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# Improving Customer Service in Elderly Care

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| <p>The elderly care sector is increasingly facing more competition and demanding customers. This leads to a growing pressure on elderly care home providers to find new and improved solutions that will enhance their level of customer service. The will ensure that the elderly service provider is remaining competitive in the elderly care service marketplace.</p> <p>The purpose of this thesis is to identify areas for improvements and propose implementable solutions for enhancing the elderly care customer service. These solutions are designed to meet or even exceed the customer's expectations while at the same time ensuring that the expected business targets are fulfilled. This case study was conducted within an elderly care organization in Finland. The case organization wanted to improve their customer service level to maintain their existing customer base and acquire new customers.</p> <p>To reach this objective, excellent customer service is firstly defined and then analyzed to apply the findings to the elderly care home business. Next, the aspects impacting customer service level and customer satisfaction are identified. Following the theoretical study, an empirical analysis was accomplished to evaluate the existing customer service level by using the interview, observation and shadowing techniques. As part of the study, detailed customer profiles were developed to better understand customer needs and expectations.</p> <p>This study identified the current customer service areas needing improvements and the research ends with making suggestions that would help increase the customer service level. Based on the findings from the study, a solution proposal for enhancing the customer service in the elderly care case organization was developed together with a practical implementation plan.</p> |   |
| Keywords  | Elderly care, customer service, employee capacity   |

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Abstract

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Thesis

This thesis is a study which focuses on how to improve the customer service within an elderly care service provider. This thesis analyzes the current situation of the customer service at the case organization and identifies the opportunities for improvements based on theoretical and practical findings.

The case organization, introduced shortly below, became the topic of this thesis, as the management and the board of directors, have asked for an external consultant to help them improve the current customer service of this elderly care provider. Their own initial view of the existing challenges became the starting point for this study and it is described as four challenges, listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The initial view of the existing challenges, by the management and the board.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>First challenge</b>  | Some of the personnel are resisting to any change that has tried to be introduced  |
| <b>Second challenge</b> | The personnel lack professional behavior towards the customers as well as towards the management   |
| <b>Third challenge</b>  | The personnel are having difficulties in cooperating as a team, and there are challenges with the mutual respect and support of each other among the personnel               |
| <b>Fourth challenge</b> | How well the case organization, as an elderly care service provider, is operating and identifying possible ways to improve its customer service effectiveness and efficiency |

This thesis starts with exploring the initial challenges and analyzing the current state of customer service in the case organization. Based on the results, it proposes improvements to the current customer service for the elderly care service provider. The overall aim of the thesis is thus to improve customer service in the case organization.

## 1.2 Research Questions of the Thesis

The objective of the thesis is to analyze the customer service that the provider is offering to their customers and propose improvements. To achieve this objective, this thesis analyzes how the studied case organization is operating, what are the potential improvement areas and which of these improvements could start being implemented.

*Customers, employees, management and the customer service* make the main areas that are considered in this document. It means that, in this study, the attention is put on four focus areas: the customer that is the recipient of the service, the employee that delivers the service and the management that is leading and managing the employee towards providing customer service and the improvement of the customer service.

In this thesis, the main research question is this:

**How can the case organization improve the current customer service?**

Since the case organization is quite big and serves multiple customers, this research question constitutes a relatively large area. Thus, the main question was divided into the following four sub-question areas listed in the table below. The sub-question areas are designed to help in finding an answer to the main research question.

Table 2: Sub-question areas to the main research question.

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>First question area</b>  | How can the knowledge about the customer be improved and uncover their corresponding profiles and segments?  |
| <b>Second question area</b> | How can the employee's opportunities be improved to create more value for the customer by better understanding the individual employee's roles and responsibilities?   |
| <b>Third question area</b>  | How can the employee's opportunities to serve the customer be improved by better organizing the employee group for increased focus on the customer? And how can the employee capacity be managed according to the customer demand? |

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Fourth question area</b> | How can excellent customer service be achieved? |
|-----------------------------|---|

This study is conducted by first focusing on the existing knowledge and literature review. The study is then analyzing the case organization and suggesting possible improvements. The theoretical themes discussed in this thesis are listed in the table below.

Table 3: Themes to be reviewed in the theoretical literature.

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>First question area</b>  | What are the customer's expectations and perceptions?<br>What is the customer satisfaction?<br>What is a customer profile, what value does it bring and how to use it?<br>What is a customer segmentation, what value does it bring and how to use it?<br>What is the customer value? |
| <b>Second question area</b> | What is the service culture?<br>How to obtain better employee management?<br>What are the roles and responsibility of the employees?  |
| <b>Third question area</b>  | How do you organize the employees around the customer?<br>How to balance resources with customer demand?  |
| <b>Fourth question area</b> | How to deliver excellent customer service?  |

These themes are studied to shed light on the research question areas (as defined in table 2 above). The research questions are then explored and the discovered best practice are applied into the empirical theme areas listed in the table below.



Table 4: Empirical theme areas that are looked upon with the help of the discovered best practice.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>First theme area</b>  | Understanding the customer's expectations and perceptions<br>Understanding the customer satisfaction<br>Understanding the customer profile<br>Understanding the customer segmentation<br>Understanding customer value |
| <b>Second theme area</b> | Understanding service culture<br>Achieving better employee management<br>Improving the definition of the roles and responsibility of the employee   |
| <b>Third theme area</b>  | Organizing employees to better serve the customer<br>Balancing resources with customer demand   |
| <b>Fourth theme area</b> | Taking the steps to deliver excellent customer service  |

The outcome of this thesis is a proposal for improvements and a number of initiatives that could be implemented to realize the ultimate goal of this thesis, a better customer service.

This thesis is carried out as a student consultancy work for the case healthcare institution that will be named Happy in this document. Happy is a privately owned elderly care home that is operating in Finland. Due to confidentiality agreement, all names mentioned in this document have been altered to conceal the identity of the particular individuals as well as the elderly care institution. Citation are as well not available in this thesis due to the confidentiality agreement. The researcher of this thesis keeps tracks and records of the data and the real names of both the individuals and the institution discussed in this thesis.

This document is structured so that it first covers the relevant research methods, then the current state analysis is presented, followed by the literature review and selecting

best practice for the case institution. Finally the summary of the proposal for potential improvements is presented.

## 2 Method and Material

This section presents the overall research design, methods and tools used in this thesis. These research methods and tools were utilized for the analysis of the data obtained during the study and for the identification and validation of the proposed improvements.

### 2.1 Research Design

The research design followed in this study starts from the identification of the business problem and ends in a proposal for potential improvements. Figure 1 below presents the research design in steps.

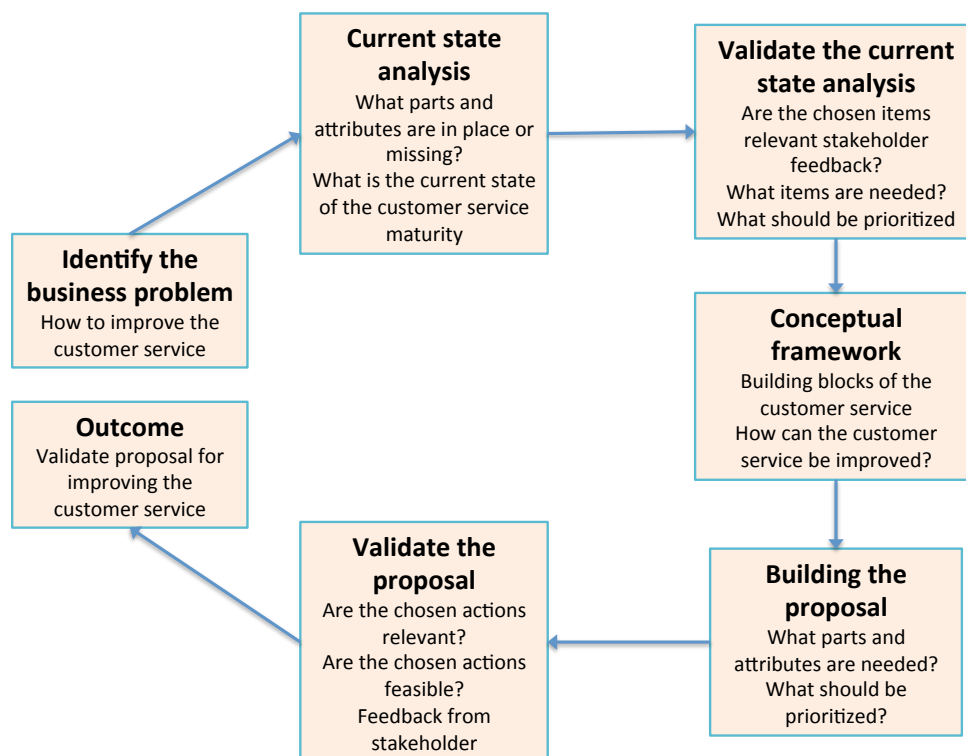


Figure 1: Research design in this study.

As seen from the figure above, the study starts with investigating the current state of the organization to identify all the possible areas in customer service that would need attention. The collected data are then analyzed, the results prioritized, and a focus presented as a shorter list of items. These points are determined as the focus topics to concentrate on, in the rest of the thesis. Consequently, not all identified challenges are

covered in this study. After selecting the focus areas, the study explores the literature and documented best practice in the focus areas that have been determined as the focus of the thesis for exploring further and developing possible solutions. The findings from the theories and best practice are then used as input for building this case's specific conceptual framework. The case framework, compared against the actual ways of working in the case organization, is then applied for building the proposal that constitutes a possible roadmap for reaching an improved state of customer services in the case organization. This proposal is then validated through a discussion with the case establishment's key stakeholders and proposed for implementation to the case organization.

## 2.2 Research Approach

This study follows the logic of case study research. The case study logic is relevant when the conducted research relates to an empirical investigation of a real life phenomenon (Robson 2012), or some aspect of an organization needs to be studied (Ghauri et al. 2002, 171-173), and multiple sources are used to conduct this type of research (Robson 2012).

Case study enables the research to isolate a particular research case and explore it as a subject of the case study research. This research strategy helps to limit the scope of the study, increases the ability to pay attention to particular aspects of the phenomenon and highlights potential links between the observed data. Case study, however, cannot be used to generalize any theoretical implications based on the findings of the research (Yin 2003: 1-18).

This thesis can be described as an exploratory case study, meaning a particular form of case study that is more useful when the researcher is looking to collect data on the research problem and collects evidence to explore the research subject (Yin 2003: 5-9).

The exploratory case study research strategy is particularly suitable for this thesis as there is a need to understand and explore real life "case" which in this thesis means the case organization. The collected data helps to explore the state of the customer service and suggest the measures that could lead to improving it at Happy, the case organization. This approach in particular makes it a valid strategy as this study is focusing solely on Happy and is not seeking to compare it to any other institution.

When engaging in research, the researcher has to choose the most suited research strategy that will increase the outcome of the research. As this study is covering only the single case organization introduced in this thesis, it was decided that the exploratory case study strategy is the most optimum strategy for this research.

### 2.3 Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research is a research strategy that helps to increase the understanding of the issue, person, group of people, process or other topics that are important for the specific research. Unlike the quantitative research, this method does not provide help in discovering a countable form of information like averages and variances as obtained in, for example, statistics (Rubin et al. 2012: 2). Qualitative research methods are useful when looking at subjects in their natural environment. It helps the researcher to understand or interpret the observed phenomena (Higgins et al. 2008).

In this thesis, different research methods were used representing a wide range of qualitative research techniques and data collection methods. The study relies on the ethnographic research techniques, observations, and interviews in particular. In the process of collecting data, the Shadowing technique that is a particular technique in Ethnographic research was widely used. The information gathering based on observation and shadowing, was strengthened by using the open and semi-open interview techniques. This technique was added with conducting discussions used through multiple ad-hoc and planned meetings with managers, employees, residents and some of their relatives.

Several workshops were also conducted to collect information, discuss the collected information and review the preliminary results of this thesis. During the information collection, the focus was put on getting insights and ideas into the case. Efforts were also put into combining the collected information to achieve different perspectives into the same subject. The aim was to create an understanding based on as many points of view as possible and include as many experiences of the individuals at Happy as possible. The sub-sections below give an overview of particular research techniques and data collected by them used in this study.

#### 2.3.1 Ethnography as a Research Method

Ethnographic research is a type of observation research where the researcher is remaining within the research environment for a long time (Mack et al. 2005: 14). In this study, ethnography is used as an especially important technique since the researcher

aimed to collect an unbiased data on the existing customer service. Therefore, an unbiased observation made a critical data source relevant for this particular case. It was selected since this technique stresses the need, and gives the tools, for the researcher “to stay objective to the topic researched and avoid bringing subjective point of views into the research” (Mack et al. 2005: 14).

Ethnography is considered to be a bit of science and art; it brings together the discipline and structured investigation together with intuition and creative investigation to arrive to the research outcome. The goal of the ethnographic study is to encompass the activities listed in the table below.

Table 5: The goals of the ethnographic study (Based on Hy 2006:109-110).

|  |
|--|
| Discovering a deep understanding of the target group perspective |
| Discover the facts from the target group’s point of view         |
| Welcome new ideas  |
| Understand the context and conditions                            |
| Understand the feeling and emotions behind people’s behavior     |
| Understand the feelings and emotions behind people’s behavior    |

For reaching the goals listed in the table above, the ethnographic research methods rely heavily on observations. There are four essential steps to reach from raw observations to the processed insights and at the same time ensure that the conclusions are reliable. These four steps are listed in the table below.

Table 6: The four essential steps to reach processed insight.

|   |
|---|
| Compile data and ensure in an organized manner to avoid missing important information   |
| Review the data and examine all the information systematically to discover relevant meanings                                    |
| Decode the collected data; make logical sense of it, explain the reviewed data through concepts, generalizations and metaphors. |
| Make imaginative “leaps” on the basis of the data and share valuable insights that influence decision-making.                   |

By following these steps, the end result provides more than just a structured report of observations but also produces interpretations for deriving business decisions, which

are possible on the in-depth understanding of the observed phenomena (Hy. 2006: 185-186).

### 2.3.2 Shadowing as an Ethnographic Technique

The shadowing is a particular ethnographic technique that helps to understand a person's real-time interactions with services or process. The shadowing technique is used to follow a person or group of persons around and observe their behavior. It is important that, during the process, the behavior of the observed is not influenced. During the shadowing, the researchers immerse themselves into the life of the observed person or group. But at the same time it is important to limit the effect of being present by trying to remain as invisible as possible in order to avoid influencing the behaviors of the observed. Thus, the shadowing technique allows for spotting the experience moments, which the observed may not recognize as problems. This technique provides a holistic view of the service operations, real-time observed interactions, etc. This technique also allows identifying where people may say one thing and do another (Stickdorn et al. 2010: 156) since it was noticed that, at least in this case, that what people say could have been different from what was actually happening.

In this study, shadowing made a valuable research instrument since it helps the researcher to minimize the coloring of the observed phenomena with his/her own beliefs and actions. It helps to create better insight of the different contexts that shapes what is being studied, as well as the aspects such as people's behavior, relations to each other and beliefs. One of the downsides of this method is that it requires considerable amount of time and it is difficult to document field notes and observe the subjects at the same time. The shadowing technique assumes that the project diaries are maintained after the sessions, since the researcher cannot afford documenting the observed people immediately when being observed. This guideline was also followed in this study.

### 2.3.3 Observation as a Research Technique

Participant observation is the research technique when the researcher is participating in the event that is under study. Unlike the shadowing, in the participant observation, the researcher is physically present and interacts with the subjects, in order to be able to succeed in the research activities. This type of research technique is also understood as participating in a close proximity to the people or event in order to allow the researcher to witness and acquire an understanding of the topic researched. The re-

searcher is thus becoming the most important research instrument of the research activity (Silverman 2001: 45).

Participant observation is complementing other research methods used in this study by bringing out a clearer picture of the researched topic and helps interpret the research results to better support the research objective.

#### 2.3.4 Interview as a Research Technique

The interview technique is used to allow the researcher to have a conversation with the interviewee(s) on the topics that the researcher wishes to study. The interview can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The structured interview relies on a standard list of questions used to interview participants. In the semi-structured interview, the interviewer has more flexibility in terms of the format varying level of standardization. Finally, the unstructured one is where the interviewee tells his/her story and the researcher follows the unique structure of this conversation (McLaughlin 2006).

Another type of conversation activities is the discussion interviews, which are a good way to collect information or points of view from the discussion with the interviewee or interviewees. This interview can be recorded in written, or have a video or audio format. The questions support the gathering of the needed information and they can also be either open or closed questions or a combination of both (Moritz 2005: 193).

In order to be an effective interviewer, it is important to gather the data in an unbiased manner, yet at the same time understand how the interviewee sees the world. A well-conducted interview does not only rely on asking the right questions, but also on using the conversation as a tool in making the interview successful. Therefore, for a deeper understanding of the counterpart, it is important not to create all questions in advance, but also prepare for possible turns and additional subject brought up along the conversation. Under some condition, the interviewee might feel being interrogated; this can be avoided by using open-ended questions and the unstructured interview style. Conducting the interview as an open conversation may reveal unexpected information and in general the quality of the gathered information might be higher.

The important elements that make an open conversation successful are shown in the table below.

Table 7: Elements that make an open conversation successful (based on Goodwin 2009: 118-124).



|   |
|---|
| Be friendly and avoid judging   |
| Listen and avoid the expert position                                  |
| Ask naive questions   |
| Ask people to show you  |
| Ask for specific example, especially the ones that you cannot observe |
| Take the opportunity when they are offered                            |
| Watch for inconsistencies   |
| Pay attention to nonverbal cues                                       |
| Think ahead a little, but not too much                                |

The elements that are recommended to avoid in an open conversation, are shown in the table below.

Table 8: Elements to avoid in an open conversation (based on Goodwin 2009: 118-124).

|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| Asking leading questions              |
| Asking solutions from the interviewee |
| Solve problems during the interview   |

#### 2.4 Data Collection in This Study

In this study, various types of observations, shadowing, interviews, meetings and some supplementary methods (workshops, discussions) were conducted to collect the data. The data collections happened mostly face-to-face, on the Happy premises, but also to some extent distantly, over the telephone. In the tables below, a summary of the data collected is listed.

##### *Data Collected by Ethnographic Observational Methods*

In this study, the collection of the empirical data was done through spending a considerable time observing the activities at Happy. The key groups of stakeholders included the customers, the employees, the management, as well as to a less extent, customer relatives. In order to be able to analyze the data collected during this study, it was necessary to explain the understanding of what has been collected. The key condition of the ethnographic research is the ability of the researcher to make the data meaningful and, based on the results; the researcher is becoming a consultant that turns information into knowledge. The knowledge derived from the observations indicated above

eventually provided evidence for actions and recommendations for the case organization.

#### *Data Collected by Interviews, Meetings, Workshops and Discussions*

The key conversations techniques used in this study include the interviews, meetings, workshops and discussions. The main technique was interviewing, conducted with all groups of respondents, and with the amount of time indicated in the table below. Discussions have been conducted with the members of the board of Happy, the Manager of Happy, and the team leaders of Happy. Furthermore, all members and customers of happy have been in contact with the researcher via different organized workshops and meetings both individually and in bigger groups. Selected customer relatives have been subject to either short or longer interviews. And also persons affiliated to Happy such as physiotherapist, medical doctor, hairdresser, cleaning personnel and others have contacted through mainly individual meetings.

