimension was ranked six of seven among the seven customer centricity dimensions. The average mean score of this dimension was 2.93, which placed it in the category of "bad," based on the score mechanism of this study. This coincides exactly with what we have seen in the findings of this focus group. The more detailed findings of this focus group for this dimension can be found in appendix 28 of this document.

#### 4.5 Research’s major findings and recommendations

The researcher’s major findings derived from the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the survey results and study of the respondents' feedback indicate that there is a great need to enhance the performance of the STC call center agents by developing their skills. Review of the seven dimensions of call center centricity used in this research revealed that four dimensions (competence, accessibility, proactivity, and reliability) did not attain the “good” category based on the scale used in this study, as shown in Table 4.13. The following three questions from these four dimensions attained a mean score that was lower than the remaining questions of this research:

- Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC online services?
- Did the agent ask you to visit STC online services ([www.stc.com.sa](http://www.stc.com.sa))?
- Is the STC call center considered the best in KSA to attract new customers?

The three questions attained a mean score of 2.2, 2.1, and 2.4 respectively.

S. No.	Quality Dimension	Ranking	Mean (out of 5)	Mean (%)	SD
1	Reliability	4/7	2.96	59	1.2
2	Responsiveness	317	3.08	62	1.13
3	Competency	5/7	2.95	59	1.17
4	Pro-activity	717	2.79	56	0.78
5	Courtesy	117	3.55	71	0.99
6	Effective problem Resolution	217	3.36	67	1.08
7	Accessibility & Ease of use	6/7	2.93	59	1.14
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.09</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1.07</b>

**Table 4.13: An overview of the total survey results dimension questions**

It is very clear that these issues have a strong relationship between the discussions made by the researcher within his analysis of the seven dimensions and the recommendations and remarks previously made on them separately.

The researcher noticed a significant weakness in the competence dimension and that agents lack some sales and technical skills. This may be caused by a lack of training and efficient

support systems. Another weakness is the reliability dimension. This may be attributed to more than one reason, such as the lack of systems, processes, and/or training.

One of the major findings of the researcher is the lack of proactivity among call center agents and their inability to offer various available options and alternatives to the callers for their inquiries. This lack may be the outcome of the weaknesses of the reliability and competence dimensions. In addition, the researcher thinks that the possible causes of the weakness of the proactivity dimension may be attributed to the culture of the organization, which ignores innovation and problem resolution issues.

As for the accessibility dimension, there was a noticeable weakness as most of the respondents rated this dimension as less than “good.” The researcher believes that the call center agents have no relation to this weakness and that it may be attributed to the systems and available trunk lines that connect customers to the call center. Another possible cause is the improper and inaccurate distribution of the call center’s personnel during peak times.

To summarize, the researcher thinks that three of the customer experience dimensions - competence, reliability, and proactivity - have a direct relationship to each other and that their apparent weaknesses significantly affect the remaining dimensions, which has had many consequences on customer service. The possible causes of this weakness may be attributed mainly to agents, procedures, and systems.

Telecom service providers around the world are facing a sea of troubles. The days of double-digit market growth are over, leaving competitors to fight for one another's customers. To overcome the ever-increasing difficulties facing telecom companies to improve their margins, many telecom companies have committed to becoming customer centric and align all of their resources (employees, services ...etc.) around the customer's needs and wants.

In this study the researcher discussed and analyzed the current status of STC call centers in terms of customer centricity, the weakness areas in these centers from the points of view of the customers who are using its services, and what the company needs to do to transform its call centers into ideal touch points that can be truly called *customer centric* call centers. These would care for STC customers in a manner that meets the objectives set by the higher management and fulfill the customers' wants and needs.

Going back to the research purpose of the study, which tries to analyze the level of customer centricity at STC's call centers, it can be seen that the study has been beneficial in describing the level of customer centricity of the call center in the points view of STC customers who used and interacted with the services.

The researcher, through separate qualitative and quantitative studies, has analyzed and studied opinions of the customers who used STC's call center services. The researcher categorized these opinions into seven dimensions that contribute greatly in the formation of a customer centric call center. Each dimension was analyzed separately and the researcher made some important conclusions concerning the seven dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, competence, proactivity, courtesy, effective communication and resolution of problem, and accessibility and ease of use) that play a key role in enhancing the level of customer centricity at STC call centers.

In this document the researcher posed three research questions that he will try to answer and determine the customers' perceptions through analysis of their responses to these questions. To achieve this goal the researcher completed several phases of study in order to find answers to these three important questions based on the customers' perceptions and points of view expressed through the qualitative and quantitative research tools used in this document.

The research will review the three questions independently and explain the perceptions of STC's customers toward the call centers, the agents, and the services delivered to them when they interacted with these call centers. This research concentrated on finding answers to the three questions because this will enable STC management to enhance the quality of the services provided by their call centers.

**Analysis of the first research question answers; how do STC customers categorize and value the service experience delivered by the call center agents?**

To answer this question the researcher explored the perceptions of the respondents and participants and sorted them according to the seven dimensions of customer centricity in call centers (reliability, competence, responsiveness, proactivity, effective communication and problem resolution, courtesy, and accessibility). In the following paragraphs the researcher will discuss and analyze the customers' perceptions according to each dimension.

From the responses of the first question about how STC customers categorize and value the service experience delivered by the contact center agents, it appeared to the researcher that those who hold a PHD and responded to the qualitative and quantitative questionnaire showed a higher satisfaction rate than others regarding the level of assistance and support presented by the agents. This can be attributed to this category's advanced technical management and communication skills that would help them to deal with the agents effectively by submitting their queries clearly. The researcher did not detect clear satisfaction from the respondents who hold degrees below a PHD, which represent the majority of the study's sample. Therefore, due to the negative impact of such rating on the reputation of the firm and its position in the market place, it is crucial to pay attention to this evident difference in the ratings of respondents because the effect of satisfaction of the respondents holding a PHD is very limited due to the low percentage of this category in the organization's customer base.

On the other hand, the researcher noticed that female respondents had a higher satisfaction rate than male respondents. This result was supported by the t-test and may be ascribed to that the call center agents paying more attention and listening more carefully to the female segment. Additionally, the requests of females may be more precise, well explained, and clear to the agents.

The researcher thinks that the implications of this finding is also limited because 20% of the study sample are female, and accordingly the majority of customer satisfaction with the services of the company and customer care employees is made by the female sample. Therefore, the researcher will not be able to draw the conclusion that there is general satisfaction with the services of the company and its call center staff.

The researcher noticed that 62% of the focus group participants and the questionnaire respondents believe that the agents are responsive, which places the satisfaction rate of this dimension at average. The remainder of the respondents and participants think that the call center agents need considerable development to become more responsive to their needs and requirements.

The researcher also noticed that only 59% of participants answered that the agents possess adequate knowledge of STC's services and products and are capable and knowledgeable enough to serve them as they expected.

Based on the results of this analysis, the researcher believes that there is clear weakness in the agents' responses to customer requests as 40% of the respondents are unsatisfied with the reliability and responsiveness skills of the agents. This percentage can directly affect the reputation, progress, and growth of the company and allow competitors the chance to attract new customers. The researcher relates this to the lack of training for call center staff coupled with the weakness of the systems that should presumably support and assist the agent to respond to the customers' requests in addition to the inefficient servicing procedures, processes, and after sale support.

Through analysis of the customer experience dimensions and in order to answer the first question, the researcher has found that 70 % of the respondents are satisfied with the level of the agent's courtesy, which is considered a good result. The researcher also noticed that the higher the respondent's level of education the higher his satisfaction with this dimension of customer centricity. This result was supported by the ANOVA test and the researcher attributes it to the more educated and cultured the customer is, the more he understands the importance of using friendly and amicable sentences during the interaction between the agent and himself in the creation of good feelings and the spirit of cooperation. However, the researcher still believes that the study sample consists of few higher degree holders and that

most STC customers are secondary certificate and B.Sc. degree holders. Accordingly, the satisfaction level of PHD degree holders does not reflect that the majority of the study sample is satisfied.

In the same context, the responses to the first question reveal to the researcher that about 50% of respondents perceived STC call center agents as proactive when they served them during their calls and were able to offer them some of the new services and explain its features, specifications, benefits, and prices, and eventually tried to persuade them to subscribe to these services. The remaining 50% of the respondents answered that the agents failed to do so. The researcher thinks that this percentage is very low and attributes it to the insufficient training and lack of effective systems that assist the agents in exercising the cross and up sell of STC products and services through the call centers.

Development of call center agents' customer service proactivity skills is one of the most important factors in enhancing the reputation of the company among its customers and increasing their loyalty (Cook, 2005). Weakness in this dimension will result in negative effects on the company, its owners, and customer service and consequently gives competitors the opportunity to build a better reputation.

The researcher also noticed through analysis of first question's responses that 45% of the respondents think that the call center agents did not listen to their complaints carefully and consequently failed to find proper resolutions for their complaints. Some respondents added that they faced great difficulty in understanding the agent's speech and that their communication with the agent was unclear and hard to understand. The researcher thinks that this weakness may be due to cultural causes and poor communication skills in addition to the predetermined short call times.

This apparent weakness in call center agents' listening and communication skills has many implications on the organization, such as losing customer loyalty, negative word of mouth which reduces the level of customer satisfaction and gives the competitors the chance to attract new customers.

Last but not least, the researcher found that one of the main drivers of the negative responses to the first question is the accessibility and ease of use dimension. The researcher detected that customers were not satisfied with the handling time of their requests or the time it took to

reach an agent. The researcher may attribute this to the insufficient number of agents at the call center, unbalanced distribution, or the need for more training in the services and products in addition to the need for effective systems in order to be able to provide timely services without delay or keeping customers on hold for a long time. The researcher thinks that these are significant implications on customer satisfaction, the attraction of new customers, and in increasing customer turnover from the company to competitors.

Results of the analysis of the respondents' answers to this question in terms of the four geographical regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, namely central, eastern, western and southern, revealed to the researcher that central region respondents are less satisfied and have a more negative perception toward all the services provided by the call centers based on the seven dimensions, while the southern region respondents have shown a more positive perception toward the services and agents of the call center. This trend needs to be further studied and analyzed to determine its actual justifications, including standard of services, network availability at the concerned region, and quality of customers.

**Analysis of the second research question answers: How do STC customers consider STC as a customer centric organization?**

The researcher noticed that the total average satisfaction rate for STC services based on the seven customer experience dimensions is less than expected. Table 5.1 shows that the total average satisfaction rate of the respondents for the seven dimensions of the customer centricity of the call center is far below the ambitions of a large company such as STC, noting that the satisfaction rate for some dimensions did not exceed 55%, such as accessibility and ease of use.

Service Quality Dimension	Mean (%)
Reliability	59
Responsiveness	62
Pro-activity	55
Competence	59
Courtesy	71
Effective communication and problem resolution	67
Accessibility and ease of use	55
<b>Total average</b>	<b>63</b>

**Table (5.1): Satisfaction rate results for the seven dimensions**

The researcher noticed that the respondents and STC customers who participated in the focus group believe that STC is not a customer centric organization that takes care of its customers' requirements and needs and has customer focused call center agents. In the same context, and in order to answer the second question of the research, the researcher analyzed the responses for three important questions in the questionnaire and they are relevantly answering the second research question:

- Is the STC call center considered the best customer facing touch point?
- Are STC call centers considered the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints?
- Are STC call centers considered the best in Saudi Arabia to attract new customers?

Through analysis of the respondents answers to the above three questions the researcher found that respondents holding PhD's have a more positive customer experience rate than others. This, as mentioned earlier, could be attributed to this segment's advantage in clarity of communication with the call center agents, due to the advanced technical and management skills they have. The researcher also noted that respondents holding a Master's, B. S, and secondary degrees have a lower positive experience rate and more negative perceptions of the services provided through the call centers and the call center agents. As the respondents holding a B.Sc. or secondary degrees represent the majority of the study sample, the researcher believes that they have a negative impact on the customers of the company and its reputation in the market, which may drive the current customers of the company to search for another service provider. The researcher attributes this weakness to processes, people, and systems.

### **Exploring the influence of Saudi Arabian culture on the scoring recorded by female respondents:**

In the same context of differing responses by different respondent types, the researcher found that the percentage of female respondents that perceived the call centers as customer centric to be greater than that of the male segment. Clearly this could be very significant for STC in adapting its own behavior in response to the finding.

The proportion of women responding was 20%, as shown earlier in Figure 4.1, and Figure 4.11 showed that the female rating was higher and significantly different from the male rating in respect of two of the seven dimensions measured, being the call center agent's reliability and competence.

This higher level of appreciation and satisfaction creates an interesting opportunity for further consideration by STC. Although females made up only 20% of the respondents, they likely constitute 50% of the Saudi population, and wield immense market power (CDSI, 2011).

The result of the research described above perhaps indicates that customer service agents, who are all male, are dealing with females in a more respectful manner according to the culture of the Saudi Islamic society, as Islam urges Muslims to treat females gently and kindly. The prophet of Islam, peace be upon him (PBUH) says "Be good and kind to women..." (Tobash, 2010).

The researcher believes that this might be explained by the central position that tenets of Islam hold in Saudi life. The Qur'an's teaching on the position of women is very clear and specific, and as a result, the STC's call center agents are pre-disposed by their upbringing to make an extra effort to understand and please female callers by resolving their problems. From his earliest days as a child, the agent-to-be would have become used to hearing and then reading for himself the many verses in the Qur'an, and in Tobash (2010) setting out the position of women, and the way in which males and family members are to behave. He would have heard and read on many occasions of the special place given by Islam to women, with references such these: Allah's Messenger, PBUH is reported to have said, 'You should take care of both weak persons; the woman and the orphan.' (Tobash, 2010). Furthermore, Allah's Messenger, PBUH is reported to have said, in another statement, 'I command you to take care of women' ( Al-Zubaidi, 1994, p. 898). So, as a result of this background, it is entirely feasible that the researcher should attribute the results of the study, which show that females are more satisfied than males, to the Islamic beliefs and culture of the call center agents.

Returning to the research, the analysis of the respondents with patronage less than six months showed less positive customer experience than other groups. The researcher believes that the possible cause of the negative perception toward the second question

from those customers who were with STC for less than six months might be because they are still adding new services and products and, accordingly require more support, which the agents failed to provide properly. The researcher thinks that this situation has many implications on the company; the most important one is that these customers may shift to another telecom service provider. This category includes the youth generation who are considered very important for building a wide future customer base for the company. It appeared to the researcher that the sample of this study perceived STC as a moderately customer centric organization with significant deficiencies in different areas, which the researcher has discussed in the previous sections. The most visible deficiencies are the lack of agents' skills and knowledge about STC services, lack of proactivity, inadequate processes and procedures available to the agents, lack of reliable systems and targeted training for the agents, and the difficulty of accessing the call center.

**Analysis of the third research question answers: What do STC customers think STC needs to do to become a customer centric organization?**

In a world where customer expectations are constantly changing and competition is always growing, companies are under increasing pressure to become more customer centric. Bailey (2006, pp. 3-16) identifies the first step to becoming customer centric is "aligning the resources of your organization to effectively respond to the ever changing needs of the customer while building mutually profitable relationship". Rosenberg (2006) adds that customer centric organization put the customer's needs and desires at the center of their entire operation, from technical support to marketing, and even new product and service decisions.

The researcher analyzed the results of the qualitative and quantitative studies and gauged the respondents perceptions of the services provided by STC call centers and the technical and administrative skills of the agents based on the seven customer centricity dimensions.

The respondents showed that the company must exert more effort and time to improve the performance of its agents. They revealed that the skills and knowledge of the agents about STC services and products should be improved. The respondents believe that the agents' sales skills are far below satisfactory and that they even lack the basic skills to understand customers and provide advice or solutions to their problems. They added that the agents should have adequate education and motivation to understand customer problems and analyze them thoroughly to service customers as expected. The researcher thinks that this situation can

be rectified through extensive training focused on development of the agents' skills and knowledge of the new services to enable them to explain its features to the customers and sell it to them more easily. Additionally, they should use continuous workshops to enhance the agents' customer problem resolution skills and keep them aware of new methods of treating customers during their calls. The training and workshops should be supported by IT systems, such as CRM, that provide a complete profile of the customer including history of various interactions with the call center. Also, clear servicing and problem resolution practices and policies are to be provided and easily accessed by the agents through the IT systems to better enable them to deal with each case properly and refer to them as they deem fit.

Some respondents, especially during the focus group discussion, believe that the problem of STC not being able to become customer centric lies in the management, procedures, and systems that should be improved. They added that the company should be more proactive toward maintenance and network incidents and notify the customer in advance. However, some respondents stated that sometimes only part of the problem is resolved and the customer needs to call again and again to resolve the rest of his complaint. The researcher attributes this deficiency to the weak control and ineffective follow up to the customer's complaints caused by poor supporting systems and procedures. This negatively affects the organization and results in losing customer loyalty and satisfaction, and consequently their stay with the company.

The researcher thinks that STC needs to review the call center staffing policy and the required technical and management qualifications of the candidates for these vital and sensitive positions in the company.

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## 6 Recommendations in General

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In this chapter the researcher will discuss some implications of the perceptions that he found through analysis of the questionnaires of respondents who used STC call center services, and in light of his analysis of the seven call center and call center agents customer centricity dimensions.

The researcher noticed that there are significant weaknesses to which STC management needs to pay more attention and care, and take the necessary corrective action before it is too late to avoid losing a market share. This weakness includes agent access time, time spent by agents to serve the customer, the significant low customer satisfaction rate regarding problem resolution, the apparent lack of the call center agent proactivity, and the weak communication skills of the call center agents.

Monitoring the call center's performance as well as the individual agent's performance are major corners for the success of a customer centricity project. Aligning the call center performance metrics to actively focus on improving customer experience is one of the important levers to promote the customer centricity culture within the call center environment. Table (6.1) shows six key performance indicators that the researcher concluded previously in document 3, as well as in this document, should be adopted by STC's call center management. These key performance indicators stress raising and enriching the level of the quality delivered by the agents and drive the call center as a whole toward customer centricity. They will underpin the focus on seven dimensions performance and keep STC management aware of the quality of the services provided by the call center, and not just the quantity of answered calls.

No.	Proposed Key performance indicators
1	First call resolution (FCR)
2	Average speed to answer the customer call by the agent
3	Call center abandonment rate
4	Customer satisfaction rating of each agent by the customers after the call
5	Cross and up sell activities of each agent
6	Call center agent adherence rate

**Table (6.1): Proposed call center performance metrics**

The base unit of measurement is the individual agent's performance, which is considered to be one of the most important pillars in driving STC call centers to real customer focus/centric activity and achieving a true positive customer experience change.

The researcher noticed that evaluation of the respondent to the agent's performance was not up to customer expectation, especially in the area of communication skills, knowledge of services offered, and the ability to respond on time to the customer's request. Accordingly, the researcher suggests that the agent's performance be assessed in four main areas: perception established from the customers who called through feedback that can be collected either by the IVR or call back; schedule adherence based on the agent's diligence in conforming to a defined shift time table; absentee rate based on an agent's unexcused absence per defined shift schedule; call quality monitoring process based on the main attributes. Table (6.2) shows these attributes accompanied by a proposed rating for each one.

Input Source	Evaluation Attribute	Evaluation Rating
1 Customer Feedback	Customer Rating	1 (Poor) -> 5 (Excellent)
2 Schedule Adherence	Agent schedule adherence	1 (Poor) -> 5 (Excellent)
3 Absence Rate	Agent absentee rate	1 (Poor) -> 5 (Excellent)
4 Call Monitoring	Courtesy	1 (Poor) -> 5 (Excellent)
	Communications skills	1 (Poor) -> 5 (Excellent)
	Effort to understand the question	1 (Poor) -> 5 (Excellent)
	Knowledge of the relevant subject matter	1 (Poor) -> 5 (Excellent)
	Ability to satisfactory answer your questions	1 (Poor) -> 5 (Excellent)
	Timeliness in answering questions	1 (Poor) -> 5 (Excellent)

**Table (6.2): Proposed agent's performance metrics**

The researcher thinks that implementation of the metrics he shows in Table 6.2 will positively affect the seven customer experience dimensions subject of this study and will enable the call center management to know the actual status and whether any improvement has been achieved in these dimensions.

The demographic analysis revealed to the researcher that the customer's education level has a direct relationship with the perception of the reliability, competence, proactivity and courtesy customer experience dimensions. He noticed that the respondents holding PhD have a positive perception of the call center agents who served them related to these four customer experience dimensions. Therefore the researcher believes that STC needs to pay more attention to the customers holding secondary, B.Sc. and Master's degrees, investigate the reasons for these significant differences between them and the PhD holders and in the meantime increase satisfaction of the PhD holders. It would be a good idea to select a group of distinguished agents and train them in the four dimensions which customers did not report satisfaction and assign them to answer the call requests of the customers holding secondary, B.Sc., and M.Sc. Degrees. These customers would be identified through the CRM function and routed to those agents.

The demographic analysis discussed previously has shown that the female segment has a greater tendency to report a positive customer experience in two customer experience dimensions: reliability and responsiveness. They reveal a positive satisfaction related to the capability of the agents' skills, knowledge, and the responsiveness of the call center's agents.

The researcher thinks that STC must maintain this strength and pay more attention to the agents who serve this segment. Additionally, the researcher believes that STC can make use of this positive result and take the necessary actions to achieve it in the female segment through training, providing the necessary resources for the agents who are serving the male segment, and investigating the reasons for the weaknesses there and taking the necessary corrective actions.

The researcher further noticed that the respondents residing in the southern region of Saudi Arabia recorded higher levels of satisfaction with the call center agents in regards to the competence customer experience dimension. They stated that the agents should possess the necessary skills and tools to enable them to provide convincing solutions and show

understanding of the company's services and abilities to solve their problems and provide them with the required support. They found the delivered this and, as a result, acquired their satisfaction. The researcher thinks that this positive perception by the southern region respondents, which is higher than other three regions, should be evaluated to determine the reason for this satisfaction, including the agents who serve the customers in the southern region and how to make use of their experiences to answer the calls of other regions' customers. In the meantime STC should provide training for the agents in the other three regions to enable them achieve the same results as those in the south, and so acquire a higher rate of customers' satisfaction.

For all agents, the IT systems they use are critical to their ability to perform. The researcher suggests that STC management thoroughly review the IT system used by the agents in the call center and ensure the availability of procedures and processes that are accessible and well understood by the agents. In addition the agents' work environment and their management should all be improved, as all these factors greatly impact an agent's performance and treatment of his caller. This may be the subject of another study that the researcher suggests be conducted by the company or other interested researchers in this field to link its findings with the results of this research and identify the reasons for the shortcomings and disadvantages to all concerned parties. Furthermore, the researcher advises that culture building programs be developed using the latest communication techniques and be circulated to all call center agents and implemented in these call centers based on the results of this research in order to drive them to raise the level of customer care and services and point out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, etc. (SWOT analysis).

The researcher noticed that there is a gap between STC responses and customer needs, wants, and expectations. Thus there is an immediate need for launching an organizational culture change program in the call center that concentrates on building essential elements such as time management, behavioral skills, clear processes, and procedures developed for the employees for use through IT systems, such as the customer relation management (CRM).

CRM helps businesses use technology and human resources to gain insight into the behavior and value of those customers. It consists of the processes a company uses to track and organize its contacts with its current and prospective customers. CRM software is used to support these processes, allowing information about customers and customer interactions to be

entered, stored, and accessed by employees in different company departments. Typical CRM goals are to improve the services provided to customers and to use customer contact information for targeted marketing (Payne, 2006).

The researcher stresses the importance of building a culture program to develop the touch point employee skills, boost the customer centric culture, and take care of their requirements through the formation of task forces that focus on the customers' needs and wants.

It is important to remove the weaknesses in some basic skills of the call center employees, as these negatively impact the competitive position of the company in the Saudi market and enables the competitors to dominate the field.

The call centers are the main communication channels between STC and its customers, so an improvement of company culture there would directly lead to an enhancing customer perception of STC.

The corporate culture is pulling everyone up to its highest standards and expectations, and employees are pushing to meet them. This improved customer service produces a competitive advantage that cannot be realized by management just saying that customer service is important or number one (Cook, 2005).

The researcher concluded from the results of the survey and focus group that the total customer experiences of STC call center users is not good enough to enable the company to meet its customers' expectations and effectively compete in the Saudi telecom market. Applying customer experience management (CEM) strategy can address this by leading to an enhanced customer experience at an STC call center. A CEM solution offers the ability to monitor all aspects of the customer's experience to help increase the positive customer experience, reduce service calls, monitor the performance of new and existing services and device types, and help operations identify which issues have the greatest impact on valuable enterprise customers (Bernd, 2003).

CEM takes care of customer needs at every touch point in the customer lifecycle (ordering, fulfillment, billing, support, etc.) and employs all channels (contact center, Internet, self-service, mobile devices). It can develop experience-based differentiation, which shifts the focus from service features to customer wants and needs (Bernd, 2003).

