

MOTIVATION AND BUILDING A TRAINING MODEL FOR ENHANCED RETAIL
CUSTOMER SERVICE

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THE QUESTION:

Creating the environment to support employee motivation to perform tasks is fundamental to management in every type of organization. Martin Ford's (1992) Motivational System Theory suggests that motivation is a factor of competence, goal directed activity and biological structure. Apply Martin Ford's motivational systems theory specifically to building a training model for grocery retail managers to motivate employees to perform enhanced customer support. Evaluate its validity.

Like a majority of businesses in today's competitive environment, the retail grocery business has its challenges. One of the greatest challenges is creating a shopping environment where customers will feel welcome to shop at; while at the same time becoming loyal by making it their primary source for purchasing the bulk of their grocery needs (Gitomer, 1998). Similarly, grocery companies are finding it more and more challenging to retain talented employees who can adequately and consistently fulfill the needs of their customers (Olesen, 1999).

Research indicates that the most profitable organizations have loyal customers and are comprised of employees who are customer service driven and generally happy with their jobs (Johnson 2003; Mauro, 2002; Sargeant & West, 2001; Reicheld, 1996; Jones & Sasser, 1995). Therefore, retailers can benefit from training that focuses on creating loyal customers and satisfied workers. This type of training should be developed in conjunction with appropriate motivational practices, management support and supporting research.

This paper analyzes motivational theories and models that may assist grocery managers to develop a competitive edge by properly training employees. Such training can ultimately create a more loyal customer base; while at the same time assist in

maintaining employee job satisfaction. Such training and similarly modeled programs may also have added benefits--they may keep employees from leaving and from finding employment elsewhere; which will in-turn negatively affect a company's bottom-line (Mitchell, 2003; Zemke, 2003; Gitomer, 1998; Blanchard & Bowles, 1993; Stum & Thiry, 1991).

Martin Ford (1992) created the Motivational Systems Theory (MST) to describe why people do what they do and how motivation works. Ford's MST can be adapted to create a basic model for managers in the grocery industry. They may use it in training employees to give greater levels of customer service.

The Motivational Systems Theory focuses on competence development with an understanding that motivation is a directional concept related to what a person is thinking. For example: If a person is debating whether or not he or she can reach a specific goal or if others will support him or her if he or she tries to accomplish a goal. Research supports the idea that there will be more likelihood that the individual will take the necessary actions to pursue a goal if it is assessed that there will be necessary support or that the goal is definitely attainable (Ford, 1992; Miller, 2001). The converse is more likely if individuals feel that there is too much risk or not enough support. With this in mind, developing a customer service training program must be enhanced with positive language that paints a picture of success and must also be combined with evidence of benefit for those being trained.

Ford's (1992) MST may prove to be the crucial corner building stone for such a proposed customer service training program. Four basic prerequisites for competence development are theorized by Ford. These fundamentals must be present as

characteristics of the person and the person's life contexts. Grocery managers and leaders should assess whether those characteristics are present. The characteristics are discussed further in this paper.

It should be noted that although the premises in which most great ideas are implemented in organizations are conceived with good intentions; follow through must be integrated into the training. Wood (2003) suggests that supervisors be trained to encourage ideas that benefit the programs, followed by effective-reward to recognize such successes.

According to Wood (2003) implementing training is best initiated with assessments. The first assessment should determine whether the person has the motivation needed to initiate and maintain a customer-centered focus. The second determination examines whether the person has the necessary skills needed to build and perform an enhanced level of customer service. The third assessment should determine whether the person's biological structure and functioning will support the operation of the motivational and customer service skill components. Finally, in concordance with MST, there must be an environment that is responsive and cooperative toward accomplishing the desired goals of providing a customer-centered shopping experience (Ford, 1992). This described type of working environment is crucial and should be carefully scrutinized so that it does not excessively impede successes of each individual's goal of providing customers with enhanced support.

Ford (1995) suggests that existing motivational theories are focused on only one or two motivational components rather than solely on motivational patterns. In MST, motivational and skill components can be applied to facilitate competence development

for worker-supported-enhanced customer service backing. The combination of focusing on motivation and skill to build training models are addressed in this paper specifically for the purpose of building a retail customer service culture. However, it should be noted that MST can be applied to the creation of many varieties of training models and is not just limited to retail customer service models.

Simply stated, motivation is defined in MST through a person's directive movement of wants, goals, support and avoidance of what is not wanted. The motivational processes are future oriented and enable people to assess a future outcome and meaningful consequences (Ford, 1992). The end result--they react or act in ways to produce the desired future or avoidance of undesired perceived futures. In essence, decision making is derived through personal agency beliefs, goals and emotions. House & Howell (1992) very similarly illustrate personal agency beliefs as charisma and personality. These key elements of decision making may ideally be incorporated into the creation of a customer service training model. Once such a suggested training model is created, an organizational culture can be produced that feeds off of a combination of this proposed training model and may be best reinforced by the organization's constituents and leaders.

In alignment with the MST are the philosophies of Johnson (2003) who suggests that safety-related behaviors be supported too. Safety measures will aid in building such a proposed customer service training model by adding underlying systems of support. These systems of support assist trainees by lessening safety issues to worry about so they can focus more at taking care of customers' needs.