Several workshops were also conducted to collect information, discuss the collected information and review the preliminary results of this the-sis. During the information collection, the focus was put on getting insights and ideas into the case. Efforts were also put into combining the collected information to achieve different perspectives into the same subject. The aim was to create an understanding based on as many points of view as possible and include as many experiences of the individuals at Happy as possible.

In this study, all the data collected by the conversational techniques was analyzed using Content analysis of the field notes. In the observational techniques, the results of the observations were immediately translated into brief filed notes and the project diary, and later, after further contemplation and merging with the results from the other data sources, interpreted for the actions needed by the management.

In presenting the final results, the researcher was guided by the understanding that heavy technical reports might satisfy the research community, but would not satisfy the need of the managers that will make business decisions based on the ethnography research findings (Hy 2006:187-188). Therefore, this study strived to keep the research documentation descriptive in nature, in order to later produce meaningful recommendations. The aim was to provide sufficient details, perspectives and behaviors and it should discuss the implications in order to provide means for business decisions.

## 2.5 Reliability and Validity

The key quality concepts in conducting qualitative research are the notions of reliability and validity. In qualitative research, *validity* means finding out if the research reflects the studied situation and if the research results are supported by the data collected. Triangulation is a qualitative method that helps with checking and establishing the validity the research. Scrutinizing the defined research question from multiple perspectives and matching it against the eventual outcome is also enhancing the validity (Patton, M.Q. 2002).

There are four different types of validity defined in qualitative research. These four types are internal validity; construct validity, external validity and reliability (Yin 2003). The *internal* validity looks at ensuring that the conducted research studies in the area, subject and focus that the researcher has intended to study. One of the main ways of verifying that is by asking the question of "Was the result of the research a response to the questions originally asked?" (Quinton et al. 2006: 126-128).

The *construct* validity is looking at the inherent validity of the theory that is tested in the research. It means that in order to increase it; the research will need to look at the used theory and the measure together (Cooper et al. 2003). The *external* validity ensures that the conducted research can be applied to other research situations and at the extend that it can be applied. The main question that can be asked is "Is it possible to transfer the findings of the research to another context and how relevant would they be in the other context?" (Quinton et al. 2006:129).

*Reliability* can be seen as the measure how similar the results would be if the research were to be repeated by the same or different researcher. In order for a research to be reliable it is important to ensure that another researcher can repeat the operations of the particular research study and that the research will result in a similar outcome (Yin 2003:34). The researcher can improve the reliability of a business research by increasing the usage of various data sources and data collection tools. The reliability would also be improved if the research tries to collect the research data at different point of time (Quinton et al. 2006: 129-131).

In addition to the above requirements, this research is conducted in the healthcare business and is thus subject to a number of privacy and ethical issues with regards to the customers, employees and management alike. Furthermore this research and the researcher are subject to a very strict confidentiality agreement that guaranties the an-

onymity for the case establishment and all its stakeholders. This situation adds limitations and boundaries that this study needs to fulfill.

### **3 Analysis of the Current State of Customer Service**

This section discusses the current state of the elderly home Happy by introducing the establishment, its customers, the management, the employees, its organization and the available employee capacity versus the customer demand. It also gives an overview of the existing customer profile and segmentation, the current management of the employee, the current status of the employee's role and responsibility and the organizational structure.

#### **3.1 Introducing the Case Organization.**

In this section, the case organization, named as Happy in this thesis, will be introduced. The details of the way that the case organization is organized will be covered. These understanding will help the reader to better comprehend the rest of the thesis content.

##### **3.1.1 Happy, an Elderly Care Provider**

Happy is an elderly care home that offers 50 homelike accommodations within a pleasant environment. Happy is owned and maintained by a private for-non-profit association. The target customers are primarily Swedish speaking elders that are in need of an elderly home service. Happy is situated in a quiet neighborhood with surrounding green areas. Furthermore the case establishment is surrounded with own large garden. There are shops, pharmacy and church in the close vicinity of the case organization. Finally, there is good public transportation available to the city center and the nearby surroundings. The case organization's building complex underwent extensive renovation and added a major extension to it. All the apartments have a handicap friendly toilet and bathroom. The newer apartments in the annex are also having own kitchen and balcony. The apartments are furnished with the residents' own furniture.

The basic rent covers full board (5 meal served per day), cleaning, laundry, help with shower, and gymnastic sessions. Medication help and other services are available as extra services. The facility has a centralized security alarm system and available personnel 24 hour / 7 days per week. Self-service laundry and sauna are available for the residents' personal usage. Diverse leisure programs are organized throughout the year in the establishment as well as outside. Extra complementary services are available for the residents as per individual residents' needs. Private medical doctor, pedicurist and hairdresser are regularly visiting the establishment

### 3.1.2 Happy's Organization

The management of Happy is shared between the board, the administration and the management team. The board is constituted of 9 members. There is a chairwoman; a vice chairwoman; a treasurer; a secretary that takes care of the financial investment portfolio; two members that are responsible for the rental properties; and three participating members. The manager and the Administrative Secretary report to the board. The chairwoman has hired them both and is acting as their superior whenever needed.

Presently, there is only one administrative staff member, the administrative secretary, and this person is administering, on behalf of the board, the contracted suppliers such as the cleaning, the physiotherapy, the hairdresser, insurances and others relevant suppliers. The administrative secretary is also responsible for the book keeping of the association as well as for the elderly home Happy. She is furthermore in charge of the salaries of all employees and any purchases that are made. The administrative secretary also takes care of managing the suppliers of the technical systems such as the computer network, security systems, phone systems, etc. The administrative secretary is reporting mainly to the Chairwoman with regards to the regular activities. At the start of this thesis, the administrative secretary did not have a job description, but during the thesis work her job description was created.

The management team has four members including the manager. The kitchen team leader, the care team 1 leader/deputy manager and the care team 2 leader, who are all reporting to the manager. The kitchen team is composed of the kitchen team leader, two cooks and a kitchen assistant. The kitchen operations are working relatively well with no major problems. It was thus decided to exclude the kitchen from this study and the kitchen activities will not be covered any further in this document. The care team is organized into two teams: care team 1 and care team 2. Years ago, the care team was one single team and it was felt that the team had become too big to be managed directly by the manager. At the time, there were only three registered nurses in the organization of which was the manager. So the manager decided to split the team into two and create a team leader role for Team 1 and Team leader role for Team 2. The team leader roles were given to the two existing registered nurses. The care team has since grown from approximately 10 persons to the current 20 persons in total. The composition of the care teams is described in the table below.

Table 11: The composition of the care teams.

|   |
|---|
| <b>Team 1</b>   |
| There are 10 regular employees in team 1; two registered nurses, seven practical nurses and one social worker. Team 1 is taking care of the customers residing in the recently built annex and the 2nd floor. |
| <b>Team 2</b>   |
| There are 10 regular employees in team 2; two registered nurses, seven practical nurses, and one social worker. Team 2 is taking care of the customers residing in the 3rd and the 4rd floor.                 |

3.2 Current Customer Service

In the case organization, customer service is synonymous with the provided service package to the customer. The service package is constituted of the basic service package and optional extra services.

The basic service package is including the rent, full board with food served 5 times per day. The rent includes the rent of the apartment, the electricity, the food, the cleaning, the security alarm and the staff available 24/7. The possibility of getting assistance with showering or bathing once a week is included in the rent. Free fitness exercise sessions provided by a registered physiotherapist are organized several times per week.

It is possible to purchase optional extra services, depending on how much extra help individual resident wishes. Some examples of the extra services, which are available, can be found in the table below.

Table 12: Example of extra services.

|   |
|---|
| Making of the bed and oversight of the apartment every day                          |
| Help with getting dressed and undressed every day in the morning and in the evening |
| Help and supervision of the needed medication                                       |

Happy has developed some standard extra care services packages that are provided at a standard price level. These standard extra service packages details can be found in the table below.

Table 13: Standard extra service packages available at a standard price level.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Care package A</b> | Ordering medicine and following up with the supplying pharmacy |
|-----------------------|--|

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Receiving medical and health care help and medication advices, laboratory test ordering and support with eventual grant applications  |
|  | Regular weight checks, B-gluc and RR level control  |
| <b>Care package B</b>  | Care package A, plus:   |
| The package B is compulsory for persons that have developed mild memory impairment. This is diagnosed when the person is scoring more than 20 points or more on the mini-mental state examination (MMSE) | Daily assistance with bed making and oversight of apartment   |
|  | Help with hearing aid   |
|  | Reminding about the meal times  |
| <b>Care package C</b>  | Care package B, plus:   |
|  | Daily assistance with getting dressed and undressed   |
|  | Help with compression stockings   |
|  | Skin moisturizing   |
|  | Support of an extra showering session per week  |
|  | Help with daily personal hygiene, cystofix and ostomy care  |
|  | Daily general mental support  |
| <b>Care package D</b>  | Care package C, plus:   |
|  | Daily help with toilet visits   |
|  | Regular monitoring of resident  |
|  | Help getting to and from the dining room for all the 5 daily servings   |
| <b>Laundry</b>   | There are 3 different optional laundry service packages to choose from. These packages are designed based on the load size of the laundry: Laundry A (2 kg/week), Laundry B (4 kg/week) and Laundry C (6 kg/week) |



### 3.2.1 Current Customer Expectations and Perceptions

The residents are not regularly asked for feedback on the existing services and what services they would like to get in the future. There are only a few residents that are proactively voicing their opinion on the available services. The nature of that feedback is mainly complaints of the items that are felt in need of improvement.

### 3.2.2 Current Understanding of the Customer Satisfaction

The case organization has limited understanding of the customer satisfaction level since systematic approach for measuring the existing customer satisfaction level is not implemented. Customer complaints and suggestions are handled on an ad-hoc basis instead of e.g. conducting customer satisfaction surveys or utilizing other similar systematic means for measuring the customer satisfaction. This means that the factors that affect the customer satisfaction level are not fully understood.

### 3.2.3 Current Understanding of Customer Profile

Currently, the target customers are primarily Swedish speaking elders that are in need of an elderly home service, although residents with primary language other than Swedish are also welcome as long as they have a relatively good command of the Swedish language as a second language.

The existing residents of Happy are of the age spanning from 85 to over 100 years old. In order to reside and receive customer services, there is a monthly charge that varies between €4.000- to over €6.000, depending on the size of the residence and the received customer service level.

On the case organization's web pages, there is a description of the profile of the customers that are welcomed as residents. That description states that the new customers should be able to manage personal morning and evening activities independently. They should be able to get from their apartment to the dining area independently, even if it is with the help of a rollator or walker. They should also undergo a medical check and get a medical certificate that certifies that they are healthy enough to live at Happy. Finally, they will need to sign a service agreement accepting the term and conditions of residing and receiving services at Happy. Other than that, the customers are profiled according to the service packages that they buy from the case organization.

There is room for improving the understanding of the existing and potential customer needs, which can be done by looking into the customer profiles and considering possi-

ble customer segmentation. The researcher was moved to this idea because it was observed is that there are disparities in the resident location, resulting in some residents having difficulties in relating and identifying themselves with some of their neighbors. As an example, some of the residents that are mentally healthy showed having angst when in the physical proximity to a neighbor that suffers from decreased mental health.

Additionally, the interview results indicate that there is a wish from many residents to have a more targeted set of customer services to fulfill their particular needs, while Happy is providing only a common set of customer services similar to most residents.

#### 3.2.4 Current Understanding of Customer Segmentation

In the case organization, customer segmentation can be done according various criteria. One of the possible criteria may be the identification of the reasons behind the residents' decisions to buy services from the case organization. This type of criteria gives a good indication why a particular customer decides to become a customer of the case organization. As gaining and maintaining the customer is imperative for the case organization, these criteria will be an important help for the case organization in assessing their customer service offering against the wishes of the existing and potential customers. This assessment will in turn allow the case organization to deliver more value to the customer and thereby increase the chances of minimizing customer churn and maximizing customer acquisition.

#### 3.2.5 Current Understanding of Customer Value

The findings of this study, collected through conversations with employees and residents, indicate the following main reasons behind the residents' decision to move in and become the customers of Happy. These reasons are summarized in the table below.

Table 14: Key reasons for the residents' decision to become customers of Happy.

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Improved living conditions</b> | Many of the residents had to or decided to move to the elderly home because it has become difficult for them to take care of their daily routines, such as buying the necessary food, cooking, maintaining the house in a livable condition and other similar activities needed for a person to remain living independently in their own homes. For |
|-----------------------------------|---|

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | example, for many residents, the fact that healthy food is made available 5 times a day constitutes a major element in their living conditions.  |
| <b>Increase in personal safety</b>                        | Another major reason for moving in, for many residents, is that they have ending up living alone. This fact combined with their decreased physical capability made many of them feel exposed to potential dangers when living at home alone or while they are in the neighborhood. |
| <b>Increase in social contact</b>                         | Some of these residents are feeling lonely and simply just want to increase the amount of social human contact they got on a daily basis.  |
| <b>Feeling part of a community</b>                        | Others sought the sense of being part of part of a community, where they have the possibility of being appreciated and appreciate others.  |
| <b>Being able to do something useful with their lives</b> | A smaller group also wanted the chance to use their knowledge and skills, to be useful to others, and to make a difference in somebody else's life.  |

When asked, many of the residents stated their wish to lead a daily life “as if they are living at home”.

The identified criteria above will lead to the employees increasing the customer understand and as a result improving their customer interactions. This will, as a consequence, lead to a higher customer service level.

### 3.3 Current Understanding of the Employees

In the paragraphs below, the current understanding of the service culture, the employee management, the current status of the employee roles and responsibility will be covered. This will help the reader to get some understanding of the employees' current situation in the case organization.

#### 3.3.1 Current Service Culture

During the review process, it became evident that the current purpose and mission of Happy have not been updated for many years. There is a written mission statement hanging on the wall in the building, but not enough employee recall what they are and

what they stand for. The only thing that most remember is that Happy is privately owned and that the residents pay considerable amounts to be customers. Instructions what tasks need to be executed, and when and how are mainly communicated either from the management to the employees or from one employee to another rather than having clear and concise written instructions. The lack of written information on the tasks leaves space for interpretation in the communication and may vary depending on who explains the task. This makes it also more difficult for new temporary staff to start their work at Happy or at least they will need more help in executing the needed tasks.

The management has not been able to increase the commitment level of the employees and most of the employees are not making much extra effort to achieve a better customer service for the customer. The organization is performing as many individuals rather than performing as one team. The management is not setting clear goals and plans on how to reach them as one team. The present planning activities are more a day-to-day activity that seeks to minimize the obstacles in delivering tasks rather than trying to optimize how to provide good customer service. The cooperation between the management and the employees would need to be strengthened through increased motivation of the employees, as at the moment the overall as well as the individual motivation level of most of the employees is not high. The majority of the personnel do not see that their work and workplace is worth being proud of.

Many employees are feeling that there is a general lack of management presence. And when they bring up issues that need attention, it is discussed and then not much more happens after that. As a result, the employee learned to either somehow live with the problem or invent an individual solution that would limit the effect of the particular issue.

Many of the employees express a wish that the management would work to implement a more clear and measurable target setting for all employees. They would like to receive training and support that would improve their knowledge and skills. They wish for a motivating workplace, where everybody is supporting everybody to execute the tasks in professional manner. They hope that words like cooperation; commitment, common goals, mutual trust and respect would have become more the norm.

Many of the employees do express that they want to provide the best service for the residents. But they are in a dilemma because their dealing with the residents are only as good as the direction, support and tools they received from their managers. They feel that under the existing conditions it is difficult to deliver a consistent and appropri-

ate care to the residents. They even seem to feel that the management is partially delegating the management role to the employees themselves. They find it difficult to accept, as the employees believe it is the role of the management, to create an environment of cooperation and make sure that the whole organization is working together in delivering a consistent and agreed level of service to the residents.

Furthermore, the executed customer service activities are not currently measured or adequately controlled and the employees do not receive enough feedback on their contribution to the workplace. The employees feel that they just need to execute the tasks at hand rather than given responsibility for certain complete activity. The employee’s experience of the workplace is in contrast to the opinion expressed by the management that is that each employee should do the tasks the way that he/she saw fit and that each employee is having the full support of the management.

### 3.3.2 Current Understanding of Employee Management

In this section, the current understanding of the employee management will be covered.

Many of the employees are missing the sense of achievement and the feedback that their contribution is important and would like more growth opportunities at the workplace. This feeling result into that they have nothing to aim for but to execute the tasks on a daily basis. They feel that they are not respected by the management and involved in decision making about the workplace and therefore, some are also considering other opportunities outside Happy. The employees feel that they have a lot of improvement ideas to contribute with but at the same time they feel that it is difficult to bring up their new ideas and get them considered for implementation.

The table below summarizes the employee interview responses of what most of them would like to see from their management.

Table 15: Summary of what the employees would like from their management.

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Visibility and openness</b></p> | <p>The management would need to become more visible and present throughout the Happy building. They would need to be more in touch with what is going on for the employees and the residents. The purpose of this effort should not be to control and check what the personnel is doing, but it should be to encourage and support the team members in achieving the best</p> |
|---------------------------------------|---|

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>possible service towards the customers. That effort would also enable the managers to see first hand where the problem areas are.</p> <p>It is important to strive for removing fear of speaking up, and ensuring that everybody's opinion is valued, including minority views.</p> |
| <b>Customer focused environment</b>  | The management would need to put more effort in communicating who the real customer is to the organization. That way, it would have been more difficult to forget that the customers are actually paying the salary of each one in the organization.                                   |
| <b>Creating an environment that allow the individual to learn and grow</b> | The employees would like that upon request, communication and training on what to do and how to do it would become available from the management. In fact, they want the management to make more effort in enabling their personal development.  |
| <b>Enabling and empowering employees</b>                                   | The team members feel that their responsibility is "dumped on" them, without enough support or guidance. They want to be able to perform better with more adequate resources and know where to go to find the needed information.  |

### 3.3.3 Current Status of Employee Role and Responsibility

In this section, the current status of the employee role and responsibility will be covered.

The job descriptions of the individual and team of employees did not exist when this thesis started. The lack of this documentation is contributing to the existence of conflicts and frictions within the organization.

Presently, it is eventually up to each employee's conscience how well the tasks are performed. The result is that the work gets executed with varying quality, effectiveness and efficiency. There is little control mechanism in place, which makes it easier for the individual employee to get lured into executing the tasks at a lower quality level.

It has to be highlighted that many residents are not able to fully stand up for themselves and voice their discontent with the current service levels, which makes it difficult to understand the level of the work executed. This again reconfirms that, the level of

service quality produced at Happy, is up to the attitude, knowledge, and skillset of the individual personnel members. There is little professional commitment from management and personnel alike, and that makes it hard for the individual employee to find a high motivation and commitment to their workplace.

The findings from the interviews revealed that management is having cooperation difficulties with the staff. It seems that the organizational structure is unclear and represents a handicap for the service execution. Detailed individual role and responsibility written descriptions do not exist. That situation increased the challenge for the individual to understand how to contribute effectively to the organization's success.

More effort is needed in the area of clarifying the roles and responsibility of the individual employees and the whole organization. The organizational structure would also need to be revised to better support the employees to fulfill their roles.

