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# Customer service culture at BigC retail chain in Vietnam

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#### Abstract

In Vietnam, Big C is one of the oldest and largest supermarket systems known to many consumers. This is still a trusted address of Vietnamese consumers with 35 Big C supermarkets distributed nationwide and 8000 employees. The variety of items along with the spacious premises to bring great shopping experiences are the big plus points that Big C is getting. However, the attractiveness of the retail market in recent years has made many domestic "giants" enter this industry, surely Big C will always have to renew itself to stand firm in the fiercely competitive market. The most essential ingredient for Big C to be able to stand firmly in the market is definitely Big C's customers, customers are the key for a supermarket system to survive, If the supermarket chain no longer attracts potential customers, it is quickly forgotten or collapsed. So not only at the goods stage, Big C also has to pay attention to the customer service stage, find out the problems that customers face when shopping here to improve the quality of their services, satisfy the customers customers to bring more than Big C's market value.

Keywords: Big C, market, customer, service, culture.

#### 1. Introduction

"Without customers, no company would exist." The comment of the famous economist Erwin Frand has shown the role of the customer in all business activities. During business downturns, companies have faced significant declines in revenue, resulting in staff cuts and downsizing of services. However, this really did not help the company regain momentum. Yes, in times of trouble, service should be even more of a priority: the more customers you attract, the quicker and easier it will be to get through the crisis.

When price wars fail, companies tend to see service as a lifeline to help them gain a competitive advantage. Many marketers of large companies are reverting to a "service first" attitude. However, while a lot of companies "sell" excellent customer service, some companies just stop at the "delivery" level. The main problem is that very few marketers have ever actually served their customers.

When we run a service-based business, we must ask our customers for their feedback. This is a necessary job, because we can learn about customers' impressions of the company, and based on that to plan or adjust the development path in the future. Customer dissatisfaction sometimes does not stem from a poor product, but rather from an unhappy experience. Why so? Because what customers "feel" about us is not just the product they buy, but the customer service that our company gives them.

Customer service culture is not about the specifics of individual customer interactions. It shapes a company's entire attitude and over time leads to different decisions and different long-term outcomes. For customer service, a customer service culture consists of a set of beliefs, values, and options of action that are communicated to all members of the organization, so they can be used to guide and model customer-related interactions and decision-making. Below we will learn about BigC's customer service culture in Vietnam today and propose key solutions to exploit and help customer service culture to be further developed.

## 2. Theoretical basis

Customer service is every interaction with your customers before, during, and after the sale.

Corresponding Author: Nguyen Hoang Tien Van Hien University, Vietnam A good customer service experience means that you provided good enough customer service and that service completely met the customer's expectations. It should not be assumed that service is just about giving customers what they want. Surely we will be in a dilemma when a customer asks for something when you cannot provide it. On the contrary, if we expand the concept of customer service, we will never have to fall into such difficult situations. There is a fact that people accept, in customer service if we give customers what they ask for, they will be satisfied and loyal customers. Customers always ask for what they want but don't say it, they need us to be understanding, friendly and fair.

Currently Vietnam retail market is considered the most attractive in the world, many foreign investors are planning to penetrate the retail market in our country. Besides starting from 1/1/2009 comply with WTO commitments, Vietnam to establish a retail business with 100% foreign capital. This is the major threat for the domestic retail business. By the foreign retail groups often have strong financial power, large scale, and the ability to manage elements of competitive strategy. While Vietnam enterprises small scale, fragmented, lack of management experience, insufficient financial strength. That was enough to create competition Unequal foreign retail groups and the domestic retail enterprises. If the domestic entrepreneur does not look out for his business strategy right, they will be defeated at home and even now foreign retailers have a foothold in the market Vietnam if not increase their competition is also possible to lose market soon. Another important thing that retailers need to remember that: "Success in retail sales Conduct". CSR Manager Role so important to the retail business efficiently. But in fact, the current quality of CSR Manager has not been the real business focus, CSR Manager that they are providing no assurance requirements, especially local businesses. The foreign firms due to advantages in terms of financing, the scale and the management experience should be able to provide better service, more variety, but the service has not really improved. Cultural customer service not only contributes to knowledge transfer, aesthetic education, help transmit cultural values - social importance but also a manufacturing industry, a sector contributing to growth as well as contributing to international security for sustainable development (East, 2020). Strategy development of cultural industries Vietnam till 2020 with a vision to 2030 (referred to as the strategy) was issued. This is a national strategy on the development of industry culture, taking into account the overall, covering over 12 industries ornate (East, 2020). Producing more and more products and services of cultural diversity, quality, establish brand products, cultural services, priority development sectors have many advantages (East, 2020). In this context, the contribution of products and cultural services in the total gross domestic product (GDP) have the opportunity to increase when integrated with digital and economy share, with the use ecommerce and other diverse opportunities emerging in the space of (East, 2020). Customer service is not a work of a department; it is rather the job of everyone - Tony Hsieh (CEO of Zappos). The dissatisfied customer is the source of great learning materials for you - Bill Gates (Microsoft Corporation). There is only one boss. It is customer. And he can beat everybody in the company from becoming president down, simply by spending his money