Safety-measures can be supported through the creation of systems integrated into company policies and protect the workers and customers alike. It should be noted, however, that “a major failing of organizations is not following through and ensuring ideas are implemented. The bigger the idea, the more likely it seems that this is to happen” (Wood, 2003, p. 24). Therefore, it is recommended to incorporate management systems, including policies which oversee and promote follow through of such safety measures and training program teachings. Often this can be done by creating a calendar-scheduled timeline of tasks which require completion of the training and one or several consecutive follow-up visits. These follow-up visits should assess success of the training and evaluate what must be done next, if anything.

According to Blair (2003) safety can be established through seven “Es”:

- 1) establish expectations--leaders establish expectations and accountabilities for safety through clear vision and communication;
- 2) engineering support--ensure that engineering concerns are handled as priorities designated in the hierarchy of controls;
- 3) exemplary behavior--leaders set a personal example of the behaviors required for the desired safety culture;
- 4) educate employees--leaders provide education, training and resources to ensure that employees are fully developed and prepared to contribute to safety excellence;
- 5) enable employees--leaders grant employees authority, flexibility and partnership once they are educated and properly prepared to fulfill those characteristics;
- 6) encourage employees--leaders encourage everyone at all levels by positively reinforcing desired behaviors. They also encourage self-efficacy or capacity to exercise control over one’s own thought processes, motivation and action;
- 7) evaluate effectiveness--leaders measure and evaluate the effectiveness of their organizational strategies and make needed adjustments (Blair, 2003, p. 20).

Blair’s (2003) seven “Es,” combined with MST--when consistently implemented, will enhance safety in customer service training programs if properly reinforced.

Behaviors within the retail organization will slowly show evidence of becoming a customer service-centric culture.

Likewise, Krisco (1997) shares a similar belief to that of Blair (2003) showing how retail leaders can benefit from changing and creating an organizational culture directed primarily at serving the customer through customized training. This can be done in five basic steps: 1) Acknowledge the belief and the importance of the belief underling the cultural norm; 2) acknowledge the existing practice or behavior that follows from that belief, and verbally put it in the past; 3) advocate a new behavior or practice following from the basic belief; 4) remove the old practice or behavior, clearly stating that it is no longer the norm; and 5) ensure leadership does what it has promised to do (Krisco, 1997). Once retail leaders fully understand how to implement these steps, company policies and training programs can be better integrated to support an organizational vision of providing heightened customer service.

Peter Senge (1994) reinforces ideas for integrating organizational vision into systems in which retail leaders may benefit in conjunction with the philosophies portrayed in the MST. The proposal of building a vision that can be shared by all organizational members is described in Senge's (1994) *The Fifth Discipline*. Therein is described how the organization--collectively will evolve and move forward when [retail] leaders successfully build a culture that is founded on an organizational visions [of having a customer service-centric workforce] and members of the organization support the vision. This vision must, however be supported by systems and policies that empower members to communicate freely and grow with the needs of the organization.

Peter Block's (1991) philosophy on organizational vision is very similar to that of Senge (1994). His philosophy for the *Empowered [retail] Manager* is to claim autonomy: Treat people well; stay focused on the customer; describe the preferred future and stick

with it; vision must come from the heart; well articulated vision and must support allies. If retail leaders can inculcate these ideas into training programs, while combining them with philosophies that support customer service, their retail organizations will clearly be seen as customer-centered with a competitive edge.

Reinforcement strategies which help sustain desired behaviors with either immediate positive or negative consequences may be the needed ingredient in such support systems. These reinforcement strategies must also take into account the equity theory (Huseman & Hatfield, 1990). The equity theory suggests that people may act to eliminate any felt inequity in the rewards received for their work in comparison of others. Likewise, the expectancy theory infers that the amount of work accomplished is determined by individual beliefs regarding effort/performance relationship outcomes (Adams, 1965).

Employees must be able to witness that good behaviors are being rewarded (Wood, 2003). Likewise, undesired behaviors such as non-adherence to safety policies are not permitted and are being recognized through negative reinforcement, such as documentation, “write-ups” and/or similar disciplinary action.

Johnson (2003) also suggests that organizational commitment and organizational culture are important aspects that support behavior in alignment with Ford’s (1992) MST. Organizational commitment deals with aligning personal and organizational characteristics, goals and beliefs (Chalofsky, 2003). Building a training model for enhanced customer service may include finding ways to motivate employees while enriching them with heightened organizational commitment. This commitment can be improved through the development of an organizational culture that supports and

encourages such behaviors and goals. Organizational culture greatly influences behaviors and should not be quickly dismissed in the processes of designing corporate training models (Knippenberg, 2000).

Another possible component of building an organizational culture that promotes enhanced customer service can be created with the inclusion of practices that help personnel see themselves as valued members of the organization (Cropanzano & Konovsky, 1993; George & Jones, 1997). Knippenberg (2000) suggests that group identification through inclusion leads individuals to act in similar ways. Group membership affects attitudes and behaviors, while enhancing organizational commitment in those involved. Therefore, it may be beneficial for managers to find ways of helping trainees feel as if they are an integral part and true member of a team whose work product has significant value to the organization as a whole (Reinhardt, 2004).

In agreement with Ford's (1992) MST is Knippenberg (2000), who acknowledges that the relationship between identification and motivation may not necessarily result in a job well- done. It is the job of the organization to clearly describe what is expected and define the expected standards. By doing so, individuals can work toward those standards, rather than their individualized perceived goals, which may be lower than the goals of the organization. The person in charge of training and the overseeing manager must set realistically clear and specific performance goals for every individual and group in the organization (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2004).