### 3.4 Current Organization of the Employees

In the paragraphs below, the current understanding of the organization and the current management of the employee capacity and the customer demand will be covered. This will help the reader to get some understanding of the current organizational setup and way that the customer demand and the employee capacity is balanced the case organization.

#### 3.4.1 Current Understanding of the Organization

This section introduces the current organization and its teams.

Team 1 and Team 2 and even the daily shift group is just a group of individuals that are executing the needed care tasks for the residents. The task organization between the participants in a given shift is rarely happening and everybody is executing the tasks according to the level that their own conscience and knowledge dictated. In general, the division into two teams has created a distance between the colleagues in the two teams. As a result, the employee of each group feel they are not familiar with the residents under the responsibility of the other group. Sometimes, a member of one team would expect the other team members to take care of "their" resident.

The employees perceive that there are differences in the workload between Team 1 and Team 2. This is, according to the employees, due to the fact that there are more difficult residents in the other group. The team members are also not able to articulate

what the Team 1 and Team 2 are about. They do not see any goals for it other than being responsible for executing the tasks that are related to the 25 residents that belong to that group.

#### 3.4.2 Current Management of Employee Capacity and the Customer Demand

In this subsection, the current management of the employee capacity and customer demand will be discussed.

At Happy, there is a rule of thumb that the number of daily needed resources is of six nurses in the morning shift, three nurses in the afternoon shift and one nurse in the night shift. This is the only specific resource balancing rule and tool that exists at Happy. If the expected resources become unavailable due to vacation, illness or other factors, temporary work force are called in. This ad hoc planning method is resulting in extra-unplanned financial costs and it makes it more difficult to ensure a consistent quality standard level in the services produced.

The overall resource planning and budgeting is mainly based on the recommendations and regulations of the healthcare authorities. Planning is based on the client - employee ratio that the healthcare authorities are regulating for the elderly care home. The regulation stipulates an availability of 50% personnel per resident and Happy is only fulfilling a personnel ratio of around 40%.

The real and specific resource need versus daily-executed tasks at Happy is not been measured. This creates a situation that the management does not understand how many daily resources in total are truly needed to keep Happy fulfilling its obligations. And this makes it difficult to understand the actual total and individual load of the staff at Happy. This is a major problem, as the majority of the employees is complaining of stress and overload. It is thus difficult to know if there is a real need for more resources or that the experiences overload is the result due to other reasons like for example poor organization of the work.

As a side effect, the heavy use of temporary worker represents a direct extra burden on the permanent personnel that needs to instruct and help the extra workers on top of their existing own tasks. This situation results in a decrease in the customer service level received by the residents.

Due to the constraints imposed by the board in terms of the amount of 20 employees, it could be stated that Happy's capacity strategy is a level capacity as the capacity is



maintained at a constant level. So the case organization could implement mechanisms such as promoting off-peak demand or implementing a booking system to would help improving the customer satisfaction.

Any resource bottleneck is usually tackled by the use of extra temporary worker. This action could be interpreted as a use of chase capacity strategy. An alternative way of relieving the bottleneck problem would be through the implementation of pricing strategies and restricted service at peak hours.

The day-to-day planning is based upon rule of thumb of ensuring the availability of 6 persons for the morning shift, 3 persons for the afternoon shift and 1 person for the night shift. This exercise is mainly concerned with allocating staff to either team 1 or team 2. There is little activity conducted in deciding what order things should be done in and when things start & finish. And if any change happens that need more resources, temporary workers is the most used way of addressing those.

During the current state analysis phase, it was uncovered that most of the employees are experiencing stress and overwork. The employees are putting forward the argument that more resources are needed in order to deliver the service offering to the adequate level. The management on the other hand is putting forward the argument that there is no need for more personnel and that the staff were complaining for no practical reason.

After some discussion with selected employee and management members, it was decided to conduct a study of the current capacity, the current customer demand and the needed capacity if the full amount of service offerings would be delivered with a adequate level of customer satisfaction.

To simplify the study at hand, the focus was put on the majority of the service items from a time consumption perspective. These items are the standard services that all residents are receiving, the standard extra care packages that some residents have purchased (care A, care B, care C and care D) and the laundering activity (laundry A, laundry B and laundry C)

The time evaluations presented in the table below were created based through: a) members of the staff evaluating the time needed to perform these services, b) researcher shadowing, measuring and checking the service activities as they are executed. These two information sources allowed a build-up of an understanding of the time

that each activity is taking was created. The times documented below represent average and approximate time measures.

The individual service items with their corresponding time consumption are listed in the tables below.

Table 16 below details the service items that are part of the standard service offering package. Each item is listed separately with that service item and the corresponding time its execution requires per customer. At the bottom of the table, the total time consumed per customer for the total standard service offering package is listed as well for the reader's convenience.

Table 16: The list of the individual standard service items with their corresponding time consumption.

| <b>Standard service elements</b> |  |              |   |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------|---|
| <b>Break-fast</b>                | The total time spend on the breakfast service at Happy is then 180 minutes per day   | First floor  | The total staff measured time load is 0 minutes, as there is no serving on that floor |
|                                  |  | Second floor | The total staff measured time load is 60 minutes                                      |
|                                  |  | Third floor  | The total staff measured time load is 60 minutes                                      |
|                                  |  | Fourth floor | The total staff measured time load is 60 minutes                                      |
| <b>Lunch</b>                     | There is a need for 2 persons during the one hour lunch service. The total time spend on the lunch at Happy is then 120 minutes per day.   |              |   |
| <b>After-noon coffee/tea</b>     | The afternoon coffee/tea service is measured in the common serving area. There is a need for 1 person during the one hour lunch service. The total time spend on the afternoon coffee/tea at Happy is then 60 minutes per day. |              |   |
| <b>Dinner</b>                    | The dinner service is measured in the common serving area. There is a need for 1 person during the 45 minutes dinner service. The total time spend on the dinner at Happy is then 45 minutes                                   |              |   |

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
|                               | per day.  |
| <b>Evening coffee/tea</b>     | The evening coffee/tea service is measured in the common serving area. There is a need for 1 person during the half hour evening coffee/tea service. The total time spend on the evening coffee/tea at Happy is then 30 minutes per day |
| <b>Weekly shower activity</b> | Each resident got a weekly support for taking a bath; the individual time for each resident varies between 20 minutes to 60 minutes per event   |
| <b>Total</b>                  | The total amount of staff hour spend on the standard service is 435 minutes per day or 7,25 hours per day   |

The table below details the individual extra service items that are part of the extra service offering Care A package. Each item is listed separately with that service item and the corresponding time its execution requires per customer. At the bottom of the table, the total time consumed per customer for the total Care A package service offering package is listed as well for the reader's convenience.

Table 17: The list of the individual extra packages of service items with their corresponding time consumption – Care A package.

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Care A package</b>                            |                                   |
| Ordering time for medical and laboratory control | Approx. 400 minutes per month     |
| Weight and blood control                         | Approx. 200 minutes per month     |
| Managing prescription                            | Approx. 400 minutes per month     |
| Ordering adult diapers                           | Approx. 200 minutes per month     |
| <b>Total care A package</b>                      | <b>Approx. 40 minutes per day</b> |

The table below details the individual extra service items that are part of the extra service offering Care B package. Each item is listed separately with that service item and the corresponding time its execution requires per customer. At the bottom of the table, the total time consumed per customer for the total Care B package service offering package is listed as well for the reader's convenience.

Table 18: The list of the individual extra packages of service items with their corresponding time consumption – Care B package.

| <b>Care B package</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| Making the bed and checking the residence                                      | Approx. 20 minutes per day per resident   |
| Reminding the mealtimes and serving the meals at the table                     | Approx. 35 minutes per day per resident   |
| Resident having over 20 points in the MMSE score, extra attention needed daily | Approx. 15 minutes per day per resident   |
| <b>Total time consumption for the care B package</b>                           | <b>Approx. 70 minutes per resident or 1960 minutes per day in total, as there are 28 residents that are purchasing this service package</b> |

The table below details the individual extra service items that are part of the extra service offering Care C package. Each item is listed separately with that service item and the corresponding time its execution requires per customer. At the bottom of the table, the total time consumed per customer for the total Care C package service offering package is listed as well for the reader's convenience.

Table 19: The list of the individual extra packages of service items with their corresponding time consumption – Care C package.

| <b>Care C package</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Helping getting to and out of bed with according change of clothing</b> | Approx. 25 minutes per day per resident  |
| <b>Helping with support socks</b>  | Approx. 5 minutes per day per resident   |
| <b>Helping with skin lubrication</b>                                       | Approx. 5 minutes per day per resident   |
| <b>Helping with one extra shower per week</b>                              | Approx. 30 minutes per week per resident |
| <b>Other personal care</b>   | Approx. 10 minutes per week per resident |
| <b>Mental support</b>  | Approx. 15 minutes per week per resident |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Total time consumption for the care C package</b> | Approx. 64 minutes per resident or 1093 minutes per day in total, as there are 17 residents that are purchasing this service package. |
|--|---|

The table below details the individual extra service items that are part of the extra service offering Care D package. Each item is listed separately with that service item and the corresponding time its execution requires per customer. At the bottom of the table, the total time consumed per customer for the total Care D package service offering package is listed as well for the reader's convenience.

Table 20: The list of the individual extra packages of service items with their corresponding time consumption – Care D package.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Care D package</b>                                    |   |
| <b>Helping with intimate care</b>                        | Approx. 30 minutes per day per resident   |
| <b>Helping with getting to and from the cantina area</b> | Approx. 75 minutes per day per resident   |
| <b>Total time consumption for the care D package</b>     | Approx. 105 minutes per resident or 840 minutes per day in total, as there are 8 residents that are purchasing this service package |

The table below details the individual laundry service items that are part of the laundry service offering package. Each item is listed separately with that service item and the corresponding time its execution requires per customer. At the bottom of the table, the total time consumed per customer for the total laundry service offering package is listed as well for the reader's convenience.

Table 21: The list of the individual laundry service items with their corresponding time consumption.

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>The laundry details</b> |   |
| <b>The laundry A</b>       | The laundry A is approximately taking 5 minutes per day per resident. As 9 residents are purchasing this service, the total time is 48 minutes per day. |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>The laundry B</b> | The laundry B is approximately taking 11 minutes per day per resident. As 6 residents are purchasing this service, the total time is 64 minutes per day.              |
| <b>The laundry C</b> | The laundry C is approximately taking 16 minutes per day per resident. As 11 residents are purchasing this service, the total time is 174 minutes per day.            |
| <b>Total laundry</b> | The total time consumption for the laundry is then approximately 284 minutes per day in total. That is also 1985 minutes per week or approximately 33 hours per week. |

All the service packages and its corresponding time consumption per customer has been determined in detail above. The next step is to build the understanding of the current available service employee capacity that can potentially deliver the service to the customer. This data was calculated by understanding that the case organization is daily having 6 persons working in the morning shift (which represents 2700 minutes of working time over a day), 3 persons working in the afternoon shift (which represents 1350 minutes of working time over a day) and 1 person working in the night shift (which represents 450 minutes of working time over a day). The total available capacity at Happy is thus 4500 minutes per day. But as most of the services are consumed during the morning and afternoon shift, it is making more sense to consider those two shifts' total capacity: 4050 minutes

During the observations, interview and shadowing conducted in this thesis; the information was gathered on what really is executed during the morning and afternoon shifts. The measured staff time expenditure per each resident in each floor can be found from the table below.

Table 22: The measured staff time expenditure per each resident in each floor.

| Total staff time per day actual utilization | Total (minutes) |
|---|-----------------|
| Floor 1                                     | <b>39</b>       |
| Floor 2                                     | <b>664</b>      |
| Floor 3                                     | <b>805</b>      |
| Floor 4                                     | <b>343</b>      |
| Total                                       | <b>1,851</b>    |

As can be seen from the table above, the actual produced services only take 1851 minutes per day. If we added the laundry estimated time of 284 minutes, which would bring the total up to an amount of 2136 minutes per day. These numbers are far behind the estimated available capacity of 4050 minutes per day during morning and afternoon shifts, in fact the difference is of 1914 minutes per day, which is more than 4 persons' day work.

Summing up, the available staff time per day, the available staff time per morning and evening and the actually realized staff capacity per day. The figure below shows a summary overview of the staff time usage at Happy.

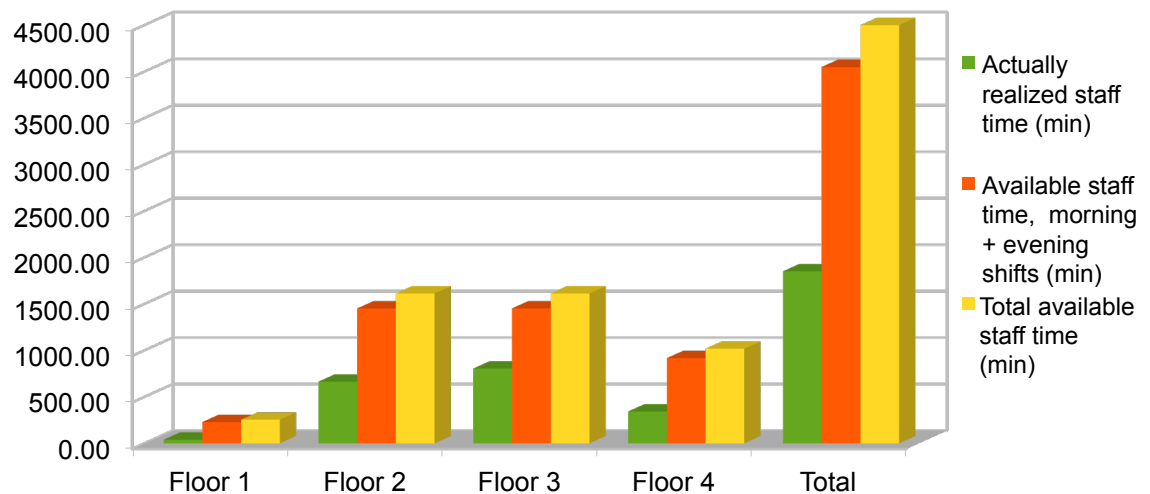


Figure 4: A summary overview of the staff time usage at Happy.

As seen in the figure 4, the observed staff time that is realized during the day in the daily service activities is significantly lower than the time staff amount that is available. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the staff is not overworked. It means that the background for their experienced stress needs to be searched in areas such as organization set-up, management or other similar operational topics that refers the needed change back to the area of management. Therefore, no specific proposals were made here, in the area of capacity management, since the analysis proved no challenges with the current capacity as such.

The subsequent section discusses the findings from literature and existing knowledge review to deal with the revealed challenges.

## 4 Review of Theory and Best Practice

This section focuses on reviewing the existing theories and best practice for improved customer service. The section covers aspects such as learning more about the customer, managing the service employees and their capacity according to customer demand, improving the customer service through clearer employee role and responsibility, improving the customer service through increased customer centricity and becoming an excellent customer service provider.

### 4.1 Customer Service

In the theoretical marketing literature, there are many definitions and understandings of services. A few examples of customer service include:

Grönroos (2007: 52) defines services as “ a process consisting of a series of more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily always, take place in interactions between the customer and the service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems”.

According to Kotler (2012: 597), a service is “any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything”.

Zeithaml et al. (2009: 4) are using a simpler definition “services are deeds, processes, and performances provided or co-produced by one entity or person for another entity or person”.

In the definitions above, the service is provided by the service provider and received by the customer as a service offering. From these three definitions above, it is clear that there is a need to take an input and transform it into an output when providing a service. The three broad categories of input, when providing a service, are typically either or a combination of people, physical objects and the need for service. For the purpose of expanding this point further, services can be categorized into four types as described in the table below. (Lovelock 2007: 34)

Table 23. Four broad categories of services (based on Lovelock 2007: 34).

**Who or what is the direct recipient of the service?**



| Nature of the service act? | People   | Possessions   |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Tangible actions</b>    | People processing (services directed at people's bodies):<br>Health care<br>Lodging<br>Beauty salons<br>Physical therapy<br>Fitness center<br>Restaurants<br>Barbers | Possession processing (services directed at physical possessions):<br>Cleaning services<br>Laundry<br>Gardening                     |
| <b>Intangible actions</b>  | Mental stimulus processing (services directed at people's mind):<br>Arts and entertainment<br>Education<br>Music concerts<br>Psychotherapy                           | Information processing (services directed at intangible assets):<br>Banking<br>Insurance<br>Legal services<br>Securities investment |

When the service offering is designed, the service provider needs to aim at fulfilling the customers' needs. The design of the service offering needs to determine the three main components: the core product, augmented service offering and the delivery process. The core product is a center element of the service offering, representing the bare minimum of a particular service offering without any extras or specific features. It answer the two questions detailed in the table below (Lovelock 2007: 69).

Table 24: Two questions that the core product is addressing (based on Lovelock 2007: 69).

**What does the customer receive when they purchase the service?**

**What business is the service provider in?**

The augmented service offering is the sum of the core product and the supplementary services. The augmented service offering enables the service providers to make the service offering more valuable by adding more of supplementary services (Lovelock 2007: 70). The delivery process defines the way the service offering is delivered to the customer. This is a crucial part of the service offering as it involves high interaction

between the service provider and the customer and needs that needs to be planned in detail. (Lovelock 2007: 70)

#### 4.1.1 Customer Needs, Expectations and Perceptions

The customers are looking to get maximum value for the money and they prefer to purchase services from the service provider that they think is providing them with the highest value for their money. The service provider must thus ensure that they meet and exceed customers' needs and expectations in order to minimize the customer churn. This can only be achieved by delivering the needed customer service level to the most profitable customer segment (Kotler et al. 2012:154).

The customer needs are the problems that the customer wants to get resolved with the help of the customer services that he/she is purchasing. The customer expectations are what the customer believes that the provided customer services will likely be. These expectations are changing with time and are influenced by the price of the services, the alternative services available, marketing, word-of-mouth, previous experience, customer's mood and attitude and their confidence in the service provider (Johnston et al. 2012: 101).

The customer perceptions of the provided customer services are based on personal impressions and interpretations of the service offering, the service delivery and the service provider. The customer's previous personal experiences, culture, language, beliefs, values, interests and assumptions are influencing these perceptions. The customer is changing his/her perception of the quality of the service offering over time and that perception can be influenced throughout the service process and the resulting customer service experience is affected by it (Johnston et al. 2012: 101).

The service provider needs to build a good understanding of the nature and the quality of its customer service offering and understanding of its organization's capability to deliver customer services. The table below lists 18 service quality factors that can help understand the customer expectations and will need to be taken into account in the service process (Johnston et al. 2012: 101).

Table 25: 18 service quality factors (Based on Johnston et al. 2012: 101).

|               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Access        | Comfort       | Friendliness  |
| Aesthetics    | Commitment    | Functionality |
| Attentiveness | Communication | Integrity     |

|              |             |                |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| Availability | Competence  | Reliability    |
| Care         | Courtesy    | Responsiveness |
| Cleanliness  | Flexibility | Security       |

The service provider will need to build an understanding of the customer expectations based on the factors introduced in the table above. This will help to determine the standard level, for each of the factors, which is needed to fulfill the customer expectations (Johnston et al. 2012: 101).

#### 4.1.2 Customer Satisfaction

A customer assesses the customer value proposition of each of the service offering that is available to him/her. He/she makes a purchase decision based on that assessment. According to Johnston et al. (2012: 101), the customer satisfaction is a measure of how content the customer is with the overall feeling with the received customer service, compared with the expectations they had of the customer service before receiving it. In general, if a service satisfies the needs and wants of the customer, it will result in high level of customer satisfaction.