somewhere else - Sam Walton (Walmart and Sam's Club). Do not promise what you cannot deliver that provide what you promise - Richard Branson (Virgin Group). We always consider customers as guests attending a party that we host. Every day we work to every aspect importance of the customer experience a little better - Jeff Bezos (Amazon). Large retailers realize that they are dealing not stop to surprise and delight customers - Howard Schulz (Starbucks). We think our customers are people, not wallet -Meg Whitman (Hewlett-Packard), Customers do not expect you to perfection, they expect you to fix their mistakes so that it becomes perfect - Donald Porter (American actor). Behave politely and customers become your marketers - James Cash Penney (JC Penney). Customers will forget what you did. But they will never forget the feeling you bring to them - Maya Angelou (American poet). Make customers happy and they will give you their life - Paul Orfalea (Kinko's). Do the best you can, the customer will come back with their friends-Walt Disney. The relationship between internal customers and external customers are what make up the customer chain. If the staff at our office at when dealing with outsiders. We can feel immediately that all activities in the company does not seem to have any impact on external customers. Conversely, if we look at the broader picture, we see every employee plays an important role in satisfying the needs of customers. All communication with client internal resistance is all important link in the chain of different events to the same end in a "draft chronic external customers". Important level of most of the companies are considered customer service is a simple operation. Build customer-oriented culture, the first thing businesses need to target is "out" of their customers! Therefore, the collection of customer feedback, listening to customers and creating meetings (Online and Offline) is essential. The regular exchange with clients is core activities to help businesses understand customers. Business without listening to the needs of our customers, it will not attract them. Survey forms and is always a great first step for enterprises. All these things can easily turn into something positive by provide ongoing customer service professionalism. Just do this well, surely we will go on a business and successful path.

Regardless of the criteria a business uses to measure its success in business, customer focus is one of them. Understanding the level of customer satisfaction, understanding their needs will help businesses get the of all business related problems with customers. Customers don't care how long the business takes to deal with the problem that arises. Customers need consultants who care and understand, and are oriented to handle the problems they encounter. If the customer has not seen their wish resolved, this is still a problem for the Business. Using the results of collecting customer opinions with satisfaction measurement software, or the work quality charts of each employee of the business to show them, each individual has a great direct influence as How to customers. From the subjective opinions of those who research the topic. We believe that: Researching and finding solutions to improve customer service is a very necessary issue, not only for domestic enterprises but also for foreignsized retail groups. Because when the economy today as mutual development, quality of life is being raised, the demands increasingly demanding quality **CSR** 

Manager. Therefore, improving the quality of customer service further is an urgent issue. Based on the above reasons, we find it necessary to study this topic.

#### 3. Research method

When our country's retail market becomes more active and more and more large retail groups in the world are paying attention, it means that BigC and other domestic supermarkets have to face a fiercely competitive environment harsh. Although BigC supermarket has affirmed its name and position in the Vietnamese retail market, if it does not increase its competitiveness, BigC may be defeated in the future. The prominent economist JACQUES-HOROVITZ once said: "Customers can bring your career to the top of success, but can also very quickly push it to the bottom of failure. So conquer and Satisfying customers is an urgent need of commercial enterprises. Appreciating properly to offer a high-quality service program, constantly advocating for perfection and growing up with the increasing requirements of customers should be your motto of action.

From the logistics industry perspective: Customer service is related to activities that add value in the supply chain. From this perspective, customer service is a process that takes place between the seller, the buyer and the logistics service provider (if the seller is not capable of providing the service to the customer). At the end of this process, the product or service is added to some value, this value in short-term exchange does not mean much, but in the long-term, it can be a factor to create relationships. Castle.