Another motivational theorist whose theories support Ford's (1992) MST for building training models, is Maslow (1943). Maslow contends that human behavior is determined by cultural, biological and situational conditions. Needs are a result that

occur from each of these conditions which in-turn cause individuals to act or react.

According to Maslow's theory, a hierarchical relationship exists among these needs and must be at least partially satisfied by the individual before the higher levels of need can act as motivators. In descending order the needs are: Self-actualization, self-esteem, social, security and physiological.

Retail leaders and customer service trainers should note that by finding ways to support trainees' five needs--as described by Maslow (1943); they may have heightened success in training and in creating training models. Again, and more clearly defined are Maslow's motivational needs theory: 1) physiological--hunger, thirst shelter needs; 2) safety--security, protection from physical and emotional harm; 3) social--affection, belonging, acceptance and friendship; 4) esteem--self respect, autonomy, achievement, attention and recognition; and 5) self actualization--doing things. Ford (1992) too acknowledges in his book, *Motivating Humans*, the importance of recognizing these needs, and therefore supports validity of his MST.

Those described five needs are dynamic and always shifting. For example, a grocery clerk may be performing customer service, as described by company training models in order to fulfill the need to do his or her job. Eventually, he or she may become tired and hungry and want to stop. Therefore, a physiological need shifts to become the first priority. Furthermore, it should be noted that a single behavior may also combine to meet multiple need levels. For example, eating dinner is both social and physiological. Satisfaction becomes relative. Satisfied needs are no longer a motivational factor.

If a person is hungry, then eats, promises of food no longer are motivational factors. Therefore, it is recommended that rewards and recognition be regular and on-

going components of retail customer service programs. Employees' hunger for performing a customer service task well-done must never be completely satisfied. In addition, employees should consistently be fed with praise and assisted to meet the needs of consistently challenging standards through a supportive work environment (Rudolph & Kleiner, 1989; Huseman & Hatfield, 1990). This same supportive work environment will assist in giving employees a feeling of belonging and acceptance. In-turn, it will contribute in helping employees to feel they have every opportunity to do their best (Mauro, 2002).

Part of feeding a culture of positive attitude and empowering people to do their best will come about through organizational values which incorporate a nurturing attitude, dependability, responsibility, friendship, high expectations, courage, and hope (Chiu, 1999; Mauro, 2002). So too, should these values be included in a customer service oriented training program.

Evidence of this type of organizational culture's success was shown in the months after September 11, 2001. Southwest Airlines became the financial leader among airlines in a time when other airlines were suffering. Evidence indicates that this was primarily due to "Southwest's low fares, exceptional service, and strong sense of identity. It found success by being courageous enough to create an environment which people can love and care at work" (Mauro, 2002, p. 59). This goes to show that developing recognizable service and employee-centered structure in retail organizations pays off. Organizational architects may use this evidence as motivational support when contributing to a customer service training model or building organizational culture, policies and systems.

Although the MST appears to give an ideal foundation for creating such proposed models, not all theorists would agree. Landry and Becker (1990) give an opposing point of view, differing from that of Ford (1992) in their motivational theory. Their research, “Motivation Theory Reconsidered” (1990), Landry and Becker propose the concept that motivation is less influenced by personal beliefs and efforts. They believe that motivation is more deeply influenced by structured goal attainment within their organization, especially as it pertains to career development. Individuals are motivated by the organization, as opposed to the individual driving their personal actions and interactions with their working environment and the focus of their motivation. This research work may not be directly aligned with Ford’s (1992), however, it may be beneficial to consider when creating systems which set structured goals and rewards within a customer service program. Likewise, it may provide another avenue to support building a customer service training program, as proposed in this paper.

Although the work of Laundry and Becker (1990) share one perspective that opposes Ford’s (1992) MST, Graen’s (1969) expectancy theory may be used to support the MST’s concept of personal agency beliefs. The expectancy theory explains how individuals make decisions based on perceived environmental factors and various behavioral alternatives. In building a proposed training model for retail customer service, the expectancy theory and Motivational Systems Theory can be applied by reinforcing a trainee’s beliefs of effort applied in performing the desired goal-achieving action or actions. By doing so, it may lead to enhancing self-confidence and yield other similar rewards.

The expectancy theory can be expressed in mathematical terms:

<p>Expectancy Theory</p> $MF = \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Instrumentality} \times \text{Valance}$

Figure 1: Expectancy theory equation (QuickMBA, 2004).

1. **Expectancy probability** is based on perceived effort-performance relationship. It is the expectancy that one's effort will lead to the desired performance and is based on past experience, self-confidence, and the perceived difficulty of the performance goal. Example: If I work harder than everyone else in the plant will I produce more.
2. **Instrumentality probability** is based on the perceived performance reward relationship. The instrumentality is the belief that if one does meet performance expectations, he or she will receive a greater reward. Example: If I work harder than everyone else in the store will I get a bigger raise or faster promotion?
3. **Valance** refers to the value the individual personally places on the rewards. This is a function of his or her needs, goals, and values. Example: Do I want a bigger raise? Is it worth the extra effort? Do I want a promotion?
4. **MF** are the motivational forces (QuickMBA, 2004).