Kotler (2012:375) defines customer satisfaction as a measure of how well the purchased service offering has performed compared to the expectation the customer had when deciding to make the purchase. The customer satisfaction usually falls within three categories, which are depicted in the table below.

Table 26: Three categories of customer satisfaction (based on Kotler et al. 2012:375).

| <b>Customer satisfaction category</b> | <b>Reasons behind the category</b>                                 |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Dissatisfied customer</b>          | The service offering does not live up to the customer expectations |
| <b>Satisfied customer</b>             | The service offering is maxing the customer expectations           |
| <b>Delighted customer</b>             | The service offering is exceeding the customer expectations        |

A service provider will achieve a high level of customer satisfaction by creating a service experience that satisfies the customer. The factors introduced in the table below, are affecting the customer satisfaction (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 105).

Table 27: Factors that affect the customer satisfaction (based on Zeithaml et al. 2009: 105).

|   |
|---|
| <p>The service features</p> <p>If the services features satisfy the needs and wants of the customer, it will contribute to reaching a high level of customer satisfaction.</p>  |
| <p>The Customer emotions</p> <p>The emotions of the customer are considerable factor on the customer's attitude. When the customer is in a happy state of mind, there is a high likelihood that the customer will perceive the service and its outcome more positively and will be less likely to become irritated.</p>   |
| <p>Attributions for service success or failure</p> <p>The customer perceives the service events that result in a successful or failed service delivery. The customer is for example more inclined to forgive a one-off failure that is out of the control of the service provider, than to forgive an error, that happens frequently and could easily be corrected.</p> |
| <p>Perceptions of equity or fairness</p> <p>The customer will experience a positive customer satisfaction, when he/she feels served in the same fashion as the other customers or feels that the value of the service received is equivalent to the money they paid.</p>  |

When trying to measure the customer satisfaction level, it is important to remember that the customer assess the customer service, as the service process, plus their expectations of the service and plus the outcomes of the service such as the benefits that they received as a result of the service. According to Johnston et al. (2012: 101), if there is a difference between the service and customer perceptions or between the service and the customer expectations, it will usually result into a difference between the perceptions and the expectations of the customer. It can be useful to understand the customer confidence that is related to the belief, trust or faith that the customer has in a service provider, its employees and services. Unlike satisfaction that is a result of an interaction with the service provider, confidence does not require previous interaction with the service provider.

The service provider can monitor the customer satisfaction by using several methods that will be summarized in the table below (Kotler et al. 2012:378).

Table 28: Methods of tracking customer satisfaction (based on Kotler et al. 2012:379).

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Complaint and suggestions management systems</b> | The service provider can make it easy for the customer to make suggestions or complaints. It is possible to make complaint boxes available physically or online, provide complaint cards to existing customers, employ customer satisfaction staff that actively interacts with customers physically, by phone or online. |
| <b>Customer satisfaction surveys</b>                | The service provider can actively use a sample of recent customers to find out how they feel about the performance of the service offering.   |
| <b>Ghost service purchasing</b>                     | The service provider can make use of researcher that pose as customers. This ghost can even test for specific problems in the service offering.<br><br>Managers can also leave their offices and experience first hand the service offering in the “field”  |
| <b>Lost customer analysis</b>                       | The service provider can contact the customer that has stopped purchasing. The service provider can also conduct an exit interview of the customer that is leaving. Another action can be to monitor the customer loss rate, which would help monitor how well the service provider is satisfying their customers.        |

As the service provider and the customer have different roles towards the service offering, it is useful to consider their separate perspectives in delivering and receiving the service offering.

4.1.3 Customer Profile

According to Drucker (2001: 18), the customer is the foundation of the service provider and is the reason that the service provider exists. It is thus fundamental that the service provider prioritizes keeping the customer happy. In doing so the service provider will need to address the questions listed in the table below.

Table 29: Questions regarding the service provider’s customer (based on Drucker 2001:18).

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| Who are my customers?               |
| What do my customers want and need? |

In order to answer these questions, the service provider will have to develop an understanding of the nature of the individual customer and the customer's attitude and behavior. According to Kotler et al. (2012: 8), answering who are the customers and what they want and need, is helping the service provider to create customer profiles of their customers. The customer profile helps to build an understanding of the type of customer that the service provider will serve.

In the elderly care business, it is recommended that elderly home service providers are listening to their customers and their associated family members, as they can be useful sources of feedback. According to Becker et al. (2000: Vol. 20, 22-28), it would also be wise to collect data from all the identified stakeholders such as customers, patients and families.

#### 4.1.4 Customer Segmentation

In order to compete more effectively, many businesses are now embracing customer segmentation as defined by Zeithaml (2009: 189).

Rust et al. (2009) believes that a service provider will not succeed trying to appeal to all potential customers in the same way. Instead of scattering their limited marketing efforts on all the available customer profiles, it is valuable to focus on those customer profiles that the service provider has the greatest chance of satisfying. In practice, this means segmenting the full customer group into smaller groups of similar customer profiles. These customer groups constitute customer segments that share similar characteristics of needs and wants. Once the division is done, each segment's attractiveness needs to be evaluated and the one or more that will be addressed needs to be selected. The selection of the appropriate customer segments is an important activity as it allows the service provider to have a more efficient and effective utilization of resources, that in turn increases the service provider's ability to satisfy the customer. Once that decision is made, it then defines a customer focused value proposition by differentiating the service offering to create a superior customer value and positioning. This makes the company more competitive in the eyes of the target customer segment (Rust et al. 2009).

As a result, an increased alignment between the service offering that the customer need is created and the service provider will be able to provide its target customer segments with a better value proposition (the value proposition is a set of delivered benefits or values that satisfies that needs and wants of the customer) than its competi-

tion. This is believed by Zeithaml et al. (2009: 189), Grönroos. (2007: 52) and Kotler et al. (2012:15) to increase the customer satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn creates a stronger competitive position of the service provider with an associated improved financial performance of the service provider.

#### 4.1.5 Customer Value

Customers are looking to get maximum value for the money and they prefer to purchase goods from the company that they think is providing them the highest value for their money. The service providers that want to retain their customers strive to ensure that they meet and exceed customers' expectations and keep their customers happy with their service offering. The service provider will need to build an understanding of what customer offering the customer prefers. The customer will choose the service offering that gives them the most value.

As a result, the customer will always strive to obtain maximum value within the available service offering that they are aware of. The customer creates a personal expectation of what value proposition he/she would like and then start searching for an offer that fulfill his/her expectation. Once a service purchase has been decided, the customer will compare the value that he/she perceives that he/she has received with the value that he/she was expecting. This comparison is then affecting the customer satisfaction level and the repurchase probability (Kotler et al. 2012:154 & 373). Accordingly, the customer is believed to always strive to purchase from the service provider that they perceive will deliver them the service offering with the highest customer value.

It is clear that the service provider cannot succeed in appealing to all potential customer segments with their service offering. The service provider will need to discover and address the customer segments that they able to provide services to with the highest profit (Rust et al. 2009). The activities that a business needs to do in order to achieve the highest customer value to the most profitable target customer segment are listed in the table below.

Table 30: Activities that a business needs to do in order to achieve effective customer segmentation (based on Kotler et al. 2012: 214, 253 & 273 and Rigby 2013: 28).

- 1) Understand the market's customer needs and demographic profiles; and break the market up into smaller segment groups
- 2) Understand the profitability of each identified segment and the potential rev-

Revenue and profit generated by it

3) Pick the segment that the company can serve best and will generate the highest profit

4) Tailor the products and services to match each of the selected market segments

5) Continuously monitor the business result and select the market segments that stay or become profitable

## 4.2 Service Employee Management

Providing the service employees with management is to enable the employees to perform together, to take advantage of their strengths and minimize the effect of their weaknesses. This is why management is critical to the success of the organization.

In order to improve the employee management, it is necessary to understand the service culture within the service provider organization.

### 4.2.1 Service Culture

The working conditions and working behavior of the employees are influenced by the culture of the organization. The organizational culture means the way that things are done in the organization and contains the norms and values of the organization. The organizational culture gives a picture of how the team spirit is and how the individual members of the organization are interacting on a social and emotional level.

The organizational culture is visible the way employees are interacting, cooperating and solving problems together and individually. The organizational culture also reflects a specific way in understanding the internal and external view of the current situation.

A service provider will be successful if they succeed in establishing a service culture within their organization. A service culture is a culture that appreciates good service, and where the norm is to good service both within the organization and towards the customer. The service provider has a competitive advantage if it is able to attain a service culture (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 348).

The management is the ambassador for service culture within the organization. It is by demonstrating integrity, joy, and respect regularly and consistently that the manage-



ment grow the service culture within the organization. It is over a long time that through consistent and concerted effort, that an organization steadily develops and maintains a strong service culture (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 350).

The management can take initiative to change the service culture by following the list of action defined by Kotter (1995: 59-67). These steps are detailed in the table below.

Table 31: Change management steps that can be taken by the management to change the service culture (based on Kotter 1995: 59-67).

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Establish a sense of urgency</b>        | 75% if the management will need to accept the need for change, for the change to be successful. The managers will need to be confronted with a compelling case for change, for them to make efforts to get out of their own comfort zone. The service employees are usually facing the mismatch between the customer expectations and the current service delivery on a daily basis, and will not need much persuasion to embrace the need for change. |
| <b>Form a powerful guiding coalition</b>   | For the change to succeed, it is important that the service employees and the management work on the change effort as one team.  |
| <b>Create a vision</b>                     | It is important that all involved in the change need to understand how the future will look like. This will help to clarify a picture of the desired destination to all involved and unify all participants to support the change initiative.  |
| <b>Communicate the vision</b>              | The management and the service employee needs to have ample discussion sessions. These discussion sessions need to encourage questions and dialogues where all parties are given the time to be heard. This will help to ensure that all participants are aligned into having a common agenda.   |
| <b>Empower others to act on the vision</b> | This step will help in eliminating any hindrance to slows/stops the progress of the change initiative. It is necessary that all open and hidden resistance to the change initiative are removed.   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Plan for and create short-term wins</b>                    | It is important that the service employees are able to experience some successful evidence of the change happening within 1 to 2 year. Part of managing that effort, there is need to recognize and reward the efforts of the service employees involved in realizing that evidence.  |
| <b>Consolidate improvements and produce still more change</b> | At the first sign of success, it is tempting to lower the pressure on realizing the change. The change process is not complete, unless the change has taken root in the culture of the organization.  |
| <b>Institutionalize new approaches</b>                        | The communication of the change and its benefit need to be continuously highlighted through the organization. Even if it is obvious to the management, the link between the change and the benefit of the new approach and behavior need to be highlighted to both employees and management. This will help the new culture to thrive and minimize the risk of falling back to the old culture. |

The table above shows the importance of different steps in change management and need for careful planning of these steps.

#### 4.2.2 Service Employee Management

The service offering is often associated with the service employee, meaning that most of interaction when the customer has contacted or purchased is performed by a service employee. It is then clear that improving the service offering requires direct investment into the employee related activities.

As the customer is mostly interacting with the service employee, the service employee represents the service provider in the customer's eyes. Any unprofessional behavior from the employees towards the customer, whether they are on duty or not will impact the perception of the service provider. It is due to this representation mechanism that the service employees influence the customer satisfaction (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375). As the service employees physically embodies the service offering, they are also representing the face of the organization towards the customer.

As the service is so closely related to the employee, it also means that customer satisfaction is difficult to achieve without addressing the satisfaction of the employee. Some research has even shown that customer satisfaction is difficult to achieve without happy employee (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375) and there is a clear interrelation between employee satisfaction and loyalty and the customer satisfaction and loyalty, and thus indirectly to the profit of the service provider.

The service provider will need to have an elaborate human resource strategy in hiring the right people into the organization, developing the people to be able to deliver the service that fulfill the customer satisfaction, provide the needed support systems for the service employees and work on retaining the best people in the organization (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375). The service provider is therefore in competition with other organizations in trying to get the best people. It is thus important that the service provider is doing its best to market itself as an attractive workplace. In the hiring process, it is important to focus on ensuring the right level of service skills and knowledge that are needed to perform the job.

When the employees are hired, it is thus important that the organization trains them and supports them in delivering service performance (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375). The training needs to help the employees to acquire the necessary technical skills, that will help them to deliver the service offering; and interactive skills, that will help them in delivering the service offering in a polite, caring, responsive and empathic manner.

To improve the customer service, the service provider can empower the service employees by giving them the authority, skills, tools and desire to serve the customer (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375). This will support the service employees to better accommodate customer requests and recover on the spot in case something goes wrong. Studies have shown that the empowerment results in reduction in job-related stress, improved job satisfaction, greater adaptability, and eventually better outcome for the customer.

Customer satisfaction will improve if the service employees work as teams (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375). Some of the stress and strain, as a result of the frustration, the demand, and the challenge that accompany service jobs, is alleviated through a teamwork setup. Furthermore, the service employees in a teamwork setup are more supported in keeping their enthusiasm in providing a good customer service.

The service employees will increase their efficiency and effectiveness, if they have adequate support systems that help them provide a better service to the customer (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375). The internal support functions need to treat the service employees as internal customers and deliver the best internal services to support the service employees in delivering better customer service. Furthermore, the right equipment needs to be available and working for the service employees in order for them to perform their job. Finally, the internal working processes need to support the service employees in deliver the service offering and be designed with the aim at providing high customer value and satisfaction.

In general, the management can increase the management dialogue, support and motivation towards the service employees for making the employees more inspired and involved (Johnston et al. 2012: 253-255). This will help create a more responsive and responsible approach to the service work and that contribute in improving the service process and customer interface.

The service provider has to make efforts in retaining its best employees (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375) as high employee turnover affect the customer satisfaction and the employee morale. In the effort of retaining the best people, the service provider needs to include them in the company's vision. When the vision and the direction that the organization is taking is clear to the service employees, they are more likely to stay and support the service provider towards reaching that vision. Another method to retain the best employees is to take care of the service employees' needs and make them feel valued. Recurrent service employee satisfaction research needs to be conducted, in order to understand if the service employees' needs are met. In short treating your employees as customer, will help retain them within the organization. It is also important to promote and reward the best performing service employees, in the effort to retain them within the organization.

Finally, the management and the service employees can cooperate on further clarifying the organization's and each employee's role and responsibility (Johnston et al. 2012: 253-255). This topic will be covered in more details in the next section.

#### 4.2.3 Customer Service and Employee Roles and Responsibilities

The current research and best practice suggest that people are more effective when they are comfortable with their roles; know their targets, and how they will be measured (Johnston et al. 2012: 261). Research shows that a customer-facing organization is

more effective and motivated to provide good service when there is little role conflict and ambiguity in their organization.

The job description is a blueprint that gives a complete, accurate and clear profile of the particular job. A basic job description is the foundation of nearly every human resource management activity. That document is guiding with all human resource activities such as recruiting and performance evaluation (Tyler 2013: 47-49). Creating job description should involve employees and managers. Employees should be involved because they have the best understanding of the job. They can verify what they do and should have a say into their job descriptions. And the Managers should be involved because they are responsible for keeping the job description up to date.

When the job descriptions are inaccurate, the given roles and responsibilities in the organization tends to become confusing and inefficiently executed. The employees might be tempted to spend more time on self-interest and on performing tasks that are of questionable priority. A well-written job description is a powerful tool for planning and controlling the employee performance.

The table below shows some of the key components that are essential for clarifying the role and responsibility of an employee.

Table 32: Key components for a job description (based on Grant 1996).

|   |
|---|
| Job title   |
| <p><i>General function statement.</i><br/>explains the overall purpose of the job and explains why the job exists</p>   |
| <p><i>Duties and responsibilities.</i><br/>covers what the employee does, or is expected to accomplish. It needs to contain a precise and specific description of the duties and responsibilities of the employee. It also needs to detail what function the employee is engaged in, or responsible for accomplishing. This paragraph needs to be complete, accurate, and clearly worded.</p> |

In general, a well-structured job description allows the organization to execute the work in a controlled manner (Grant 1996: 28). It is a tool for monitoring the activities, analyzing the tasks and reengineering of the job over time. It helps to prevent the employee

become complacent. It brings order and system into what otherwise might become a random collection of activities.

A good job description needs to define the role and responsibility of the specific position, its tasks and how they are performed and the required qualifications (Randall 1992: 322). Job descriptions should be checked and potentially revised every two years. This helps assure that the right person is in the right position and help ensure successful performance.

### 4.3 Customer Service and Customer Centric Organization

In this section, firstly the customer centric organization and how an organization can achieve becoming one will be introduced. Secondly, the concepts of service demand and capacity will be introduced and how an organization can optimally achieve a balance of them in their service operations will be reviewed.

#### 4.3.1 Customer Centric Organization

Being a customer-centric organization means that the organization is literally organized around the customer and have an embedded culture of serving its customers (Galbraith 2005). Succeeding in achieving that means finding the structure that enables the specific organization to move from product centrality to customer centrality. In order to achieve that, it is necessary, as a first step, to build up a thorough understanding of the whole customer group and an optimum segmentation of that group. The second step will be to organize teams around the selected segments to try to build up and maintain relationships with the customer. The aim for that ongoing exercise should be to avoid an organization structure that would be an impediment to customer centrality. A criteria for succeeding in this activity is to reward the employees for customer centric behavior. The employee reward criteria could be customer satisfaction. Furthermore, training the employees to judge and deal with several customer interaction patterns would be beneficial.

The most powerful and most customer centric form of organizing around the customer is to create a separate customer-facing structure by gathering all the dedicated customer-specific resources from the organization (Galbraith 2005). This will result in a creation of customer business unit that can act as profit centers and can be measured on customer profitability. It takes efforts and time to achieve a customer-centric organization and following items described in the table below need to be considered in attempting to do so.

The table below introduces the items, which need to be considered, when the organization aim to achieve a customer-centric organization.

Table 33: Items to consider in the attempt to achieve a customer-centric organization (based on Smith 2011: 16).

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Executive management must set the tone</b>                                | They must display a visible commitment to champion exemplary customer service   |
| <b>Vision and mission, followed by strategic plans, goals and objectives</b> | The strategic plans needs to lead into tactical actions that support the goals and objectives of the organization. Effective customer activities are based on an active tracking, measuring, analyzing and reporting of the customer point of view  |
| <b>Good customer service begins within the organization</b>                  | When internal customers are treated well by the internal suppliers, it often leads to happy external customers. Everybody in the organization is both a customer and supplier. When everyone internally is focused on good customer service, then the external customer will receive good customer service  |
| <b>Empower the total organization to provide the best service possible</b>   | Studies reveal that 70% of customers leave a brand due to poor service quality. Customer-contact employees need to understand that each interaction is a moment of truth in which customers get an impression, good or bad, of the organization. Companies that invest in training that stresses how to handle these situations are more successful |

The table above shows how important is that everybody in the organization are customer focused and the customer focus needs to be considered also in the visions, mission and goals for the organization in order to become a customer-centric organization.

#### 4.3.2 Service Capacity and Service Demand

The service capacity is the measurable amount of customer service that the service provider is able to provide in a specific time period. Service content, location, intangibility, resource constraints and other factors are making it difficult in measuring the service capacity .The service demand is the measurable amount of demand for customer service in a specific time period (Johnston 2012: 282-286). The service provider needs

to make enough service employees available in order to manage the expected levels of customer service demand.