The above points of view show that customer service has the following common characteristics: First, customer service is a service that accompanies major products to provide maximum satisfaction to customers when shopping. The need for customer service is the need that arises when customers go shopping, these are the benefits that customers enjoy when shopping. And here are some research methods on the customer service culture of the Big C supermarket supply chain.

#### 3.1 Methods of data analysis

P flavor this method to find out the basic ideological content of the document, find out the problems related to research topics and define the problem to be solved. Materials, articles, interviews or magazines science-related issues "cultural customer service at Big C". So, for that data and related materials, we need to screen to get the most accurate documentation for the problem.

#### 3.1.1 Secondary data analysis method

Secondary documents about Big C supermarket are collected through reports and statistics of state agencies, research projects, specialized newspapers and magazines on the contents related to the research topic. In addition, secondary data sources are also provided through websites and business leaders such as organizational structure, number of employees, functions and duties of department heads, business results through years.

And this method helps to find a way to group the signs and find out the cause and effect in the target groups based on the literature and research source of the secondary data analysis method so that we can highlight the roles important customer service culture and answer the question of why supply chain businesses have not been able to operate

effectively in Vietnam.

## 3.1.2 Methods of primary data analysis

Conduct in-depth interviews with employees in supermarkets about the problems posed to the business through interview questions. At the same time, conduct field surveys at the supermarket system, direct contact with customers, collect customer information related to customer care service issues.

On the basis of information collected through qualitative questions, problems for supermarkets were discovered. Then, conduct research on the interview questionnaire to collect the necessary quantitative information. The construction, investigation and analysis of these primary sources of information play an important role in the supermarket's customer service method through customer evaluation.

#### 3.2 Data processing methods

#### 3.2.1 Secondary data processing method

Comparative method: use this method to compare theories and topics about customer service, brand name. From there, agree on research issues as a basis for research activities

Data synthesis method: After being collected, secondary data sources will be aggregated to come to conclusions about the status of customer service at Big C supermarket chain.

This method is based on available documents, so when applying this method, it requires specificity, meaning it must be clear, consistent with the research objectives, the accuracy of the data and current. And the method of comparison and contrast to find the most accurate documents on the research problem as well as reliable sources of information from the internet.

## 3.2.2 Primary data processing method

After conducting the interview survey, from the data collected during the interview, the boss proceeds to synthesize, classify and prepare for the data processing and analysis process.

After the data collection process, the data sources will be processed through SPSS software and use One Sample T-test to assess customer satisfaction about customer service. From there, comments and conclusions related to the research topic can be drawn.

In addition, there are methods such as comparing and contrasting research results, comparing the terms "business" and "international business", comparing enterprises of the Vietnamese product supply chain with those of Vietnam. Big C businesses to see more clearly the role of customer service culture to offer good solutions to help Big C businesses succeed in Vietnam. Because when Big C succeeds in Vietnam, it not only improves the service culture but also helps promote the economy in Vietnam, attracts foreign investment into Vietnam, helps Vietnam to move forward quickly more on the path of international integration in the current industrial age 4.0, creating favorable conditions for Vietnam to advance quickly on the road to becoming a developed country in the future.

#### 4. Research results

# Survey through customer survey

We built a customer survey questionnaire and conducted a sample survey of 100 consumers in the vicinity of

Big C supermarket, with the following content: Questions for the survey:

- 1. Do you often go to BigC?
- A. Often B. Occasionally C. Rarely.
- 2. On average, how many times per month do you come to BigC?

A. <3 B.3-5 C.>5

- 3. What is your purpose of coming to BigC?
- A. Shopping B. Roaming C. Both reasons above D. Other
- 4. Who do you usually go to BigC with?
- A. No one else B. Family (spouse, children) C. Friends and colleagues
- 5. What is your monthly income?
- A. 2-5 million VND B.5-8 million VND C.>8 million VND
- 6. Why did you choose to shop at BigC?
- A. Cheap price B. Big supermarket scale C. Good customer service D. other opinion.
- 7. Are you satisfied with the customer service at BigC supermarket?
- A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Not really satisfied
- 8. How do you evaluate the quality of customer service at Big C compared to the supermarkets that you have been to in Hanoi city?
- A. Better B. Same C. Worse
- 9. What is it about Customer Service at BigC that makes you (he) not satisfied?
- A. Type of service B. Quality of service C. Service attitude of staff D. Other opinion.
- 10. What do you expect from customer service at BigC supermarket?