## **6.1 Recommendations to the organization**

Based on the results described in this document, and the previous documents of this DBA, regarding both the quantitative and qualitative study, the researcher has suggested a program of recommendations to be implemented in five phases of fifteen specific actions. The researcher believes that this program will enhance the quality of customer experience when contacting STC call centers and this will be measured by a new set of key performance indicators (KPI's), included within the recommendations.

The researcher will briefly shed light on these five phases here and then will discuss them in detail in the following section.

In Phase 1, the researcher recommends that the project is authorized, aligned with corporate objectives, and key personnel assembled. This key personnel team should comprise a Project Champion, a Call Centre Transformation Team (CCTT), a lead Director and a lead consultant. This team will then review and validate the recommendations of the researcher regarding the implementation of the project, the expected benefits and the KPI's by which it will be managed and form an estimate of cost. On conclusion, the CCTT will present their recommendations to the Management Committee of the company chaired by the CEO and request approval to proceed to the main implementation phases. The second phase is entitled 'Prepare and Energize Staff'. In this phase, there are two parallel work streams: One to prepare the new tools and processes identified as necessary by the research, the second to send a signal to all staff that a challenging change to a new customer-centric way of thinking and behaving is being introduced. The third phase is entitled 'Activate & Enthuse Staff'. This begins a process of culture change and a specific quality enhancement as part of the growing focus on customer centricity and satisfaction. The fourth phase is 'Finalize and Implement' the new call center operational model. This is the implementation of the background work that has been carried out by the support functions and modified by agent feedback and other learning derived during Phases 2 and 3. The final phase is 'Review and Improve' – a constant process of monitoring, feedback, learning, adaptation and improvement.

These five phases and their inter-relationship are shown in Figure 6.1.



The detail of each Phase is now described in the following paragraphs:

Phase 1 – Call center transformation team CCTT assembly, recruitment of lead consultant and review and validation of the four-phase implementation program, together with developing an estimated budget requirement.

The researcher recommends that, based on his experience of major programs, the call center GM should set up the CCTT as described, reporting directly to himself and be assembled as follows in order to achieve the recommendations set out in this section:

- CCTT Executive Director (ED): This is an executive who will be the full-time leader of the program, carrying operational responsibility for a successful implementation.
- Lead Consultancy: A program of this scope and duration will require substantial dedicated effort and expertise. A suitable consultancy will bring in knowledge and awareness of international best practice and benchmarks, as well as industry skills to complement the skills of the company. It will also relieve some of the load on company management.
- The ED will be further supported by the Directors of the following functions, each of whom will appoint a suitably skilled leader to be a dedicated full-time member of the implementation team:

- The Director of Customer Experience, whose function will be to input the company's current and on-going measures of customer satisfaction, the key messages the company wishes to deliver and new products and services as they are being brought to market.
- The HR Director, whose function will be to organize the training program, any necessary recruitment, to advise on the KPI's and agent incentive programs and their alignment with company practice and objectives. This will cover training in behavior, processes and use of the various support systems. The scale of training required will require HR to develop an initial set of experts, and then a train-the-trainer program to match the target deployment.
- The Director of Internal Communications, who will be responsible for delivering the appropriate messages about the program not only to the Call Centre staff, but to the company as a whole. He will also be responsible for providing a mechanism to capture, analyze and act on feedback from the call center agents and their supervisors.
- The IT Director, whose function will be to provide access to the two key sets of tools required by the agents: The operational diagnostic tools which enable an agent to understand any technical issue affecting the customer and the customer relationship management (CRM) tools that give the agent all the information he needs about the customer and his or her history with STC.
- CCTT should then recruit the lead consultancy. This should be done in the following stages:
  - Define the specification for the lead consultancy as a company with a proven international track record in culture change in service industry preferably telecom sector and specifically in call centers.
  - Issue a request for information (RFI) to companies considered to be suitably qualified.
  - Issue a request for proposal (RFP) to a shortlist of selected companies from submissions received.
  - Bring the selected company into the CCTT activities.
- CCTT and Consultant should then agree on an overall implementation plan for each of the five phases, as recommended by the researcher. This will include a

number of review points at which progress will be formally reviewed, with the remaining timetable adapted as necessary.

- CCTT, supported by the Consultant, will then present the program to the company's Management Committee members and President, describing the five stages of implementation, the program plan, the expected benefits and the KPI's by which achievement of these will be measured.
- The approval by the Management Committee should be marked by a personal message from the President and should be the moment to ignite the program in the minds of the employees.
- CCTT should then hold a launch briefing to call center agents and supervisors, explaining the program objectives and scope, the roles of the project team, and the roles that the supervisors and agents themselves will play during the implementation.
- This should be followed by the set-up of the various internal communications vehicles to be used, both for outbound messaging to staff and for collecting feedback from agents and supervisors.

**Phase 2:** To prepare and energize staff, both in the call centers themselves, and also in the supporting functions that will be developing and implementing the new processes. As mentioned above, the support staff will be engaged in creating and providing the enablers – two-way communications, the diagnostic and CRM tools and processes for their use, the training and the alignment with company customer experience objectives and new products and services. This is about creating a mind-set of customer centricity, customer satisfaction and a winning spirit of “Together we can achieve this!” The researcher proposes three recommendations for this phase:

- Develop new call scripts that identify lessons learned in this research and identify roles and responsibilities for agents. This must not be interpreted as wrapping the agent in a strait-jacket, but rather as providing a common set of forms of address for greeting, apology if necessary, resolution, proactive offering of other services and final closure. The process of using the diagnostic tools and discussing the findings with the customer or discussing the customer's service requirement cannot be scripted and this is where the skill and knowledge of the agent plays its part. This will contribute in facilitating

and improving agent interaction with callers and will create the desired awareness level among agents of their responsibilities and impact.

- Develop and institutionalize root cause analysis processes for those different scenarios requiring analysis, such as common customer complaints and high repeat callers. This will identify roadblocks, inefficient processes, inconsistent policies and opportunities for automation – the basis for a more lean and effective organization. . The result of the removal of such roadblocks, inefficient processes and inconsistent policies will be an improvement in call center efficiency and proactivity. It will also enhance the percentage achieved of first call resolution (FCR) and decrease repeat callers.
- Enhance team communication within the call center. The objective of this recommendation is to improve the communication within the team and between senior management, agents and supervisors. Performance will be defined by progress against the project plan and progress against the target KPI's as described in Section 2. As well as the standard management reviews of the above, there will be regular peer group workshops at supervisor and manager level, to identify, for example, individual cases of best practice and how these can be applied, or to identify common problems, which the project team should resolve. The expected impact of this recommendation is to promote team spirit among the agents, improve visibility on performance through regular meetings with them, and promote awareness among agents on the importance of the KPI's, and encourage them to provide feedback as an input to Phase 4.

**Phase 3:** is to activate and enthuse the call center staff. It takes the attention-grabbing activities in Phase 2 and introduces culture change, specific quality enhancement, and greater focus on customer centricity and satisfaction. There are three specific recommendations to be carried out in this phase as follows:

- Launch an agent culture change program to change the existing cultural norms of the agents and supervisors to be more customer centric and the acceptance of new KPIs being introduced to monitor call center and agent performance. This recommendation will enhance and increase awareness and shift focus to customer centricity with operational efficiency as a key support – a means to an end rather than an end in itself.
- Increase the authority and empowerment of front-line agents to build customer centricity and customer focus at STC call centers. Empowering STC agents will enable

them to respond faster to customer needs and resolve a defined list of customer service requests without resorting to the back office.

- Introduce live call monitoring to the agent quality assessment process in addition to recorded calls, in order to improve the level of feedback provided to agents. The steps to implement this recommendation involve:
  - Develop the call center's ability to conduct live-call-monitoring.
  - Train staff members in the use of new systems to monitor calls efficiently and properly. In particular, train supervisors to show an agent how the call could have been better handled or to commend an agent on the way he turned around an angry customer and resolved the situation.
  - Design an agent rating process based on the recommended component of agent quality rating KPI's.
  - Train staff members in effectively rating agents.

**Phase 4:** is about finalizing and implementing the new call center operational model. This is the implementation of the background work that has been carried out by the support functions and modified by agent feedback and other learning derived during Phases 2 and 3. There are five specific recommendations in this phase as follows:

- Develop and deliver a training program for call center agents which focuses on customer satisfaction, use of new tools, skill enhancement and effective utilization of call center resources. This will certainly contribute to increasing the agent's quality of service, customer satisfaction and morale.
- Provide the agents with the proper tools that will enable them to better analyze customer problems and have access to the right information. These tools have four elements: The diagnostic tools used to investigate a customer's service problem, the CRM system that describes the customer's service set and history, the product and service database and lastly, the processes that guide an agent through the use of all of these. This will improve customer satisfaction by enabling agents to better serve customers and improve FCR by providing agents with tools that help resolve customer problems
- Review the set of KPI's based on the recommendations set out by the researcher in Chapter 2.7. The training and internal messaging need to explain to both the call center agents and to the company as a whole, the basis upon which these KPI's have been

constructed, so that the link between KPI, individual performance and customer satisfaction is clear to the whole organization.

- Redesign the agent incentive program to align the agent's personal and functional performance with the new customer-centric objectives. This will recognize both his individual responsibilities and his role as a team member.
- Introduction of newly recommended KPIs into the daily reporting process, such as (FCR) and (FRR). A prerequisite for this recommendation is to ensure the presence of necessary systems and processes to measure and report KPIs. The implementation team should create a series of reports from the GM, down to individual agent, and create a publishable version both for all call center staff and all other concerned parties in STC. Clearly care needs to be taken about both individual and company sensitivity. The adoption of this recommendation will provide the tools to monitor and improve performance as well as accountability, ownership and enhance the call center's operational efficiency.

The totality of implementing the four actions in this phase comprises the launch of the program and the new operational process will then be live.

**Phase 5** is “Review & Improve”. The feedback phase is an essential part of this program, as in any major change initiative. Dening (1986) revealed fourteen key principles for transforming business effectiveness. The fifth of these is the necessity to improve constantly and forever, the system of production and service to improve quality and productivity. It is very important that the STC management adopts this approach in driving through its transformation of call centers to being models of customer centricity. The value of this is re-enforced by Dening’s championing of the Shewart improvement cycle (sometimes called the Dening improvement cycle) – Plan, Do, Check, Act.

The researcher recommends that the project team not be disbanded immediately after the conclusion of Phase 4, but be kept in place for up to two years beyond that in order to drive the review, learning and adaptation processes. By regularly reviewing agent and customer feedback and call center performance, management will recognize the many areas in which processes, tools, training and attitude can be further changed and enhanced. Reilly (1994) added that a massive training effort is required by the organization to instill the courage to break with tradition. The attitude of the agents and call center management is as critical to the

success of the transformation program as any process, and it is very important that in the face of operational difficulties, changed attitudes are not allowed to slowly drift back to their previous state.

The processes themselves, such as root cause analysis, can never be considered as finished, but always capable of further upgrading and the 'Review & Improve' phase must be institutionalized to facilitate this continuous improvement.

### **Responsibilities and costs**

To implement the recommendations proposed by the researcher as a result of his findings will require a focused effort and investment by the organization. The researcher has suggested an appropriate allocation of responsibilities and resources for each of the recommended actions, and these are set out in table 6.3.

This table reveals each phase and its associated activities and adds the suggested names of the departments responsible to carry out each phase together with the estimated working days required. For example, Phase 2 comprises three activities and it is proposed that the call center management leads this phase is led by, supported by the Marketing and Customer Experience functions, which can add their specific functional knowledge. One month is allocated to the development of scripts and definition of roles and responsibilities, and a further month to the development of root cause analysis. The enhancement of team communication must clearly be an ongoing and never-ending activity and so is labeled "continuous".

Phase	Description	Activity	Working days	Responsible Leader
Phase 1	Initiate program  Assemble Project team and execute start-up activities	Gain management committee approval for Phase 0 & appoint Executive Director	One month	<b>GM (Project Champion)</b>
		Recruit lead consultancy	Six months	<b>GM (Project Champion)</b>  <b>Executive Director</b>
		Agree overall project plan for phases. Gain Management Committee approval for phases 1 to 5 Publish letter from President and hold launch briefing for call center agents and supervisors		
		Set up internal communications to address all staff		
Phase 2	Prepare & Energize	Define scripts and roles & responsibilities	One month	<b>Lead:</b> Call center management <b>Support:</b> marketing Customer Experience
		Enhance team communication	Continuous	
		Develop root cause analysis	One month	
Phase 3	Activate & Enthuse	Launch Culture Change Program	Three months	<b>Lead:</b> Call center management <b>Support:</b> HR Culture Change Team
		Empower agents	Continuous	
		Introduce live call monitoring	Two weeks	
Phase 4	Finalize & Implement new Call Centre Template	Develop agent training program	> develop two months > implement six months	<b>Lead:</b> Call center management <b>Support:</b> HR Performance Monitoring Team
		Provide agents with the proper assess tools	Three months	
		Streamline KPI's	One month	
		Redesign agent incentive program	One month	
		Introduce new KPI's	Continuous	
Phase 5	Review & Improve	Review and Improve	Continuous	<b>Lead:</b> Call center management

**Table (6.3): Allocation of responsibilities and resources for the recommended actions.**

The total cost of this program will be substantial and the researcher will calculate a provisional estimate for submission to the STC Board as part of the whole program's objectives and scope.

In order to estimate the substantial cost of implementing this program, the researcher has begun by creating the classifications of indirect and direct activities.

Indirect activities are those carried out by STC staff, and which therefore involve no additional budget expenditure by STC resulting from this recommendation. In the majority of cases, these are activities carried out by staff in the normal course of their work – for example, internal communications by internal marketing, IT development by IT staff, and of course a significant part of the resource pool are the call center agents themselves and their supervisors

and management. The incremental effort is provided by the CCTT team, which is made up of staff seconded from their usual duties to full time and dedicated participation in implementing this project. Even this group would not classify as extra spend by STC, as the creation of temporary project teams staffed by secondees is a normal organizational activity in STC, as in any major corporation.

Direct activities are those requiring additional external expertise, and which therefore will involve STC in incremental expenditure. The researcher sees activities such as consultancy, internal marketing communication and materials and agent training as direct costs.

The researcher has also identified the published results of a recent industry survey that reveal the market rate for change management consultancy, and for various expert disciplines. The findings of the latest Skillfair Annual Fee Rate Survey Report (2010) reveals the market rates for various disciplines when provided by specialist consultancies. The researcher recommends that STC use a major organization with the relevant experience as the lead consultancy, as defined earlier, and appropriate specialist organizations for each specific task. Using the timescales set out in Table 6.3, and using his experience regarding the number of consultants needed for any task, and based on the data from the Skillfair Annual Fee Rate Survey Report (2010), the researcher has calculated a cost for these direct activities. In Saudi Arabia, these consultancy skills are generally sourced from international providers, and the rates have to be adjusted to provide an allowance for accommodation and travel. The resulting estimate is 22.4 million Saudi Riyal (\$US 6.1m). The basis of calculation is shown in Appendix 31.

This research study covered the activities of the call center at Saudi Telecom Company (STC) and did not include other STC touch points such as the sales department, online services, and marketing group. There are a number of limitations that should be mentioned in connection with this study.

Studying customer centricity concept and implementing it at any organization should not be confined to customer service call centers but should include retail offices, which are considered one of the most important touch points and play a critical role in providing a consistent customer experience across the value chain of any service organization. The outcomes of this study are not necessarily representative of what happens at the sales outlets and other alternative channels, such as online service and retail shops. There may be some differences or similarities between limitations of the study and certain touch points will not reveal the complete picture of the level of customer treatment at any organization.

There are other departments in an organization, which play a great role in supporting these centers, subjected to this study and the positive the role the said departments play through providing the call centers with technical and administrative support that will affect the positive outcome of customer service.

As this study was limited to measuring the level of customer centricity only at the call centers, the results and findings of the researcher may not reflect the actual status of the other departments in the organization as the study didn't cover the role of the following groups and departments of STC and the range of support they provide to the call center:

- Marketing and the support it provides to the call center relating to providing the right information on the services and training the agents in the new services prior to launching it in addition to availability of clear procedures and practices.
- Human resources and the support related to personnel services provided to the call center agents as the internal customers of the firm.

- Information technology (IT) support to the call center agents in a form of systems and equipment that assist them in their duties and effectively meet the customer's needs and requirements.

Therefore, the researcher suggests that a comprehensive study be conducted on customer centricity at STC covering all its business units including the call centers, which are considered the corner stone of an organization's success. All executives and managers of the different departments at STC should align the main objectives of the company in servicing the customers in an efficient and proper manner that meets and exceeds their needs and their expectations.

The researcher thinks that the customer experience of call center services could have been investigated in terms of their regions through a research methodology that involves taking larger samples of customers from each region via a stratified sampling method to make the research more focused on STC customers by region, then take a complete image of the perceptions of customers in the four regions. In such a way the analysis will be realistic and the results more accurate. In the same context, the researcher noticed significant differences between the customers' perceptions of the services provided by the call center agents and the education and gender segments. For example, the female segment perceived the customer experience delivered by the call center as higher than males and the higher the education of the respondent the higher his perception of his experience with the call center's services.

Accordingly, the researcher thinks that there is room for other researchers to conduct research covering these segments and determine the justifications of these differences between the different customers of STC. This study will give STC the opportunity to understand its customers' needs and demands according to each segment of the customers according to gender, education, or region and consequently enable it to compete strongly in the Saudi telecom market, because customers' needs and demands represent the first step toward becoming a customer centric organization as stated by Bailey (2008) in his definition adopted by the researcher.

The final limitation of this study deals with call center employee satisfaction with their management, work environment, rewards, and incentives. This has strong connection with the satisfaction and loyalty of the organization's customers. Neglecting the study of the level of

employee satisfaction with the organization in general and measuring the level of support they receive is considered one of the main limitations of this study. Other researchers can thoroughly study and identify the linkages between employee's satisfaction and customer satisfaction at any organization.

This research was conducted to get the customer's point view of the services offered by STC call center and its implications toward the customer centricity of the call center.

The study has helped describe how STC call center customers view the level of customer centricity at the call center through their interactions with the call center's agents.

Since the employee's point of view was not an area to be studied from different angles, such as working environment, rewards, treatment, and career development, they are recommended to researchers who would consider studying the call center employee's perspective. The proposed study would explore employee's perceptions of their work environment and answer crucial questions that would complete the overall study of this research, such as:

- What do you like best about working here? What do you like least?
- What helps you to be the most effective? What gets in the way of being most effective?
- How do you feel about the training you have received to do your job?
- Do you have the information and knowledge you need to do your job?

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## **9 Appendices**

## Appendix (1) English translation of the first article



### **Customer is always right**

Serving the client is the top priority for companies that wish to grow fast.

Based on the outcome of a survey conducted by the Price water house company for measuring customer tendencies & trends in services and products companies that grow rapidly, it has been proven that the customer service is deemed to be 81% whereas the cost control factor represents 72%. Customer service in this study is considered to be the most important activity factor in these companies. If one company does not grow fast, then their customer service will be the reason.

It is well known in marketing that keeping the existing customers is much less costly than gaining new ones. So it would be better for service & product companies to keep their customer satisfaction & happiness as their main concern. Mr. Getzler, the chairman of Getzler & Partners Company, said that most companies are not listening to their customers. They are giving them false promises that they cannot fulfill and solving problems only when it is too late. Mr. Getzler also said that the customer care department should be given more authority to deal with customers freely and solve their problems, and then the management will assist them when they need help. He also said that the most inconvenient status for customers is hearing "The manager is not here!" His advice is to have focus groups ready to discuss problems with major customers, and the kind of services they prefer, ahead of time.

Although automatic systems have been inserted for serving customers, mankind will remain the keystone for customer service. So the employees should be trained in how to deal with customers, not to be trained how to use the system. That is because nowadays its workers rather than its automatic systems constitute the real value of the company.

Another study carried out by Mr. James S. Bebiton, the chairman of Dallas services & Administrative Company in Texas, who is the author of the book "Human Performance Consulting: Transforming Human Potential into Productive Business Performance," pointed out that human customer service is increasing income rates by 10% to 30%. So the effective customer service is the biller of the company that wishes to be successful in a competitive market, otherwise it will fail for sure.

Mrs. Karen Ede of Avak Telecom in New York City is saying that customer effective services depend on provision of the best resources, reasonable training programs, and highly skilled labourers, especially when facing their customers at the service centers, while providing their administration with very useful information for all levels of the administration. Mrs. Karen is also warns against conducting customer evaluations through automatic systems which are giving the wrong measurements for things which customers care about but employees cannot control. This, considering that customer phone calls/per minute is a major indicator of success, is dangerous without considering the quality of the services offered to the customers originally.

Mr. Josef Michel Longer, deputy executive chairman of Longo Company, said that using the marketing reports to keep the sales department employees informed in detail of all kinds of problems and solutions plays a great role in the customer service process, because those employees act like customers, who show them how to solve the problems. We have to contact them before they call us.

According to the briefing, shown above, we, as managers or employees in customers service and other departments, have to study these lessons carefully about the importance of the customer's service and how it helps companies to grow quickly, increase their incomes, and minimize cost control. Then Saudi Telecom Company (STC) will be on top in a strong competitive position that enables her to fulfill all customers' needs and demands and grant their pleasure, and at the same time achieves an increase in company's financial value.

So we have to focus our efforts on the company's service centers, such as 901, 904,905, 907 and pay attention to the development of workers' skills for the role which they are assuming in their capacity as company's frontline, who are receiving millions of phone calls every month from our customers Kingdom wide. We have to make sure, as managers, that our employees get the right training, assisting them with systems and programs to serve customers better. We don't have to rely mainly on the reports and statistics of the incoming calls of these centers.

On the same line, we have to focus our administrative and supervisory efforts on improving the performance and activities of our customer services centers all over the Kingdom, which are approximately 256 offices. We also have to be careful when selecting the employees for these centers and offer them enough training to face and deal with callers and solve their problems. I think that we are still in it. We can check all kinds of services offered to our customers in all customers services centers in the company, evaluate their benefits, taking action to cover their shortcomings and inspire the employees with suitable incentives that match the nature of their jobs and the tasks they are performing.



Cont.... Appendix (1) English translation of the second article

## **Loyalty before satisfaction**

Having completed the sale of part of the STC capital to the public, the company will now move to complete the next phase, which is the sale of a part to the group known as stakeholders. They are the customers, employees, and benefactors inside the company or the public sector. Keeping customers, implementing loyalty to company's services among themselves, creating synergistic relationship, and are becoming crucial issues nowadays. Achieving this target is not done by the company's workers alone, but the new benefactors who are now checking the heartbeat of the company's administrative staff to make sure that keeping customers satisfied and developing loyalty is maintained before the competition. Obviously it is not an easy mission without the mutual support and selection of broad base management that is able to think, plan, and constantly contribute to achieving positive operational objectives for client satisfaction and happiness.

Other marketing studies conducted by major companies showed that most clients who believe that they are at the satisfaction level do not show signs that they are planning to purchase these products or services one more time, or they are going to use it constantly. Satisfaction alone does not give the company strategic privilege. So the definition of loyalty is behavior in purchasing services or products where the client who is loyal does not accept services offered to him by any company, purchasing and using the services of one company regular bases. He also uses wide varieties of that company's products. He can convince others to purchase services and products from that company. He will get resistance and declare it against competitive inspirations. These people can be described as loyal. The process of being loyal goes through many phases over long period of time. There are seven steps for the loyal client to grow. Each step has its own requirements. If the company succeeds in meeting the client needs in each stage, then it will have great opportunity to attract any buyer of its services or products into permanent consumers and loyal customers.

In the following paragraph, I will discuss these seven stages precisely to show you how to recognize and deal with each stage, and its requirements.

1<sup>st</sup> stage: Suspect

He is anyone who purchases the company's services. In this stage the company conducts market research to learn about these people.

2<sup>nd</sup> stage: Prospect

He is anyone who is in need and able to purchase the company's services. He might have heard about it, but has never used it. This category knows your company and the services it is offering very well, but never purchased from the company. Only they can point it out and know it through market research.

3<sup>rd</sup> stage: Disqualified Prospect

This category is hard for the company to convince to purchase its services for some reason. Either they are disqualified from getting the service or are unable to purchase it. The company will ignore them but keep their information on file.

4<sup>th</sup> stage: First-time Customer

This category is made of those customers who are the one-time buyers. They might be customers or competitors. We have to find out who they are, what their real needs are, and whether those needs are fulfilled or not.

5<sup>th</sup> stage: Repeat Customer

Those who have used the company's services more than one time. We concentrate on and support them with information and clear data about our company's products. We should know everything about them, including their desires and how we can get in touch with them through advertising or other means.

6<sup>th</sup>. Stage: Client

This category is the keystone for any company. They purchase everything our company is selling and can use it several times. The company should keep a good relationship with them, protect them from competitors, and interact with their needs personally.