The optimal service capacity is the maximum level of activities over the period of time that the employee capacity can consistently achieve under normal operating conditions (Johnston 2012: 282-286). It might be possible, under some circumstances, that the customer service employees can produce higher service output. This higher service output is called maximum service capacity and it is not sustainable for the service organization to deliver that over longer period of time.

In service organizations, the demand for service is usually fluctuating over time as opposed to the service capacity that is usually fixed in most organizations (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375). The service provider can have four different combinations of their capacity of and their demand for service as depicted in the table below.

Table 34: Different combinations of service capacity and demand (based on Zeithaml et al. 2009: 360-375)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Excess demand</b>   | The level of demand is above the maximum capacity. In this situation, many customers will not receive the expected service. The customers, that receive service, might not receive it at the level that it was promised, because the service employees are crowded or overused. |
| <b>Demand exceeds optimum capacity</b>                                   | The level of demand is below the maximum capacity. In this situation, most of the customers will receive service. But the level of the service will below what is promised, due to the fact that the service employees are crowded or overused.                                 |
| <b>Demand and capacity are balanced at the level of optimum capacity</b> | This is an ideal situation. The customers are receiving the service as it as promised.  |
| <b>Excess capacity</b>   | This situation is when the service demand is below the optimum capacity. The service employees are underutilized. The customer are getting the service as was or higher than was promised. But this situation constitutes a   |



|   |
|---|
| loss of productivity and a lower profit for the service provider. |
|---|

In order to understand the fluctuating demand, the service provider needs to build a clear understanding of the demand patterns for customer service over time and the reason behind the variations (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 447-448). This will require that the demand information is tracked and documented on an hourly, daily, monthly or any other relevant timeframe basis. This will help the management to predict future service demands and design the service capacity accordingly.

In order to balance service capacity and service demand, the service provider will need to create a good understanding of the constraints that it has on the service capacity and a good understanding of the pattern of service demand over time (Zeithaml et al. 2009: 450-452). With the help of that information, the service provider can develop a strategy on how to balance the available service capacity with the upcoming service demand. One alternative is that the service provider is smoothing the demand fluctuations by shifting demand to match the existing capacity. This implies that the service demand level above and below the optimum service capacity level is flattened to match the optimum service capacity level. The other alternative is to adjust the optimum service capacity to match the fluctuations of the service demand level.

Capacity management is the tool to ensure that the resources are adequately utilized taking into account the operational and financial aspect of the customer service operations (Johnston 2012: 282-286). In practice, there are three basic service capacity strategies that can be employed as standalone or as a mixture of them all. These strategies can be found listed in the table below. (Johnston et al. 2012: 290-294 and Zeithaml et al. 2009: 450-452)

Table 35: Three basic capacity strategies (based on Johnston et al. 2012: 290-294 and Zeithaml et al. 2009: 450-452).

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Level capacity | In this case the capacity of resource is maintained at a constant level, and the organization needs to address resulting issues with customer satisfaction and operational service quality. This strategy includes the approaches of promoting off-peak service demand and usage of a service booking systems. The service provider can communicate the busy |
|----------------|--|

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
|                   | timeframes to the customer, set priorities by taking care of loyal or high-need customers first, and charge a higher price for the service offering at the high-peak.  |
| Chase capacity    | In this case you are attempting to match the capacity to the demand by building flexibility into the operation. The prime objective is to provide high level of service in the most efficient manner. This strategy includes the approaches of flexible staffing levels and the use of subcontractors or temporary staff. These approaches are stretching the resources of the organization and this can result in a lower level of customer service, if used over a longer period of time. It is thus recommended that this strategy is only used over short periods of time. |
| Demand management | In this case, you are attempting to influence the demand as much as possible to “smooth” the load on the resources by using pricing strategies. This typically takes the form of offering price incentives to encourage customers to move to off-peak hours  |

#### 4.4 Excellence in Providing Customer Service

Excellent service is happening when the level of the service is giving the customer a feeling of delight (Johnston et al. 2012: 296-299). It has been identified that excellent service is containing the four items below listed in the table below.

Table 36: The four items of excellent service (based on Johnston et al. 2012: 296-299).

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Delivering the promise</b>                 | Delivering the promise is quite the same as meeting or even exceeding the expectations. The point is that customer tends to be delighted when the promise is delivered, even if it is not what the customer want or expect. Basically, it means that you do what you say and you are reliable and consistent. |
| <b>Dealing well with problems and queries</b> | Most people accept that things occasionally go wrong and it is usually not the problem that causes dissatisfaction but the way the organization deals with it.  |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Providing personal touch</b> | <b>a</b> The personal touch is an enhancing factor, it does not have to be there but when it does it tends to delight.  |
| <b>Going the extra mile</b>     | Going the extra mile is also an enhancing factor. It is about staff going out of their way to help customers, where nothing is too much trouble, and maybe providing a little something that is not expected. |

In summary, a world-class organization delights customers by doing what they say, and when something does go wrong, it sorts it out well. As a result, world-class service organization has delighted customers, processes that are continually improving, staff who feel well supported and able to deal with problems and a culture that encourages staff and managers to find, and fix problems before they occur (Johnston et al. 2012: 435).

Good leadership throughout the organization is realized through developing the items listed in the table below.

Table 37: Development items that lead to good leadership (based on Johnston et al. 2012: 440-449).

|   |
|---|
| A willingness to listen and communicate up and down the organization  |
| A investment in staff, processes, training  |
| Lack of complacency, never being satisfied with the status quo and recognizing that the organization can always be better |
| A clear service vision, that provides the employees with something to believe in and to challenge them                    |
| Clear plans that set out how the goals and vision will be achieved  |
| A supportive culture that is self-renewing and encouraging the development of new ways of thinking and acting             |
| A management that never loses sight of the big picture while, at the same time paying close attention to the detail       |

In additions to the items covered above, the service concept needs to be well defined, communicated and well understood by the employees and customers alike. And the service concept needs to be routinely and consistently delivered in the form of outstanding service. The organization is enabled by employee teams that are empowered or self-directed. The staff is encouraged to own the service processes, to look for ways to improve them and motivated by the right mix of recognition and reward.

To maximize the customer experience, the organization's systems and processes need to be designed from the outside in to maximize the customer's experience (Johnston et al. 2012: 443-446).

#### 4.5 Summary of Theory and Best Practice

The analyzed current available literature and best practice indicates that the customer service improvements should be addressed, firstly, through the performance of the staff, secondly, through the leadership and management and, thirdly, through improving the understanding of the customer. These findings prove that the main focus in service improvement effort, should focus on a) the customer that is the recipient of the service, b) the service that the customer receives, c) the employee that deliver the service, and d) the leadership and management that is leading and managing the organization. If summarized, this approach can be formulated into the logical representation that is illustrated in the figure below.

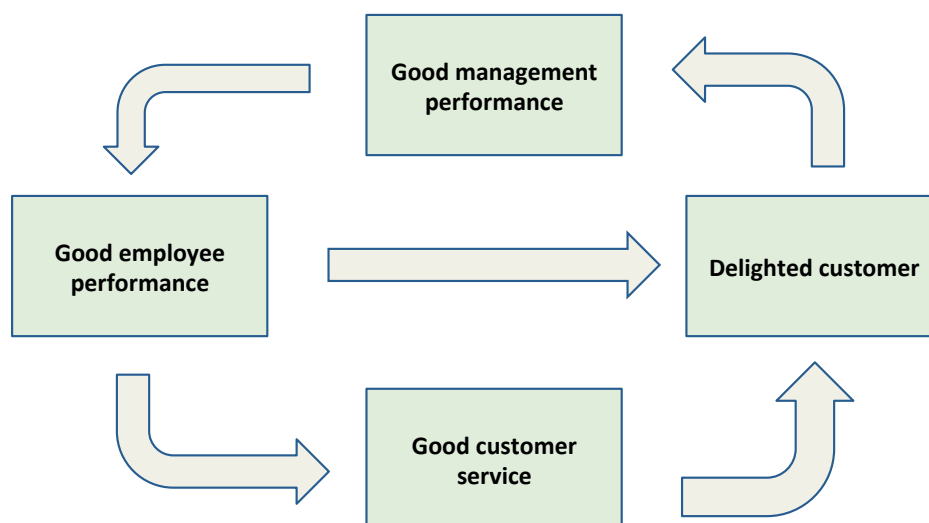


Figure 5: Delivering a good customer service, which results in delighted customer.

It became evident through the review of the literature and best practice, that for setting up the service business and remaining competitive, it is required to deliver a consistent customer service that results in delighted customers. This delivery will only be possible to reach if the employees deliver excellent customer service, supported by the management team that performs effective management and leadership and all service activities targeting the target customers. It is through the effective and efficient performance of the whole service delivery chain that the service provider is able to succeed in delivering the adequate level of customer service. And it is only this level of service that results in delighted customers. The concrete steps that help reach this state, and that are relevant in the context of the case organization, are summarized in the table below.

Table 38: Improvement areas to realize an excellent service.

| Area  | Actions  |
|---|--|
| <p><b><u>CUSTOMER SERVICE:</u></b><br/>Improving the understanding of the Customer</p>                                  | <p>Improved understanding of the Customer Expectations and Perceptions<br/>Improved understanding of the Customer Segmentation<br/>Improved understanding of the Customer Satisfaction<br/>Improved understanding of the Customer Profile<br/>Improved understanding of the Customer Segmentation<br/>Improved understanding of the Customer Value</p> |
| <p><b><u>SERVICE EMPLOYEES:</u></b><br/>Improving the Customer Service through improved Management of the Employees</p> | <p>Improving the service culture<br/>Improving the Employee Management of the employees<br/>Improving the roles and responsibilities of the Employees</p>  |
| <p><b><u>CUSTOMER CENTRIC ORGANIZATION:</u></b><br/>Improving the organization's customer focus</p>                     | <p>Improving the customer centricity of the organization<br/>Improving the management of the employee capacity according to the customer demand</p>  |

This is the logic that is applied to building the proposal for improvements in the case organization, which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

## 5 Improving Customer Service in Practice

This section introduces the customer service improvements for the case organization based on the findings from the current state analysis and suggestions gathered from the theories of best practice covered in the literature review of Section 4.

### 5.1 Customer Service

Based on the reviewed literature in section 4, it is clear that the case organization is providing its customers within all four broad categories of services; the people processing, the possession processing, the mental stimulus processing and the information processing). These services are covering both the customer and their possessions and require performance of tangible and intangible actions. This situation emphasizes the complexity of the existing service operations and that it is necessary to take that complexity into consideration, while planning and executing any customer service improvement project. It is also necessary to consider the impacts of any changes made on the core and supplementary services that are provided directly by the case organization, on the supplementary services that are provided by the case organization indirectly through partnerships and finally the delivery process of all these services.

#### 5.1.1 Understanding of Customer Expectations and Perceptions

Firstly, it would be valuable that the case organization launches and keeps up to date, an internal review of the content and quality of its current customer services and a thorough assessment of the true current capabilities of delivering this customer service offering. During the current state analysis, it became clear that the case organization is not fully aware of the state and details of its current customer services and capabilities.

Secondly, the case organization would benefit from conducting a regular marketing research that details the status of the existing customer's expectations and perceptions of the case organization as a supplier. This research would need to detail the 18 service quality factors, as detailed in section 4.1.1.

Executing these steps will tool the case organization with understanding their current customer expectations and perceptions and what actions are need to support the improvement of their customer services and its capability in delivering them.

### 5.1.2 Improving the Understanding of Customer Satisfaction

If the above activities were conducted, the case organization would be able to utilize the result of these activities to research and track the customer satisfaction level of their customer base. This would enable them to have an overview of how many customers are dissatisfied, satisfied and delighted.

This customer satisfaction research and tracking can be done by using a complaint and suggestions management systems, conducting regular customer satisfaction surveys and getting the managers to increase their presence in the “field”.

This customer satisfaction research and tracking would then in turn help uncover the factors that affect the customer satisfaction level.

### 5.1.3 Understanding Customer Profile

As reviewed above, Happy will need to ensure that they meet and exceed the customer’s expectations. In order to improve its ability at doing that it will require that they improve their knowledge of the customer. It is recommended that Happy is listening to and collecting data from their present and future customers and their associated relatives.

Since there is currently no documented description of the understanding of the Happy’s customer profile, this study suggests that such a profile needs to be developed. In the current state analysis in the previous section, we described the needs that the customers of Happy are seeking to get fulfilled. These needs are summarized in the table below.

Table 39: The needs of case organization’s customers.

|  |
|--|
| Improved living conditions                         |
| Increase in personal safety                        |
| Increase in social contact                         |
| Feeling part of a community                        |
| Being able to do something useful with their lives |

The present customers of Happy showed that they have a need to get one or more of the above-mentioned needs fulfilled. Since the key needs were revealed, they are suggested as the basic criteria of the customer profile. The customer needs are, thus, put into the center of attention and become the criteria for profiling the customers. Howev-



er, more needs or more detailed needs may be revealed which will help to create more detailed profiles in the future. It is recommended that Happy is listening to and collecting data from their present and future customers and their associated relatives, based on the categorized customer needs. It will lead to revealing the customer expectations and better addressing them in customer service.

#### 5.1.4 Understanding Customer segmentation

Happy does not have the resources necessary to satisfy the needs of all potential customers optimally. Therefore, the case organization has chosen to concentrate on serving the Swedish-speaking minority of the total potential customer population. Furthermore, the fees, that are necessary to pay to become a customer, is narrowing the customer base even further to the more affluent part of the Swedish-speaking minority population.

Based on the current state analysis and the findings from the literature review, it would be valuable to answer the two questions in the table below. This will help to determine if the presently addressed customer segment is the most optimal one.

Table 40: The two questions, which are valuable to answer in determining if the case organization is addressing the most optimal customer segment.

The case could ask itself if the present targeted customer group is the group that Happy has the greatest chance of satisfying.

Which smaller group of customers shares an even more similar characteristic in their needs and wants?

The first question is a relatively big strategic exercise that would need to be addressed from time to time to re-evaluate the full enterprise of Happy. In this study, it was decided to concentrate on the second question in order to reveal more characteristics of the customer segment and address them better in the improved customer service.

Through interviews with the residents, the employees and the management, it emerged that a few key characteristics can divide the resident group into smaller customer groups that share similar characteristics and needs. The characteristics are identified as the residents' mental health, the residents' physical health and their respective residence's geographical location within the case organization's building complex as shown in detail in Appendix 1.

For the purpose of this thesis and to simplify the analyses, the trial customer segmentation is made relying on the case organization’s staff’s subjective knowledge and expertise of each of the residents. And as this information is subjective, the score granularity is done in percentage (each segment is ascribed 25%) and using only 4 levels, as described in the table below.

Table 41: Four levels of mental and physical health.

|                        |
|------------------------|
| Very low (0% - 25%)    |
| Low (25% - 50%)        |
| High (50% - 75%)       |
| Very high (75% - 100%) |

By using the current mental and physical health distribution of the residents of Happy as an example, the suggested matrix of customer segmentation is depicted in the table below.

Table 42: The mental and physical health distribution of the residents of Happy.

|               | Physical health |         |           |          |            |
|---------------|-----------------|---------|-----------|----------|------------|
|               |                 | 0% -25% | 25% - 50% | 50%- 75% | 75% - 100% |
| Mental health | 75% - 100%      | 0%      | 2%        | 4%       | 4%         |
|               | 50%- 75%        | 2%      | 12%       | 16%      | 4%         |
|               | 25% - 50%       | 10%     | 6%        | 14%      | 2%         |
|               | 0% -25%         | 8%      | 12%       | 2%       | 2%         |

The results of the current customer segmentation indicate that there are at least three distinct customer segments (given three different colors in the table) at Happy that can be found in the table below. These groups are listed in the table below.

Table 43: The three distinct customer segments at Happy.

|  |
|--|
| Individuals that are more than 25% healthy physically and mentally, a group that constitutes of approximately 64% of the total customer base                       |
| Individuals that are less than 25% physically healthy and more than 25% mentally healthy, a group that constitutes of approximately 12% of the total customer base |
| Individuals that are less than 25% mentally healthy, a group that constitutes of approximately 24% of the total customer base                                      |

It seems that each of these identified customer segments would benefit from a more focused service offering. As a result of creating these three segments, Happy would be able to create a superior customer value for each of the segments. At the time of writing this document, Happy's management and board are considering the customer segmentation to be taken into practice, as well as the actions needed to create more value for their residents.

#### 5.1.5 Improving the Understanding of Customer Value

The three identified customer segments identified above are looking for more value for their money. The case organization would increase each of these customer segments' customer satisfaction, if engaging in discovering the more specific needs that these three customers would have. Once these needs are uncovered, the case organization could build a more tailored service package that is a better match to the specific customer segment group.

### 5.2 Better Customer Service Through Better Management of the Employees

#### 5.2.1 Improving Service Culture

A potential key performance indicator for the case organization to measure how well they are performing services to their customers could be their level of service culture within the organization. During the current state analysis, there were indications that the service culture level in the case organization was weak and that a considerable portion of the employees were ready to work for an improvement.

The management team and key members of the board together with key members of the employee group could lead this improvement initiative. This initiative would have an improved chance of succeeding if the management and the board would strengthen their role of ambassador for service culture within the organization. The chances of success would also improve if the change management steps detailed in section 4.2.1 would be followed.

During the current state analysis, it became clear that major part of the management and the employees are feeling a certain sense of urgency. The appointed core team of employees and managers would be able to draw advantage of that for a change initiative to succeed.

### 5.2.2 Service Employee Management at Happy

During the current state analysis, it became clear that the service employees are the service at the case organization. The case organization could benefit if the position of the service employee was elevated within the organization and towards the customer. The elevation could happen in such a fashion that the management could highlight the crucial role of the service employee within the case organization and purposely increase the privileges and benefits that high performers within the service employee group are receiving. At the same time, also highlight the duties and expected behaviours, that as a representative of the case organization, the service employees would need to have on and off duty.

The case organization could also increase effort in improving the service employee satisfaction and even consider the service employee group as a second customer group of the case organization or perhaps another customer segment that they need to address in the same fashion as they would address the customer like detailed under the customer service section 5.1.

In general, the case organization could improve the recruitment of the new permanent and temporary service personnel and developing all personnel with the mind-set of striving towards high customer satisfaction. The case organization could review the feasibility of the existing support systems and initiate actions for improving the service employees in serving the customer.

The case organization would benefit from remembering that they are competition with other elderly service providers for certified healthcare personnel. It could increase the marketing of its attractiveness as a workplace.

The case organization could increase its support for acquiring technical and interactive training that would further support the growth of its service employees into becoming better skilled in delivering the service offering at a high level of technical and customer friendliness.

The case organization could consider increasing the empowerment of its service employees to better serve the customer. This could contribute to reducing the current job-related stress; improve the working conditions and the associated job satisfaction.

The management could promote teamwork, which could further help in improving the service employee working conditions and the service culture.

The present support systems and internal support functions could be improved to better support the service employees to better serve the customer. The technical equipment could be reviewed with the aim to improve the support of the service employee that are interacting with the customer. Finally, the work processes could be reviewed with the aim of improving the level of the customer value and satisfaction.