Victor Vroom's (1964) work on motivation theories support Graen's (1969) and Ford's (1992) motivational theories. Vroom shows how motivational decision making processes are influenced by expected reward or outcome and the effort expected to be used to produce the results of the goal. Retail leaders and trainers may find greater results by using expectancy theories that support the MST through presented examples of other members who have achieved expected results in similar areas of the training. This type of training may also be enhanced by discussing possible rewards of such follow through. Rewards may be as simple as accomplishment of the goal, recognition for accomplishing the goal well, or as formidable as more autonomy, a promotion or a raise in pay (Rudolph & Kleiner, 1989; McClelland & Burnham, 2003).

The expectancy theory and the MST can be bridged with the scaffold of work developed by Klein (1991) who discusses goal setting. For the purpose of supporting this paper's thesis and in accordance to Klein's work; goals can be developed to serve as a foundation for retail customer service training. Likewise, goal setting is supported by the expectancy theory; which proposes that people strive to attain goals with attached expectations for a return on their efforts.

With this in mind, customer service training programs may work best when they utilize goal setting pooled with attached and verbally and written expectations. These expectations may defined how trainees are expected learn to serve customers in a way that benefits the company in both long and short-terms. Also, at the same time such goal setting and training should benefit the employee too. This can be done through the use of rewards recognizing accomplishment and other company related rewards--including company-cultural status.

Accomplishing a goal may serve as a reward itself. Ultimately, trainees will learn to set personal goals that further their abilities and enhance a culture of customer service within the company through their performance and interactions (Locke & Latham, 1990). Their rewards are both intrinsic and publicly recognized within their organization (Rudolf & Kleiner, 1989).

Sustaining Organizational Culture

A closely related issue and final area which Ford (1992) identifies as a crucial segment of MST; is the very need to sustain the culture of the organization. This can be done by identifying goals, interests and environment for the individuals facilitating the

training. One part of accomplishing this may be through visibly perceived benefits of the training as it is acknowledged by the trainee (James & Tetrick, 1986).

Likewise, trainees and trainers alike must understand how training outcomes will benefit the organization in the bigger picture (Block, 1991; Senge, 1994). Also, task specific goals should be set as a part of the training to aid in sustaining the organizational culture. By doing so, it may positively enhance training performance and results (Locke & Latham, 1990). Training success truly depends upon successful goal setting and training development, which in-turn will yield benefits to many on several differing levels.

Another factor that should be considered in building a training model for enhanced customer service is empowerment. Empowerment supports the MST by giving individuals more control to pursue goals and as described hereafter. Another benefit of empowerment is that it too assists in sustaining organizational culture (Curran, 2004).

Leach, Wall and Jackson (2003) define empowerment in terms that refer to a motivational state which includes having personal choice over work behaviors and processes. Evidence shows how empowering employees can enhance feelings that augment task motivation (Leach et al., 2003). Empowerment is said to also promote job knowledge by drawing on approaches and methods from cognitive psychology. Likewise, evidence supports the belief that empowerment enhances self-efficacy. Self-efficacy or a “can do” attitude that reflects a feeling of self-worth is a key to success (Geller, 2001). Combined with job knowledge, worker empowerment may also be a crucial element in building training models because it directly supports the MST.

Training models supported by MST and enhanced with various forms of employee empowerment may prove to be beneficial in training culture building and work environment enhancement. However, still more can be done to support training needs. Studies show that various forms of performance monitoring that accompany the training programs may enhance results (Holman, Chissick, & Totterdell, 2002). While there are studies which show how monitoring employees may cause workers to feel an increased workload and enhanced levels of work demand and stress (Aiello & Kolb, 1995), monitoring has also shown to enhance well-being derived through knowledge of improved performance (Bandura, 1997).

It is therefore suggested that performance monitoring may be established as a positive feedback process tool. This tool can aid in clarifying performance criteria, and therefore may aid in lessening anxiety, while enhancing skills. This is best done in situations where job control and supervisory support are high. Performance monitoring may act as a buffer which reduces any negative impact on individuals' well-being (Carayon, 1993). In-turn it may assist in building a positive organizational culture and work setting.

Bandura (1997) suggests that training programs within work environments will have enhanced success when people are equipped with knowledge, sub-skills and self-affirming experiences that exercise personal control. If done properly, training programs created using the MST--in conjunction with self-affirming experiences, and also combined with clearly defined expectations; employee monitoring will generally enhance feelings of accomplishment in a more positive light. The end-result will be greater successes with training programs.

Hensey (1998) supports the notion that training programs and work environments will be more effective and have enhanced motivation as Ford (1992) suggests. The keys to creating self-affirming programs and work environments include setting well-defined targets and goals that challenge people. Once the goals are achieved, recognition should be given to reward achievement (Richards, 2004).

Bragg (2000) shows how to use Ford's (1992) Motivational Systems Theory's feature of creating self affirming work environments through rewards given in recognition for good behavior and performance. According to Bragg (2000), a six-principle effective reward system can do the job of recognizing appreciation and a job well done. The six principles for effective rewards are:

1. Rewards must support organizational goals. Reward the behavior that is wanted to be repeated. First identify the type of behavior that will help the organization achieve its goals.
2. Rewards must be fair. A reward will appear to be fair if everyone has an equal opportunity of qualifying for it. There will be little motivation behind the reward if it is perceived that there is an unfair advantage to obtain it.
3. Reward to promote cooperation. Effective rewards encourage people to work together. A more effective reward occurs when groups of people win when achieving a certain level of productivity or goal.
4. Reward must have a positive impact on performance. This is best accomplished when short-term trials and small targets are set in increments.
5. Rewards must be effective in both good and bad times. Even when there is not a lot to celebrate, because company profits are low or the economy has negatively effected the organization, maintain the reward system.
6. Rewards must focus performance on serving the customer. The purpose of business is keeping customers. Reward behavior that serves your customers (p. 39 & 40).