7<sup>th</sup> stage: Advocate

These are our customers who purchase our products on regular basis and they inspire others to purchase our company's products, recruiting new customers on behalf of the company. If any company reaches this stage it has to maintained a very intimate relationship with them and let them know that they are one of the owners of the company and a part of its success.

I have explained in a simple way the definition of loyalty and the customer's status, categories, and stages. I will try to implement what we had learned here to our company to develop loyalty to the services offered to our customers and provide the means to help keep them from the coming competition. Not only making them happy, but also we will work hard to gain their love too, and let them remember our trade mark by providing quality services which our customers will not find anywhere. We let them choose STC as their main services provider. Someone will say that our

company does not reach customer satisfaction, how it is going to by-pass this stage and jump straight to loyalty.

My reply to them is that loyalty isn't assured from all customer categories. We have to work on it with a targeted group of customers representing key clients, and form a strong foundation to build an intimate relationship with all customers to control the telecommunication market Kingdom wide and in neighboring markets when competition is doors-open.

Cont.... Appendix (1) English translation of the third article



### Serve your client with all your senses

The Saudi telecom company has entered the competitive stage recently. It does enter with her all capabilities, which is represented by the faith of its 13 million customers, highly qualified staff, rich and multiple services covering the whole nation, its advanced technology, and its great financial capabilities entering this very critical, historical, and recent competitive stage.

We all know that the media, telecommunication efforts, and the interior and exterior advertising supported the existence of this company by gaining the trust of customers in the local markets. A complete communication program had been implemented with a clear strategic concept, feasible to the coming stage, going by the slogan: Building, Protecting, and Growing. The purpose of this program is to support building a strong relationship between the Saudi telecom company and its customers, protecting STC from its competitors, and supporting the growth and services of the STC to be the best in the local market and close to its customers.

For the first time in the history of STC, a media campaign has been conducted and an interior advertising campaign directed to the employees in general, the customer service department in particular- appropriate with the exterior campaign-, to support and build the culture of achieving customers satisfaction and respect. Such action will help build strong unity with customers and keep STC in a respected position in the local market and establish competition barriers.

The interior campaign will come out with the motto "Serve your client with your all senses" and will consist of Islamic messages such as the blessing "Hadeeth", which encourages perfection and good conduct. Also the campaign will carry out the administrative values that inspire employees to be honest, perfect, and deal with customers among cooperative working groups with mutual support,

exchanging experience and information's to serve customers better. The interior campaign also consists of an initiative for selecting the best customer service staff throughout the customer service centers. Customers can record their opinions on the services offered by these centers on the templates provided. The ideal employee will be selected and rewarded on the basis of these results.

The internal campaign will be followed by another with the motto "serve your client with all your senses," designed in a very attractive shape with a message "smile on your customers face first."

"Listen to him."

"Give him a respectful look."

These campaigns are conducted inside customers service centers scattered all over the Kingdom, and through most of the advertising campaigns, like posters, stands, and entertaining gifts. The interior communication elements, STC magazine, electronic message center, and the link provide more support for these campaigns to spread out.

The campaign is supporting the goals of the telecomm program in its second & third stages, maintenance and growth. The supportive campaigns include the "Qitaf" campaign program, which is one of the customer maintaining programs that the company had introduced to its customers, who are over 160 000. This number is great, compared to the same programs delivered by other telecomm companies. Other campaigns also conducted for the recognition of the great role of the Saudi telecom company in offering telecom services to pilgrims, also the outstanding social role of STC that created jobs for more than 20 000 Saudi young men in different regions, districts, and villages. The Saudi telecom company also provided technical and mechanical training for its employees to improve their performance so as to be an asset to the national base of qualification.

To implement the third stage of the telecom program, which is the stage of building a strong relationship between STC and its customers, the company completed two advertising campaigns that considered being the keystone of the "customer communication" strategy under the banner of "together promising morning". The two campaigns – one of which has already been shown on TV - highlight the national role of the company in offering telecom services, which is spreading all over our lovely country and to be close to its customers at all times. The campaigns will be conducted according to a well-prepared timetable, including the usage of TV and newspapers advertising, plus road advertising, that secure the best ways for spreading our messages.

At last, we, the entire family of STC, know that without our corporation, all together, delivering the best service ever to our customers based on a professional and sophisticated foundation that aims to gain client satisfaction and respect, the potential goals of this program are not going to be fulfilled. Then let us work together to serve our clients with all our senses.

**Appendix (2)**

**Questionnaire**

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**Dear respondent,**

I am a DBA student conducting a research on Customer Centricity concept and delivery of high standard services to the customers that fulfill their needs and requirements. The research is intended to measure the range of application of this concept in the STC Customer Care Centers. Therefore, you are requested to share your views and assist me to complete this research which is considered part of my graduation requirements and kindly answer the following questions and evaluate the standard of customer care centers' (902 and 907) agents.

<input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; margin-left: 5px;" type="checkbox"/> Have you ever called any of STC customer care centers (902-907)? Please enter ( ✓ ) mark in the appropriate column.	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
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If your answer to the above question is yes please answer the following questions by entering ( ✓ ) mark in the appropriate column. If “No”, then please accept my apologies for troubling you and destroy this questionnaire.

<input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; margin-left: 5px;" type="checkbox"/> Please answer the following questions by entering ( ✓ ) mark in the appropriate column.	How long have you been using STC services (mobile, landline, and internet)?	Less than 6 months		6 months to one yare		One to 3 years		More than 3 years	
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<input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; margin-left: 5px;" type="checkbox"/> How often do you call the call center (902, 907)?	Weekly		Monthly		Each 6 years		Yearly	
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<input style="width: 20px; height: 20px; margin-left: 5px;" type="checkbox"/> When was your last call to STC call center?	This month		1 to 2 months		3 to 6 months		More than 6 months	
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According to your last call to the call center (902, 907), how do you evaluate the agent for the following points?

No	Question	Answer				
		Poor	Fair	Good	V. good	excellent
		1	2	3	4	5
1	The agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by STC?					
2	The range of assistance provided by the agent?					
3	The range of courtesy and attitude of the agent?					
4	The professionalism of the agent?					
5	The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration?					
6	The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement?					
7	The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when you got angry?					
8	The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you?					
9	The availability of the requested information with the agent?					
10	The ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services?					

The following questions are about the various behaviors of the agent that you have witnessed during your call. Please determine whether these behaviors are present with the agent or not by entering a ( ✓ ) mark in the appropriate column.

No	Question	Answer		
		Yes	No	Don't remember
		1	0	9
1	Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly?			
2	Did the agent greet you saying Assalam Allaikom (Pease be upon you)?			
3	Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number etc.?			
4	Did the customer care center agent ask you about your query or requirements?			
5	Did the agent listen without interrupting you?			
6	Did the agent repeat your question after listening to you?			
7	Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request?			
8	Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes your request?			
9	Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time?			
10	Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry?			
11	If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services?			
12	Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer?			
13	Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services ( <a href="http://www.stc.com.sa">www.stc.com.sa</a> ) ?			
14	Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services)?			
15	Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC			

No	Question	Answer		
		Yes	No	Don't remember
		1	0	9
	Online Services?			
16	After addressing your query did the agent ask you whether you have any other request?			
17	At the end of the call did the agent thank you for dealing with STC?			
18	Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have any problem?			

**7** How do you evaluate STC call center on the following points:

No	Question	Answer				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
1	STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.					
2	STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints.					
3	STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers.					

**8** How do you evaluate the agent in the following general points?

No	Question	Answer				
		Poor	Fair	Good	V. good	Excellent
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Based on your call with customer care center agent how do you rate the courtesously of the					

	agent?					
2	How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the agent in terms of his voice clarity, correct pronunciation and so on?					
3	At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent?					

<b>9</b>	Further remarks or comments on your dealing with STC call center:
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<b>10</b>	<b>Background information</b>
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<b>Sex</b>	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>	
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**Region:**

<b>Makkah</b>		<b>Medina</b>		<b>Riyadh</b>		<b>Jeddah</b>		<b>Dammam</b>	
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<b>Ihassa</b>		<b>Jubail</b>		<b>Hail</b>		<b>Qassim</b>		<b>assir</b>	
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<b>Tabouk</b>		<b>Jouf</b>		<b>Northern boundaries</b>		<b>Jizan</b>		<b>najran</b>	
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**Education:**

<b>Less than primary</b>		<b>Primary</b>		<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Secondary</b>		<b>Bachelor or Diploma</b>		<b>Master or Doctrate</b>	
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**Age: (year)**

<b>18-25</b>		<b>26-35</b>		<b>36-45</b>		<b>46-60</b>		<b>More than 60</b>	
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**Thank you for your invaluable help and assistance in the completion of my research**

## Appendix 3

### Customer Centricity of Call Center (Focus Group) Questions

#### PART ONE (AGENT)

##### A. Agent behavioral skills during the call

- 1- Behavior and treatment of the agent when receiving your call

**Q1: Did you feel that the behavior of the agent during the call met your expectations? For example did he give his name clearly and greet you saying “Assalam Allaikom”?**

- 2- Behavior and treatment of the agent during the call

**Q1: How do you gauge the level of friendliness and courteous the agent showed during the call?**

- 3- Behavior and treatment of the agent after he finished serving the customer

**Q1: Did the agent thank you politely for dealing with STC after providing you with the required service?**

- 4- Overall Perception once the customer finished the call

**Q1: Through your call with the agent, did his treatment encourage you to call the call center once again?**

##### B. Agent’s sales skills and capabilities

- 1- Cross and up sell capabilities

**Q1: Did the agent offer you any other services after he finished serving you such as a new product, promotions or other extra services?**

- 2- Knowledge of the required service

**Q1: did the agent inform you with the details of the offer or the service you requested including the features and prices?**

- 3- Promoting the Online service channel

**Q1: Did the agent to register in STC Online services to obtain all STC services automatically without the need to call the call center and explained the benefits of this channel?**

- 4- Showing commitment to the customer and assure him that he will do his best to serve him.

**Q1: Did the agent assure you when he received your call that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request?**

**C. Agent communication skills**

- 1- Greeting the customer and the level of communication

**Q1: When he answered your call, did the agent give his name clearly and greet you saying “Assalam Allaikom”?**

- 2- Listening to the customer carefully during the call without interruption

**Q1: Did you feel that the agent listened to you during your call without interruption?**

- 3- Understanding the customer request

**Q1: Did the agent ask you to repeat your request and you notice that he faced some difficulty in understanding your request?**

**D. Agents product and services knowledge and capabilities**

- 1- Technical products and services features

**Q1: How do you evaluate the agent’s knowledge of the service technical specifications during your conversation with him?**

- 2- Overall evaluation

**Q1: What is your overall evaluation of the call center agent’s capabilities and knowledge of the services provided by STC?**

**PART TWO (CALL CENTER)**

**A. Call center related issues and measurement of customers’ views about:**

- \_ The level of customer complaints resolution
- \_ As the optimum channel for customer services

**Q1: Do you think that the call centers are the optimum channel for resolving any complaints about the services provided by STC?**

**B. Customers perception on call centers**

**Q1: Do you think that the call center is the best customer facing touch point?**

**C. Acquisition of customers and the ability to attract them**

**Q1: Do you think that STC call centers have the ability to attract new customers and improve customer satisfaction?**

**Appendix (4) Last Page (P.9 of 9) of Detailed results of the Cronbach's Alpha**

	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7	Q 8	Q 9	Q 10	Q 11	Q 12	Q 13	Q 14	Q 15	Q 16	Q 17	Q 18	Q 19	Q 20	Q 21	Q 22	Q 23	Q 24	Q 25	Q 26	Q 27	Q 28	Q 29	Q 30	Q 31	Q 32	Q 33	Q 34	Sum																	
Person454	3	3	2	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	5	2	2	1	2	5	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	92																
Person455	3	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	5	3	5	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	75																	
Person456	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	5	5	2	3	4	3	91																	
Person457	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	2	4	4	2	2	3	1	2	5	5	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	1	3	4	3	97																	
Person458	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	103																	
Person459	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	4	5	4	106																	
Person460	2	1	4	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	67																	
Variance	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	33.7568959																
SD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																																									
<b>Cronbach's alpha = 0.853</b>																																																				

**Appendix 4.1 Last Page (P.9 of 9) of Detailed Cronbach Alpha results for Reliability**

	Q 2	Q 6	Q 29	Q 30	Q 34	Sum
Person455	2	1	2	2	1	8
Person456	3	2	5	5	3	18
Person457	4	3	3	2	3	15
Person458	3	4	4	4	4	19
Person459	4	4	3	2	4	17
Person460	1	1	1	1	2	6
Variance	1.490058729	1.5776	1.53055	1.53817846	1.215194	7.351562944
SD	1.220679618	1.256				
					<b>cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>0.83003</b>

**Appendix 4.2 Last Page (P.9 of 9) of Detailed Cronbach Alpha results for Responsiveness**

	Q 5	Q 6	Q 8	Q 17	Q 28	Q 29	Q 30	Sum
Person455	3	1	1	3	2	2	2	14
Person456	2	2	2	2	2	5	5	20
Person457	4	3	2	5	2	3	2	21
Person458	4	4	2	2	2	4	4	22

Person459	4	4	4	3	2	3	2	<b>22</b>	22
Person460	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	<b>10</b>	10
Variance	1.38	1.5776	1.5978	0.66	0.9	1.53	1.538	<b>9.133826</b>	21.93178
SD	1.18	1.256	1.264						0.583535
Cronbach's alpha									0.729

**Appendix 4.3 Last Page (P.9 of 9) of Detailed Cronbach Alpha results for Competence**

	Q 1	Q 4	Q 5	Q 8	Q 17	Q 28	Q 29	Q 30		Sum
Person455	3	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	<b>18</b>	18
Person456	2	3	2	2	2	2	5	5	<b>23</b>	23
Person457	4	4	4	2	5	2	3	2	<b>26</b>	26
Person458	4	4	4	2	2	2	4	4	<b>26</b>	26
Person459	3	4	4	4	3	2	3	2	<b>25</b>	25
Person460	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	<b>13</b>	13
Variance	1.34	1.36012	1.383	1.598	0.66	0.851	1.531	1.5382	<b>10.25252</b>	29.07937
SD	1.16	1.16624	1.176	1.264						0.64743
Cronbach's alpha										0.74

**Appendix 4.4 Last Page (P.9 of 9) of Detailed Cronbach Alpha results for Proactivity**

	Q 20	Q 21	Q 22	Q 23	Q 24	Q 25	Sum	
Person455	3	3	3	3	2	3	17	17
Person456	3	3	3	3	3	3	18	18
Person457	3	3	2	2	3	3	16	16
Person458	3	3	3	3	3	3	18	18
Person459	2	3	3	3	3	3	17	17
Person460	2	3	3	3	3	2	16	16
Variance	0.54	0.376	0.6	0.45	0.38	0.342	2.680056	4.912357
SD								0.454426
Cronbach's alpha								0.606

**Appendix 4.5 Last Page (P.9 of 9) of Detailed Cronbach Alpha results for Courtesy**

	Q3	Q7	Q11	Q12	Q18	Q19	Q27	Q29	Q32	23	23
Person454	2	3	5	2	2	3	2	2	3	24	24
Person455	2	1	3	2	5	2	2	2	1	20	20
Person456	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	5	3	24	24
Person457	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	22	22
Person458	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	26	26
Person459	5	4	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	27	27
Person460	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	2	20	20
Variance	1.47	1.5179	0.839	0.637	0.42445	0.816	0.73	1.5305	1.269	9.242346	17.55996
SD	1.21	1.232	0.916								0.473669
Cronbach's alpha											0.711

**Appendix 4.6 Last Page (P.9 of 9) of Detailed Cronbach Alpha results for Effective Communication and Problem Resolution**

	Q5	Q15	Q16	Q31	Q33	Sum	16
Person455	3	2	5	1	1	12	12
Person456	2	2	3	2	4	13	13
Person457	4	2	5	1	4	16	16
Person458	4	2	3	4	4	17	17
Person459	4	3	3	3	5	18	18
Person460	1	2	3	1	2	9	9
Variance	1.3826	0.54834	0.8063	1.4244	1.32149	5.4831723	21.53594
SD	1.1759						0.745394
Cronbach's alpha							0.894

**Appendix 4.7 Last Page (P.9 of 9) of Detailed Cronbach Alpha results for Accessibility**

<b>Person454</b>	Q5	Q8	Q13	Q29	Q31	Q34	Sum	15
<b>Person455</b>	3	1	2	2	1	1	10	10
<b>Person456</b>	2	2	3	5	2	3	17	17
<b>Person457</b>	4	2	3	3	1	3	16	16
<b>Person458</b>	4	2	3	4	4	4	21	21
<b>Person459</b>	4	4	3	3	3	4	21	21
<b>Person460</b>	1	2	2	1	1	2	9	9
Variance	1.38	1.6	0.538	1.531	1.424	1.215	7.688671	19.87792
SD	1.18	1.26						0.613205
<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>								<b>0.736</b>

**Appendix (5): Further analysis of the reliability dimension**

Answer Options	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	V. Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						(5)	%		
The range of assistance provided by the agent.	16%	24%	30%	17%	12%	2.83	56 %	1.2	461
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	19%	21%	30%	19%	11%	2.84	57 %	1.25	461
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	18%	17%	29%	27%	9%	2.92	58 %	1.23	461
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	12%	19%	24%	30%	15%	3.19	64 %	1.24	461
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	8%	23%	33%	26%	10%	3.09	61 %	1.09	461
<b>Total for Reliability</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>59 %</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>461</b>

Answer Options	Male		Female	
	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average
The range of assistance provided by the agent.	361	56%	91	63%
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	361	58%	91	65%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	361	56%	91	66%
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	361	62%	91	70%
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the	361	59%	91	69%
<b>Total for Reliability</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>67%</b>

Answer Options	PHD		Master		B.S. Or Diploma		Secondary School or less	
	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average
The range of assistance provided by the agent.	11	62%	39	51%	309	58%	98	57%
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	11	65%	39	48%	309	61%	98	56%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	11	73%	39	55%	309	59%	98	59%
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	11	73%	39	62%	309	65%	98	57%
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall	11	62%	39	58%	309	62%	98	61%
<b>Total for Reliability</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>58%</b>

## Appendix (6) Open question details for Reliability

N = Negative

P = Positive

Respondents' Remarks - of Reliability	P/N
Number of Agents are not enough to serve customers	N
There is no credibility to deal with customers requirements'	N
Sometime you call 907 and you wait long time but nobody response	N
I hope you have agents that respect customers	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
Sometimes agents misunderstand of your question, you may need long time to make him understand	N
Last time when I call 907 for canceling of Jood service, the agent try in different try ways to convince me to not canceling of this	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
After waiting long time, agent asked me to call later,	N
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for calling".	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost	N
Regarding fraud, STC is not matched by any other company	N
In general, the services provided by our staff of the company are very good. But the problem lies in the procedures, services	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Most of landline problems need external and not interior maintenance, but the agent try always tell you that you have interior	N
When you call 907, agent refer to another agent to solve your problem because he has no enough knowledge	N
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
The reason is that I had a problem in Qitaf when I Want replace the points and call 902 daily, and nearly three months did not	N
Services of the company had failed to the required level, need time to be developed. In addition, employee is not responsible for the failures and bad services, he provides what it is capable of performing.	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	P
Customer service is very poor, This make customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor network	N
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and it is	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
When you have a fault, agent told you "The Tech. will contact you during the 24 hours...", but sometimes it take more than 3	N
The Call Center should have Clarification of the customer of the existence of the problem	N
Need more Transparency with the customers, Full and frank explanation	N
When there a general problem with the internet in whole Kingdom and when you call 907, the agent try to solve the problem	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes ) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with	N
The agent thanks you and promise you to solve the problem with in 30 minutes, but nothing done	N
When you make call, You should expect 90% you will not be served	N
Positive and beneficial to help customers and wish them success	P
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been is transferred to other employees. And then I chooses to	N
The length of waiting time, may be up to more than an hour	N
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
First: prayers Good luck to you.	N
We always wish the customers to be served as required.. and not to be fraud.	N

Respondents' Remarks - of Reliability	P/N
The negative point that they do not respond to you directly. But when they response, they solve the problem, often	P
Everything is bad on STC	N
Agent promise customer to serve him quickly, but it take long time	N
Deliberately ignored the agent to respond to customer	N
STC in spite of originality. But it isn't offer integrated services to the customer. After a long wait to respond to the call,	N
The quality of service of 907 is too bad. Sometime agent promise to send an order to network department to solve your	N
Lack of awareness of agent offers new services. Goes to the agents lied to the customer	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
Agent try to avoid your request when you ask to speak to the supervisor	N
Delivery of the required service delayed	N
Long waiting time.	N P
As for 907 I witnessed a very long waiting time and my request was not completed. Sometimes the System malfunctions and hangs up the call.	N
902 and 907 services are very poor. Waiting time is long and exceeds 20 minutes. There is no credibility and the agent gives inaccurate information. When calling another agent he gives information that contradicts to information given by the former	N
Answer of the customers call is very bad and reflects disrespect of the customers. We wait one hour for the reply of the agent without the required result.	N
Frankly, they try to satisfy the customer	P
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
The biggest swindling and fraud communication company in the world	N
You feel that the agent is in a hurry and at the moment he understands your problem he wishes to leave you may be to serve other customers in addition to the lack of transparency and misguide in some offers or new services.	N
STC lacks credibility and characterized by exploitation and exaggeration.	N
I apologize for my comment but this is the truth. STC is really a bad company and lacks credibility in their offers and customer service. Since three years it is impossible to get a reply for my call before waiting for 30 minutes. This failure for the com	N
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
Errors of billing is not resolved properly	N
The agent do not give the agent accurate date for fixing his problem	N
Most agents are unaware of the requested information	N
All my remarks are negative	N
I am satisfied with STC services but the services of other providers seem to be better. I am afraid to shift to other providers because I am accustomed to STC services.	P
Very expensive bill compared to other companies and neighboring countries.	P
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
Sometimes the agent tell you that they understood your problem and that they are going to solve it but it will not be solved before you repeat calling till you find an agent who really understand the problem and fix it	N
Some of the employees are very bad and do not care for solving internet problems but when you shout and threaten them they understand	N
Generally, the internet service is bad and I hope that your company bankrupt and lose.	N
The disadvantages are very much. If you need some services you must visit the customer service building.	N
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
There should be a clear practice, policy or methodology to be followed by the employees of the call center so that they do not waste customers' time due to their incorrect information	N
They do not respond	N
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N
We need an easy employee for an easy life	N
In addition to the bad service the agents lack transparency.	N

**Appendix (7): Further results of Responsiveness Dimension**

Answer Options	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	V. Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						(5)	%		
The range of the agent's understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	12%	21%	31%	25%	11%	3.03	62%	1.17	461
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	19%	21%	30%	19%	11%	2.84	57%	1.25	461
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	37%	20%	24%	12%	7%	2.31	46%	1.26	
Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request	28%		7%		65%	3.97	79%	0.89	
Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have any problem	12%		40%		40%	3.23	67%	0.93	461
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch	18%	17%	29%	27%	9%	2.92	58%	1.23	461
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints.	12%	19%	24%	30%	15%	3.19	64%	1.24	461
<b>Total for Responsiveness</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>461</b>

Answer Options	Male		Female	
	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average
The range of the agent's understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	361	56%	91	69%
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	361	58%	91	65%
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	361	44%	91	52%
Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request	361	76%	91	88%
Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you	361	64%	81	74%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch	361	56%	91	66%
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints.	361	62%	91	70%
<b>Total for Responsiveness</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>69%</b>

Answer Options	PHD		Master		B.S. Or Diploma		Secondary School or less	
	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average
The range of the agent's understanding of your inquiry	11	62%	39	89%	309	61%	98	61%
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment	11	65%	39	48%	309	61%	98	56%
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	11	58%	39	77%	309	46%	98	44%
Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to	11	73%	39	78%	309	78%	98	82%
Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the	11	81%	39	64%	309	66%	98	66%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing	11	73%	39	55%	309	59%	98	59%
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving	11	73%	39	62%	309	65%	98	57%
<b>Total for Responsiveness</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>61%</b>