As reviewed in section 4.2.2, the customer service will improve if the management improving the general management of the service employees. In general, improving the management level would contribute in making the employees more inspired and involved, that takes a more responsive and responsible approach to their work and that contribute in improving the service process and interfacing with the customer. These efforts would in turn, improve the retention level of its best personnel.

The effort of improving the management would need to take into consideration all the four functions of management listed in the table below.

Table 44: The four functions of management to be taken into consideration.

|  |
|--|
| Planning: goal setting, course of action setting, rules and procedures development, organization planning, employees planning and forecasting                      |
| Organizing: discovering roles to filled, get the roles filled with employees, setting up teams, empowering employees   |
| Motivating: The organization will have difficulties in reaching its goals without motivated employees. Motivation is key in enabling motivated employees.          |
| Controlling: Shared the results with the organization, measure it against the set target level and take necessary actions when there are deviations from the plans |

Finally, The management and the service employees could, in cooperation, work on revising and clarifying the role and responsibility of the organization and the individual employee. This topic will be covered in more details in the section 5.2.3.

### 5.2.3 Customer Service and Employee Roles and Responsibilities

There is room for improving the design of the responsibilities and the roles of each the Happy employees. This would lead to further clarification of the role and responsibility of each employee and make them feel more dedicated and enable them to perform better in their job at Happy. These improvements would also result in the improvement of the work environment and encourage employees to voice their opinions when they

see the need for change and to report shortcomings without fear, as they have been part of the process.

The care team members would work more effectively if there were an improvement of their understanding of their role, what is expected from them, and how they would be assessed. The customer services that they provide would have become more effective with minimizing the individual and group role conflict and role ambiguity. Any attempt to clarify the employees' roles and responsibility should start with the development of their job descriptions.

As job descriptions did not exist initially, it was decided to produce job description for each of the existing role in Happy. This documents was written by the manager, reviewed by the staff and approved by the board. And the aim is that the manager will be responsible for maintaining the content of that document up to date.

Job descriptions are produced for the role of the manager, the deputy manager, the registered nurse, the practical nurse, the kitchen team lead, the cook and the kitchen assistant. During the production of the job description, special attention is put to ensure that they are as accurate as possible. The job descriptions contain the following sections listed in the table below.

Table 45: The sections contained in the job description.

|  |
|--|
| Job title  |
| Needed competences   |
| General function statement. This section explains the overall purpose of the job.                                    |
| Duties and responsibilities. This section contains a description of the duties and responsibilities of the employee. |

In this study, these documents were developed and suggested for the case organization. They were originally written in Swedish and then translated into English for the purpose of publishing them in this document. The job descriptions for the manager, the deputy manager, the registered nurse, the practical nurse, the kitchen team lead, the cook and the kitchen assistant are listed in Appendix 2.

### 5.3 Customer Service and Customer Centric Organization

#### 5.3.1 Increasing the Customer Centricity of the Organization

The case organization could become more customer-centric and steps would be needed in order to realize it. The key characteristics of those steps would include creating a single point of contact for the customer. The single point of contact represents the customer's ambassador inside the case organization. It would also include changing the organization setup to be more focused on serving the customer. And finally, the case organization and its employees should become measured on the customer satisfaction and rewarded accordingly.

Multiple discussions have been conducted with the management on the easiest steps that could be initiated to make the organization more customer-centric. As covered in the current state analysis section, the case organization is structured into two teams, based on the geographical locations in the building, as detailed in the figure below.



Figure 3: The current case organization set-up: Team 1 and Team 2, as they are located in the building.

After some brainstorming sessions, where many ideas were discussed, an agreement was reached upon a possible first step that would be implemented in Happy in order to strengthen the relationship with the residents and their relatives. A specific practical nurse was appointed as the single point of contact for a particular resident. This is a first step for the organization to move towards a customer centric setup. The particular practical nurse's name was printed and put visible on the door of each of the respective contact resident. This change was the first step of the organization to increase the focus on the particular needs of the individual customer. Today, the names are still on the doors of each residents and the initiative is deemed a partial success. The result of this initiative has helped uncover areas that need to change in order to continue improving the focus on the customer.

Based on the outcome of the first step, workshops were conducted in finding a way of redesigning the organization to become more organized around the customer as described in the literature section. The finding is a renewal of the organization that has a customer-focused structure and gathers all the dedicated customer-specific resources from the organization. These areas are listed in the table below.

Table 46: The areas that need changes in order to continue improving the focus on the customer.

Organizational setup: Team 1 and team 2 organizational setup remains in place and constitutes some level of impediment to the customer centricity initiative. The care personnel are not organized around the customer and the organization will need to more reflect focus on the customer.

Metrics and incentive systems: The service personnel is not particularly measured and rewarded for supporting this initiative. Their time planning and reward scheme will need to be adjusted to reflect this new initiative.

Training on customer focus: The personnel and the residents would have benefitted from receiving more training and other information on the initiative. This is reflected in the fact that there is some that are a little confused on some details of the initiative's goal.

Leadership commitment: The management could have invested even more time to support the change in mindset and behavior of both employees and residents.

In addition to the focus areas listed above, the aim is to enable the organization to keep the functional team structure that ensures a proper focus on hiring, training and managing the employees in each of their expertise areas: registered nurse, practical nurse and kitchen. And the same time, ensure that Happy and its residents gets the customer-centric team structure that takes into account the segmentation and respective profiling of each customer. Furthermore, this ensures that the resulting organization reflects a more optimum geographical location of each customer.

As for the new organization setup, reflected against the case organization content, this results in a proposal of a new matrix organization. This new matrix organization has a team leader for each of the function and a team leader for each of the floors in the case organization's building complex as a short-term solution. This temporary structure is



depicted in the figure below. Presently, since the 1<sup>st</sup> floor only has three residents, it was thus combined with the 4<sup>th</sup> floor that also has a smaller amount of 12 residents.

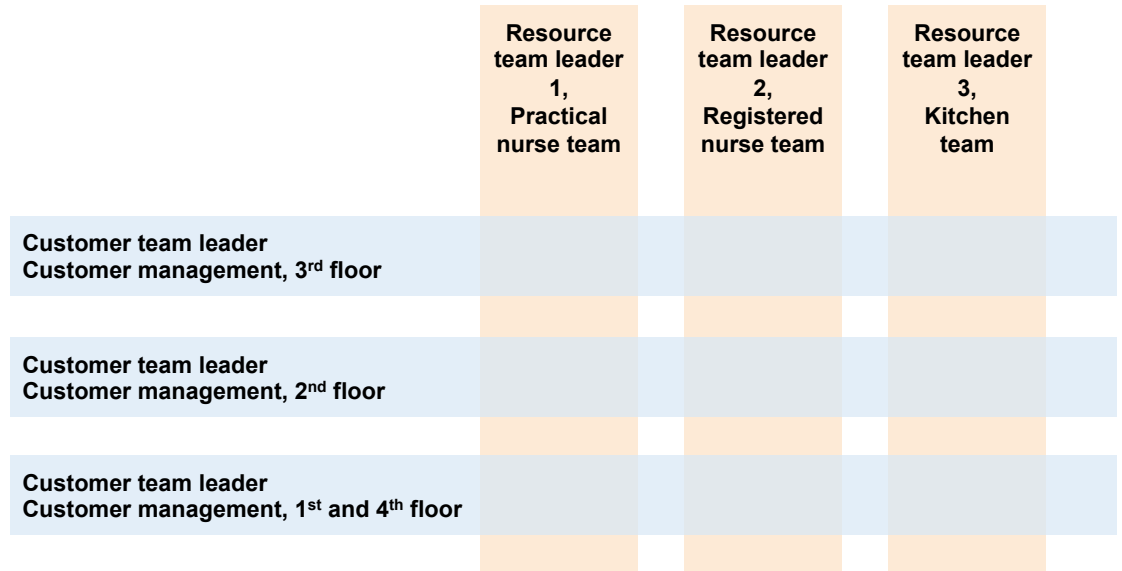


Figure 4: The new matrix organization.

As it is depicted in the figure below, this new matrix organizational setup would increase the flexibility of the resource usage in the different time shifts as well.

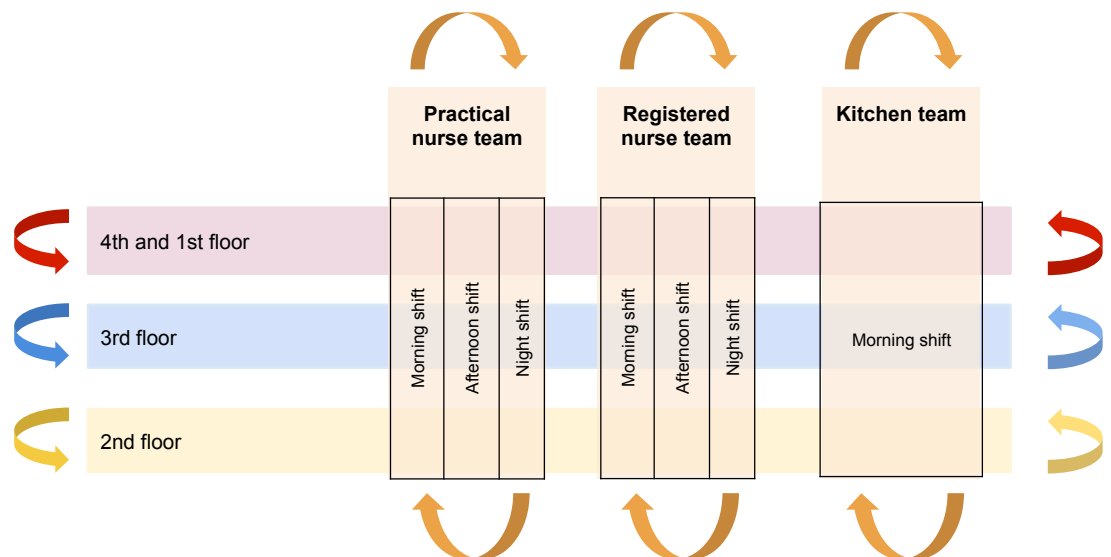


Figure 5: The increased flexibility of the resource usage in this new matrix organizational setup.

A visual explanation of the new short-term floor team setup is shown in the figure below.



Figure 6: A visual explanation of the new short-term floor team setup.

This study proposes, based on the discussions with the management and the employees, that the long-term development of the organization is to be a merger of the customer segmentation and the physical residents' location. This reorganization would allow for the service personnel to increase their specializing in both the customer competence (based on the customer profiles and segment groups) as well as in the customer services competence. This will in turn increase the possibility to deliver the customer a service offering with a higher customer value.

This change would take into account the discovered customer segments and a dedicated care team that would become more specialized in servicing a particular customer segment. This renewed setup would also help to enhance delivering the services according to the specific customer value proposition, to all customer groups. The long-term development of the organization is presented in the figure below.

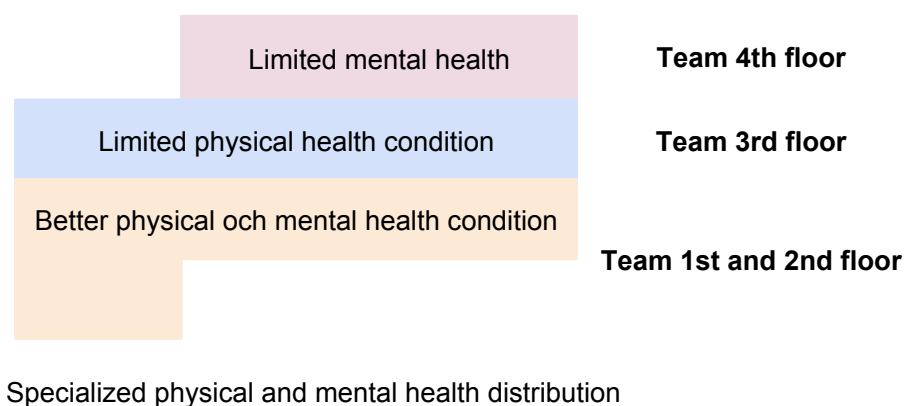


Figure 7: The long-term development of the organization.

The long-term organizational setup allows for a merger of the customer segmentation and the residents' geographical location. This reorganization allows for the service personnel to increase their specializing in both the customer competence (based on the three defined customer segments, determined earlier) as well as in the customer services competence. This step will allow for further specialization of the service employees, which will result in a further increase of the customer value delivered to the customer with the resulting higher customer satisfaction level.

The transition to the long-term setup would require a considerable effort of changing the residence location for many residents. As a result, the study suggests a transitional approach, that aims to end up with the long-term setup and at the same time allows for both the employees and residents to adjust slowly to the change. The slow transition is depicted visually in the figure below.

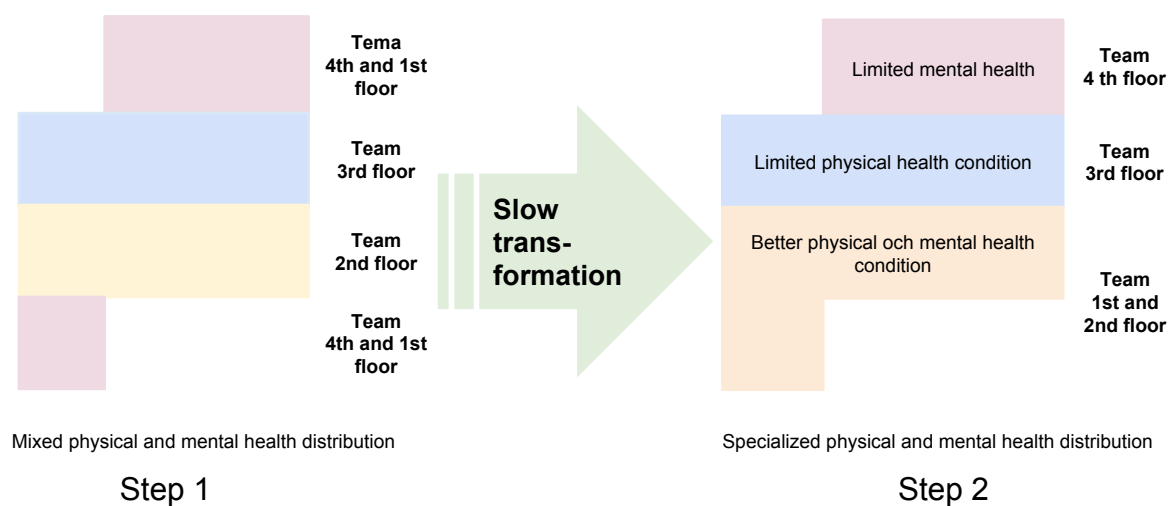


Figure 8: The slow transition to the long-term setup.

This renewed organizational setup keeps the strengths of the existing organization and at the same time, puts the customer in the center. Furthermore, it strengthens the accountability of the employees for the customer as well as for the provided customer services.

In the course of this thesis, as a result of this proposal, the management and the board of Happy started considering the optimum timeframe and the optimal way to implement relevant elements of the above proposal within their organization.

### 5.3.2 Managing Employee Capacity According to Customer Demand

The case organization could benefit decreasing the use of temporary workers by having a more defined way of managing the service capacity. The current fixed capacity of 20 service employees, based on the result of the current state, seems to be adequate for the current level of service offering. This capacity of 20 service employees will need to be translated into service capacity, in terms of how much measurable amount of customer service can 20 service employees undertake. This service capacity can then be put up against to the demand for service over time. The demand for service is defining the needed capacity at a certain point in time.

The demand for services is fluctuating during the 24 hours of each day and this fluctuation could be managed in a better way than currently.

It would be valuable to initiate and maintain the tracking of the historical demand information; as this could help in predicting future demand fluctuation.

With the increased learning on which optimum strategy works for the case organization and its customer base, a written instruction on how to best make use of the resources can then be written. This instruction would then constitute a set of clear guidelines that the whole organization can execute upon when needed.

The case organization seems currently to be using a combination of the level capacity, chase capacity. It could be of value for the case organization to consider the introduction of demand management to help improve the capacity management. Furthermore, a complex operation such as the case organization would most probably benefit from the utilization of all three basic capacity strategies. In order to make the right strategic decision, it would be recommended that the case organization conducts a thorough capacity management analysis.

#### 5.4 Becoming an Excellent Customer Service Provider

Happy would become an excellent customer service provider by looking into the ways of improving the four drivers to deliver effective and efficient customer service. An overview of the four drivers can be found in the table below.

Table 48: An overview of the four drivers to deliver effective and efficient customer service in the case organization.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Investing more in developing good leadership in the organization</b> | Increasing the willingness to listen and communicate up and down the organization  |
|   | Further invest in training the staff, improving the processes  |
|   | Improve the ways of working to further eliminate complacency, aim to never be satisfied with the status quo and believe that the organization can continuously improve itself. |
|   | Further clarify the service vision, that would strengthen the employees' believe in the organization and to challenge them to support it even more.                            |
|   | Clarify further the plans on how to achieve the goals and vision of Happy  |
|   | Build further a supportive culture that is self-renewing and   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | encouraging the development of new ways of thinking and acting   |
|   | Further encourage the management to never loses sight of the big picture while, at the same time paying close attention to the detail  |
| <b>Knowing and delivering the service concept</b>   | The whole Happy team could work together in improving the definition of the service concept, increase the communication of it towards the employees, present and potential customers.  |
| <b>Supportive and committed staff</b>               | Investment could be made to further encourage the staff to own the service processes, to look for ways to improve them. The management could look at further developing the existing recognition and reward schemes. These actions would lead to further empowerment and initiative taking of the staff. |
| <b>Establishing excellent systems and processes</b> | The organization's systems and processes could be redesigned to increase the customer's experience, by looking at the services that are provided at Happy from the customer's perspective.   |

By aiming at becoming an excellent customer service provider, the case organization would realize three clear advantages. It will enable a service offering that delights the customer, by offering them a good service experience. The service outcome for the customer will be closer to the customer value that customer was expecting. The service provider's organization would have a reputation for delivering excellent customer service and would find it easy to acquire the best customers and employees. The employees would most likely be committed and engaged at serving the customer. The management would find it easier to manage the organization, as there is no poor service, complaining customer, useless process, poor technology, etc.... to deal with. Finally, the owners of the institution will see higher revenues, lower costs, lower employee and customer turnover and higher profit.

## **6 Discussion and Conclusions**

This section introduces the customer service improvements for the case organization based on the findings from the current state analysis and suggestions gathered from the theories and best practice covered in Section 4.

What makes this study special is that some of the proposals were immediately applied into action in the context of the case organization. Moreover, all proposals were incremental and aimed at improving key service elements in order for the organization to become more customer-centric.

### **6.1 Improving Customer Service in the Case Organization**

The purpose of this thesis was to review customer service activities in an elderly care home, uncover gaps in the current customer service that need attention, propose improvements and, if appropriate, start implementing them to reach the improved customer service in the case organization.

When conducting this thesis, it has become clear that improving the existing customer service relies equally on, first, the performance of the staff, second, the leadership and management and, third, on the understanding of the customer. This approach was tried and supported by the findings from the literature review, which proved that the main focus should be placed on: a) the customer that is the recipient of the service, b) the service that the customer receives, c) the employee that deliver the service, and d) the leadership and management that is leading and managing the organization. This approach was formulated into the conceptual framework for this study, which is illustrated in the figure below.