Bragg (2000) also recommends that appreciation should be given in a way that will be perceived as sincere. Future desired actions to be repeated may be motivated through such regular displays of appreciation (Rudolph & Kleiner, 1989). It is highly recommended that these afore-mentioned six principles be used as a management staple to enhance training programs. This is especially true for varieties of training programs in which employees are required to work together more productively.

Closely related to Ford's (1992) MST are important elements which may be found valuable if included in the development of training programs. These elements are comprised of any methods which assist in making trainees feel a gain in valued benefits from the training (Dubin, 1990; Farr & Middlebrooks, 1990; Leibowitz, Shore & Schuman, 1992). In theory, a training program and working environment which assists employees to see the results of their participation are more likely to be motivated to participate more effectively than those who are not led to see clear value (Dubin, 1990; Leach et al, 2003).

Tharnou's (2001) research on training motivation lends three recommendations that may also be helpful in creating a training program as suggested in this paper:

The results of this study suggest implications for practice in three ways. The result for motivation through expectation suggests that organizations need to link intrinsic outcomes such as pay; promotion and job security to the knowledge, skills and ability gained from training and development, and ensure employees are aware of these links, to enhance participation. Secondly, the results suggest that supervisor support is a key factor in an employee's participation in training and development. Supervisors need to encourage their subordinates to participate and help them develop and use skills from training and development. Thirdly, the results suggest that employees already higher in training motivation than other may access the support provided by employers more, and suggest that employers need to assist all employees to respond to the support they provide (p. 619).

In other words, a training program directed toward helping employees give enhanced customer service should have multiple methods for supporting the employees' training needs through direct supervision and participation. Likewise, training-supervisors should bestow incentives on employees--while at the same time show links between enhanced participation and the rewards. It is recommended that there also be forms of promoting and showing outward structures of job security (Taylor, 2004). Inclinations of job security not only benefit the employee, but also the employer too. Therefore, these inclinations and signs of security should be woven into every aspect of the organization's fabric.

Personal Agency Belief

Ford (1992) suggests the concept of personal agency beliefs, which are the underlying factors of competence development in the Motivational Systems Theory or MST. Personal agency beliefs are sets of goals, ideas and context forming factors that influence an individual's development in training. According to Ford (1992), the strength of an individual's personal agency beliefs are directly associated and related to the individual's conviction about their own abilities to achieve set goals. This theory also refers to the realization of a goal and the relationship to personal abilities as "capability belief" (p.45).

When considering the development of a training program that develops employees to perform expected high levels of customer service, capability belief and personal agency beliefs should be considered into the processes of constructing an effective program. With this in mind, retail leaders may benefit by considering that although trainees may have the ability to deliver expected high levels of customer

service, they may not have the desire to perform at the level demanded by the organization. Likewise, individuals may have the desire to deliver the expected levels of customer service, but lack the ability to deliver it at all times due to unique circumstances. Therefore, linking desire and ability in the inner-workings of customer service training programs should be highly considered.

Hence, retail leaders should consider including special communication within the training model and in associated follow-ups with the trainee. This will assist in making sure that personal agency beliefs are addressed continually and regularly. Doing so will also give added support to the trainee and while assist in alleviating any anxieties that may form and cause a lack of motivation. Also, such interventions should reduce unexpected circumstances that may inhibit performance.

Another idea that may aid retail leaders, trainees, trainers, managers and the organization as a whole is the idea of “hot washing.” According to Godin (2002), the United States Army practices a technique called a “hotwash” session (p. 192). Hotwash sessions could prove to become an effective tool for maintaining retail operations just like a well-oiled machine.

The process of hotwashing is implemented the same day after war games are played. Officers brainstorm in follow-up meetings about what went on during the tactical practice games. Officers, leaders and participants study what went right and what went wrong--analyzing the reasons behind both. Hotwash sessions allow the Army to find out why things happened and how to do it better next time.

Similarly, retail leaders, trainers, managers and trainees may find it helpful to implement hotwashing as a part of all training programs and in daily customer service

activities. They may find that these short meetings have great benefits, as the United States Army enjoys in their operations. By doing so, possibilities of future motivational inhibitors and problems can be lessened through advance communication, education and training.

Context Belief

Another area, closely related to Ford's (1992) personal agency belief is "context belief" or confidence in potential responsiveness of the work environment as it relates to the attainment of goals (p. 45). In the development of a customer service training program, retail leaders may benefit in considering using context belief. According to this theory, the environment has significant influence on an individual's ability to achieve their goals. Negative environmental factors can and will influence individual's motivation toward making company goals a reality. One way to implement context belief is to help employees develop and maintain a working environment that promotes confidence that the expected levels of customer service can be delivered and maintained consistently. This belief motivates employees to continuing pursuing company and personal goals associated with customer service training.

One method of enhancing the work environment to produce desired customer service-oriented outcomes is to give employees more control and autonomy (Chalofsky, 2003; Harris, 1986). Giving away more power to employees can improve individuals' confidence. Do so will also empowering employees to take control in the meaning of their work, which may result in greater levels of job satisfaction. Autonomy combined with regular reward yields motivational results that reveal training success because of context belief associations.