## Appendix (8) Further details of the customer input of open question Responsiveness

**P = Positive**

**N = Negative**

Remarks – Responsiveness	P/N
There is no credibility to deal with customers requirements'	N
The problem that agent support their friends with secure data to	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
Sometimes agents misunderstand of your question, you may need long time to make him understand	N
Last time when I call 907 for canceling of Jood service, the agent try in different try ways to convince me to not canceling of this service.	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
After waiting long time, agent asked me to call later,	N
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for calling".	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily agent will call you But. with STC you should call again which require to wait another 30 minutes	N
In general, the services provided by our staff of the company are very good. But the problem lies in the procedures, services and regulations imposed by the company to the employee and the customer. 902 and 907 over the three phases are as follows (Yalil	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Most of landline problems need external and not interior maintenance, but the agent try always tell you that you have interior problems.	N
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
The reason is that I had a problem in Qitaf when I Want replace the points and call 902 daily, and nearly three months did not solve my problem	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	P
Customer service is very poor, This make customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor network	P
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and it is repeated. when I contacted the 902 and as is well known, I waited 13 minutes. When the agent response about my problem (deducted the	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
The Call Center should have Clarification of the customer of the existence of the problem	N
Need more Transparency with the customers, Full and frank explanation	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes ) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with sheep.	N
Third. Agents know very little about the field of communications, however. Fourth. Agents wants to get rid of the call as	N
The agent thanks you and promise you to solve the problem with in 30 minutes, but nothing done	N
When you make call, You should expect 90% you will not be served	N
Positive and beneficial to help customers and wish them success	P
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another extension. When you go to the web site, you face a lot of problem there.	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been is transferred to other employees. And then I chooses to cancel my phone line because of the lack of a professional one who	N
The length of waiting time, maybe up to more than an hour	N
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
The negative point that they do not respond to you directly. But when they response, they solve the problem, often	P
Every thing is bad on STC	N

Remarks – Responsiveness	P/N
Agent promise customer to serve him quickly, but it take long time	N
Deliberately ignored the agent to respond to customer	N
STC in spite of originality. But it isn't offer integrated services to the customer. After a long wait to respond to the call, customer get no benefit.	N
The quality of service of 907 is too bad. Sometime agent promise to send an order to network department to solve your problem, but hi didn't	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
The agent do not deal efficiently with customer complaints	N
As for 907 I witnessed a very long waiting time and my request was not completed. Sometimes the System malfunctions and hangs up the call.	N
Answer of the customers call is very bad and reflects disrespect of the customers. We wait one hour for the reply of the agent without the required result.	N
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
The biggest swindling and fraud communication company in the world	N
You feel that the agent is in a hurry and at the moment he understands your problem he wishes to leave you may be to serve other customers in addition to the lack of transparency and misguide in some offers or new services.	N
STC lacks credibility and characterized by exploitation and exaggeration.	N
I apologize for my comment but this is the truth. STC is really a bad company and lacks credibility in their offers and customer service. Since three years it is impossible to get a reply for my call before waiting for 30 minutes. This failure for the com	N
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
Errors of billing is not resolved properly	N
The agent do not give the agent accurate date for fixing his problem	N
Most agents are unaware of the requested information	N
In addition to the bad service the agents lack transparency.	N
All my remarks are negative	N
The agent is concerned of ending the call as soon as possible therefore his answers are very brief and repeats the word "Yes .... correct" even what the customer says is incorrect.	N
I am satisfied with STC services but the services of other providers seem to be better. I am afraid to shift to other providers because I am accustomed to STC services.	P
Very expensive bill compared to other companies and neighboring countries.	P
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
Sometimes the agent tell you that they understood your problem and that they are going to solve it but it will not be solved before you repeat calling till you find an agent who really understand the problem and fix it.	N
Some of the employees are very bad and do not care for solving internet problems but when you shout and threaten them they understand.	N
Generally, the internet service is bad and I hope that your company bankrupt and lose.	N
The disadvantages are very much. If you need some services you must visit the customer service building.	N
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
There should be a clear practice, policy or methodology to be followed by the employees of the call center so that they do not waste customers' time due to their incorrect information.	N
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N
We need an easy employee for an easy life	N

## Appendix (9) Competence - Open Question Details

remarks – Competence	Competence
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamat (STC online service)	P
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for calling".	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily	N
In general, the services provided by our staff of the company are very good. But the problem lies in the procedures, services and regulations	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Agent is attractive and deal friendly, But does not provide a solution to your problems... either because of ignorance or his failure to perform	P
When you call 907, agent refer to another agent to solve your problem because he has no enough knowledge	N
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
The reason is that I had a problem in Qitaf when I Want replace the points and call 902 daily, and nearly three months did not solve my	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain )	P
Customer service is very poor, This make customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor network	P
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and it is repeated. when I	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
When there a general problem with the internet in whole Kingdom and when you call 907, the agent try to solve the problem step by step,	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes ) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with sheep. Third,	N
When you make call, You should expect 90% you will not be served	N
Positive and beneficial to help customers and wish them success	P
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been is transferred to other employees. And then I chooses to cancel my	N
The length of waiting time, may be up to more than an hour	N
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
Everything is bad on STC	N
From my point of view that there should be a professional to respond to the calls. The employee must be on a very high degree of tact. This	N
The quality of service of 907 is too bad. Sometime agent promise to send an order to network department to solve your problem, but hi	N
Lack of awareness of agent offers new services. Goes to the agents lied to the customer	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
Agent knowledge of DSL is very poor	N
Some agents give you wrong information	N
902 and 907 services are very poor. Waiting time is long and exceeds 20 minutes. There is no credibility and the agent gives inaccurate	N
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
You feel that the agent is in a hurry and at the moment he understands your problem he wishes to leave you may be to serve other	N
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
The employees do not possess enough knowledge about DSL but their knowledge of landline is satisfactory and good	N
They agent provide contradicting information	N
All my remarks are negative	N
The agent is concerned of ending the call as soon as possible therefore his answers are very brief and repeats the word "Yes .... correct"	N
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
There should be a clear practice, policy or methodology to be followed by the employees of the call center so that they do not waste	N
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N
The agents are not aware of the too much service of STC particularly the new ones.	N

### Appendix (10) Survey results – Pro-activity

Answer Options	Yes	No	Don't	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
				(5)	%		
Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry	36%	58%	6%	2.92	59%	0.94	461
If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services	16%	62%	21%	2.4	51%	0.74	
Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer	26%	65%	9%	2.7	54%	0.87	461
Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services www.stc.com.sa(	21%	73%	6%	2.5	49%	0.81	461
Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services	14%	80%	6%	2.2	45%	0.72	461
Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online Services	11%	83%	6%	2.1	42%	0.64	461
<b>Total for Pro-activity</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>461</b>

Answer Options	Male		Female	
	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average
Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry	361	58%	91	61%
If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to	361	50%	91	54%
Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer	361	51%	91	61%
Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services www.stc.com.sa(	361	46%	91	68%
Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services	361	43%	81	49%
Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online	361	40%	91	47%
<b>Total for Pro-activity</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>57%</b>

Answer Options	PHD		Master		B.S. Or Diploma		Secondary School or less	
	Response s Count	Rating Average	Response s Count	Rating Average	Response s Count	Rating Average	Response s Count	Rating Average
Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry	11	73%	39	53%	309	59%	98	59%
If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services	11	73%	39	45%	309	50%	98	55%
Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer	11	79%	39	45%	309	54%	98	53%
Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services www.stc.com.sa(	11	85%	39	51%	309	49%	98	47%
Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services	11	76%	39	44%	309	44%	98	43%
Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online Services	11	73%	39	44%	309	41%	98	43%
<b>Total for Pro-activity</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>50%</b>

### Appendix (11) Courtesy Survey Results

Answer Options	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	V. Good	Excellent				Response Count
						(5)	%		
The range of courteous and attitude of the agent	8%	19%	29%	25%	8%	3.28	66%	1.21	461
The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when	17%	24%	28%	22%	17%	2.85	57%	1.23	461
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch	18%	17%	29%	27%	18%	2.92	58%	1.23	461
Based on your call with customer care center agent how do you	7%	24%	32%	24%	7%	3.11	62%	1.12	461
Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly	38%		10%		51%	3.52	70%	0.93	461
Did the agent greet you saying Assalam Allaikom (Pease be	11%		7%		82%	4.37	89%	0.66	461
Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes your request	17%		4%		79%	4.4	80%	0.76	
Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time	35%		10%		55%	3.6	72%	0.93	
At the end of the call did the agent thank you for dealing with STC	25%		8%		67%	3.97	79%	0.86	
<b>Total for Courtesy</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>461</b>

Answer Options	Male		Female	
	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average
The range of courteous and attitude of the agent	361	64%	91	72%
The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when you got	361	55%	91	63%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	361	56%	91	66%
Based on your call with customer care center agent how do you rate	361	60%	91	68%
Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly	361	70%	81	75%
Did the agent greet you saying Assalam Allaikom (Pease be upon you	361	89%	91	94%
Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes your request	361	87%	91	89%
Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time	361	73%	91	72%
At the end of the call did the agent thank you for dealing with STC	361	81%	91	79%
<b>Total for Courtesy</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>75%</b>

Answer Options	PHD		Master		B.S.		Secondary School or	
	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average
The range of courteous and attitude of the	11	60%	39	58%	309	65%	98	59%
The ability of the agent to deal with you in a	11	64%	39	50%	309	58%	98	56%
STC call center is considered the best	11	73%	39	55%	309	59%	98	59%
Based on your call with customer care center	11	62%	39	57%	309	62%	98	63%
Did the customer care center agent give his	11	73%	39	73%	309	43%	98	41%
Did the agent greet you saying Assalam	11	73%	39	85%	309	54%	98	56%
Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes	11	82%	39	77%	309	53%	98	55%
Did the agent thank you for waiting too long	11	76%	39	69%	309	43%	98	46%
At the end of the call did the agent thank you	11	76%	39	81%	309	47%	98	51%
<b>Total for Courtesy</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>54%</b>

## Appendix (12) Courtesy - Open Question Details

N = Negative

P = Positive

Remarks – Courtesy	Courtesy
I hope you have agents that respect customers	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
After waiting long time, agent asked me to call later,	N
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for calling".	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily agent will call you But, with STC you should call again which require to wait another 30 minutes	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Agent is attractive and deal friendly, But does not provide a solution to your problems... either because of ignorance or his failure to perform work	P
I hope to give staff training courses in effective communication with the public	P
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	P
Customer service is very poor, This make customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor network	P
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and it is repeated. when I contacted the 902 and as is well known, I waited 13 minutes. When the agent response about my problem (deducted the	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes ) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with sheep. Third, Agents know very little about the field of communications, however. Fourth, Agents wants to get rid of the call as	N
The talky gently only with girl.	N
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another extension. When you go to the web site, you face a lot of problem there.	N
Agent need more courses to deal better with customer.	N
Everything is bad on STC	N

Remarks – Courtesy	Courtesy
I hope to be better with dealing with customers	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
First, I wish you success. These remarks do not mean that I do not thank STC employees who are in fact the best, but there should be some shortcomings. It is true that we lack much treatment and courtesy from both the agent and the customer. I want to add	P
Giving the agent's name very quickly and unclearly	N
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
All my remarks are negative	N
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N

### Appendix (13) Effective communication survey results

Answer Options	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	V. Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						(5)	%		
The range of the agent's understanding of your	12%	21%	31%	25%	11%	3.05	61%	1.17	461
STC call center is considered the best customer	18%	17%	29%	27%	9%	3.25	58%	0.95	461
STC call centers of are considered the best in the	31%	22%	27%	16%	4%	2.4	48%	1.19	
How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the	5 %	15%	38%	31%	11%	3.11	62%	1.15	
Did the agent listen without interrupting you	22%		5%		73 %	4.2	84%	0.82	461
Did the agent repeat your question after listing to	45%		10%		44%	3.25	66%	0.95	461
<b>Total for Effective problem Resolution</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>461</b>

Answer Options	Male		Female	
	Responses Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a	361	56%	91	69%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	361	56%	91	66%
STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting	361	45%	91	60%
How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the agent in terms of his	361	61%	91	67%
Did the agent listen without interrupting you	361	83%	81	88%
Did the agent repeat your question after listing to you	361	65%	91	72%
<b>Total for Effective communication and problem Resolution</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>70%</b>

Answer Options	PHD		Master		B.S.		Secondary	
	Responses Count	Rating Average						
The range of the agent's understanding of your	11	62%	39	89%	309	61%	98	61%
STC call center is considered the best customer	11	73%	39	55%	309	59%	98	59%
STC call centers of are considered the best in the	11	58%		49%	309	47%	98	49%
How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the	11	65%	39	61%	309	63%	98	60%
Did the agent listen without interrupting you	11	45%	39	45%	309	85%	98	84%
Did the agent repeat your question after listing to you	11	44%	39	42%	309	64%	98	72%
<b>Total for Effective problem Resolution</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>64%</b>

## Appendix (14) Effective communication and problem Resolution Open Question Details

Remarks- Effective communication and problem resolution	P/N
There is no credibility to deal with customers requirements'	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
Last time when I call 907 for canceling of Jood service, the agent try in different try ways to convince me to not	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when	N
Then the sound is too low to be thinking that sleeping	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
The reason is that I had a problem in Qitaf when I Want replace the points and call 902 daily, and nearly three	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	P
Customer service is very poor, This make customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor	P
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
When you have a fault, agent told you "The Tech. will contact you during the 24 hours...", but sometimes it take	N
The Call Center should have Clarification of the customer of the existence of the problem	N
Need more Transparency with the customers, Full and frank explanation	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes ) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as	N
The agent thanks you and promise you to solve the problem within 30 minutes, but nothing done	N
When you make call, You should expect 90% you will not be served	N
Positive and beneficial to help customers and wish them success	P
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been is transferred to other employees. And then I	N
The length of waiting time, may be up to more than an hour	N

Remarks- Effective communication and problem resolution	P/N
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
First: prayers Good luck to you.	N
The negative point that they do not respond to you directly. But when they response, they solve the problem, often	P
Agent need to give his name clearly.	N
Everything is bad on STC	N
STC in spite of originality. But it isn't offer integrated services to the customer. After a long wait to respond to the	N
The quality of service of 907 is too bad. Sometime agent promise to send an order to network department to solve	N
Please select agent who talk clearly	N
Lack of awareness of agent offers new services. Goes to the agents lied to the customer	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
Agent try to avoid your request when you ask to speak to the supervisor	N
Tone of voice of many agents is not good	N
Answer of the customers call is very bad and reflects disrespect of the customers. We wait one hour for the reply of	N
Frankly, they try to satisfy the customer	N
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
You feel that the agent is in a hurry and at the moment he understands your problem he wishes to leave you may be	N
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
Most agents are unaware of the requested information	N
In addition to the bad service the agents lack transparency.	N
All my remarks are negative	N
The agent is concerned of ending the call as soon as possible therefore his answers are very brief and repeats the	N
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
Sometimes the agent tell you that they understood your problem and that they are going to solve it but it will not be	N
Some of the employees are very bad and do not care for solving internet problems but when you shout and threaten	N
Generally, the internet service is bad and I hope that your company bankrupt and lose.	N
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N
We need an easy employee for an easy life	N

**Appendix (15) Survey results – Accessibility & Ease of use**

Answer Options	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	V. Good	Excellent	Rating Average		SD	Response Count
						(5)	%		
The range of the agent's understanding of your inquiry	12%	21%	31%	25%	11%	3.03	62%	1.17	461
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	37%	20%	24%	12%	7%	2.31	46%	1.26	
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	18%	17%	29%	27%	9%	2.92	58%	1.23	461
Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number	36%		5%		60%	3.87	093	1.25	461
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	18%	17%	29%	27%	9%	2.92	58%	1.23	461
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the	8%	23%	33%	26%	10%	3.08		1.09	461
<b>Total for Accessibility</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>2.93</b>		<b>1.14</b>	<b>461</b>

Answer Options	Male		Female	
	Response Count	Rating Average	Responses Count	Rating Average
The range of the agent's understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	361	56%	91	69%
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	361	44%	91	52%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	361	56%	91	66%
Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number etc	361	54%	91	66%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	361	56%	81	66%
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	361	59%	91	69%
<b>Total for Accessibility</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>65%</b>

Answer Options	PHD		Master		B.S.		Secondary	
	Responses Count	Rating Average						
The range of the agent's understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	11	62%	39	89%	309	61%	98	61%
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	11	58%	39	77%	309	46%	98	44%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	11	73%	39	55%	309	59%	98	59%
Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number etc	11	58%	39	50%	309	60%	98	55%
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	11	73%	39	55%	309	59%	98	59%
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	11	62%	39	58%	309	62%	98	61%
<b>Total for Accessibility</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>57%</b>

## Appendix (16) Accessibility & Ease of use - Open Question Details

**P = Positive N = Negative**

Remarks – Accessibility and ease of use	Access
Number of Agents are not enough to serve customers	N
Sometime you call 907 and you wait long time but nobody response	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	N
Sometimes agents misunderstand of your question, you may need long time to make him understand	N
For me, long waiting time make customers to transfer to other competitors	N
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
Waiting for almost 10 minutes	N
Waiting for almost 6 minutes	N
After waiting long time, agent asked me to call later,	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily agent will call you But, with STC you should call again which require to wait another 30 minutes	N
Then the sound is too low to be thinking that sleeping	N
The length of the waiting and not to respond to the call, making the customer wait-and-tired and close of the phone	N
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	N
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	N
You need to wait 10-30 minutes	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
One of the biggest problems we face with (902 and 907) is a long wait before a response from one of the staff. And sometimes stretching to more than 20 minutes	N
Do any thing to reduce the waiting time	N
Waiting time to is a relatively long	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes ) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with sheep. Third, Agents know very little about the field of communications, however. Fourth, Agents wants to get rid of the call as	N
Please respond quickly. Pls. take care of this point.	N
Wait time until the time of long, especially with the phone Sawa (Prepaid)	N

Remarks – Accessibility and ease of use	Access
I hope the company to reduce fees, and quickly respond to our calls	N
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another extension. When you go to the web site, you face a lot of problem there.	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been is transferred to other employees. And then I chooses to cancel my phone line because of the lack of a professional one who	N
The length of waiting time, may be up to more than an hour	N
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
The negative point that they do not respond to you directly. But when they response, they solve the problem, often	N
More waiting time when you cal from prepaid card (Sawa)	N
With 907, it is difficult to reach to the agent.	N
Everything is bad on STC	N
STC in spite of originality. But it isn't offer integrated services to the customer. After a long wait to respond to the call, customer get no benefit.	N
When waiting in the 907, it seem to I wait to travel on Saudi Airlines	N
With 907 and 902, there are many options, these make customers conflict. Not all customers are the same	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
Instead of have two number to call (907 and 902) I suggest to have only one calling center	N
When my balance is lee than SR0.15, I cannot talk to the 902. I hope this problem to be solved.	N
When I called 907 through my mobile set one week ago the agent responded after 32 hours. So, this call cost me lot of money. I believe that the company has established 907 office to serve its marketing purposes and not to serve the customer. I can say	N
We suffer from the long waiting time at the call centers (902 & 907) and sometimes we wait for more than 15 to 20 minutes without reply and the line hangs up.	N
Waiting for long time till the agent replies	N
First, I wish you success. These remarks do not mean that I do not thank STC employees who are in fact the best, but there should be some shortcomings. It is true that we lack much treatment and courtesy from both the agent and the customer. I want to add	N
Waiting time is very long	N
Long waiting time.	N
I am a VP customer. I suffer from long waiting time when I call the call center. I sometimes notice that the agent is unaware of the required service and transfers me to the System or to the supervisor of 902.	N
As for 907 I witnessed a very long waiting time and my request was not completed. Sometimes the System malfunctions and hangs up the call.	N
902 and 907 services are very poor. Waiting time is long and exceeds 20 minutes. There is no credibility and the agent gives inaccurate information. When calling another agent he gives information that contradicts to information given by the former agent.	N
The telephone service is the worst among the services of STC as regards to long waiting time. The service is a big failure because sometimes when you call the call center the AVR system allows you two options only the first is for invoice inquiry and the	N
Answer of the customers call is very bad and reflects disrespect of the customers. We wait one hour for the reply of the agent without the required result.	N
The disadvantages: Long waiting time for reply	N

Remarks – Accessibility and ease of use	Access
Mostly the call is hanged up or you are directed to restart the call	N
I suggest that the customer should be called and not be left waiting for more than 10 minutes	N
The waiting time still very long and unbearable.	N
No need at least 15 minutes till the agent reply your call	N
I apologize for my comment but this is the truth. STC is really a bad company and lacks credibility in their offers and customer service. Since three years it is impossible to get a reply for my call before waiting for 30 minutes. This failure for the com	N
The waiting period is deadly and disappointing.	N
Call answer delay	N
Long waiting period	N
When the agent fails to understand the customer or feel that he cannot deliver the required service he ends the call and when you complain to the supervisor he asks you give him the call time and the agent's name ( who do not give his full name )	N
Delay in replying the customer's call	N
Most agents are unaware of the requested information	N
All my remarks are negative	N
Is there any call center that keeps you waiting for 15 to 20 minutes?	N
Long waiting period particularly 902 where it reaches 15 minutes.	N
Delay answer of the customer call	N
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	N
The problem of long waiting time	N
Long waiting period particularly 907	N
There is delay in deactivation of mobile service after the disconnection	N
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
They do not respond	N
There is only one remark which the long waiting period that may reach 7 minutes.	N
When the customer calls 907 or 902 the waiting period is not less than 7 minutes for VIP, what will be the case for regular customers.	N
Please hire more employees so as to be able to serve us	N
Reduce the option of the AVR system because it includes too much steps which requires pressing different bottoms of the telephone set.	N
The Internet is slow and installation of the service takes long time.	N
Too Much waiting time	N
I hope we have faster responses	N
Please reduce the waiting time	N

**Appendix (17): Detailed ANOVA Test**

Q / Education	Secondary	BS	Master	PHD
The range of assistance provided by the agent	2.85	2.9	2.55	3.1
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	2.8	3.05	2.4	3.25
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	2.95	2.95	2.75	3.65
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	2.85	3.25	3.1	3.55
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3.05	3.01	2.9	3.1
Group Rating Avrg (%)	58	60.64	54.8	66.6
Responses#	98	309	39	11

**ANOVA Tet**

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.937615	3	0.312538	7.327121	0.002617	3.238872
Within Groups	0.68248	16	0.042655			
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.620095</b>	<b>19</b>				

**T Test**

	Master	PHD
Mean	2.74	3.33
Variance	0.07675	0.066
Observatio	5	5
Pearson Co	0.409995	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	4	
t Stat	-4.54519	
P(T<=t) one	0.005228	
t Critical on	2.131847	
P(T<=t) twc	0.010456	
t Critical tw	2.776445	

	PHD	BS
Mean	3.33	3.032
Variance	0.06575	0.0181
Observatio	5	5
Pearson Co	0.40343	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	4	
t Stat	2.815333	
P(T<=t) one	0.024028	
t Critical on	2.131847	
P(T<=t) twc	0.048056	
t Critical tw	2.776445	

	PHD	Secondary
Mean	3.33	2.9
Variance	0.06575	0.01
Observatio	5	5
Pearson Co	-0.0975	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	4	
t Stat	3.383625	
P(T<=t) one	0.013846	
t Critical on	2.131847	
P(T<=t) twc	0.027693	
t Critical tw	2.776445	

Q / Education	Secondary	BS	Master	PHD
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.05	3.05	4.45	3.1
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	2.8	3.05	2.4	3.25
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.2	2.3	3.85	2.9
Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.65
Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have any problem	3.3	3.3	3.2	4.05
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch	2.95	2.95	2.75	3.65
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	2.85	3.25	3.1	3.65
Group Rating Avrg (%)	60.71	62.29	67.57	69.29
Responses#	98	309	39	11

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.8874113	0.2958040	0.9574220	4.287933	0.008787	

Within Groups      7.415      24 0.308958

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**Total**                      8.302411 27

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Q / Education	Secondary	BS	Master	PHD
The agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by STC	2.95	3.1	2.8	3
The professionalism (technical & customer care) of the agent	3	2.95	2.65	2.75
The availability of the requested information with the agent	2.95	2.95	2.75	2.8
The ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services	2.75	3	2.5	2.9
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.95	2.95	2.75	3.65
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3.05	3.1	2.9	3.1
Group Rating Avrg (%)	58.83	60.17	54.50	60.67
# Responses	98	309	39	11

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Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.353646	3	0.117882	3.314782	0.040876	3.098391
Within Groups	0.71125	20	0.035563			
Total	1.064896	23				

t-Test

	PHD	Master
Mean	3.033333	2.725
Variance	0.107667	0.01875
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.311592	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	2.407475	
P(T<=t) one	0.030527	
t Critical on	2.015048	
P(T<=t) twc	0.061054	
t Critical tw	2.570582	

	PHD	BS
Mean	3.033333	3.00833
Variance	0.107667	0.00542
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	-0.0138	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	0.181568	
P(T<=t) one	0.431526	
t Critical on	2.015048	
P(T<=t) twc	0.863053	
t Critical tw	2.570582	

	Master	BS
Mean	2.725	3.00833
Variance	0.01875	0.00542
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.520946	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	-5.93666	
P(T<=t) one	0.000968	
t Critical on	2.015048	
P(T<=t) twc	0.001936	
t Critical tw	2.570582	

T Test

	PHD	Secondary
Mean	3.033333	2.94167
Variance	0.107667	0.01042
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.114465	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	0.675725	
P(T<=t) one	0.2646	
t Critical on	2.015048	
P(T<=t) twc	0.5292	
t Critical tw	2.570582	