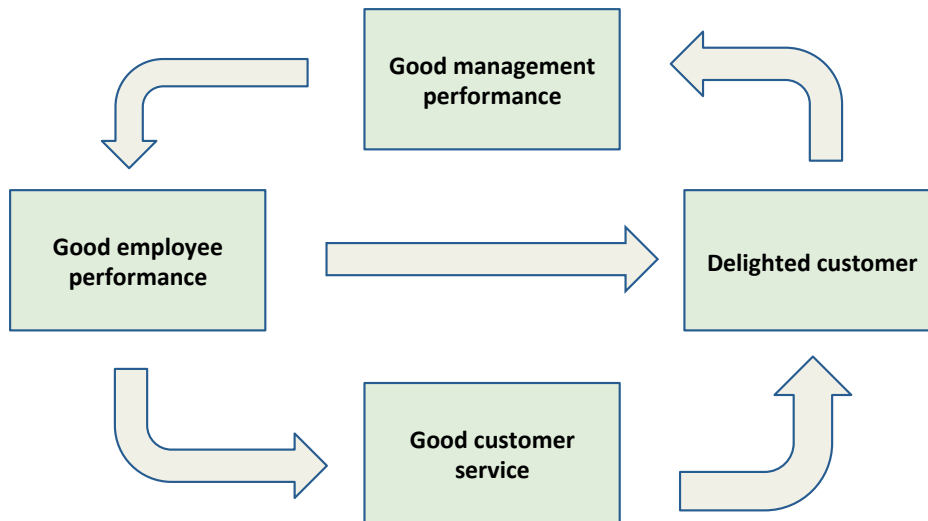


Figure 9: The key stakeholders in delivering good customer service: the employees, the management and the customer.

It became evident through both the review of the literature and best practice, as well as the current state analysis of the case organization, that for setting up and remaining competitive, the case elderly care establishment is required to deliver consistent customer service. The consistent customer service will then result in delighted customers. This delivery will only be possible to reach if the employees deliver excellent customer service, supported by the management team that performs effective management and leadership. It is through effective and efficient performance of the organization that an elderly care business is able to succeed in delivering the right level of customer service. These principles were also followed in the research and when making proposals for improvements. The following sub-sections contain the summary of the proposals and the actions needed for realizing the improved customer service in the case organization.

## 6.2 Customer Service

Since the primary purpose and mission of the case organization is to serve its customers, the first step in the improvements is the recognition that the elderly home acts as a business organization. Although this may be difficult to remember in everyday activities, the only purpose of its whole existence is serving its customers. The case organization is in the business of satisfying the need of its customers. Moreover, the customer has a choice at any moment to choose another elderly care service provider. Therefore, understanding and satisfying the need of every individual customer is the main



reason and justification for this establishment to exist. The success in that effort requires building up a solid understanding of the present customer base, as well as identifying the future targeted customer segment. This should become the focus of every single employee and not only the management of the case organization, in order for the elderly home to maximize customer value. It is through maximizing the customer value, rather than driving the number of transactions with the customers, that the case organization could enable the generation of revenue and profit that is necessary for its success.

As the findings reveal, the case organization has a challenge in providing maximum customer value due to, among other things, a limited understanding of its target customer group. In order to improve the understanding of the current and potential future customers, the case organization needs to be able to profile the customers based on suitable information that could help in identifying different customer profiles. Such information would need to be collected and grouped for forming customer segment profiles. This information and customer segments can be used for improving or developing the required services.

As the next step in the customer profiling and analysis, it is important to recognize what is the customer segment that the case organization has the greatest chances of satisfying. By identifying the target customer segments, the case organization can ensure that the organization focuses its energy and resources on improving or developing the offering for the needs of the right customer segments.

In this thesis, it was proposed that the status of mental and physical health of customers could become the basis for such customer segmentation. If this logic is accepted, then the aim is to provide the customers with the tailored services that fulfill the needs of each individual customer, depending on their level of physical and mental health. It could be anticipated that such a change to a more customer-tailored service package will be followed by increased individual value derived by the customers. This increased value creation can be based, first of all, on identifying the category that, each individual customer belongs to, and then offering them a service package accordingly.

### 6.3 Service Employee

In the elderly home service business, as in many services, it is the customer-facing staff, taken both individually and collectively, that is responsible for successful interactions and service delivery to their customers. It is at the customer contact point that the

success of the service is determined. The human factor in creating value that the employee is bringing to the operational execution is, however, not given enough importance. In the case organization, on top of the unsatisfied customer, the level of the employee satisfaction is not adequate, which makes it even more difficult for the establishment to deliver the right level of customer service.

From the analysis of the case organization, it became evident that the care team members form the most important element in the customer service. It is their actions that, as the findings suggest, create the most value for the customers. Moreover, through its presence and action, the care staff represents the organization and demonstrates how important each resident is as a customer.

As it was shown in the study, the essence of case organization's customer service portfolio lies in the skills, capacity and knowledge of the care team members. The care staff is "the service" in the sense that it is these employees - a blend of their expertise and chemistry with the client - that the residents are paying for and receive services from. It is thus of primary importance that the case organization is aiming at high employee satisfaction level, since more satisfied employees, seeing meaning in their work are better able to provide good customer service (Fischer 2012, 2014). As it became evident in this thesis, one of the main factors contributing to employee satisfaction is the management and leadership they receive at work.

One of the cornerstones of the employee productivity gained through the effective management is to ensure that the organization and each employee have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, what is expected of them, and how they will be assessed. The organization's, the team's and the individual's job description is the starting point in enabling that. Creating and maintaining the clear job descriptions will help to avoid the situation when the given roles and responsibilities in the case organization become confusing and inefficiently executed. Such a job description should contain the basic components that are essential for clarifying the role and responsibilities of an employee. The essential ones are the job title, general function statement and duties and responsibilities.

Although clarification of the roles and responsibilities make an essential start on the road of improving individual employee performance, it is also important to arrange the organization and its customer service around the customer as much as possible. Such focus will maximize the attention, both individual and collective, to fulfilling the custom-

er needs. One of the essential pillars of a customer-centric organization is to maximize the empowerment of the employee to provide the best possible customer service to every customer.

Another aspect that needs to be ensured is that there is enough personnel capacity to fulfill the customer demand for services. This requires trying to achieve a balance between too much and too little resource utilization, within the financial and operational constraints. It is necessary to do thorough planning for execution in order to make the best use of the resources, who are handling the forecasted demand for customer services. In order to manage capacity, it is needed to be able to measure it first. In this measurement, it is important to take into account factors such as service mix, location, intangibility, resource constraints, etc.

#### 6.4 Customer Centric Organization

In this thesis, we have learned that management is key in getting the employee to perform their roles within the organization. In order to enable the case organization to be successful it is important for the management to establish the specific purpose and mission of the case organization. In striving towards performing an effective and efficient leadership and management, it is important to consider performing most of the actions listed in the table below.

Table 49: Actions that could enable effective leadership and management in the case organization.

|   |
|---|
| Determining and formulating the key short and long term objectives of the case organization as a service business operating in the field of elderly care  |
| Working towards these objectives at all times, limiting any distractions or activities that distract from accomplishing these objectives  |
| Translating and communicating the business objectives to the employees and ensuring the successful achievement of these objectives.   |
| The employees that are hired have the right professional attitudes, skills, and will to perform well the roles and responsibilities allocated to them   |
| A clear, concise, and frequent guidance is given to the employees   |
| The employees are evaluated based on their contribution to achieving the key business objectives, and they are rewarded appropriately according to the level of accomplishment towards the objectives |
| Taking necessary actions when there are obstacles that slow down the pro-   |

gress towards accomplishing the business objectives

Continuously engaging the market place to understand the future developments that might affect the customer behavior and the corresponding customer needs. This will tool the management to be able to valid and fine-tune the established mission and vision to continue forecasting and matching the latest customer developments

As a result of the continuous implementation of the above-described actions, the management will enable the organization to keep their customer delighted. The organization will be able to have processes that are adjusted to the current customer situation. As a result, the employees will feel that they are well supported, as they are able to handle most of the problems that they meet. Continuous improvements will as a result occur within the organization, as the culture of the workplace will strengthen the will to identify and fix the problems before they occur.

## 6.5 Evaluation of This Study

### 6.5.1 Evaluation of the Objective vs. Outcome of This Study

The purpose of this thesis was to review the current elderly home customer service operations, uncover any gaps that need attention, propose improvements and, if appropriate, suggest some immediate steps for implementation for some of the proposed improvements towards the improved customer service at Happy. The outcome of this study was planned as recommendations for the management on how to improve the current state of customer care in the case organization.

If this study were to be conducted again, the learning is, that even more time needs to be allocated for discovering and realizing the improvements in the complex environment of the case organization.

As the current state analysis took considerable amount time, there was limited time left to test the proposed improvements and further fine-tune them based on the implementation of the initial suggestions. It is, as result, recommended that this study is continued and finalized to realize all potential improvements. Different methods and techniques were used for uncovering the current state and the reasons behind the things that were working well and the things that needed improvements. If this study were to be conducted again, the lesson learnt is that even more time needs to be allocated for discovering and realizing the current state, in order to uncover even further details and

reasons for the current customer experience and employee feelings. Also additional techniques like broader anonymous questionnaires could be considered for deepening the study.

#### 6.5.2 Validity and Reliability

As discussed in Section 2.3, validity and reliability make the key notions related to the quality of research. Validity is divided into four types. These are the internal validity, the construct validity, the external validity and the reliability (Yin 2003).

The internal validity is strengthened, by putting attention into answering the research questions. Review of this thesis content together with key members of the case organization ensures that the research question was answered and that the proposal content is actionable for the case organization. Conversational field notes were taken during interviews, meetings and workshops. These notes were reviewed and validated with the participants after the particular sessions. Observational field notes were collected during the data collection time frame. These notes were reviewed and validated with the participants after the particular sessions. Furthermore, the research held a diary throughout the conduction of this research. This diary was regularly reviewed and validated by the management team of the case organization.

The construct validity is strengthened, by using triangulation of data collection and analysis methods, meaning the way the data was collected, analyzed and summarized. Multiple data collection methods were used in order to maximize the validity of the result. The data collection had multiple individual and group sources.

The external validity would need to answer the question “How much is it possible to transfer the proposal to another similar organization?” Since this thesis does only cover the case organization, it can be stated that the external validity has not been verified and does not need to.

The reliability of this study was increased by collecting data from many participants through relatively long lasting observations, multiple sessions of personal interviews, and selected persons in meetings and larger group workshops. All interviews, workshops and other material were collected anonymously in order to maximize the reliability of the results. The researcher’s personal notes were reviewed together with the participants in order to increase the reliability of the study. Finally, the researcher acted as an outside consultant, which helped to keep his interpretations unbiased and not reflecting any views of any particular stakeholder group.

Considerable efforts were put into ensuring the credibility of this study when identifying the ways to improve the customer service level at the case organization. Large amount of literature from diverse sources was studied to limit possible bias while conducting the research. Moreover, the management team was involved acting as a reference group for the study. All recommendations were reviewed and validated by this group.

Despite all the efforts, it was difficult to overcome the limitations of this research. Firstly, the study of the internal cooperation of the organization (management, employee and customer), although constituting a major factor in implementing a good customer service, was left out of this study. Secondly, the data collected is based on personal subjective views of the participants. Thirdly, the researcher is new to the field of healthcare and had to learn on the way while researching. These limitations will need to be considered when reviewing the results of this study.

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## The Customer Mental and Physical Health Characteristics

### Customers on floor 1

The mental and physical profile of residents on floor 1 is shown in Figure 1 below:

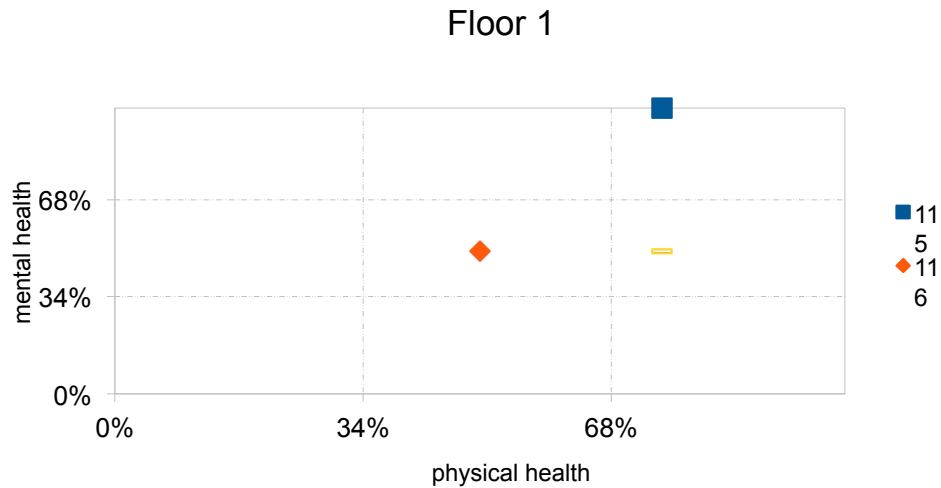


Figure 1: The mental and physical profile of residents in percentage on floor 1.

The combined mental and physical profile of residents on floor 1 is shown in the figure 2 below:

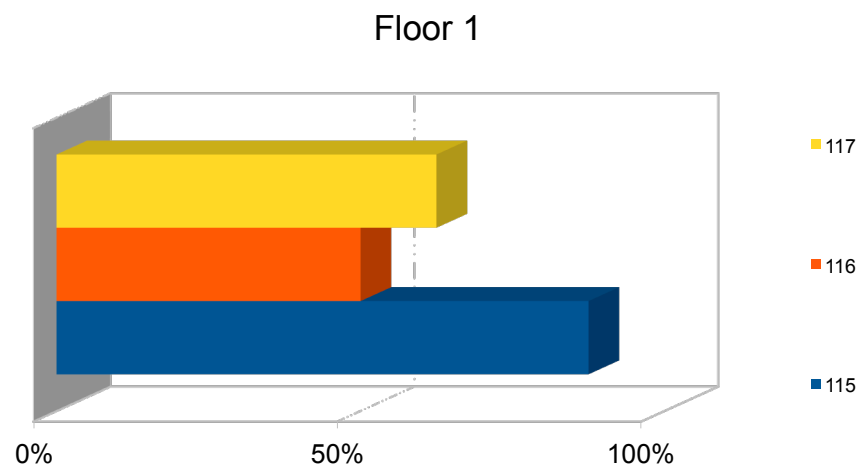


Figure 2: The combined mental and physical profile of residents in percentage on floor 1.

Customers on floor 2

The mental and physical profile of residents on floor 2 is shown in Figure 3 below:

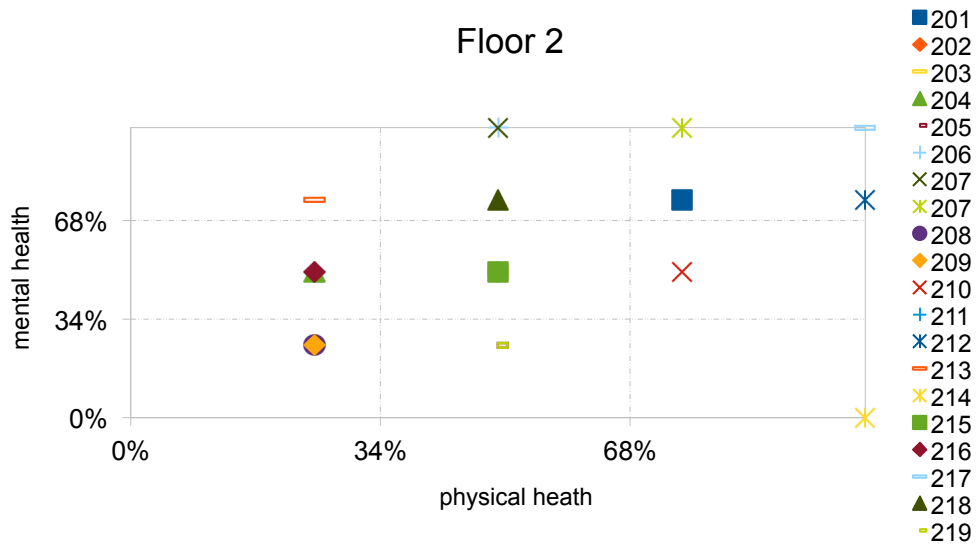


Figure 3: The mental and physical profile of residents in percentage on floor 2.

The combined mental and physical profile of residents on floor 2 is shown in Figure 4 below:

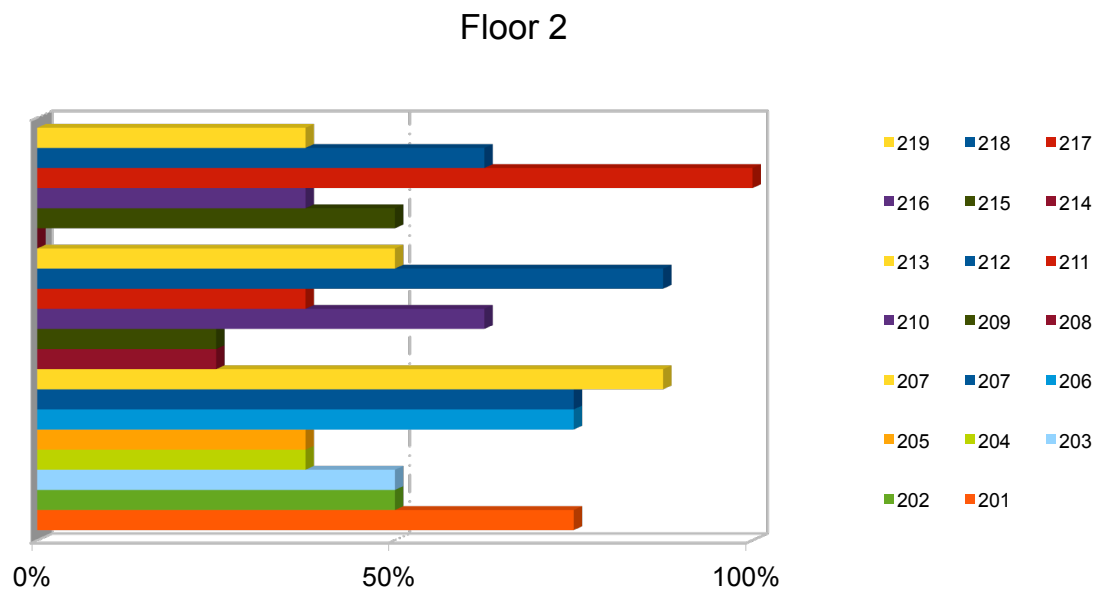


Figure 4: The combined mental and physical profile of residents in percentage on floor 2.