Reply:

From these survey questions, we will get the results of the percentage of customers who are satisfied with the service when using at Big C.

# Through interview

Interviewing some employees in the supermarket to see the salary regime and the reward and treatment regimens for BigC employees, the employees' attitude towards work and with the supermarket management.

Directly interviewing a set of customers shopping at a supermarket, thereby obtaining customer feedback as well as recommendations for customer service activities here. As a basis for analyzing specific situations from customers.

The result: Customer service is absolutely the lifeblood of any business. We may promote or reduce the price of products to attract new customers, but through many surveys from customers and from staff at Big C, it is found to attract and bring back a new customer. It is necessary to have costs many times higher than the cost of retaining loyal customers, so in the long run there will be no high profit for the business. Recognizing this problem, BigC's managers have influenced the shopping psychology of consumers and provided customer services that are not only services to attract new customers and services to boost sales products, but also services to impress and entice old customers to return to the Supermarket.

Services to attract customers: Like many other commercial enterprises, BigC brings its image to consumers through advertising. In terms of form, BigC uses a variety of advertising methods such as: through newspapers, radio, magazines, leaflets, on buses, via the web, etc. to target all different types of customers, advertising everywhere, anytime. Big C still focuses on advertising channels such as: Voice radio; leaflets; and through the Internet, now Big C focuses on the Internet, especially the main website channel www.bigC.com.vn, the main purpose is to update promotional news, product prices, and product information. New promotions, specials, and all information for customers are continuous. Make it easy for customers to track and update.

Sales promotion services: How consumers know your brand and visit is very important, but to sell to them is much more important. The efforts of the entire group of employees of Big C to bring customers the best service, through the efforts that Big C has provided a full range of services to customers the most convenient and the most comfortable with BigC. Services that have brought comfort and satisfaction to customers:

- Product service: The goods that BigC provides are diverse in structure, rich in types, guaranteed in quality, creating many choices for customers.
- Gallery goods: A form of DV that supermarkets provide to customers, by presenting goods reasonably, beautifully and make easily in the selection of products, and satisfaction when shopping.
- **Promotions:** Promotions offered by BigC are not only the business strategy of the supermarket, but are also a form of customer service that consumers receive when choosing for themselves. Products are being promoted at BigC.
- Installment purchase: To support customers in consumer shopping, BigC hypermarket has pioneered compared to supermarkets across the country when officially providing a new type of supplementary service that is purchasing service installment goods.
- Handy trolley: Instead of having to carry heavy goods and hand fatigue like when buying goods at the market or at small supermarkets, you can choose for yourself a lovely, sturdy plastic basket or a stroller stainless steel is placed at the entrance to the supermarket.
- Atmosphere in the supermarket: Coming to BigC, customers are immersed in the bustling atmosphere of a shopping festival. Through sound and images from the small screens and televisions that are ubiquitous in BigC.
- Payment service: BigC has up to 48 effective cashier counters to serve the maximum payment needs of customers.
- Customer retention services.
- **Service of packing goods:** When paying, the items are packed with plastic bags printed with BigC's logo for customers to conveniently transport goods home.

- Gift wrapping service: Like other supermarkets or department stores, BigC also offers free gift wrapping services for customers on special holidays.
- **Door-to-door delivery service:** BigC's staff will deliver to customers' homes within 24 hours and within 10km, completely free of charge.
- Goods purchased at BigC can be returned: Having purchased goods at BigC, but not very satisfied with your decision, you can rest assured that the goods can be returned.

Service is an exceptional product, many other characteristics

with other commodities such as cloning, heterogeneity, as

#### 5. Discussing the research results

inseparable and cannot be stored. It is these characteristics that make services difficult to quantify and unrecognizable to the naked eye. Quality of service is the most influential factors to customer satisfaction. If a supplier provides customers with quality products that satisfy their needs, then the business has initially made customers have a mutually supportive relationship. Customer satisfaction can be explained as a reaction emotional nature of customers for a product or service based on personal experience. Philip Kotle researcher's masters of Marketing said "Satisfaction is the level of the emotional state of a person derived from comparing the results obtained from the product or service with the expectation of him". Some views believe that service quality and customer satisfaction are the same, but there are certain differences expressed in different aspects. Do not build the Big C standard job performance so making evaluation criteria depends on the decision of the management. These standards are applied to all positions in the system. - Criteria for quantitative criteria: to be decided by the General Director, based on the objectives of the Company during the financial year without consideration to factor the impact of external market and economic situation actual sales of the company in recent years. For block shop staff, the majority of employees agree that the standards are too high making and unlikely to do so (68%). A few that need to try new lot can be achieved (2%) and if the focus will be achieved (representing 0.08%). The cause of the difference in the rate is so is because the management staff selection target data is given at the beginning of the period under review. These standards are too high and has been amended several times in the year. However, although the data are adjusted and staff have sent comments to the management level, the evaluation results of the work, the managers still use data first goal digest standard, makes employees feel dissatisfied and practically difficult to implement. In the survey data is the staff about the possibility of complete standard job performance, for staff office block, most of the employees argue that if the focus will do good job (40%) and part of the staff that no specific standards should not know how easy or difficult to obtain