	Master	Secondary
Mean	2.725	2.94167
Variance	0.01875	0.01042
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.840762	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	-7.05024	
P(T<=t) one	0.000444	
t Critical on	2.015048	
P(T<=t) twc	0.000887	
t Critical tw	2.570582	

Q / Education	Secondary	BS	Master	PHD
Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry	3.65	2.95	2.65	3.65
If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services	3.65	2.5	2.25	3.65
Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer	3.95	2.7	2.25	3.95
Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services (www.stc.com.sa)	4.25	2.45	2.55	4.25
Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services	3.8	2.2	2.2	3.8
Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online Services	3.65	2.05	2.2	3.65
Group Rating Avg. (%)	76.50	49.50	47.00	76.50
Responses#	98	309	39	11

Result of Anova

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>12.01781</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4.005938</b>	<b>61.33493</b>	<b>2.9E-10</b>	<b>3.098391</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>1.30625</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0.065313</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.32406</b>	<b>23</b>				

**T Test**

	<i>PHD</i>	<i>Master</i>
Mean	3.825	2.35
Variance	0.05775	0.039
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.284462794	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	13.68029742	
P(T<=t) one	1.87176E-05	
t Critical on	2.015048372	
P(T<=t) twc	3.74351E-05	
t Critical tw	2.570581835	

	<i>PHD</i>	<i>BS</i>
Mean	3.825	2.475
Variance	0.05775	0.10675
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.028656	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	8.267028	
P(T<=t) one	0.000211	
t Critical on	2.015048	
P(T<=t) twc	0.000422	
t Critical tw	2.570582	

**T Test**

	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>BS</i>
Mean	3.825	2.475
Variance	0.05775	0.10675
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.028656463	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	8.267027882	
P(T<=t) one	0.000211224	
t Critical on	2.015048372	
P(T<=t) twc	0.000422448	
t Critical tw	2.570581835	

	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Master</i>
Mean	3.825	2.35
Variance	0.05775	0.039
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.284463	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	13.6803	
P(T<=t) one	1.87E-05	
t Critical on	2.015048	
P(T<=t) twc	3.74E-05	
t Critical tw	2.570582	

Q / Education	Secondary	BS	Master	PHD
The range of courteous and attitude of the agent	2.95	3.25	2.9	3
7The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when you got angry	2.8	2.9	2.5	3.2
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.95	2.95	2.75	3.65
Based on your call with customer care center agent how do you rate the courtesy of the agent	3.15	3.1	2.85	3.1
Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly	2.05	2.15	3.65	3.65
Did the agent greet you saying Assalam Allaikom (Pease be upon you	2.8	2.7	4.25	3.65
Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes your request	2.75	2.65	3.85	4.1
Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time	2.3	2.15	3.45	3.8
At the end of the call did the agent thank you for dealing with STC	2.55	2.35	4.05	3.8
Group Rating Avg (%)	54.00	53.78	67.22	71.00
Responses#	98	309	39	11

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Result of ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	5.374722	3	1.791574	8.796	0.000213	2.90112
Within Groups	6.517778	32	0.203681			
Total	11.8925	35				

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Q / education	Secondary	BS	Master	PHD
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.05	3.05	4.45	3.1
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.2	2.3	3.85	2.9
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.95	2.95	2.75	3.65
STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers	2.75	3	2.5	2.9
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	2.95	2.95	2.75	3.65
Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number etc	3.05	3.1	2.9	3.1
Group Rating AVRG (%)	56.50	47.67	64.00	64.33
Responses#	98	309	39	11

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Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.749167	3	0.249722	1.1003	0.372153	3.098391
Within Groups	4.539167	20	0.226958			
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.288333</b>	<b>23</b>				

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## Appendix 18 Detailed ANOVA Test

Q / Age	18-25 Y	26-35 Y	36-45 Y	>46 Y
The range of assistance provided by the agent	3.01	3.05	2.67	2.85
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	2.94	2.8	2.63	2.96
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	3.01	2.82	2.99	2.74
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	3.32	3.14	3.2	2.81
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3.32	2.96	2.85	3
Group Rating Avrg (%)	62.4	59.08	57.36	57.44
Responses#	155	201	75	31

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.208375	3	0.069458	2.271365	0.119435	3.238872
Within Groups	0.48928	16	0.03058			
Total	0.697655	19				

Q / Age	18-25 Y	26-35 Y	36-45 Y	>46 Y
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.14	3.04	2.77	2.89
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	2.94	2.8	2.63	2.96
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.45	2.24	2.61	2.3
Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request	4.13	3.73	4	4.2
Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have any problem	3.45	3.23	3.25	3.08
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch	3.01	2.82	2.99	2.74
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	3.32	3.14	3.2	2.81
Group Rating Avrg (%)	64.11	60.00	61.29	59.94
Responses#	155	201	75	31

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.200325	3	0.066775	0.252868	0.858505	3.008787

Within Groups	6.337686	24	0.26407			
Total	6.538011	27				

Q / Age	18-25 Y	26-35 Y	36-45 Y	>45 Y
The agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by STC	3.36	3.05	2.79	3
The professionalism (technical & customer care) of the agent	3.09	2.89	2.76	2.81
The availability of the requested information with the agent	3.04	2.91	2.61	2.85
The ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services	3.11	2.74	2.55	2.74
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	3.01	2.82	2.99	2.74
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3.32	2.96	2.85	3
Group Rating Avg (%)	56.43	63.50	64.33	58.17
# Responses	7	42	54	361

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.515646	3	0.171882	9.368991	0.00045	3.098391
Within Groups	0.366917	20	0.018346			
Total	0.882563	23				

Q / Ages	18-25 Y	26-35 Y	36-45 Y	>45 Y
Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry	3.07	2.86	2.85	3.15
If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services	2.75	2.42	2.38	2.75
Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer	2.88	2.58	2.3	2.75
Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services (www.stc.com.sa)	2.73	2.4	2.4	2.47
Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services	2.15	2.2	2.35	2.35
Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online Services	2.1	2.05	2.1	2.35
Group Rating Avg (%)	52.27	48.37	47.93	52.73
Responses#	155	201	75	31

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.286879	3	0.095626	0.965103	0.428552	3.098391

Within Groups	1.981683	20	0.099084			
Total	2.268563	23				

Q / Age	18-25 Y	26-35 Y	36-45 Y	>45 Y
The range of courteous and attitude of the agent	3.5	3.11	3.21	3.19
7The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when you got angry	3.12	2.68	2.73	2.81
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	3.01	2.82	2.99	2.74
Based on your call with customer care center agent how do you rate the courteously of the agent	3.39	2.97	2.89	3.07
Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly	3.38	3.57	3.65	3.95
Did the agent greet you saying Assalam Allaikom (Peace be upon you	4.61	4.47	4.53	4.27
Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes your request	4.5	4.47	4.18	3.65
Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time	3.45	3.63	3.72	4.32
At the end of the call did the agent thank you for dealing with STC	4.1	4.05	3.8	4.13
Group Rating Avrg (%)	73.47	70.60	70.44	71.40
Responses#	155	201	75	31

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.1305	3	0.0435	0.109885	0.953702	2.90112
Within Groups	12.66776	32	0.395867			
Total	12.79826	35				

Q / Age	18-25 Y	26-35 Y	36-45 Y	>45 Y
5The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.14	3.04	2.77	2.89
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	3.01	2.82	2.99	2.74
STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers	2.55	2.32	2.35	2.2
How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the agent in terms of his voice clarity, correct pronunciation and so on.	3.29	3.05	2.93	2.96
Did the agent listen without interrupting you	4.26	4.1	4.1	4.48
Did the agent repeat your question after listing to you	3.35	3.17	3.38	3.45
Group Rating Avrg (%)	65.33	61.67	61.73	62.40
Responses#	155	201	75	31

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.134983	3	0.044994	0.111051	0.952634	3.098391
Within Groups	8.1034	20	0.40517			
Total	8.238383	23				

Q / Ages	18-25 Y	26-35 Y	36-45 Y	>45 Y
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.4	3.04	2.77	2.89
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.45	2.24	2.13	2.3
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	3.01	2.82	2.99	2.74
STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers	2.55	2.32	2.35	2.22
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3.32	2.96	2.85	3
Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name. ID number etc	3.62	3.86	3.6	4.2
Group Rating Avrg (%)	61.17	47.33	55.63	57.83
Responses#	155	201	75	31

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Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.239079	3	0.079693	0.236935	0.869547	3.098391
Within Groups	6.726983	20	0.336349			
Total	6.966063	23				

## Appendix (19) Detailed ANOVA Test

	less than 6 M	fom 6M to 1 Y	from 1 to 3 Y	more than 3Y
The range of assistance provided by the agent	2.71	3.09	3.11	2.82
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	3.14	3	3.06	2.77
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.51	3.07	3.09	2.88
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	3	3.27	3.19	3.19
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3	3.11	3.52	3
<b>Group Rating Avrg (%)</b>	<b>57.44</b>	<b>62.16</b>	<b>63.88</b>	<b>58.64</b>
<b># Responses</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>361</b>

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.337495	3	0.112498	3.235267	0.050155	3.238872
Within Groups	0.55636	16	0.034773			
Total	0.893855	19				

	less than 6 M	fom 6M to 1 Y	from 1 to 3 Y	more than 3Y
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.3	2.89	3.07	3.3
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	3.14	3	3.06	2.77
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.86	1.89	2.39	2.34
Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request	3.1	4.3	4.48	3.9
Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have any problem	3.1	3	4	3
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch	2.51	3	3.1	2.88
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	3	3.27	3.19	3.19
<b>Group Rating Avrg (%)</b>	<b>60.03</b>	<b>61.00</b>	<b>66.54</b>	<b>61.09</b>
<b># Responses</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>361</b>

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
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Between Groups	0.459411	3	0.153137	0.479477	0.699582	3.008787
Within Groups	7.6652	24	0.319383			
Total	8.124611	27				

	less than 6 M	fom 6M to 1 Y	from 1 to 3 Y	more than 3Y
The agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by STC	2.57	2.98	3.19	3.04
The professionalism (technical & customer care) of the agent	3.43	4.05	3.13	2.88
The availability of the requested information with the agent	2.71	3	3.22	2.85
The ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services	2.71	2.84	3.15	2.8
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.51	3.07	3.09	2.88
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	3	3.11	3.52	3
Group Rating Avrg (%)	56.43	63.50	64.33	58.17
# Responses:	7	42	54	361

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.684446	3	0.228149	2.664898	0.075632	3.098391
Within Groups	1.71225	20	0.085613			
Total	2.396696	23				

	less than 6 M	from 6M to 1 Y	from 1 to 3 Y	more than 3Y
Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry	3.10	2.60	3.10	3.00
If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services	2.78	2.40	2.90	2.54
Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer	2.15	2.30	3.30	2.65
Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services www.stc.com.sa)	2.85	2.38	2.90	2.38
Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services	1.90	2.29	2.60	2.20
Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online Services	2.60	2.43	2.45	2.20
<b>Group Rating Avrg (%)</b>	<b>51.27</b>	<b>48.00</b>	<b>57.50</b>	<b>49.90</b>
<b># Responses</b>	<b>7.00</b>	<b>42.00</b>	<b>54.00</b>	<b>361.00</b>

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.7613	3	0.253767	2.475974	0.090967	3.098391
Within Groups	2.049833	20	0.102492			
Total	2.811133	23				

	less than 6 M	from 6M to 1 Y	from 1 to 3 Y	more than 3Y
The range of courteous and attitude of the agent	3.14	3.27	3.56	3.23
The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when you got angry	2.71	2.95	3.15	4.65
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.51	3	3.1	2.88
Based on your call with customer care center agent how do you rate the courteously of the agent	2.86	3.05	3.48	3.07
Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly	2.6	4.1	3.85	3.45
Did the agent greet you saying Assalam Allaikom (Pease be upon you	4	4.6	4.75	4.5
Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes your request	4	4.2	4.45	4.4
Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time	3.2	2.6	3.67	3.67
At the end of the call did the agent thank you for dealing with STC	4	3.7	4	4
<b>Group Rating Avrg (%)</b>	<b>64.49</b>	<b>69.93</b>	<b>75.58</b>	<b>75.22</b>
<b># Responses</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>361</b>

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	1.843697	3	0.614566	1.545688	0.221718	2.90112

<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>12.7232</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0.3976</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.5669</b>	<b>35</b>				

	less than 6 M	fom 6M to 1 Y	from 1 to 3 Y	more than 3Y
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.29	2.89	3.07	3.03
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	3	3	3.1	2.88
STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers.	2.86	2.7	2.83	2.28
How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the agent in terms of his voice clarity, correct pronunciation and so on	2.86	3.05	3.44	3.06
Did the agent listen without interrupting you	3.8	4	4.3	4.2
Did the agent repeat your question after listing to you	3	4.1	3.83	3.13
Group Rating Avrg (%)	62.70	65.80	68.57	61.93
# Responses	7	42	54	361

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>6.713056</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.237685</b>	<b>0.004131</b>	<b>0.999623</b>	<b>3.008787</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>13000.41</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>541.6839</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>13007.13</b>	<b>27</b>				

	less than 6 M	fom 6M to 1 Y	from 1 to 3 Y	more than 3Y
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	3.29	2.89	3.07	3.3
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.86	1.89	2.39	2.34
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	3	3	3.1	2.88
STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers	2.86	2.78	2.83	2.28
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	2.8	3.11	3.52	3
Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number etc	3.3	4.3	3.78	3.67
Group Rating Avrg (%)	60.37	59.90	62.30	58.23
# Responses	7	42	54	361

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>0.125933</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.041978</b>	<b>0.141777</b>	<b>0.933733</b>	<b>3.098391</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>5.921667</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0.296083</b>			

## Appendix (20) Detailed ANOVA Test

Q / Gender	Male	Female
The range of assistance provided by the agent	2.8	3.15
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	2.9	3.25
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	2.8	3.3
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	3.1	3.5
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	2.95	3.45
Group Rating Avg (%)	58.2	66.6
Responses#	361	91

### Result of T Test:

**T State** > **T Critical**, **P value** denote very high significant differences.

So, the  $H_0$  (T assumption: **No relationship**) must be rejected

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Male	Female
Mean	2.91	3.33
Variance	0.0155	0.02075
Observations	5	5
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	8	
t Stat	-4.932649844	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.000572805	
t Critical one-tail	1.859548033	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.001145611	
t Critical two-tail	2.306004133	

Q / Gender	Male	Female
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	2.8	3.45
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	2.9	3.25
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.2	2.6
Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request	3.8	4.4
Did the dealing of the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have any problem	3.2	3.7
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch	2.8	3.3
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	3.1	3.5
Group Rating Avrg (%)	59.43	69.14

Result of T TEST:

T State < T Critical, P value denote low significant differences

So, the H<sub>0</sub> (No relationship) must be accepted

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Male	Female
Mean	2.971429	3.457143
Variance	0.235714	0.292024
Observations	7	7
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	12	
t Stat	-1.76897	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.051142	
t Critical one-tail	1.782288	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.102284	
t Critical two-tail	2.178813	

Q /Gender	Male	Female
The agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by STC	2.95	3.25
The professionalism (technical & customer care) of the agent	2.8	3.35
The availability of the requested information with the agent	2.8	3.2
The ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services	2.7	3.3
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.8	3.3
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	2.95	3.45
Group Rating Avrg (%)	56.67	66.17
# Responses	361	91

**T State > T Critical, P value** denote very high significant differences, the  $H_0$  must be rejected

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Male	Female
Mean	2.833333333	3.308333333
Variance	0.009666667	0.007416667
Observations	6	6
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	10	
t Stat	-8.901904428	
P(T<=t) one-tail	2.28304E-06	
t Critical one-tail	1.812461102	
P(T<=t) two-tail	4.56607E-06	
t Critical two-tail	2.228138842	

Q / Gender	Male	Female
Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry	2.9	3.05
If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services	2.5	2.7
Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer	2.55	3.05
Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services (www.stc.com.sa)	2.3	3.4
Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services	2.15	2.45
Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online Services	2	2.35
Group Rating Avrg (%)	48.00	56.67
Responses#	361	91

**T State > T Critical, P value** denote very high significant differences, the  $H_0$  must be rejected

**t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances**

	Male	Female
Mean	2.4	2.833333
Variance	0.103	0.162667
Observations	6	6
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	10	
t Stat	-2.059345378	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.033230018	
t Critical one-tail	1.812461102	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.066460035	
t Critical two-tail	2.228138842	

Q / Gender	Male	Female
The range of courteous and attitude of the agent	3.2	3.6
The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when you got angry	2.75	3.15
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.8	3.3
Based on your call with customer care center agent how do you rate the courtesy of the agent	3	3.4
Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly	3.5	3.75
Did the agent greet you saying Assalam Allaikom (Peace be upon you	4.45	4.7
Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes your request	4.35	4.45
Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time	3.65	3.6
At the end of the call did the agent thank you for dealing with STC	4.05	3.95
Group Rating Avrg (%)	70.56	75.33
Responses#	361	91

The result of T TEST as in the graph below showed  
T State < T Critical, P value denote low significant differences  
So, the H<sub>0</sub> (No Relationship) must be accepted

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Male	Female
Mean	3.527778	3.766667
Variance	0.416944	0.27
Observations	9	9
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	15	
t Stat	-0.86468	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.200415	
t Critical one-tail	1.75305	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.400831	
t Critical two-tail	2.13145	

Q / Gender	Male	Female
5The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	2.8	3.45
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.8	3.3
STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers	2.25	3
How do you evaluate the quality of speech of the agent in terms of his voice clarity, correct pronunciation and so on.	3.05	3.35
Did the agent listen without interrupting you	4.15	4.4
Did the agent repeat your question after listing to you	3.25	3.6
Group Rating Avrg (%)	61.00	70.33
Responses#	361	91

The result of T TEST as in the graph below showed :  
T State < T Critical, P value denote low significant differences  
So, the H<sub>0</sub> (No Relationship) must be accepted

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Male	Female
Mean	3.05	3.516667
Variance	0.403	0.226667
Observations	6	6
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	-1.44055	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.09179	
t Critical one-tail	1.833113	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.18358	
t Critical two-tail	2.262157	

Q / Gender	Male	Female
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	2.8	3.45
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	2.2	2.6
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	2.8	3.3
STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers	2.7	3.3
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	2.8	3.3
Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number etc	2.95	3.45
Group Rating Avrg (%)	54.17	64.67
Responses#	361	91

The result as in the graph below showed  
**T State < T Critical, P value denote low significant differences**  
**So, the H<sub>0</sub> (No Relationship) must be accepted**

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Male	Female
Mean	2.708333333	3.233333333
Variance	0.068416667	0.101666667
Observations	6	6
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	10	
t Stat	-3.11820059	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.005453666	
t Critical one-tail	1.812461102	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.010907333	
t Critical two-tail	2.228138842	

**Appendix (21) Detailed ANOVA Test Result of Reliability by the Region of Customer (Responses)**

<b>Q / Rgn</b>	<b>Cent</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
The range of assistance provided by the agent	58	56	57	62
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	57	56	56	61
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point.	55	59	59	61
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	64	62	65	61
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	60	63	62	63
Group Rating Avrg (%)	<b>58.76</b>	<b>59.24</b>	<b>59.84</b>	<b>61.64</b>

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	23.814	3	7.938	0.898675	0.463403	3.238872
Within Groups	141.328	16	8.833			
<b>Total</b>	<b>165.142</b>	<b>19</b>				

**Result of Reliability by the Region of Customer (Responses)**

<b>Q / Rgn</b>	<b>Cent</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	60	63	59	67
The agent answers to your question and actual fulfillment of your requirement	57	56	56	61
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	47	44	47	44

Did the agent assure you that he will do his best to execute and fulfill your request	76	84	78	83
Did dealing with the agent encourage you to contact the STC call center when you have any problem	62	72	67	68
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch	55	59	59	61
STC call centers are the optimum channel for resolving customer complaints	64	62	65	61
Group Rating Avrg (%)	60.22	62.78	61.54	63.55
Responses#	98	309	39	11

ANOVA Result

S. of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	44.78794	3	14.92931	0.128019	0.942544	3.008787
Within Groups	2798.823	24	116.6176			
<b>Total</b>	2843.611	27				

Q / RGN	Cent	West	East	South
The agent's knowledge of the services and products provided by STC	58	62	62	64
The professionalism (technical & customer care) of the agent	58	58	59	63
The availability of the requested information with the agent	58	59	57	61
The ability of the agent to clearly explain the available services	56	56	57	59
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	55	59	59	61
At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent	60	63	62	63
Group Rating Avrg (%)	57.50	59.67	59.30	61.97

ANOVA Result

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
60.63166667	3	20.21056	4.496897	0.014411	3.098391	3.098391
89.88666667	20	4.494333				
150.5183333	23					

t-Test:

	South	East
Mean	61.96667	59.3
Variance	4.006667	4.108
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.760164	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	4.681646	
P(T<=t) one	0.002713	
t Critical one	2.015048	
P(T<=t) two	0.005426	
t Critical two	2.570582	

	South	West
Mean	61.96667	59.66667
Variance	4.006667	6.938667
Observatio	6	6
Pearson Co	0.757619	
Hypothesiz	0	
df	5	
t Stat	3.27681	
P(T<=t) one	0.011016	
t Critical one	2.015048	
P(T<=t) two	0.022032	
t Critical two	2.570582	

### Result of Proactivity by the Region of Customer (Responses)

Q /Rgn	Cent	West	East	South
Did the agent offer you any other services related to your inquiry	59	58	59	63
If your answer to the previous question is yes, did he persuade you to get the offered services	52	49	51	54
Did the agent inform you with the details and prices of the offer	54	51	55	55
Did the agent ask you to visit STC Online Services <a href="http://www.stc.com.sa">www.stc.com.sa</a> )	47	47	50	54
Did the agent ask you to register in STC Online Services	44	46	44	53
Did the agent explain to you the benefits of using STC Online Services	42	44	40	46
<b>Group Rating Avrg (%)</b>	<b>49.56</b>	<b>49.11</b>	<b>49.89</b>	<b>54.22</b>

ANOVA Result

<i>S of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	101.3889	3	33.7963	0.94325	0.438406	3.098391
Within Groups	716.5926	20	35.82963			
<b>Total</b>	<b>817.9815</b>	<b>23</b>				

**Detailed ANOVA Test Result of Courtesy by the Region of Customer (Responses)**

Q /Rgn	Cent	West	East	South
The range of courteous and attitude of the agent	65	63	66	70
The ability of the agent to deal with you in a proper way when you got angry	59	53	57	61
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	55	59	59	61
Based on your call with customer care center agent how do you rate the courtesy of the agent	60	64	63	64
Did the customer care center agent give his name clearly	71	79	66	75
Did the agent greet you saying Assalam Allaikom (Pease be upon you	87	88	93	93
Did the agent ask you to wait till he processes your request	87	89	87	91
Did the agent thank you for waiting too long time	70	74	73	81
At the end of the call did the agent thank you for dealing with STC	76	81	85	74
Group Rating Avgg (%)	<b>70.01</b>	<b>72.30</b>	<b>72.13</b>	<b>74.61</b>

ANOVA Result

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	95.41667	3	31.80556	0.207006	0.890792	2.90112

Within Groups	4916.649	32	153.6453			
Total	5012.066	35				

**ANOVA Test Result of Effective problem resolution by the Region of Customer (Responses)**

Q / Rgn	Cent	West	East	South
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	60	63	59	67
STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point	55	59	59	61
STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers	48	51	47	50
How do you evaluate the quality of speech of in terms of his voice clarity, pronunciation, and so on.	60	64	63	63
Did the agent listen without interrupting you	83	86	83	84
Did the agent repeat your question after listing to you	68	70	62	77
Group Rating Avrg (%)	62.29	65.47	62.20	67.14

Result ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	107.4243	3	35.80809	0.251378	0.859404	3.098391
Within Groups	2848.943	20	142.4471			
Total	2956.367	23				

**ANOVA Test Result of Accessibility by the Region of Customer (Responses)**

Q / Rgn	Cent	West	East	South
The range of the agent understanding of your inquiry within a reasonable duration	58	56	57	62
The quantity of time that the agent took to serve you	47	44	47	44

<b>STC call center is considered the best customer facing touch point</b>	55	59	59	61
<b>STC call centers of are considered the best in the KSA in attracting new customers</b>	48	51	47	50
<b>At the end of your interaction with the customer care center how do you rate the overall performance of the agent</b>	60	63	62	63
<b>Did the agent ask you to provide him with your personal information such as your name, ID number etc.</b>	73	81	73	79
<b>Group Rating Avrg (%)</b>	<b>56.61</b>	<b>59.17</b>	<b>57.38</b>	<b>59.97</b>

ANOVA Result

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	0.749167	3	0.249722	1.1003	0.372153	3.098391
Within Groups	4.539167	20	0.226958			
Total	5.288333	23				