Customers on floor 3

The mental and physical profile of residents on floor 3 is shown in Figure 5 below:

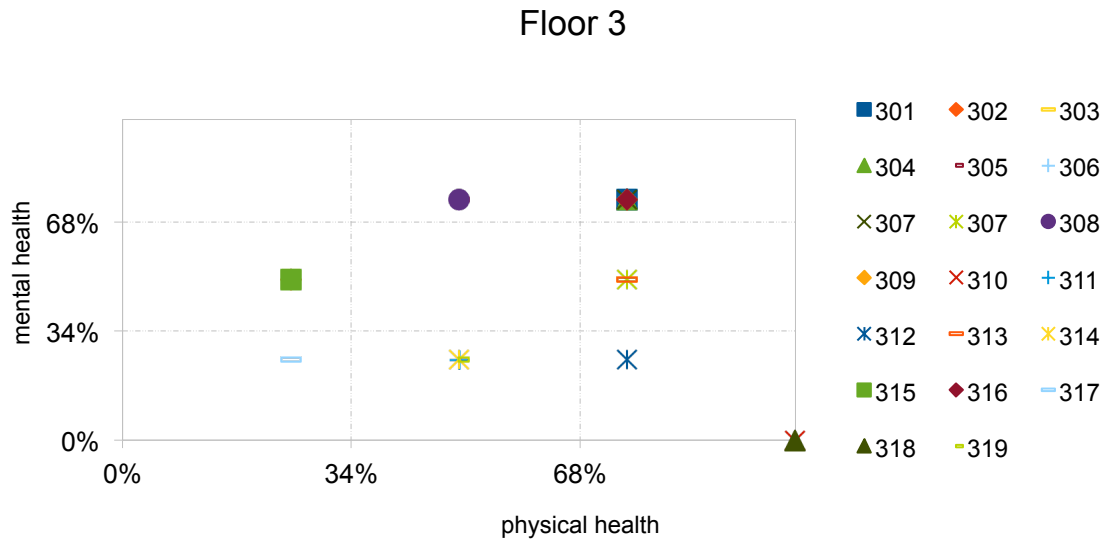


Figure 5: The mental and physical profile of residents in percentage on floor 3.

The combined mental and physical profile of residents on floor 3 is shown in Figure 6 below:

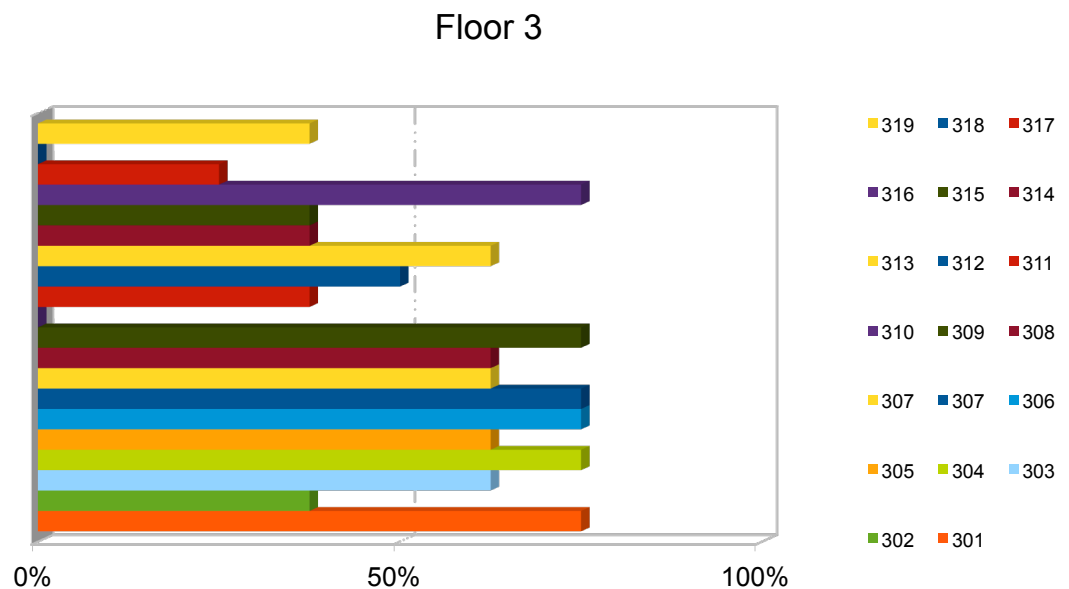


Figure 6: The combined mental and physical profile of residents in percentage on floor 3.

Customers on floor 4

The mental and physical profile of residents on floor 4 is shown in Figure 7 below:

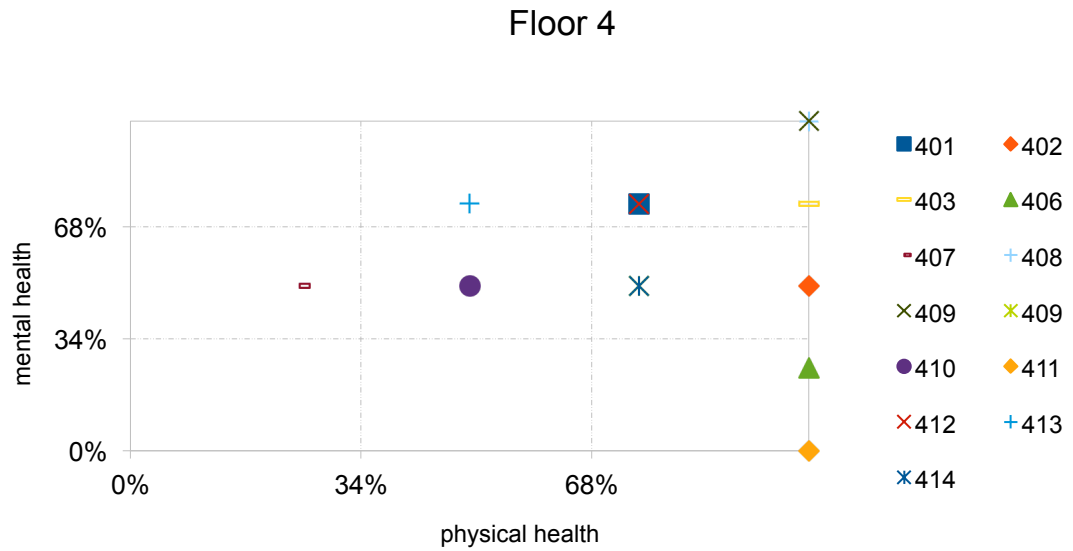


Figure 7: The mental and physical profile of residents in percentage on floor 4.

The combined mental and physical profile of residents on floor 4 is shown in Figure 8 below:

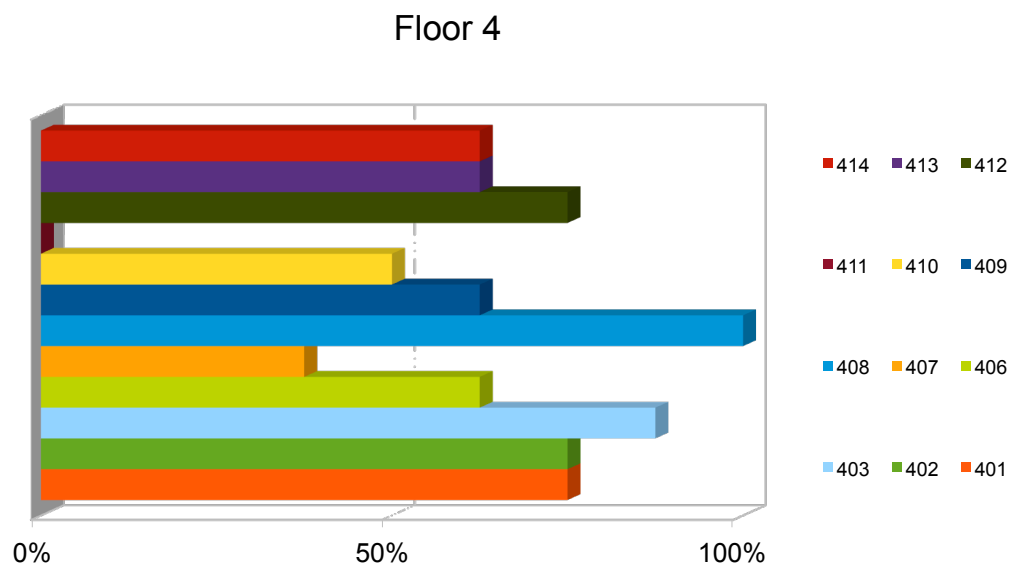


Figure 8: The combined mental and physical profile of residents in percentage on floor 4.

Customers in the whole establishment

The mental and physical profile of residents in the whole establishment is shown in Figure 9 below:

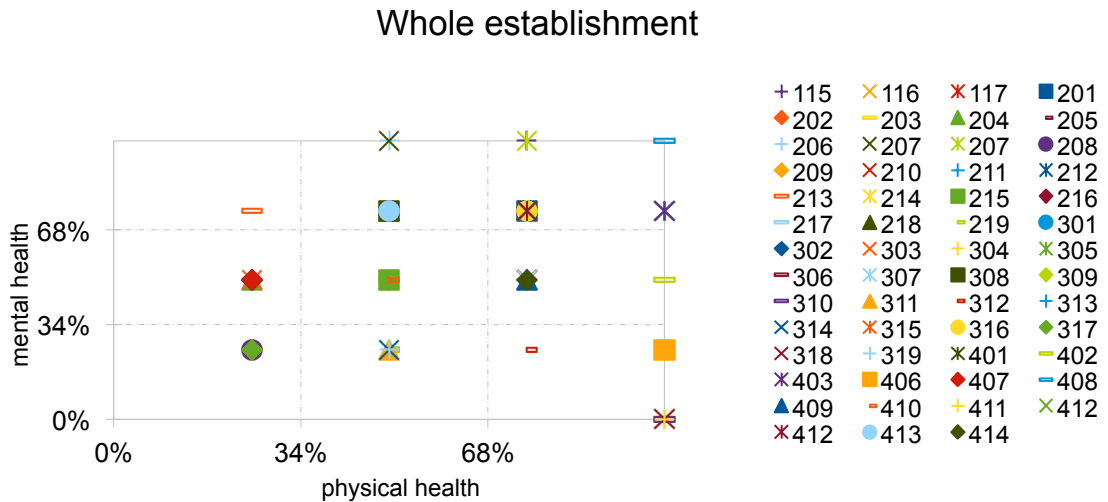


Figure 9: The mental and physical profile of residents in percentage, in the whole establishment.

The combined mental and physical profile of residents in the whole establishment is shown in Figure 10 below:

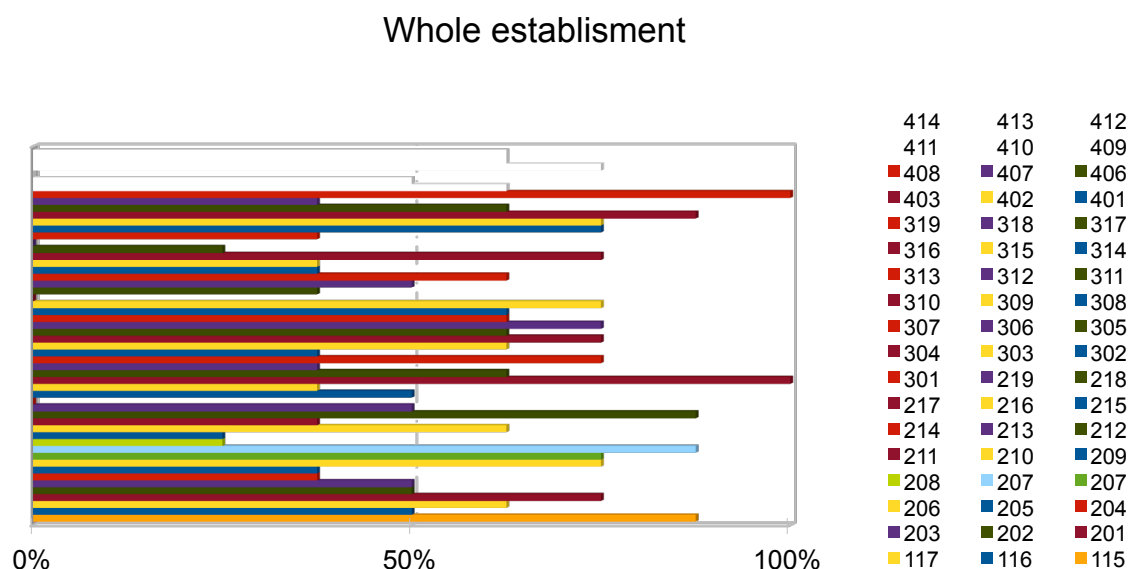


Figure 10: The combined mental and physical profile of residents in percentage, in the whole establishment.

## **Job descriptions**

### **I. Job description for the Manager**

#### **Competence needed**

Registered nurse diploma, administrative and management training

Knowledge of health care for older people (geriatrics, dementia care and ability to see the big picture)

Knowledge of developments in the Healthcare industry and familiarity with current issues in elderly care

#### **General function statement**

The manager is responsible for developing the operations and to ensure that all activities are without problems, that the objectives are met, and that the given budget is followed.

#### **Duties and responsibilities**

Has overall responsibility to ensure that the home's retirees receive good care and treatment

Leads staff and daily operations

Hires new staff and temps in the framework of the budget

Responsible for ensuring that the staff has good working conditions, they get much needed support in their daily work, and that they have knowledge of the home's mission statement and goals

Develops the operations and come up with innovative proposals

Selects new retirees to the home with regard to household resources

Handles together with the personnel contact between the home and the relatives.

Monitors in consultation with the responsible service manager & managing the technical condition of the property.

Responsible in consultation with the technical manager that the authorities mandated audits and checks are made

Follows the budgetary limits

Is responsible for the administrative tasks

Execute other duties as assigned by the Board

Participate in Board meetings

Is in continuous contact with the Chairman, elderly home-Committee and the responsible for the salary statistician

Have a regular basis, at least one time per year employee development meetings

Have the right to flexible working hours i.e. has the right to work from home if needed, requires no overtime pay

Available 24h

Job description for team leader

**Competence needed**

Nurse or health care graduate

Knowledge of health care for older people (geriatrics, dementia care, with the ability to see the big picture)

Knowledge of developments in the healthcare industry and familiarity with current issues in elderly care

Ability to work with the Manager to lead and motivate team

General function statement

Deputy Manager is responsible along with the manager for the business development, ensures that the whole works, and that common goals are met

Duties and responsibilities

Manages the work planning and schedules of the care staff

Is responsible for the recruitment of staff, in cooperation with the manager

Is responsible for the introduction of new employees and for mentoring of students in cooperation with the manager.

Is innovative, and develops the business, creates the conditions for a safe and open working environment.

Responsible for the personnel by fostering a good atmosphere and a positive working and by monitoring their general well-being.

Creates opportunities for flexible cooperation with their colleagues

Is responsible for reporting and documentation that all tasks are done as expected

Is responsible for receiving residents and their relatives at Happy daily

Participates in the care activities, if necessary, (see the nurse's job description)

Has a flexible mindset

Is together with the manager responsible for the budget and the recruitment of temporary staff

Acts as a substitute when the manager is not available and performs other activities assigned by the manager

Is responsible for the vaccination activities at Happy.

II. Job description for the Registered Nurse

**Competence needed**

Nurse or health care for graduate

Knowledge of health care for older people (geriatrics, dementia care, with the ability to see the big picture)

Ability to transfer new professional knowledge to other colleagues

Ability to lead and motivate others

Ability to build on their professional skills to help and support the client

### **General function statement**

The nurse is responsible, together with the manager and the colleagues that the activities are executed and that common goals are met.

### **Duties and responsibilities**

Supervises new nurses and students

Promotes a positive working and good atmosphere

Decides in healthcare issues and prioritize care options based on an overall assessment based on professional knowledge

Implement and follow up the system with regards to their own careers

Considers an activating and rehabilitative approach

Is responsible for medicine distribution, which involves sharing medications in dosage unit and ordering medications from the pharmacy

The nurse assesses in terms of health care, the need for medical hospitalization, and is primarily responsible for the surgery at home

Participates actively in the care work

Manages documentation and reporting as prescribed, i.e. both oral and written reports, make up care plans in consultation with their own caregiver, also update them, do as agreed twice / year health assessment and health needs assessments using existing health measures; RAVATAR and MMSE

Have a flexible approach to their duties

Perform other foreman assigned responsibilities.

### III. Job description for the Practical Nurse

#### **Competence needed**

Practical nurse diploma

Basic knowledge in elderly care (dementia, geriatrics, with the ability to see the big picture)

Ability to, based on their professional knowledge, assist and support the care-dependent person so that it can maintain a good quality of life.

#### **General function statement**

The practical nurse is liable together with the manager, the team leader, and other colleagues for executing the needed activities and that the clients receive quality care.

#### **Duties and responsibilities**

Promotes a positive working environment and good atmosphere

Takes full responsibility for own role

Works with an activating and rehabilitative approach

Is responsive for client demands, wishes and views and serve as their advocate



Is responsible for completing the program training program “safe distribution of medication”. This will allow the individual practical nurse to have the rights to administer eye drops and inhalers

Giving injections with the special permission of the medical physician

Having the necessary expertise in ordering medications from the pharmacy

Perform wound care in consultation with the registered nurse

Supervises new employees and students

Producing documentation and reporting as prescribed, i.e. both oral and written reports, produce and update the residents’ care plans

Perform twice a year healthcare assessment of the residents and produce the associated care plan using the health measures provided by the tools RAVATAR and MMSE

Is responsible for managing the residents’ clothes

Participates in meal serving to the residents and comply with the kitchen’s rules and regulations

Contributes to a positive collaboration within the workplace

Have a flexible approach to their duties

Perform other assigned responsibilities assigned by the management.

#### IV. Job description for the Kitchen Team Leader

##### **Competence needed**

Nutrition Technician / catering kitchen chef / restaurant chef

Basic knowledge of nutrition for the elderly

##### **General function statement**

The kitchen team leader is responsible together with the manager and other colleagues for ensuring that the kitchen is working and that common goals are met

The kitchen team leader is responsible for the produced meals meets the authorities mandated quality recommendations in the area of the elderly diet and nutrition.

##### **Duties and responsibilities**

Produce and maintain the work schedules for kitchen staff

Is responsible for the recruitment of kitchen staff together with the manager

Is responsible for the introduction of new kitchen employees and for the supervision of kitchen students together with the Manager

Planning kitchen menus

Managing the kitchen team

Is innovative, and wants to develop the kitchen activities

Participates in the practical work in the kitchen

Is responsible for the team to work by fostering a good atmosphere and a positive work

Is flexible with regards to the working hours

Have an economical approach in the management of the kitchen

Perform assigned responsibilities

Is able to use the electronic resident record program.

#### V. Job description for the Cook

##### **Competence needed:**

Cook diploma

Basic knowledge of nutrition for the elderly

##### **General function statement**

The cook is responsible together with the kitchen team leader and other colleagues for ensuring that the kitchen is working and that common goals are met

The cook is responsible together with the kitchen team leader and other colleagues for ensuring that the produced meals meet the authorities mandated quality recommendations in the area of the elderly diet and nutrition.

##### **Duties and responsibilities**

Prepare the food, breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner

Take into consideration various special diet needs

Planning dinner

Baking

Participates in special celebrations and other needed services

Prepare the meals

Dishing

Ensure cleanliness of the kitchen

Considers the quality of meals

Perform self-inspection to ensure compliance with regulations

Manages the ordering and the unpacking of need ingredients

Is innovative

Contributes to a positive working environment together with the care staff

Participates in staff meetings

Have a flexible approach to their duties

Perform other assigned responsibilities

Is able to use the electronic client record program.

VI. Job description for the Kitchen Assistant

**Duties and responsibilities**

Operates morning meal in the resident's kitchen floor

Prepare the water bath

Cleans and fills the fridges in the dining room

Cleans the tables in the dining room

Sets up water jugs and prepare the salad table

Washes the lunch dishes

Sets the clean dishes ready

Prepare the afternoon coffee

Keeps in personnel fridge tidy

Helps in the kitchen when necessary

Participates in staff meetings.