Through analysis, the evaluation methods at Big C all have the advantages of being suitable for the size of the business, towards the goal of the assessment, in order to increase the employee's motivation. However, in the process of implementation, due to shortcomings in the development of criteria and standards, the effectiveness of these methods is not significant, subjective errors are easily made when using

(36%).

the method has not been remedied. The survey results also show that the assessment methods at Big C have not created motivation for employees, only 25% of employees are motivated by evaluation methods.

Customers of BigC supermarket are a part of the population in the district and in the vicinity of the supermarket, mainly households with moderate or higher incomes, so there is also the participation of local people foreigners and students, but these subjects account for not much. According to the data that I found, the percentage of customers of the supermarket is as follows:

- 21% of high-income customers (average from 8 million/month)
- 48% of customers with good income (average from 5-8 million/month)
- 22.5% of customers with average income (average 2-5 million/month)
- 8.5% other audience (students, tourists and foreigners)

During the current pandemic and economic recession, BigC's pricing strategy proved to be attractive to many customers with promotions, discounts or just keeping prices stable during the pandemic. This has also retained a loyal customer base.

# **6.** Conclusions and recommendations Conclusions

The customer services that BigC supermarket provides are quite diverse and rich that other supermarkets have not been able to perform. Specifically, BigC has actively provided entertainment services for children, an attractive food court with dishes throughout the three regions. The payment service at BigC has many advantages, with diverse forms of payment, accepting many types of payment (cash, bank card), especially BigC also provides red invoices, price invoices added value for corporate customers. Massive promotions have become BigC's strategic advantage in providing customer services as well as promoting goods consumption. Get free freight within 15km for purchases over 500 thousand VND, this is a service that small supermarkets can hardly do... While other supermarkets are struggling with the cost problem. - Revenue before the economic downturn, BigC still continues to provide customer services with an increasingly high level, and richer.

It can be said that the results of promotion policies and service provision in recent years have achieved many achievements and proved to be superior to other domestic supermarkets. However, there are also some limitations that cannot be avoided. Through research and analysis, we have made general assessments of the achieved as well as the unsatisfactory aspects of business activities and customer services. At the same time, he proposed some solutions to improve customer service at BigC, contributing to increasing the supermarket's competitiveness in the coming time. Through the results of analyzing the current situation of sales activities at BigC, domestic supermarkets can draw lessons for themselves. From there, build a business strategy suitable to the size and financial capacity of the supermarket itself.

#### Recommendation

Currently the management of Big C supermarket, not to maximize the performance of ng work of the staff. Need to

strengthen the team to monitor the activities of employees. It is recommended to build a measure of mutual management among employees through support and dependence mechanisms in a sales chain.

Taking this measure will improve the working consciousness of employees and increase work efficiency. Supermarket managers should focus on using a combination of all three management methods, namely economic, administrative and educational methods in managing their employees.

Currently, the remuneration regimes for employees at supermarkets are quite limited, so they have not created motivation to work for employees. This is also the reason why employees often do not work for a long time at supermarkets. The lack of good employees is always a question for BigC in the current period. As such, BigC needs to build reasonable employee benefits and appropriate salary regimes to create long-term attachment to its employees.

Building sales skills training classes for employee's right in the supermarket to save costs. At the same time, hire good experts to teach skills to employees. Organize extracurricular activities, exchange programs for supermarket employees to create a working environment that is both vibrant and friendly among employees.

Exploiting the creative ideas of employees, building a program every day one idea to increase the ability to improve sales quality.

Continuously organize achievement competitions among employees to find out who are capable and employees who have not performed well in their tasks. From there, there are measures to requisition talent and train even weak employees. The working attitude of employees has a great influence on the business performance of any commercial enterprise.

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