## Appendix (22) Focus group discussions on customer centric reliability dimension

**P = Positive**    **N = Negative**

Remarks – Reliability	Reliability
Number of Agents are not enough to serve customers	N
There is no credibility to deal with customers requirements'	N
Sometime you call 907 and you wait long time but nobody response	N
I hope you have agents that respect customers	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
Sometimes agents misunderstand of your question, you may need long time to make him understand	N
Last time when I call 907 for canceling of Jood service, the agent try in different try ways to convince me to not canceling of this service.	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
After waiting long time, agent asked me to call later,	N
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for calling".	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily agent will call you But, with STC you should call again which require to wait another 30 minutes	N
Regarding fraud, STC is not matched by any other company	N
In general, the services provided by our staff of the company are very good. But the problem lies in the procedures, services and regulations imposed by the company to the employee and the customer. 902 and 907 over the three phases are as follows (Yalil)	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Most of landline problems need external and not interior maintenance, but the agent try always tell you that you have interior problems.	N
When you call 907, agent refer to another agent to solve your problem because he has no enough knowledge	N
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
The reason is that I had a problem in Qitaf when I Want replace the points and call 902 daily, and nearly three months did not solve my problem	N
Services of the company had failed to the required level, need time to be developed. In addition, employee is not responsible for the failures and bad services; he provides what it is capable of performing.	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	P
Customer service is very poor; This makes customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor network	N
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and it is repeated. When I contacted the 902 and as is well known, I waited 13 minutes. When the agent response about my problem (deducted the	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
When you have a fault, agent told you "The Tech. will contact you during the 24 hours...", but sometimes it take more than 3 days	N
The Call Center should have Clarification of the customer of the existence of the problem	N
Need more Transparency with the customers, Full and frank explanation	N
When there a general problem with the internet in whole Kingdom and when you call 907, the agent try to solve the problem step by step, he did not know that there is a general problem and not that customer only.	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with sheep. Third, Agents know very little about the field of communications, however. Fourth, Agents wants to get rid of the call as	N
The agent thanks you and promise you to solve the problem within 30 minutes, but nothing done	N
When you make call, You should expect 90% you will not be served	N
Positive and beneficial to help customers and wish them success	P
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another extension. When you go to the web site, you face a lot of problem there.	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been transferred to other employees. And then I choose to cancel my phone line because of the lack of a professional one who could solve the problems.	N
The length of waiting time, maybe up to more than an hour	N
Slow in solving the problems of telephone DSL	N

Remarks – Reliability	Reliability
Why pay for the establishment of telephone or mobile phone as long as I pay my monthly subscription When agent feel as the employer, w	
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
First: prayers Good luck to you. Second: I am one of the most contacted people in customer service. Agent wants to serve you. But the problem with company itself. Agents often say this is what I can do.	N
We always wish the customers to be served as required and not to be fraud.	N
The negative point that they do not respond to you directly. But when they response, they solve the problem, often	P
Everything is bad on STC	N
Agent promise customer to serve him quickly, but it take long time	N
Deliberately ignored the agent to respond to customer	N
STC in spite of originality. But it isn't offer integrated services to the customer. After a long wait to respond to the call, customer gets no benefit.	N
The quality of service of 907 is too bad. Sometime agent promise to send an order to network department to solve your problem, but hi didn't	N
Lack of awareness of agent offers new services. Goes to the agents lied to the customer	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
Agent try to avoid your request when you ask to speak to the supervisor	N
Delivery of the required service delayed	N
Long waiting time.	N P
As for 907 I witnessed a very long waiting time and my request was not completed. Sometimes the System malfunctions and hangs up the call.	N
902 and 907 services are very poor. Waiting time is long and exceeds 20 minutes. There is no credibility and the agent gives inaccurate information. When calling another agent he gives information that contradicts to information given by the former agent.	N
Answer of the customers call is very bad and reflects disrespect of the customers. We wait one hour for the reply of the agent without the required result.	N
Frankly, they try to satisfy the customer	P
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
The biggest swindling and fraud communication company in the world	N
You feel that the agent is in a hurry and at the moment he understands your problem he wishes to leave you may be to serve other	N
STC lacks credibility and characterized by exploitation and exaggeration.	N
I apologize for my comment but this is the truth. STC is really a bad company and lacks credibility in their offers and customer service. Since three years it is impossible to get a reply for my call before waiting for 30 minutes. This failure for the com	N
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
Errors of billing is not resolved properly	N
The agent do not give the agent accurate date for fixing his problem	N
Most agents are unaware of the requested information	N
In addition to the bad service the agents lack transparency.	N
All my remarks are negative	N
I am satisfied with STC services but the services of other providers seem to be better. I am afraid to shift to other providers because I am accustomed to STC services.	P
Very expensive bill compared to other companies and neighboring countries.	P
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
Sometimes the agent tell you that they understood your problem and that they are going to solve it but it will not be solved before you repeat calling till you find an agent who really understand the problem and fix it.	N
Some of the employees are very bad and do not care for solving internet problems but when you shout and threaten them they understand.	N
Generally, the internet service is bad and I hope that your company bankrupt and lose.	N
The disadvantages are very much. If you need some services you must visit the customer service building.	N
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
There should be a clear practice, policy or methodology to be followed by the employees of the call center so that they do not waste customers' time due to their incorrect information.	N
They do not respond	N
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N
We need an easy employee for an easy life	N

### Appendix (23) Focus group discussions on customer centric responsiveness dimension

Remarks	Responsiveness
There is no credibility to deal with customers requirements'	N
The problem that agent support their friends with secure data to	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
Sometimes agents misunderstand of your question, you may need long time to make him understand	N
Last time when I call 907 for canceling of Jood service, the agent try in different try ways to convince me to not	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
After waiting long time, agent asked me to call later,	N
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you	N
In general, the services provided by our staff of the company are very good. But the problem lies in the procedures,	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Most of landline problems need external and not interior maintenance, but the agent try always tell you that you have	N
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
The reason is that I had a problem in Qitaf when I Want replace the points and call 902 daily, and nearly three months	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	P
Customer service is very poor; This makes customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor network	P
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and it is	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
The Call Center should have Clarification of the customer of the existence of the problem	N
Need more Transparency with the customers, Full and frank explanation	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing	N
The agent thanks you and promise you to solve the problem within 30 minutes, but nothing done	N
When you make call, You should expect 90% you will not be served	N
Positive and beneficial to help customers and wish them success	P
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been transferred to other employees. And then I choose	N
The length of waiting time, maybe up to more than an hour	N
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
The negative point that they do not respond to you directly. But when they response, they solve the problem, often	P
Everything is bad on STC	N
Agent promise customer to serve him quickly, but it take long time	N
Deliberately ignored the agent to respond to customer	N
STC in spite of originality. But it isn't offer integrated services to the customer. After a long wait to respond to the call,	N
The quality of service of 907 is too bad. Sometime agent promise to send an order to network department to solve your	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
The agent do not deal efficiently with customer complaints	N
As for 907 I witnessed a very long waiting time and my request was not completed. Sometimes the System	N
Answer of the customers call is very bad and reflects disrespect of the customers. We wait one hour for the reply of the	N

Remarks	Responsiveness
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
The biggest swindling and fraud communication company in the world	N
You feel that the agent is in a hurry and at the moment he understands your problem he wishes to leave you may be to	N
STC lacks credibility and characterized by exploitation and exaggeration.	N
I apologize for my comment but this is the truth. STC is really a bad company and lacks credibility in their offers and	N
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
Errors of billing is not resolved properly	N
The agent do not give the agent accurate date for fixing his problem	N
Most agents are unaware of the requested information	N
In addition to the bad service the agents lack transparency.	N
All my remarks are negative	N
The agent is concerned of ending the call as soon as possible therefore his answers are very brief and repeats the word	N
I am satisfied with STC services but the services of other providers seem to be better. I am afraid to shift to other	P
Very expensive bill compared to other companies and neighboring countries.	P
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
Sometimes the agent tell you that they understood your problem and that they are going to solve it but it will not be	N
Some of the employees are very bad and do not care for solving internet problems but when you shout and threaten	N
Generally, the internet service is bad and I hope that your company bankrupt and lose.	N
The disadvantages are very much. If you need some services you must visit the customer service building.	N
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
There should be a clear practice, policy or methodology to be followed by the employees of the call center so that they	N
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N
We need an easy employee for an easy life	N

## Appendix (24) Focus group discussions on customer centric competence dimension

**P = Positive N = Negative**

Remarks	Competence
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for calling".	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily agent will call you But, with STC you should call again which require to wait another 30 minutes	N
In general, the services provided by our staff of the company are very good. But the problem lies in the procedures, services and regulations imposed by the company to the employee and the customer. 902 and 907 over the three phases are as follows (Yalil	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Agent is attractive and deal friendly, But does not provide a solution to your problems... either because of ignorance or his failure to perform work	Y
When you call 907, agent refer to another agent to solve your problem because he has no enough knowledge	N
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
The reason is that I had a problem in Qitaf when I Want replace the points and call 902 daily, and nearly three months did not solve my problem	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	P
Customer service is very poor; This makes customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor network	P
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and it is repeated. When I contacted the 902 and as is well known, I waited 13 minutes. When the agent response about my problem (deducted the	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
When there a general problem with the internet in whole Kingdom and when you call 907, the agent try to solve the problem step by step, he did not know that there is a general problem and not that customer only.	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with sheep. Third, Agents know very little about the field of communications, however. Fourth, Agents wants to get rid of the call as	N
When you make call, You should expect 90% you will not be served	N
Positive and beneficial to help customers and wish them success	P
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another extension. When you go to the web site, you face a lot of problem there.	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been is transferred to other employees. And then I choose to cancel my phone line because of the lack of a professional one who could solve the problems.	N
The length of waiting time, maybe up to more than an hour Slow in solving the problems of telephone DSL Why pay for the establishment of telephone or mobile phone as long as I pay my monthly subscription? N N N When agent feels as the employer.	N
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
Everything is bad on STC	N
From my point of view that there should be a professional to respond to the calls. The employee must be on a very high degree of tact. This is not, unfortunately, in the 907 and 902	N
The quality of service of 907 is too bad. Sometime agent promise to send an order to network department to solve your problem, but hi didn't	N
Lack of awareness of agent offers new services. Goes to the agents lied to the customer	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
Agent knowledge of DSL is very poor	N
Some agents give you wrong information	N
902 and 907 services are very poor. Waiting time is long and exceeds 20 minutes. There is no credibility and the agent gives inaccurate information. When calling another agent he gives information that contradicts to information given by the former agent.	N

Remarks	Competence
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
You feel that the agent is in a hurry and at the moment he understands your problem he wishes to leave you may be to serve other customers in addition to the lack of transparency and misguide in some offers or new services.	N
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
The employees do not possess enough knowledge about DSL but their knowledge of landline is satisfactory and good	N
They agent provide contradicting information	N
All my remarks are negative	N
The agent is concerned of ending the call as soon as possible therefore his answers are very brief and repeats the word "Yes .... Correct" even what the customer says is incorrect.	N
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
There should be a clear practice, policy or methodology to be followed by the employees of the call center so that they do not waste customers' time due to their incorrect information.	N
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N
The agents are not aware of the too much service of STC particularly the new ones.	N

**Appendix (25) Focus group discussions on customer centric pro-activity dimension**

**P = Positive N = Negative**

Remarks	Pro-activity
Excellent	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily agent will call you But, with STC you should call again which require to wait another 30 minutes	N
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another extension. When you go to the web site, you face a lot of problem there.	N
Everything is bad on STC	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
All my remarks are negative	N
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
STC provides SMS service which can be used instead of direct calling but the company, but, did not exert enough effort to spread awareness of this service and consequently customer use voice calls.	N

## Appendix (26) Focus group discussions on customer centric courtesy dimension

**P = Positive N = Negative**

Remarks	Courtesy
I hope you have agents that respect customers	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
After waiting long time, agent asked me to call later,	N
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for calling".	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily agent will call you But, with STC you should call again which require to wait another 30 minutes	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Agent is attractive and deal friendly, But does not provide a solution to your problems... either because of ignorance or his failure to perform work	Y
I hope to give staff training courses in effective communication with the public	Y
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	P
Customer service is very poor; This makes customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor network	P
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and it is repeated. When I contacted the 902 and as is well known, I waited 13 minutes. When the agent response about my problem (deducted the	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with sheep. Third, Agents know very little about the field of communications, however. Fourth, Agents wants to get rid of the call as	N
The talky gently only with girl.	N
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another extension. When you go to the web site, you face a lot of problem there.	N
Agent needs more courses to deal better with customer.	N
Everything is bad on STC	N
I hope to be better with dealing with customers	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
First, I wish you success. These remarks do not mean that I do not thank STC employees who are in fact the best, but there should be some shortcomings. It is true that we lack much treatment and courtesy from both the agent and the customer. I want to add	P
Giving the agent's name very quickly and unclearly	N
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
All my remarks are negative	N
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N

## Appendix (27) Focus group discussions on customer centric effective communication and problem resolution dimension

**P = Positive N = Negative**

Remarks	Effective communication and problem resolution
There is no credibility to deal with customers requirements'	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	P
Last time when I call 907 for canceling of Jood service, the agent try in different try ways to convince me to not canceling of this service.	P
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
I found only one professional agent, the rest are only good saying "Akhee Alkareem" (My brother) and "thanks for calling".	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily agent will call you But, with STC you should call again which require to wait another 30 minutes	N
Then the sound is too low to be thinking that sleeping	N
By comparison with the other companies from the services, STC is the best	P
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
The reason is that I had a problem in Qitaf when I Want replace the points and call 902 daily, and nearly three months did not solve my problem	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	P
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	P
Customer service is very poor; This makes customers to hate the company. They do not want to serve you	N
The employee has the skill, but after awhile, you will have same problem related to the poor services and poor network	P
I was one of the users of mobile Sawa (Prepaid Card). Per day discount 0.5 Halaleh (SR 0.05) and hit five riyals and it is repeated. When I contacted the 902 and as is well known, I waited 13 minutes. When the agent response about my problem (deducted the	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
When you have a fault, agent told you "The Tech. will contact you during the 24 hours...", but sometimes it take more than 3 days	N
The Call Center should have Clarification of the customer of the existence of the problem	N
Need more Transparency with the customers, Full and frank explanation	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with sheep. Third, Agents know very little about the field of communications, however. Fourth, Agents wants to get rid of the call as	N
The agent thanks you and promise you to solve the problem within 30 minutes, but nothing done	N
When you make call, You should expect 90% you will not be served	N
Positive and beneficial to help customers and wish them success	P
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another extension. When you go to the web site, you face a lot of problem there.	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been is transferred to other employees. And then I choose to cancel my phone line because of the lack of a professional one who could solve the problems.	N
The length of waiting time, maybe up to more than an hour	
Slow in solving the problems of telephone DSL Why pay for the establishment of telephone or mobile phone as long as I pay my monthly subscription? When agent feel as the employer, w	N
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
First: prayers Good luck to you. Second: I am one of the most contacted people in customer service.	
Agent wants to serve you. But the problem with company itself. Agents often say this is what I can do.	N

Remarks	Effective communication and problem resolution
The negative point that they do not respond to you directly. But when they response, they solve the problem, often	P
Agent need to give his name clearly.	N
Everything is bad on STC	N
STC in spite of originality. But it isn't offer integrated services to the customer. After a long wait to respond to the call, customer gets no benefit.	N
The quality of service of 907 is too bad. Sometime agent promise to send an order to network department to solve your problem, but hi didn't	N
Please select agent who talk clearly	N
Lack of awareness of agent offers new services. Goes to the agents lied to the customer	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
Agent try to avoid your request when you ask to speak to the supervisor	N
Tone of voice of many agents is not good	N
Answer of the customers call is very bad and reflects disrespect of the customers. We wait one hour for the reply of the agent without the required result.	N
Frankly, they try to satisfy the customer	N
STC is good in my opinion and the agents do their best but of course not all of them	P
You feel that the agent is in a hurry and at the moment he understands your problem he wishes to leave you maybe to serve other customers in addition to the lack of transparency and misguide in some offers or new services.	N
The call center is not perfectly utilized by STC. In my opinion the employees are qualified but there are some	P
Most agents are unaware of the requested information	N
In addition to the bad service the agents lack transparency.	N
All my remarks are negative	N
The agent is concerned of ending the call as soon as possible therefore his answers are very brief and repeats the word "Yes .... Correct" even what the customer says is incorrect.	N
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	P
Sometimes the agent tell you that they understood your problem and that they are going to solve it but it will not be solved before you repeat calling till you find an agent who really understand the problem and fix it.	N
Some of the employees are very bad and do not care for solving internet problems but when you shout and threaten them they understand.	N
Generally, the internet service is bad and I hope that your company bankrupt and lose.	N
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
Some employees still deal with customers through the culture of the government employees	N
We need an easy employee for an easy life	N

## Appendix (28) Focus group discussions on customer centric accessibility dimension

**P = Positive N = Negative**

Remarks	Accessibility
Number of Agents are not enough to serve customers	N
Sometime you call 907 and you wait long time but nobody response	N
Excellent	P
Agents are very good, but the problem with waiting time only	N
Sometimes agents misunderstand of your question, you may need long time to make him understand	N
For me, long waiting time make customers to transfer to other competitors	N
both 902 and 907 are good But, I prefer to use Khadamati (STC online service)	P
Waiting for almost 10 minutes	N
Waiting for almost 6 minutes	N
After waiting long time, agent asked me to call later,	N
STC is the worst telecommunication company in the kingdom. Mobily is better, for example, during the call, when you lost contact, Mobily agent will call you But, with STC you should call again which require to wait another 30 minutes	N
Then the sound is too low to be thinking that sleeping	N
The length of the waiting and not to respond to the call, making the customer wait-and-tired and close of the phone	N
Negative	N
Call Center 902 failed and very bad	N
Excellent, but the problem is long time waiting.	N
However it is better than other competitors (Mobily, Zain) "	N
You need to wait 10-30 minutes	N
The Worst customer service in the world is 902	N
One of the biggest problems we face with (902 and 907) is a long wait before a response from one of the staff. And sometimes stretching to more than 20 minutes	N
Do anything to reduce the waiting time	N
Waiting time to is a relatively long	N
First waiting time (from ten to fifteen minutes) Second more agents speak like a Badawii, he deal with you as dealing with sheep. Third, Agents know very little about the field of communications, however. Fourth, Agents wants to get rid of the call as	N
Please respond quickly. Please take care of this point.	N
Wait time until the time of long, especially with the phone Sawa (Prepaid)	N
I hope the company to reduce fees, and quickly respond to our calls	N
If you get an answer after half an hour, you are lucky. And agent told you go to the website service, or you should call again to another extension. When you go to the web site, you face a lot of problem there.	N
I Asked them to solve my problem; after procrastination, I have been is transferred to other employees. And then I choose to cancel my phone line because of the lack of a professional one who could solve the problems.	N
The length of waiting time, maybe up to more than an hour Slow in solving the problems of telephone DSL Why pay for the establishment of telephone or mobile phone as long as I pay my monthly subscription? When agent feel as the employer, w	N
STC is the worst service companies in the Kingdom in terms of service and lack of clarity.	N
The negative point that they do not respond to you directly. But when they response, they solve the problem, often	N
More waiting time when you call from prepaid card (Sawa)	N
With 907, it is difficult to reach to the agent.	N
Everything is bad on STC	N
STC in spite of originality. But it isn't offer integrated services to the customer. After a long wait to respond to the call, customer gets no benefit.	N
When waiting in the 907, it seem to I wait to travel on Saudi Airlines	N
With 907 and 902, there are many options, these make customers conflict. Not all customers are the same	N
Competitors services are better than STC services	N
Due to the poor service with the 907, I would avoid contact, even if the 907 I have a problem	N
Instead of have two number to call (907 and 902) I suggest to have only one calling center	N
When my balance is lee than SR0.15, I cannot talk to the 902. I hope this problem to be solved.	N
When I called 907 through my mobile set one week ago the agent responded after 32 hours. So, this call cost me a lot of money. I believe that the company has established 907 office to serve its marketing purposes and not to serve the customer. I can say	N

Remarks	Accessibility
We suffer from the long waiting time at the call centers (902 & 907) and sometimes we wait for more than 15 to 20 minutes without reply and the line hangs up.	N
Waiting for long time till the agent replies	N
First, I wish you success. These remarks do not mean that I do not thank STC employees who are in fact the best, but there should be some shortcomings. It is true that we lack much treatment and courtesy from both the agent and the customer. I want to add	N
Waiting time is very long	N
Long waiting time.	N
I am a VP customer. I suffer from long waiting time when I call the call center. I sometimes notice that the agent is unaware of the required service and transfers me to the System or to the supervisor of 902.	N
As for 907 I witnessed a very long waiting time and my request was not completed. Sometimes the System malfunctions and hangs up the call.	N
902 and 907 services are very poor. Waiting time is long and exceeds 20 minutes. There is no credibility and the agent gives inaccurate information. When calling another agent he gives information that contradicts to information given by the former agent.	N
The telephone service is the worst among the services of STC as regards to long waiting time. The service is a big failure because sometimes when you call the call center the AVR system allows you two options only the first is for invoice inquiry and the	N
Answer of the customers call is very bad and reflects disrespect of the customers. We wait one hour for the reply of the agent without the required result.	N
The disadvantages: Long waiting time for reply	N
Mostly the call is hanged up or you are directed to restart the call	N
I suggest that the customer should be called and not be left waiting for more than 10 minutes	N
The waiting time still very long and unbearable.	N
No need at least 15 minutes till the agent reply your call	N
I apologize for my comment but this is the truth. STC is really a bad company and lacks credibility in their offers and customer service. Since three years it is impossible to get a reply for my call before waiting for 30 minutes. This failure for the com	N
The waiting period is deadly and disappointing.	N
Call answer delay	N
Long waiting period	N
When the agent fails to understand the customer or feel that he cannot deliver the required service he ends the call and when you complain to the supervisor he asks you to give him the call time and the agent's name ( who do not give his full name )	N
Delay in replying the customer's call	N
Most agents are unaware of the requested information	N
All my remarks are negative	N
Is there any call center that keeps you waiting for 15 to 20 minutes?	N
Long waiting period particularly 902 where it reaches 15 minutes.	N
Delay answer of the customer call	N
The service is excellent but the waiting time is long	N
The problem of long waiting time	N
Long waiting period particularly 907	N
There is delay in deactivation of mobile service after the disconnection	N
From my point of view STC is one of the best companies that attract customers	P
They do not respond	N
There is only one remark which the long waiting period that may reach 7 minutes.	N
When the customer calls 907 or 902 the waiting period is not less than 7 minutes for VIP, what will be the case for regular customers.	N
Please hire more employees so as to be able to serve us	N
Reduce the option of the AVR system because it includes too much steps which requires pressing different bottoms of the telephone set.	N
The Internet is slow and installation of the service takes long time.	N
Too Much waiting time	N
I hope we have faster responses	N
Please reduce the waiting time	N

## Appendix (29) Brief biography of the experts to validate the research instrument

### **ABDULLAH H. AL-HARTHY**

P. O. Box: 89166, Riyadh 11682, Saudi Arabia; Mobile: +966 553444919, E-mail: ahharthy@stc.com.sa

#### **EXPERIENCE**

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<b>‡ Director, Program Management</b>	2008-Date
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Saudi Telecom Company, Saudi Arabia

<b>‡ Director, Service Management</b>	2007-2008
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Saudi Telecom Company, Saudi Arabia

<b>‡ Head of Customer Services Offices Manager</b>	2007-2007
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Saudi Telecom Company, Saudi Arabia

<b>‡ Head of Business Sales Offices</b>	2003-2007
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Saudi Telecom Company, Saudi Arabia

<b>‡ Landline &amp; Package Services Manager</b>	2002-2003
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Saudi Telecom Company, Saudi Arabia

<b>‡ Key Account Manager</b>	2001-2002
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Saudi Telecom Company, Saudi Arabia

<b>‡ District Business Sales Assistant Manager</b>	2000-2001
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*Saudi Telecom Company, Saudi Arabia*

#### **ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS**

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De Montfort University, United Kingdom

<b>Doctor of Business Administration</b>	2001-2004
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**Master of Marketing Administration** 1999-2000

King Abdul-Aziz University, Saudi Arabia

**BSc Engineer, Production Engineering & Systems Design** 1991-1996

**PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION**

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**Professional Engineer**, Saudi Council of Engineers (SCE)  
2009

**Six Sigma Green Belt**, American Society of Quality 2010

**Cont.....Appendix (29) Brief biography of the experts to validate the research instrument**

**Mahmoud Makki**

**Senior Associate**

**Communications, Media & Technology**

**Middle East**

**Executive Summary**

- 15 years experience, 4 with Booz & Company
- Extensive experience in strategic and business planning, marketing and communication strategy, customer experience, call center optimization, corporate performance and management, business intelligence, content strategy, market liberalization, service development and service management

**Relevant Experience**

- Strategic and business planning for fixed operators
- Marketing and communication strategy development and implementation for emerging services
- Business performance analysis and management
- Content strategy and operating model design for an incumbent ME operator
- Customer experience analysis
- Call center performance optimization
- Customer insight and analytics
- IPTV go-to-market plan for a fixed telecom operator
- Marketing, sales and customer care strategy focused on enterprise and residential markets

**Education**

- Masters of Science in Operations Research from the University of Texas at Austin
- Financial Optimization Certificate from Columbia University NYC
- Bachelor of Engineering from the American University of Beirut

### **Appendix (30) expert's review & comments on the construct and content validity of the research instrument**

I have been requested by the researcher to validate the construct and content of the research instrument.