During the time autonomy in work functions is being exercised, it should be also be accompanied by rewarding workers. Such rewards may be as simple as policies that can be seen as nurturing and supportive (Rudolph & Kleiner (1989). Context beliefs can be better controlled by the individual workers' environment if the workers are more in control of the work environment.

Conversely, it is interesting to note that giving rewards in the workplace can also sometimes have negative effects. Researchers have demonstrated how giving rewards for engaging in an activity can decrease desire to pursue an activity (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Welton, 2003). Three conditions may cause an undermining effect for the use of a reward. The first, occurs when the reward is seen as an attempt to control a person's behavior. This condition outwardly appears that it may not be a sincere reward, but a manipulation to get a desired outcome.

The second perception that may cause a reward to have a negative effect occurs when the reward distracts a person's attention from an original goal activity and divides the intensity of want to accomplish each goal. The third diminishes the psychological value or meaning of the task. In this third instance, people may perceive the reward as extra payment that devalues the task itself and must be condoned as a task hardly worth doing and only extra compensation will justify doing it (Ford, 1992).

Although rewarding employees can have negative effects if improperly administered, educating trainers and managers on proper methods of giving reward may be included as formal component of employee training to increase benefits of instruction (Pierce, Cameron, Banko, & So, 2003). Leibowitz, Shore and Schuman (1992) outline "carrots" or rewards for employee development (p. 54). They believe recognition can be

rewarded through: achievement awards, manger “spotlights,” cash awards, bonuses or additional training and development budgets (p. 54). Methods of accountability coupled with a procedure to measure success should also be included in such proposed training programs.

When context beliefs as they pertain to customer service training are considered by retail leaders, other related environmental areas of the business can be adapted to enhance employees’ beliefs that the company goals of delivering high levels of customer service are supported and are obtainable. Likewise, when retail leaders are trained and developed, it is recommended that the “bigger picture” be painted.

The bigger picture should show how imperative it is to create working environments that encourage the delivery of expected and well-defined customer service. Retail leaders should be trained to troubleshoot possible road blocks that may inhibit company practices for defined customer service expectations. Likewise, once the roadblocks have been identified, proper channels of communication should be facilitated to support these newly found organizational needs (Management Functions, 1995).

Retail leaders and trainers should note that Motivations Systems Theory (MST) contends that specific actions will not necessarily produce a specific motivational result (Ford, 1992). Rather, consequences of an action, not the action itself will be the focus of an action and interaction. Consequently, retail training programs must plan accordingly, leaving time for communication to be facilitated to reinforce positive outcomes and discuss possible remedies for undesired results or reactions needing correction.

Positive Outlook in Training

The third aspect of Ford's (1992) MST that should be considered by retail leaders is maintaining a positive view of the context through the framework of customer service training. This can best be done through mentoring and other similar methods that may build confidence of the employees being trained. Lord (2002) agrees with the aspect of maintaining a positive work environment through the transformation and creation of a positive company. The result will not only enhance and support customer service training results, but should also increase productivity and improve employee retention (Benjamin, 2003).

Training Process

Technical training processes must be considered when training trainers or developing a training process. Srinivasan (1990) believes that trainers must have a sense of mission and commitment to the subject area and also to the personal growth of the trainees. A second element of training involves consistent two-way communication-facilitation and means. Third, a trainer must be future-focused—seeking out the needs and wants of the customer and trainees. Then they must meet those needs.

Dr. Vicki Lachman (2001), nurse, trainer and consultant believes that it is important to give good feedback. Feedback should focus on the skills not the person. She recommends painting a picture of desired skills and to balance positives and negatives with action examples. Lachman outlines nine basic tips for training.

The first tip deals with using care in communication with trainees. Lachman (2001) contends that feedback can be an art. It must be given with an attitude that displays a genuine need to help, not hurt the trainee. The second tip deals with focusing attention with the individual in a genuine two-way exchange. The third tip is to give

feedback when invited to do so, while at the same time, being open and ready for the invitation to do so. The fourth tip is a recommendation to be direct and specific with particular incidents and behaviors. Being able to express thoughts fully, so that the trainee can evaluate the true impact of his or her behavior is tip five. Tip six is a warning not to make evaluative judgments. Simply describing the situation as it is seen and let the receiver make the evaluation is best. "If you want to offer judgments, you must state clearly that you're providing subjective evaluation," Lachman recommends (2001, p.18).

Tip Seven is a recommendation to be prompt in giving feedback when the trainee is receptive and in a stage of time that is close enough for the event to be fresh in mind. The eighth tip is a reminder that the only behaviors that should be addressed are ones which the trainee has the power to change. All feedback should be focused on the behavior, while sharing alternative suggestions at any availability.

The final and perhaps most important tip for training is a recommendation to check and clarify perception. This involves finding out if others share the same perception. This can best be done by collecting and assimilating many different points of view to be more objective. Of course appreciation should be genuinely shown at the end of the training. Rewards, if done properly reinforce positive outcomes to be repeated later (Lachman, 2001).

James Mapes, (1996) reminds us that training involves motivators and people are motivated by differing values. He believes that it is important for trainers to understand their own most important values in order to enhance effective communication skills. Also, trainers need to be supporters and nurturers through whatever means is necessary to inspire and motivate learners. Personal values are the key to motivation and should be

considered in the development of any training model. Incentive programs should be used to motivate employees for internal standards of performance, quality, and also measured results (Stum & Thiry, 1991). This will help in building a culture that thrives on delivery customer service from top to bottom, which will ultimately enhance company financial growth.