The researcher's study aims to provide his organization with a transformation plan into becoming more customer-centric.

In order for an organization to be customer-centric, not only must it understand what the customer values, but also the value the customer brings to their bottom line. A customer-centric organization also needs to be employee-centric. I do agree with the researcher in that whilst customer-centricity creates a culture that is more aligned with customers' requirements, thus leading to greater customer intimacy, it alone will not drive profitable revenue growth.

Customer centricity within call centers is above and beyond handling customer calls efficiently; in a customer-centric call center, all customer issues are fully addressed and resolved satisfactorily. Support departments should ensure that frontline staff are regarded as their internal customers, thus ensuring everyone in the organization adopts an external focus. In such organizations, it is not sufficient to train frontline staff in how to treat customers, rather staff should be provided with the appropriate tools and authority, letting them decide how best to treat customers. Frontline staff should be allowed to offer customers what they feel they may require in the future and not simply rely on what they need today. Even the organization of a customer-centric company itself, is determined by customers and not by the senior management. When it is the customers who advise a company to raise prices, it can truly say it is customer-centric.

The seven dimensions selected by the researcher are, in my opinion, the 'DNA' of customer experience and attempting to excel in each of these will transform an organization from pushing products into one that wins customers. Therefore it is my belief that the conceptual model of customer experience, as adopted by the researcher, with a view to achieving customer-centricity is a valid one.

I have reviewed all the questions the researcher has selected to assess each dimension of customer experience, and it is my view that these questions are adequate and consistent with reading on the subject of the research. Accordingly, it is my belief that the content of the research instrument is valid for the purposes of this study.

**Abdullah H. Al-Harthy**  
**Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**June 2011**

**Cont..... Appendix (30) expert's review & comments on the construct and content validity of the research instrument**

Dear Saad,

I have read chapters 2 and 3, and also completed the survey as I have been an STC customer for the past 4 years and I call the call center on a “prolonged, yet regular” basis, almost once every year.

The literature and analysis you have gathered capture the topic of customer centricity at its heart. From a multitude of readings, case studies, and best practices, as well as from reading your document I summarize the philosophy of customer-centricity in few points:

1. It takes much more than motivated and knowledgeable employees to institutionalize customer-centricity; it actually requires optimized internal processes and tools to enable the motivated employees to practice customer-centricity;
2. Even if an organization had the most motivated employees, and the best processes, it still requires a customer-centric-ready organization
3. Customer-centricity is not a one-time task that organization spend on initially and then reap its advantages in shareholder's value (especially as this correlation has been proven in the analysis); but rather, it is an on-going process, that requires continuous improvement as customers are always evolving, the way they perceive your business is evolving, their channel requirements changes, competitors are changing, and people's motivation drivers are also evolving.
4. Internal marketing is key as the minute an organization treats its “external” customers better than its “internal” customers it will be committing a suicidal move; as this will directly lead to a fast deteriorating customer experience;
5. Last but not least, no matter how the above is difficult and time-consuming to achieve, the room of error is pretty low as customers typically judge and build their perception, that is difficult to change, from the first interaction, the first moment of truth; and therefore, these front-line agents need to have the right support system, need to be motivated, and have the sense of belonging to the organization from the time the phone rings! Furthermore, even if the first impression is good, then a customer would expect the same treatment at every touch point moving forward.

The seven pillars that are used in your paper to measure customer experience quality address the above points very well. In a nutshell:

1. Reliability, for me it is also consistency and this greatly covers points 3 and 5 above.
2. Responsiveness, or timeliness and effectiveness in handling the calls, covers point 5 above as well.
3. Competence and the ability to meet customer needs covers point 1 above.
4. Proactivity also covers points 1, 2, and 4 above;
5. Courtesy and the ability to listen well and care for the customer cover points 1, 3, and 5.

6. Effective communication and problem solving and the ability to be patient, positive and honest with the customer cover points 1, 3, and 5.
7. Accessibility and ease of access to multiple channels covers point 3.

In summary, the seven pillars are complete. Furthermore, the questionnaire that was distributed is fully aligned with the seven pillars; the questions asked covered the spirit of customer-centricity along the seven pillars. More importantly, the questions specific to each pillar were targeted to serve the purpose of that pillar, which I found useful as this will help in analyzing the survey data efficiently.

Last but not least, regarding the questionnaire, I believe it is engaging enough and complete in terms of covering the seven dimensions. And being an expert in the field, as well as a practitioner, the questionnaire captures the essence of the seven dimensions.

On the long run, I suggest to re-conduct the questionnaire again to better assess the call center's "Reliability" pillar, and more specifically the "consistency" component of reliability by asking the same questionnaire to a sub-set of customers that have actually regularly called the call center then assess how consistent their "good" or "bad" experience is.

Very thorough analysis and I wish you all the best.

**Mahmoud Makki**  
**Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
**June 2011**

### Appendix 31: Project Cost Based on Skillfair Annual Fee Rate Survey Report (2010)

Consultancy Type	Rate £	Premium	Co O/Head	Days	Number of consultants	Total	SAR
Lead Consultancy Partner	1250	0.5	3	220	1	£687,500	4,125,000
Lead Consultancy Associate	750	0.5	3	220	3	£1,237,500	7,425,000
Communications Specialist	400	0	2	60	4	£96,000	576,000
Call centre Script Specialist	450	0	2	20	4	£36,000	216,000
Live Call Monitoring Expert	450	0	2	20	4	£36,000	216,000
Agent Training Expert	600	0	2	140	8	£672,000	4,032,000
Total							16,590,000
Accom & Travel							5,806,500
Project Total							22,396,500
SAR rate	6						

**Customer Centricity at Saudi Telecom Company (STC)**

**An Investigation of User Perspectives on Customer-Centricity  
at Saudi Telecom Call Center**

**Document Six – Reflection**

**Name: Alkahtani Saad bin Zafer**

**NTU: N01488133**

**Document six is submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements of the Nottingham  
Trent University for the degree of Doctorate of Business Administration**

**December, 2010**

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## **1. Introduction**

My primary motivation to begin the journey of my doctorate degree in 2005 was to better equip myself to establish my company, STC, as a distinguished firm ready to face the strong and fierce competition prior to liberalization of the Telecom sector in Saudi Arabia.

During my daily work, I had already recognized the scale of the many important issues and contemporary challenges facing the company, and I felt that I needed to build on the MBA I had achieved in 2001 in order to develop the necessary intellectual capability to be a successful leader at a time of such wrenching change for my company.

In particular, I was looking to develop an objective and professional approach to situation assessment and problem solving based on scientific methodologies and to learn from the experiences of others in my field.

These aims brought me to the decision to undertake a DBA rather than PhD. I viewed it as necessary to closely relate my studies to my work, so that my company's activities, people and customers would supply the material for my research for my academic development. Furthermore, I felt that my own development would be enhanced by as much group working and interaction as possible, rather than studying in isolation.

### **1.1 Choosing the subject for study**

Selecting the DBA led to the major question of the subject for study and research. Clearly it needed to be grounded in STC's battle to transform itself from a government department to a major public company, and to be a subject big enough to make a difference but sufficiently focused to be addressable within the scope of personal endeavour in the DBA. I had already been urging culture change within STC in a series of articles that I had written since 2000 and published in my organization's magazine. (See appendix 1). The focus of all this culture change was to create a customer first, or customer centric, mindset throughout the organization. During the first two taught modules my thinking crystallized into focusing on the front line employees, and in particular on transforming the customer service call centers by understanding their jobs and challenges and providing the right environment and training.

This decision was reinforced by my own strong belief that it was crucial to start with the front line staff in customer service center, sales or marketing departments because they are the first who get in contact with STC customers.

From a personal standing, this meant I would also build on the training courses in customer focus strategy that I had already attended in reputed universities such as Stanford Business School, University of Michigan, Colombia Business School and Insead Business School. STC itself had also held a series of Culture Change Programs driven by the President and VP's of the company. These factors together with conferences and workshops held by experts in this field had settled me in the importance of the customer centricity concept for my organization and also helped me to start preparation of the documents of this research.

However, moving on from choice of course and subject to living the program provided some major challenges, as I will outline in the next two sections – Personal Development and Project Development.

## **2. Personal Development**

### **2.1 Issues**

Although successfully studying for my MBA had given me a hunger to undertake a DBA, it also made me deeply aware of the personal challenges of juggling the DBA study requirements, my work as a VP of STC at a very demanding time, and my young and growing family.

Firstly, the choice was to study in Saudi Arabia or internationally. For reasons of its academic excellence and for the highest likelihood of cross-fertilization from like-minded executives with similar challenges, I chose Great Britain.

Within GB, the decision hinged on academic excellence and a program that would fit my lifestyle. Of the offers received, the Nottingham Trent University Business School offered the best match. In particular the requirement for compulsory attendance on Thursdays and Fridays fitted perfectly with weekends in Saudi Arabia. This meant I could travel to Nottingham Trent Wednesday night, return to Saudi Arabia on Saturday and report to work on Sunday – in theory therefore minimizing the impact on my work, and on time spent away from my family.

The reality was a grinding weekly journey that significantly affected my physical and psychological health. This was particularly so during the taught modules in September 2007 and 2009 corresponding to Ramadan, the month of fasting in the Muslim world.

### **2.2 Managing through the issues**

In the main I managed this by sharing. I had discussed the whole concept of the course with my wife and family, and together we had agreed that success in doing this course would benefit the whole family, and that the sacrifices entailed would be shared accordingly. Their support throughout the inevitable moments of fatigue and self-doubt was invaluable.

Sharing was also amplified by my decision to embark on this journey with a fellow traveller and colleague, Mr. Yahya Al Kahtani. Together we had researched and selected this course and this university, and together we flew through the night, worked in the day and argued in the evenings and kept up our spirits and together we have reached the final

stage. Taking this learning point slightly out of order, I would say that this DBA experience has brought home to me the basic truth in the old English adages – “No man is an island unto himself”, and “a trouble shared is a trouble halved”. The lessons for business are – difficult challenges are best met by teams, not individuals working in isolation.

Bonds of family and friendship can assuage but not erase the realities of travel and time zones, so another essential element of coping is to make the travel as comfortable and stress free as possible.

### **2.3 Learning points**

I have mentioned the massive impact of friendship and teamwork, but it bears repeating now. Teamwork is not the sum of its parts but a massive multiplier on the components. Whilst in this course I have learned and developed a number of objective tools and methodologies, I have also recognized again that using them to drive teamwork generates far more power than anything I can deliver as even the most dedicated executive.

On a very personal basis, I have learned the truism that I only have one body that I must nurture and respect in order to have it carry me through difficult days. I have learned that exercise in the Nottingham Hilton gym is an excellent antidote to stress and frustration, and that a pleasant dinner with good company will give renewed energy to meet the challenges of the morrow.

I have also learned the benefit of the discipline of forward planning. This may seem a very basic admission to any Western reader, but Saudi culture is one of “on demand satisfaction”. Just the physical and logistical effort of travelling across three time zones between two very different cultures on a weekly basis requires a shift in personal thinking and behavior, and one that can be turned to benefit in grappling with the scale of change with which STC wrestles each day.

### **3. Project development**

#### **3.1 Issues**

There have been three “big problem” issues in developing my submission for this DBA.

One is that I live my subject every day. Hauling my organization around from being product oriented to customer centric is a daily task of unremitting focus, so in that sense, my chosen subject of a subset within that is just an extension of normal work, and so straight forward. *Not true at all*. Succeeding in the DBA required me to change attitude and behavior – to build analysis rather than react to a specific, and to look for models and frameworks to assist analysis rather than seek instant solutions. In my research, I listened for the first time to a large number of recorded calls between agent and customer and understood at first hand the level of call center agents' awareness of customer centricity. I was taken aback by the poor skills of some agents, particularly their behavioral skills as well as their lack of knowledge of the features of the company services - especially the new ones. Whilst this increased my determination to continue my DBA journey it also inflamed me to seek instant action. It was impossible not to shift in a moment from detached observer researching customer experience to enraged VP on hearing one of my precious customers treated with ignorant indifference by my organization.

Secondly, doing a job and doing a DBA require different skills.

When I started writing my research, particularly document one and document two, I felt that this task of undertaking a research programme of this size was a very difficult mission. Although my MBA studies had involved the same combination of private study and business activity, the long years following that had been a time of work as a senior manager focused on the day to day work and achievement of my organization objectives, and particularly the objectives of the business unit under my direct supervision. In that time, the habit and discipline of private research had been forgotten, and in any case DBA required a ramp up on my previous efforts.

As a result of this I began doubting my capability to combine the necessary research program with my business and personal situations. I realized that this type of programme requires skills, great effort and reliable references for the research as well as a special emphasis on interpretation, reflection and the application of both academic and professional insights.

Thirdly, to compound my anxiety about my own level of capability, I realized that I had selected a subject with little existing literature. There is a wealth of material on customer focus, of course, but nothing that I can find on my industry, - “customer focus in public network telecoms”, and therefore nothing on “public telecoms – the journey from state-owned to private enterprise”. I had chosen a research subject that had no references in Saudi Arabia or even in some European countries. In fact, I had already experienced difficulty in obtaining references during the stage of building and writing the literature reviews for Document Two. As a result, I decided to rely on references from USA libraries, some journals and the library of NTU.

### **3.2 Managing through the issues**

My reaction to these difficulties and doubts was to look back at my own companies’ analysis of the challenges it was facing. I started reviewing the previous minutes of meetings of culture building program committees in order to obtain any insights and information that could lead me to start outlining a high level research strategy and questions. I also tried to recall the discussions with other VPs in our meetings on this subject about their problems and concerns. It appeared to me that all of them concentrated on the threat of the imminent competition to our company and stressed the importance of implementing culture building programs for the front line employees across the company. This is the primary interface through which we serve the customers properly and fulfill all their needs and requirements, and the quality of customer service delivered is the major factor in customers' loyalty and satisfaction. In a nutshell – this was something I had to do and deliver on.

The methodology I developed to guide me through the uncertainties was the ancient navigational technique of triangulation.

In undertaking the work required for defining and structuring my research questions I adopted and greatly benefited from Remenyi *et al's* (1998) work on completing business and management research, as well as my resources from the previous executive education program I have attended and my DBA taught sessions. Adopting this triangulated approach enabled me to identify the common linkages between all of my research documents as well as developing the required road map of this journey. From here I began my journey to

prepare the research and start writing Document One because the road to the DBA and the primary features of my mission became very clear and straightforward.

### **3.3 Learning points**

I have had to separate out and compartmentalize my roles of researcher and VP. As a VP, I cannot stand back in the face of clear organizational shortcomings – I must act and address these immediately. However, as a researcher, I need to go back and continue to assemble the big picture evidence that I need to provide the foundation for this DBA, and which I also recognize, that I need to give direction to my organization.

For instance, in compiling the material for Document Three, there was one significant recommendation I derived from the results and findings pertaining to the importance of increasing the awareness and knowledge of call center agents about the new services offered by the company. I found that this lack of development repeated throughout the document, and was a demonstrable weak point in our search for customer centricity. I reacted immediately and formed a taskforce to develop a communication mechanism between sales retail offices, the marketing group which designs the product, and the call center supervisors and team leaders responsible for selling and providing technical support to customers. The taskforce began its mission to streamline and establish the right procedures that support the smooth delivery of service via any touch point, and the subsequent results were spectacular.

To summarize this reflection, I believe that one of the most important skills that I have learned through my DBA study has been to become more confident and determined to achieve my objective regardless of the ambiguities and challenges.

## **4. Professional Development**

I view my professional development in two dimensions – behaviour and competence. I define my *competence* as my understanding and range of analytical tools and processes, and my *behavior* as my readiness to adopt the necessary discipline and working practice to deploy and use my competence.

The issues I faced in carrying out this DBA posed major challenges in both of these areas, and managing through them has been a major source of overall personal improvement, as set out in the following sections.

### **4.1 Issue – Defining the scope**

I have already said that once I had chosen to undertake the DBA, I wanted my subject for study and research to be about culture change within STC, and specifically to understand how to create a customer first, or customer centricity, mindset throughout the organization. During the first two taught modules my thinking crystallized into focusing on the front line employees, and in particular on transforming the customer service call centers through understanding their jobs, their challenges and providing the right environment and training.

**Validating the choice of subject:** My first step was to use the structure and reading opportunities provided by the DBA to validate my decision and define customer centricity, its implications for an organization in creating and growing the mindset and understanding amongst employees. I was already intuitively certain that the greater the ability of an organization to deliver exceptional customer experiences then the greater its ability to survive in a turbulent global economy. Now I needed to satisfy myself intellectually that this is true, and also use the disciplines imposed by the DBA to structure my approach.

**Building a layered structure:** Although, as I have said, I had already decided that the focus of the study was to be the Customer Service Call Centers, I wanted to put that in the context of the whole organization, and understand the totality of the concept, rather than a single island implementation. I therefore decided that I should build a logic chain leading

from concept through progressive layers of detail, both to develop my understanding, and to transform the elephant into bite size chunks.

**Basic concept:** My first proof point was taken from Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's statement, (1991) that "the managing of customer experiences and the quantification of those strategies through proper analysis and tools for example is providing a strong, scalable foundation for ascertaining just how an organization can consistently deliver exceptional customer experiences over time."

I learned from Thompson (2004) that thinking on Customer-centric organizations had moved on a huge way in the last forty years, and that the successful 21<sup>st</sup> century practitioners are far removed from the conventional view of efforts in the past century to motivate call center representatives externally. Researches over the last forty years show that motivational posters and sayings are useless unless the call center representatives see the value of taking ownership of a call and attempting to maximize customer satisfaction every time – a very valuable point to appreciate from the outset.

**Differentiating between Product & Customer Centricity:** In setting the scene for my journey through the DBA, I explained that my company, STC, is engaged in a voyage of its own from state to private ownership, and the implicit mind-set shift from being supply to market led. I felt sure that Product Centricity was deeply embedded within my organization, and I needed to learn the characteristics of each type, and be able to compellingly argue the case for change.

On this subject I learned a great deal from the classic analysis of marketing's search for meaning, *Marketing Myopia*. This draws out the definition of customer-centric over product-centric segmentation of markets. Drucker (1954); Levitt (2004); and Kotler, (1967) all advocate customer centricity as being integral to the daily operations of an organization - that is, that every initiative, strategy and program must be directly driven by customers' preferences, requirements and needs. In effect an organization becomes a lean provider of customer responsiveness and reflects back to customers across all segments what their greatest preferences and needs are.

I noted that true customer centricity is exceptionally difficult to attain and takes a focus on continual improvement through measured results (Shah, *et al.* 2006) and a strong focus on

changing the culture of an organization (Sharma, Mathur, and Dhawan, 2009) – this last point again being of particular relevance to me.

By now it was clear to me that I was not only gaining a far deeper understanding of the subject, but also how to implement what I was learning – a point I will return to later in this section.

My reading that researchers and theorists have often defined customer centricity through thorough analyses and comparisons with product-centric organizations further strengthened this realization. A comparison of the philosophies between product versus customer centricism, shows that the former is entirely focused on tangible, measurable attributes (Shah, *et al.* 2006), while the latter is entirely focused on how to bring the customer decision-making process into the product and customer service effectively (Galbraith, 2005). Organizations also credit this philosophical difference with entirely different approaches to innovation and new product development, where the customers' preferences, perceptions and unmet needs are taken into account in the new product development and introduction process (Crosby and Johnson, 2006). Customer-centric organizations also seek to define their organizations by their alignment with customers' future goals and objectives as well (Tomovic, *et al.* 2010). In short, customer-centric cultures see the continual investing in relationships as more critical than continually moving down a product timeline or moving one product generation to the next (Shah, *et al.* 2006).

**The Value of relationships – focus on relationships, not transactions:** The above reading led naturally into the value of relationships. Customer-centric organizations also have a business orientation built more on relationships, with significantly less of a reliance on transactions (Sharma, Mathur, and Dhawan, 2009). Once again, I found myself reflecting that whilst I clearly understood the difference between a transaction and a relationship, I had not at all grasped the implications of what a focus on one or the other meant for the organization's core behavior.

Chakravarthy, and Lorange, (2007) explained this in terms of internal and external focus. They describe an organization that chooses to concentrate only on the internal factors critical for their success as myopic, and one that will perpetuate an inward-centric mentality, as compared with one that chooses to concentrate on the external factors and their accountability for making results happen for customers.

I particularly noted that from an organizational focus perspective, customer centricity requires senior management to be role-models for the behaviors they expect the organization to adopt and eventually engrain into the daily performance of the processes, procedures and tasks to be done. Employees become customer advocates in organizations that have a highly customer centric focus and mindset. The focus is on customer satisfaction and growth through customer loyalty beyond transactions. As a result, organizations tend to place much greater emphasis on valuing the relationships and insights gained from conversations with customers over any amount of internal, and often distanced, analysis. However, changing the organizational focus of an organization is exceptionally difficult and requires that senior management concentrate on the most critical pressing tasks to keep their companies customer-centric over time. For lasting change to occur, senior management must continuously concentrate on removing outdated procedures that may get in the way of listening to customers, getting rid of outdated ideas of how to manage customer service, replacing no longer relevant support and service programs, and also removing any and all factors that can deter customer data driving innovation. A customer-centric organizational focus requires continual vigilance and a continual level of support from senior management if it is to become and then remain the predominant force in an organizational culture (Chakravarthy, and Lorange, 2007). In the same context Strikwerda, and Stoelhorst (2009) stressed that in comparing those customer-centric organizations that excel in every aspect of their businesses, the description of minimally acceptable versus exceptional performance is in the ability to create a passion for customer centricity that is not easily replaced. They added that the role of senior management is crucial in this regard with the celebrating of customer-centric, often selfless, acts on the part of employees, being critical for the culture to continue growing and strengthening itself over time.

The repetition is deliberate of the role of senior management as the cause and guardian of the change to customer centricity, as it is one of the central elements of learning. It seems that customer centricity, like freedom, requires eternal vigilance, to paraphrase Thomas Jefferson.

**Profitability & customer centricity:** The very easy question to ask of all of the above is – “Fine, but how does that translate into profitability”? Answering this is key to my role as a senior manager in promoting and guarding the migration to customer centricity. I learned

from my reading of Strikwerda and Stoelhorst (2009) that ultimately the greatest differentiators a company has over the long-term are the value of its customer relationships, created through various touch points such as call centers and the depth of insight they can provide, insights into how the organization can be improved, and ultimately how loyalty can be attained. Specifically, on the point of customer-centricity and profitability, studies by Reichheld and Detrick (2003) indicate that once an organization has been able to attain a high degree of customer loyalty their churn costs, services costs, and customer acquisition costs drop significantly. Loyalty, when systematically and consistently pursued through the use of programs and a continual strengthening of the reciprocal relationships between companies and their customers, can have a very significant long-term financial impact to the organization from cost reductions. From a primarily financially driven focus, customer centricity when combined with loyalty can have a very significant effect on profitability of a firm over time by reducing its costs and increasing profitable sales to existing customers (Reichheld, and Detrick, 2003).

**Systems are important:** On several occasions, the importance of company systems was stressed. Relationships may be of a higher order of importance than transactions, but relationships are carried out through a series of transactions.

Strikwerda and Stoelhorst (2009) believe that the differences between product-centric and customer-centric organizations become evident in how information and knowledge is used. In customer-centric organizations knowledge and intelligence are used to make every interaction with the customer as insightful and useful as possible. They added that intelligence and information within the company is used to attain higher levels of customer satisfaction and greater levels of customer loyalty.

At a basic level, Cook (2008) made the point forcefully when he said that a call center representatives may have the best intentions in the world to help a customer calling in, yet if the underlying systems and processes are not in place to enable them to deliver consistently exceptional results, customer satisfaction will be periodic - a point to carry home after the DBA voyage and park on top of my desk, and never to be forgotten. Good customer-friendly systems are becoming more and more important in enabling a good experience.

Reychav, and Weisberg, (2009) stated that the measurable results of a customer-centric mindset often emanate from the financial investment in business process improvements

that are directly made as a result of research into customers' unmet needs, preferences and requirements. These types of investments are often at a very fundamental, systemic level in organizations to make their entire series of databases, systems, and programs all align to the needs of customers.