Customer Service

Why is it important that today's retail employers design customer service training programs? The answer is easy. According to Frederick Reicheld (1996) of the *Harvard Business Review*, United States corporations lose half of their customers every five years. These customer defections cause companies to invest in ways to bring in new customers, hence tapping into company profits that could be spent better elsewhere. This in-turn affects cash flow negatively and has a direct impact on perceptions of company value. Reportedly, if some companies can reduce their customer defection by as little as 5%, profits could double.

A ten-year study on customer defections and loyalty conducted by Reicheld (1996) reveals that most companies seem to not realize the relationship between company cash flow and profits for several reasons. In another study, on average more than 90 percent of customers who have had a bad customer service experience will leave. Only one person out of 27 will actually file a complaint (Blume, 1988). Even worse, thirteen percent will tell 20 or more other people about poor service or products (Schonberger, 1990).

One reason companies do not seem to investigate loss of customer loyalty is that it may be too unpleasant to study failure closely. In most corporations, doing so will

negatively affect careers. For some, it is too difficult to define customer defection or even what a customer is in their organization. A difficulty in uncovering real root causes of customer defection and lessons that could be learned from losses of customers are other reasons organizations fail to study customer defection. Similarly, in many organizations it is complicated to get the right people to learn the right lessons from customer loss and/or get commitment to act upon the newly found challenges associated with the loss (Reicheld, 1996).

When the right people in the retail organizations utilize their powers to make a difference, they should focus on creating customer loyalty first. Creating customer loyalty can be best done with value. The key to giving customers value comes through company-wide education (Senge, 1994). Such education campaigns may best be directed at actually looking at company failures--such as customer loss and employee dissatisfaction. Companies that continually work toward finding ways to satisfy their customers and turning them into loyal customers on an individual basis will flourish over their competition (Jones & Sasser, 1995).

Another study shows that companies need to do more than just create satisfied customers; they need to create **completely satisfied customers** in order to generate long-term financial performance. The study shows that customers, who are anything less than completely satisfied, have diminishing loyalty (Jones & Sasser, 1995). According to this study, customers--with their freedom of choice will only remain rock-solidly loyal if they are completely satisfied. One way that this can be done is by defining target customers and by providing outstanding value in products and services, so as to completely meet their needs.

According to Jones and Sasser (1995), there are four elements that affect customer satisfaction. The first is expectation of meeting the need from the actual product or service itself. The second is the support associated with the product or service. Support must make the product or service easier to use. The third involves the quality of a recovery process if the product or service fails to meet expectations of the customer. The fourth has to do with the availability of extraordinary services that excel in meeting the customer's needs, including problem solving and customization of the product or service. Meeting these four elements consistently will enhance levels of customer loyalty. "Customer loyalty is the single most important driver of long-term financial performance" (Jones, & Sasser, 1995, p.91). As a matter of fact, costs of keeping an existing customer are estimated at about a fifth of the cost to recruit a new one (Blume, 1988).

A recent study by the Gallup organization shows that management campaigns need to go deeper than just satisfying customers (Gopal, 2004). Reportedly, Dr. Joseph LeDoux, a neuroscientist from New York University indicates that emotions are not designed to be controlled, but designed to control. Also, noted in this study is that humans do everything unconsciously, and only after that, they rationalize the actions--consciously (Gopal, 2004). With this in mind, companies may find benefit in targeting reason, while finding ways for employees and customers to gain emotional attachment to outstanding products and engaged employee experiences. These connections will build deeper customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Retail managers, leaders and trainers may find benefit in analyzing the needs of their customers through various means. Blume (1988) reports that customers want

reliability in getting what they are promised in a dependable and accurate manner.

Customers want assurance from knowledgeable and courteous employees that they can count on and trust with confidence. Customers want empathy and individual attention combined with prompt service and a genuine willingness to help from employees (Gitomer, 1998). Finally, the tangible facilities and products must be customer-friendly.

According to Blume (1988), companies that successfully improved customer service found success because their top management wanted to make excellent customer service a company policy. Likewise, middle managers must have the power in these companies to make any necessary changes in policy in order to get the service programs to work. Employees must be given increased autonomy to satisfy customers' needs. Also, training departments must be given more flexibility to get rid of processes that didn't work and support to try new things that aid in giving customers higher levels of service.

Three primary behaviors allude to customer loyalty: 1) making repeat purchases; 2) giving referrals; and 3) demonstrating immunity to doing business with competing organizations (Stum & Thiry, 1991). Employees must be trained to build customer loyalty (Gitomer, 1998). The training must emphasize that employees exceed customer expectations by offering added value. Also, employees must be trained to build relationships with customers to form a bond that customers won't find elsewhere. By doing so, customers may find it illogical to do business with the competition. Follow-up too is important in developing customer loyalty (Stum & Thiry, 1991). When customers see that employees consistently offer these types of value added service, there is a greater chance that the customers will become completely satisfied. Therefore, trainers in retail

organizations can benefit by including these training features in their training programs (Stum & Thiry, 1991; Gitomer, 1998; Mitchell, 2003).

Fundamentals of Training

Although Ford's (1992) MST creates an ideal foundation for a retail customer service training program, trainers should be aware of some basic training fundamentals. The following training information has been synthesized from *T+D* and *Training & Development*-- top scholarly journals. These resources are dedicated to providing on-going support and ideas in need for training trainers. The following information and ideas may prove helpful to managers, leaders and trainers in developing a customer service training model with the MST in its roots.

Rick Sullivan (2003) recommends that discussions and training can ideally begin with watching a video, listening to a guest speaker, answering an intriguing question, completing a case study or observing a role play. After one or several of those have been implemented, Sullivan suggests that further discussion could enhance training through brainstorming. This can be done with these four steps: 1) stating the topic or problem; 2) emphasizing that all ideas are accepted; 3) recording the ideas on a flipchart; and 4) asking that no idea be discussed during the brainstorming process.

As with everyday conversations, sometimes brainstorming within training discussions can get off task or need a mediator when disagreements occur. Sullivan (2003) suggests that a skillful facilitator can regain control of the discussion by:

1. Standing up in order to bring the focus back to the facilitator or trainer.
2. Thank participants for their input.
3. Try to clarify both sides of the argument or debate.
4. Remind participants of the focus of the discussion.
5. Direct a question to a participant who was not involved in the previous interactions.

6. Sit down (p.23).

Basically, a well-designed training program starts off with a well-chosen, planned, and researched topic. It should be facilitated in a room that is arranged appropriately before the training begins to allow adequate visual and audio communication. The training facilitator should have appropriate, well-organized notes that will help keep the discussion on track. Also, the training facilitator should allow enough time for presentations and discussions, while providing consistent positive feedback. Good training facilitators will involve all participants (Sullivan, 2003).

Baldoni (2003) contends that planning a training effort may best be done by first clarifying the purpose of the training. The success of the training relies heavily on the clarity of the message. This can be done best by working from a vision of what the end looks like and working backwards. The message of training should be linked to the organizational culture and be consistent with company organizational values.

A second step requires drawing up the actual plan. Baldoni (2003) believes that trainers must consider training as an advertising campaign. Participants must be able to “see, hear and feel the message in many places” (p. 20). This can be followed up by previewing the training course on a company intranet or on the internet. Good facilitators know that physical appearance and communication charisma influences the audience. Therefore, they must dress appropriately and have rehearsed the training and make sure that there is adequate and appropriate supporting material (Plavetich & Kleiner, 1992).

Executing the plan is the next phase. Delivering the complete message is the goal of this phase, as discussed earlier. Pike (1992) recommends that this can best be done by being clear about the learning objectives, making the process objective consistent with

content objectives, learning as much as possible about training effect on trainees, and by being entertaining.

Also, Baldoni (2003) reminds trainers to reiterate the message a second time in this phase in order to help insure the participants get the message. Sometimes trainees will not receive the information adequately the first time. Finally, the last phase of training is merchandising the training message and follow-up (Baldoni, 2003). This can be done in person or with gifts such as pens, buttons or t-shirts.

Barbara Dastoor (1993) acknowledges that training adults works best with an understanding of the following basic psychological advice. This advice works in conjunction with Ford's MST. She advises that adult-learning facilitators should:

- 1) Demonstrate how a course will help adults successfully solve a current workplace problem.
- 2) Actively involve learners in planning and directing their learning activities.
- 3) Take advantage of learner experiences through group discussions, simulation, labs, problem-solving exercises, and field work.
- 4) Encourage active participation using practical, learner-centered applications.
- 5) Place learning in a conceptual framework.
- 6) Establish a non-threatening learning environment that accommodates learners' different learning styles, learning speeds, and physical abilities.
- 7) Provide immediate and positive feedback, reinforcement, and follow-up.
- 8) Allow plenty of time for practice and participation.
- 9) Use instructors who have both subject matter expertise and the ability to relate to learners.
- 10) Assist learner, rather than direct them.
- 11) Place learning in a pleasant environment that encourages change (p. 20).

When these tips are considered by retail customer service trainers, facilitation of training will be more effective for adult learners. Also, instruction in conjunction with Ford's (1992) MST--combined with researched customer service tips and practices; specialized retail training will pay off on the investment if properly executed (Jones, & Sasser, 1995), as proposed in this paper.

Conclusion

Dr. Martin Ford's (1992) Motivational Systems Theory (MST) can provide a solid and valid foundation to retail training programs, including programs designed to enhance customer service and customer loyalty. An assessment by managers and trainers of the trainees should be conducted to determine if the primary prerequisites exist in each learner. These four primary components lay the framework of MST: Competency development, personal agency belief, context framework, and goal attainment. The first--competency development, is the center and primary feature of retail customer service training. Training models for retail customer service must provide examples of what excellent customer service looks like and followed up with testing trainees for understanding and application awareness.

Personal agency belief, the second component of MST, helps individuals be identified by their ability to adapt and apply their interests as well as underlie the ongoing process of customer service training and development competency. This is an evaluation process that helps affirm whether one can achieve a goal. An example of this goal may be to perform customer service as anticipated by company policies and culture.

Context framework for a retail customer service training program focuses on company culture, customer needs, organizational and operational needs. These context beliefs rely upon expectancies about whether the environment will be responsive and supportive of the individual's goal attainment efforts of providing a company defined level of customer service.

Finally, for the purpose of proving validity to Ford's (1992) MST--goal attainment emphasizes a focus on achieving recognition and mastery of company customer service expectations. Goal attainment also enhances motivation for employees

to continue working toward desired results, such as customer service as long as rewards and benefits are present.

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