Reichheld, Markey Jr. and Hopton, (2000) linked the need for making customer centricity a foundational element in the process improvements directly to the eventual customer loyalty and long-term cost reductions achieved. Investing to drive up loyalty by getting key customer criteria taken care of from a process standpoint not only can make an organization easier to do business with, it can increase loyalty as well (Reichheld, and Detrick, 2003). This is especially true if the modifications made to key process areas are made specifically based on customer feedback and specific, focused feedback has been provided to them with regard to the re-engineering of core process areas – which in turn ties directly back to the profitability section above. Simply willing customer centricity is not enough without the resources to support the front end.

**Red and blue oceans – Market positioning:** All of the above is based on contrasting two status quo positions – that is, in any given environment; a customer-centric environment will outperform its product-centric counterpart. However, markets are not static elements but dynamic organisms.

Kim and Mauborgne's work (2004) articulates the value of customer-centricity in finding and developing new markets. Spending on research and development is no guarantee of finding highly profitable or blue ocean markets. Instead it requires a more creative, unique and different perspective to find opportunities in the market and fully capture them based on insights from customers with unmet needs. Customer centricity can also have a significant impact on the perspective an organization has of its market and the opportunities inherent within it and other tangential and territory market areas as well. This aspect of blue ocean thinking being driven by customer's perspectives, preferences, unmet needs and wants further underscores its inherent value and also its usefulness from a strategy perspective. A blue ocean concept is one of finding an untested market space and exploiting it not through massive amounts of research & development spending, but through the development of innovative approaches to anticipating and responding to current and future customer needs. As a result, blue oceans or uncontested markets are often found by more customer-centric organizations, versus those that are product- focused and organized around transactions. Companies that have a high reliance on a product-

centric approaches to managing their businesses run the risk of entering “red” oceans or those markets where price is used as a differentiator and often loss of profitability results (Kim, and Mauborgne, 2004).

In a business such as public telecoms, where anything other than “me too” is extremely complex and expensive to achieve, this is a fundamental learning point, and one whose weight will only increase in future. Arussy (2002) stressed that customers are now often much more demanding than they have ever been in the past. Studies indicate that the value equation of customers is altered during recessionary times as well, with a higher level of expectations around service, support, and responsiveness.

**Celebration milestones:** I have learned the importance of celebrating correctly to support the transition to customer-centricity. Kim and Mauborgne (2004) together with Nolan (2009) reveal that product-centric organizations also tend over time to celebrate milestones that are entirely focused within the organization, with a new product launch being a critical one. Instead of celebrating a customers’ first use of the product or better yet, the first customer satisfaction survey or questionnaire received with a perfect score, product-centric organizations develop a more insulated view of the world that perpetuates cause-and-effect thinking. They also believe that this cause-and-effect thinking is driven by the dollars and time spent on the product driving it into existence, with customer’s adoption being seen as a given. In fact celebrating the overall success of a new product when it launches *and* is adopted by customers is more indicative of customer-centric organizations as it means finally the connection has been made from all the internal efforts paying off with customers’ needs being met.

This tells me how I must be careful in creating recognition and incentive programs, and even to check the direction and phrasing in the company’s news magazines and websites. It is success with customers that matters, and not the creation of a product or service.

**Making the organization change:** Dyer, and Nobeoka (2000) and Shah *et al.* (2006) stress that improving organizational effectiveness begins by taking the perspectives and insights from customers and acting on them. In the case of service providers such as STC that rely on call centers to capture orders as well as customer insights from their customers, being able to manage the variation in orders for off-the-shelf versus build-to-order or highly customized services is absolutely critical. They stated that customer centricity as a

source of innovation and improvement at the strategy and process levels for the more advanced customized services requirements is critical.

Shook (2009) added that customer centric organizations therefore mark excellence in understanding and reacting to changing market needs from a customer perspective. Dyer, and Nobeoka (2000) and Shah *et al.* (2006) have agreed that customer centric organizations have fully integrated processes that tie in customer understanding to all business functions. They strive to have integration between business units to avoid a silo approach. Processes in these organizations also are perfectly consistent and drive customer satisfaction and loyalty.

I read this section as bridging between building a compelling understanding of the business imperative, and then understanding the detail of my chosen business unit element – the call centre, and making that a pathfinder for change in my organization.

#### **4.2 Issues – Objectivity & scale**

Armed with a big picture understanding does not obviate the over-riding need to be objective – and I have previously described that challenge. The source of the research for this DBA is in my work environment, and my job and the DBA are inter-twined. I have mentioned that when listening to recorded conversations between Call Centre Agents and customers I found it next to impossible not to shift in a moment from detached observer to enraged VP on hearing one of my precious customers treated with ignorant indifference by my organization. The Analytical tools I used were an essential way of bringing personal discipline to this process, as well as being the basis for analysis of an unstructured situation.

The second is managing the scale of the project. STC has 4 million customers and 256 main “contact points” across the Kingdom, staffed by hundreds of agents handling thousands of calls each day on a huge variety of issues. Defining customer centricity in a way that was comprehensive but manageable in discrete elements posed the second challenge - and also one that was addressed through use of the analytical tools of which I learned during the DBA study.

#### **4.3 Managing through the issues**

My research process essentially turned on two elements – the analysis of conversations between Call Centre agents and customers (a very unstructured environment), the

importance of which is brought out below, and structured questionnaires across a wider body – I have described this below under “The Current State Assessment Phase”.

Creating an appropriate structure for these questionnaires was undoubtedly educational, but I should say that understanding the process of analyzing the conversations between the Call Centre Agents and the customers was an especially new and deep learning experience. Why – well, I have already alluded to the need for a tool that would provide objectivity, but far more importantly was the realization of the depth of work that has been done to generate an understanding of how to analyze what is by its nature a very unstructured situation. Two people talking to each other in a situation being driven by the customer set me an entirely new dimension of challenge in conceptualizing and in learning – and the result was extremely informative and educational.

The reading and findings are given in depth in Document Three, and the reading and conclusions are summarized here.

The real key for me in “how to analyze” was in the reading on Conversational Analysis. My base guide was the work of Goffman and Garfinkel, who both tackled different aspects of conversations and discussions. Goffman (1955, 1983) in his studies explained that all evaluators of discussions or conversations analysts should understand that the whole idea behind discussions is that they not only represent the personal identity, opinion and inclination of the individual but also all the social agencies that operate in and have an influence on his environment – social agencies in this case being the rules of STC and Saudi culture.

The next level down was the Narrative & Semiotic (Science of Signs) Analysis by Peter Manning and Betsy Cullum – Swan (1992) highlighted the differences between the content narrative and semiotic analysis, Narrative analysis positions texts as symbolic action, studying them through a certain frameworks of act, scene, agent agency and purpose. Semiotics' is considered to be the science of signs.

Finally, the work of Drew & Heritage, and specifically that of Heritage (1984) enabled the specific positioning of this body of thought to the Call Centre environment.

Carrying out the analysis meant putting my learning into practice in my work. I have explained that the DBA journey and my company’s voyage were parallel and inter-twined. I had been part of a senior management working group for some time, and as part of that

implemented my learning in this real-life and very hands on environment. The process was as follows:

#### **4.4 Conversation analysis within a call center**

The decision was that the approach to studying and analyzing discussion under this situation specific format would be the same as the one that worked for the ordinary conversation format. The general idea was that all the context and denotations and conclusions that were going to be made would be a direct result of the construction of the interaction made by the members of the discussion. This was considered more useful as opposed to the collection of bulk load of data that was collected as part of the historical background provided (Heritage, 1984). This approach can work like a charm in the call center industry where the conversation between the caller and the company's respondent is purely based upon the construction or configuration of the conversation and all relevant points are exchanged as outcrop of the previous comments of expression.

The main idea in call centers when they use the concept of CA is that, at its core, all the conversation and discussions that take place between the caller and the company respondent can be very easily constructed, referenced, and supervised to help the company as well as the caller come to common grounds of mutual understanding. Also, most of the implementers of the CA concept in a call center can apply the exterior company rules and practices during different phases within the conversation so as to see their influence and whether they can be implemented in the long run for the betterment of both the company and the callers.

The result was order out of the chaos of hundreds of unstructured calls, with some very valuable findings for STC, and I would not have been able to achieve this without the learning experience provided through the DBA.

All of this was then distilled down and used to generate the Current State Assessment phase which was as follows:

- The project was kicked off along with identification of “Customer Life Cycles” for each business unit, each activity happening in different customer life cycle steps (e.g. Service application for PSTN, etc.), and related Touch-Points (e.g. Sales Outlets, call centers, website, Email, Field technician, etc.)

- Then, in order to have the Voice of Employees, 30 different employee interviews were conducted with STC professionals working in each and every Touch-Point in order to reveal the perspective of employees regarding the customer experience delivered in each customer life cycle step.
- In a parallel study to collection of voice-of-employees, two consecutive voice of customer studies were conducted:
  1. In-Depth Interviews: Over 130 questions were addressed to 28 customers from different customer segments (Stars, Steady stars, Up & Coming, Low contributors) and from three different cities (Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam).
  2. Focus Groups: After completing In-Depth Interviews of STC customers, two Focus groups were conducted in order to validate the finding of In-Depth-Interviews.
- Best Practices from global operators were used. (Understanding best practices applied by other Telco's was part of the Current State Assessment phase)
- Competitor Analysis of the Saudi market was conducted. Mobily's and Zain's contact centers were compared and contrasted with STC and several analyses at different stages were used to understand the weakness and strengths of the touch points such as call centers.
- Customer-Centricity Assessment: A questionnaire addressed to key touch-point employees in order to identify how well STC identifies, differentiates, and interacts with its customers and customizes its services /communication/ interaction based on the differences among the customer base.
- Customer Experience Strategy Formation Phase.
  - In order to set the basis for all customer interactions delivered from all touch-points, especially the contact centers, a customer experience strategy was constructed. This strategy, which was also aligned with the renewed brand promise of STC, is supposed to be the base for all customer experience related initiatives in future.
- Customer Experience Roadmap Development Phase.
  - In order to close the gaps identified in Current State Assessment as per the strategy developed in Customer Experience Strategy deliverable, 38 different initiatives have been identified under six different work streams, which will take STC to best-in-class operator within customer experience domain.

## **5. Overall Experience**

I expected to acquire knowledge and technique on my DBA journey and was not disappointed, though the process of learning threw up many flashes of realization. But firstly, and rather unexpectedly, I learned about myself. To participate in the DBA required me to cope with strenuous physical demands, and the way in which I coped with this has been a lesson for life.

Moving from a work to academic environment during this programme has not been a simple shift of mindset. The physical move from Riyadh to Nottingham is a grinding weekly journey that significantly affected my physical and psychological health, especially during the taught modules in September 2007 and 2009 corresponding to Ramadan, the month of fasting in the Muslim world. The value of friendship and comradeship is only really appreciated at such times of stress and fatigue, and the long hours shared with my fellow traveler, student and colleague, Mr. Yahya Al Kahtani, will be a long standing memory. Teamwork is often a glib management concept but for me the practicalities of the DBA made me really understand the power of a team when the members pull together and support each other.

A second personal insight was planning ahead, which is not a cultural strength of the Saudi nation. Dealing with the volume of reading and thinking in the DBA together with the travel load, a senior role in a company going through a wrenching transition and last but not least, family life with young children took my time management and planning to a different level, and can only have fitted me better for my life ahead.

On a very personal basis, I have learned the truism that I only have one body that I must nurture and respect in order to have it carry me through difficult days. I have learned that exercise in the Nottingham Hilton gym is an excellent antidote to stress and frustration, and that a pleasant dinner with good company will give renewed energy to meet the challenges of the morrow.

A closely associated trait of personal management is self-discipline. Part of my logic in choosing customer centricity was that it was core to driving the transition in my company, so that my research would simply be an extension of my normal work. In part, that was so, but separating the role of researcher for DBA from business VP could be very difficult. In listening to recorded agent-customer conversations, it was very difficult not to shift in a moment from detached observer to angry manager when listening to employees clumsily

mis-managing a customer situation. Difficult it might have been, but it laid an excellent foundation for the later implementation of analytical frameworks.

I also had to deal with real self-doubt, especially in the early stages when I began questioning my capabilities of being able to continue with the overall research program due to my business and personal situations. I realized that this type of programs requires a different skills and mindset to my “business VP head” - more focus on reliable references for the research as well as special emphasis on interpretation, reflection and the application of both academic and professional insights.

The only solution was to keep going, and eventually it was clear to me that I was not only gaining a far deeper understanding of the subject, but also how to implement what I was learning – a lesson in the value of perseverance.

I also found that apparently narrow academic definitions could have surprisingly significant practical applications. For instance, at one point I found myself reflecting that whilst I clearly understood the difference between a transaction and a relationship, I had not at all grasped the implications of what a focus on one or the other meant for the organization's core behavior.

This leads me to comment on examples of where the DBA experience gave me insights in how to significantly improve my working performance.

One such was the Task Force I formed to upgrade the awareness of call centre agents about new products and services, as a result of noticing that there was a repetitive theme of weakness in the awareness and knowledge of call center agents about this. This was in the phase of collecting data for Document Three, and the taskforce I formed between sales retail offices, the marketing group and the call center supervisor and team leader produced spectacular results .

I have certainly appreciated the role of senior management as the cause and guardian of the change to customer centricity, as it is one of the central elements of learning, and adjusted my own behavior accordingly.

Finally, understanding the whole process of analyzing the interaction between call centre agent and customer, and therefore as to how this can be improved has been at the heart of my DBA and application to work and at the core of the current State Assessment that I have described earlier.

## **5.1 Conclusion**

In embarking on this DBA in 2005, I set out to better equip myself to establish my company, STC, as a distinguished firm ready to face the strong and fierce competition prior to liberation of the Telecom sector in Saudi Arabia.

During my daily work, I had already recognized the scale of the many important issues and contemporary challenges facing the company, and I felt that I needed to build on the MBA that I had achieved in 2001 in order to develop the necessary intellectual capability of being a successful leader at a time of such wrenching change for my company.

In particular, I was looking to develop an objective and professional approach to situation assessment and problem solving based on scientific methodologies and to learn from the experiences of others in my field.

I am confident that I have achieved this aim, with the support of my family, friends, fellow students and the staff at the University of Nottingham Trent.

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### Appendix (1) English translation of the first article



## Customer is always right

Serving the client is the top priority for companies that wish to grow fast.

Based on the outcome of a survey conducted by the (Price water house company) for measuring customer's tendency & trends in services and products companies that grow rapidly, it has been proven that the customer's service is deemed to be 81%, where as the cost control factor, represents 72% as such. Customer service in this study is considered to be the most important activity factor in these companies. If one company does not grow fast, then the customer service will be the reason.

It is well known in the marketing studies that keeping the existing customers is way less in cost than getting new ones. So it would be better for services & products companies to keep their customers satisfaction & happiness as their concern. Mr. Getzler , the chairman of Getzler & partners company , said that most of the companies are not listening to their customers .They are giving them fake promises which they cannot fulfill , & solving problems only when it is too late . Mr. Getzler also said that customer care department, should be given more authorities to deal with customers freely & solve their problems , then the management will assist them when they need help .He also said that the most inconvenient status for customers , when hearing ( manager is not here ! ) so his advice is to have ( Focus groups ) ready to discuss problems with major customers & the kind of services they prefer , ahead of time .

Although automatic systems had been inserted for serving customers, but still mankind will be the keystone for customer services. So the employees should be trained how to deal with customers, not to be trained how to use the system. That is because nowadays, the real value of the company is measured by its mankind rather than its automatic systems.

Another study carried out by Mr. James S. Bebiton ,the chairman of Dallas services & Administrative Company in Texas , who is the author of the book : ( Human Performance Consulting : Transforming Human Potential into Productive Business Performance ) pointed out that human customer services is increasing the income rate by 10% to 30% . So the effective

customer services is the biller of the company that wish to be successful in a competitive market, otherwise it will fail for sure.

Mrs. Karen Ede, of Avak Telecom in New York City is saying that customer's effective services depend on provision of the best resources, reasonable training programs & high skilled labors, especially when facing their customers at the service centers, while providing their administration with very useful information's for all levels of the administration. Mrs. Karen is also warning from conducting customer's evaluations through automatic systems which are giving the wrong measurements for things that customers care employees cannot control. And that considering customers phone calls/per minutes as a major indicator of success , is dangerous , without considering the quality services offered to the customers originally .

Mr. Josef Michel Longer, (deputy executive chairman) of Longo Company, said that keeping the sales dept. Employees informed with all kinds of problems & solutions in details throughout the marketing reports, plays the great role in customers service process, because those employees act like customers layers, who show them how to solve the problems. We have to contact them before they do.

According to what the briefing shown above about the importance of the customer's service and how it helps companies to grow fast, increasing their incomes, & minimizing the cost control, we are ,as managers or employees of the customers service ,& other departments , have to study these lessons carefully ,so that our Saudi Telecom Company (STC) will be on the top , in a strong competitive position that enables her to fulfill all customers needs & demands and granted their pleasure , in the same time achieves an increase in company's financial value .

So we have to focus on efforts of the company's service centers, such as 901, 904,905, 907 And attention over development of workers skills for the role which they are assuming in their capacity as company's forefront who are receiving millions of phone calls every month from our customers Kingdom Wide. We have to make sure as managers, that our employees get the right training, assisting them with systems & programs to serve customers better. We don't have to rely mainly on the reports & statistics of the incoming calls of these centers.

In the same track, we have to focus our administrative & supervision efforts to improve the performance & activities of our customer's services centers all over the Kingdom, which are about 256 offices approximately. We also have to be careful when selecting the employees for these centers and offer them enough training for the environment of facing & dealing with peoples and solve their problems. I think that we still in it .We can check all kind of services offered to our customers in all customers services centers in the company ,evaluate their perfections , taking actions to cover their shortage & inspire the employees with suitable incentives that match the nature of their jobs & tasks they are performing .



## **Loyalty before satisfaction**

After the process of selling part of the STC capital to the people accomplished successfully, then the group known as (stake Holder) will be completed too .The stake house group members are the customers, employees, benefactors inside the company or the public sector . Keeping customers, implement loyalty to company's services among themselves, create synergistic relationship, and are becoming crucial issues nowadays. Achieving this target is not by the company's workers only, but the new benefactors too, who are now started checking the heartbeat of the company's administrative staff, to make sure that keeping customers status and developing loyalty feelings, are maintained before the star up competition. Obviously it is not an easy mission without the mutual support, selection of broad base management that is able to think, plan, and constantly contribute to achieving positive operational objectives for client satisfaction & happiness.

Other marketing studies conducted by major companies, showed that most clients who believe that they are at the satisfaction level, do not show signs that they are planning to purchase these products or services one more time, or they are going to use it constantly. Satisfaction alone does not give the company strategic privilege. So the definition of loyalty, is (behavior of purchasing service or product) the client who is loyal to services offered to him by any company, purchases and uses the service on regular bases. He also uses wide varieties of that company product. He can convince others to purchase services & products of that company. He will get resistance and declare it against competitive inspirations. Then people could be described as loyal on stages. The process of being

Loyal goes through many phases, over long period of time. There are seven steps for the loyal client to grow. Each step has its own requirements. If the company succeeded to meet the client needs in each stage, then it will have great opportunity to change any purchaser of its services or products, into permanent consumers & loyal customers.

In the following paragraph, I will discuss these seven stages precisely, to show you how to recognize & deal with each stage, and its requirements.

1<sup>st</sup> stage: (suspect)

He is anyone who purchases the company services. In this stage the company conducts research in the market to know about these people.

2<sup>nd</sup> stage: (prospect)

He is anyone who is in need & able to purchase the company services. He might have heard about it, but never use it recently. This category know your company very well,& the services it is offering , but never purchase from the company, only they can point it out & know it through market researches.

3<sup>rd</sup> stage: (Disqualified Prospect)

This category is hard for the company to convince to purchase its services for some reasons. Either they are disqualified to get the service, or not able to purchase it. The company will erase them, but keep their information's alive.

4<sup>th</sup> stage: (First-time Customer)

This category is those customers are the one time buyers. They might be customers or competitors. We have to find out who are they, what are their real needs, whether fulfilled or not.

5<sup>th</sup> stage: (Repeat Customer)

Those who have used the company's services more than one time: we concentrate on them & support with information's & clear data about our company's products and we should know everything about them, their desires & how can we get in touch with them through advertising or any other mean.

6<sup>th</sup> . Stage: (Client)

This category is the customers or the keystone for any company. They purchase everything our company is selling; they can use it for several times. The company should keep good relationship with them, protect them from competitors & interact with their needs personally.

7<sup>th</sup> stage: (advocate)

Those are our customers, who purchase our products on regular bases, but they another privilege, that, they inspiring others to purchase our company products & recruit new customers on behalf of the company. if any company reached this stage, it has to maintain very intimate relationship with them &let them that they are one of the owners of the company, & part of its success.

Thus I had explained in a simple way, the definition of loyalty, and customer's status, their categories, & their stages. I will try to implement what we had learned here, to our company, how to develop the loyalty status to our services offered to our customers & the means that help keeping them and prepare them for the coming competition. Not only make them happy, but we will work hard to gain their love too, & let them remember our trade mark by providing quality services, which our customers do not find the same anywhere. We let them choose STC, their main services provider. Someone will say that our company does not reach customers satisfaction, how it is going to by-pass this stage and jump to towards their loyalty.

My reply to them is that loyalty isn't indefinite from all customers' categories, but we have to work on it with a particular targeted group of customers, representing key clients and the strong foundation to build intimate relationship with all customers & controlling telecommunication market the Kingdom Wide, & neighboring markets when competition is doors-open.

Cont.... Appendix (1) English translation of the third article



### Serve your client with all your senses

The Saudi telecom company is entering the competitive stage recently. It does enter with her all capabilities, which are represented by the faith of its 13 million customers, highly qualified staff ,rich & multi services covering all over the nation, its advanced technology, and its great financial capabilities, entering this very critical, historical,& recent competitive stage .

We all know that the media and telecommunication efforts and the interior & exterior advertising supported the existence of this company and gaining the trust of customers in the local markets. A complete communication program had been implemented with a clear strategic concept, feasible to the coming stage, goes by the title: building, protecting, and growth. The purpose of this program is to support building strong relationship between the Saudi telecom company & its customers, protecting STC from its competitors, or the expected risky competition, and support the growth & services of the STC so as to be the best in the local market & close to its customers.

For the first time in the history of STC , a media campaign have been conducted & an interior advertising campaign, directed to the employees generally & customers service department in particular- appropriate with the exterior campaign- to support & build the culture of achieving customers satisfaction and respect it . Such action will help building strong unity with customers, and keep STC in a respectful position in the local market & establishing competition barriers.

The interior campaign will come out with the title: serve your client with your all senses, and will consist of Islamic messages, such as blessing “Hadeeth”, that encourage the perfection & good conduct. Also the campaign will carry out the administrative values that inspire employees to be honest, perfect, & deal with customers among cooperative working groups with mutual support, exchanging experience & information’s to serve customers better. Interior campaign also consists of an initiative for selecting the best customer’s service staff throughout customer’s service centers. The clarifying templates should be filled out by customers showing their commentary on services

offered by these centers. According to these templates, the ideal employee will be selected & rewarded.

The interior campaign will be followed by another professional one with the goal: “serve your client with all your senses “, designed in a very attractive shape with a message: “Smile on your customers face first”.

“Listen to him “.

“Give him a respectful look “.

These campaigns are conducted inside customers service centers scattered all over the kingdom, and through most of the advertising campaign, like prostrates, stands, & entertaining gifts. Interior communication elements, STC magazine, the electronic message center, & the link, provide more support to these campaigns to spread out.

Campaign is supporting the goals of the telecomm program in its second & third stages “maintaining & growth”. The supportive campaigns are including “Qitaf” campaign program , which is one of the customers maintaining program that the company had introduced to its customers , who are over hundred sixty thousand . This number is great, comparatively to the same programs delivered by other telecomm companies. Other campaigns also conducted for the recognition to the great role of the Saudi telecom company in offering telecom services to pilgrims, also the outstanding social role of STC that created jobs for more than twenty thousand Saudi young men in different regions, districts, & villages. The Saudi telecom company also provided technical & mechanical training for its employees to improve their performance so as to be an asset to the national base of qualification.

To implement the third stage of the telecom program, which is the stage of building strong relationship between STC and its customers, the company completed two advertising campaigns that considered being the keystone of the “customer communication” strategy under the banner of “together to a promising morning”. The two campaigns – one of them had already been shown in one of the TV channels - , to highlight the national role of the company in offering telecom services, which is scattering all over our lovely country and to be close to its customers all times. The campaigns will be conducted according to a well prepared time table including the usage of TV & newspapers means of advertising, plus the road advertising, that secure the best ways for wide spreading and messages understanding.

At last, we, the entire family of STC, have to know that without our corporation, all together, delivering the best service ever to our customers, based on a professional & sophisticated base that aims to gain clients satisfaction & respect; the potential goals of this program are not going to be fulfilled. Then let us work together to serve our clients with all our senses.