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Report title: Organisation's quality systems and customer relationship management

Module code: BMSW5103

June 2022 – Term 1, Group 1 (WEEKENDS)

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TASK DESCRIPTION

ASSESSMENT TASK – 100%

You are required to Produce an academic report of **4,500-word (+/- 10%)** by applying academic marketing (service) models, methods, and theories to assess the factors that influence an organisation's ability in maximising customer value.

Task Description/Scenario:

Customer Service Is a 24/7/365 Affair

With the shift to online shopping came a sense of immediacy that extended to customer service inquiries. Online brands do not operate on a 9-5 shift Monday through Friday, but rather, they are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Customers may be ordering from a brand at 3 in the morning, and if so, they expect customer service staff to be on hand to respond to any inquiries they have. "Customer service should be an around-the-clock effort because your customers are operating in that exact way. Anything that brands provide to customers today, especially from a digital service, is 24/7/365," said Patnam.

In light to the given scenario above, you will need to identify an organisation that you either working for now or have worked for in the past. If you have never worked for an organisation, then you will need to choose an extracurricular organisation you are involved in, or an alternative organisation that you know a lot about, in terms of what happens within the internal organisation environment (e.g. an organisation your parent/partner works for). If you are having problems choosing an organisation, please discuss this with your module lecturer.

Having chosen your organisation and reviewed the brief scenario above, you then need to answer the following questions:

Task 1

How have internal and external factors affected or influenced your selected organisation's quality systems and controls for customers to deliver a 24-hour customer service? Your work MUST be evidence based rather than descriptive – (Findings and analysis MUST be supported with secondary data and statistics to support answer)

Task 2

How can your selected organisation deal with the new customer demand and achieve its business objectives by developing and maintaining good customer relationships 24/7/365?

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1. Introduction: companies and customers

Independently on the changes that the society and the business world have suffered through the centuries, customers are always the most important variable for every organization whenever it is a profit or a non-profit organization. The main mission of every organization is to deliver goods or services to customers. Customers are the heart of a company, without customers or service users companies would not exist. Developing customer relationships is very important in order to attract more customers and to keep and maintain satisfied the already existing customers. Customer relationship management theories and strategies have been developed and tested through the last century in order to find the most effective strategies to implement in order to improve the client and organization relationship.

2. Introduction to the company: easy and the EasyGroup



EasyGroup is a very well known worldwide privately held conglomerate. British and headquartered in London, UK, it was founded 24 years ago in 1998 by Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, a company established to expand the EASY brand after the success that EASYJET has achieved right after its launch. Other EASY brand expansion companies after EASYJET's success were EasyInternetCafe in June 1999 and EasyRentacar (renamed later as EasyCar) launched in 2000.

During the over two decades of activity, EasyGroup tried to reinvent themselves and keep on bringing new products and services in order to keep the old customers satisfied and to also attract new long-term customers.

The products and services that EasyGroup brings to the market consist of airlines, bus service, car hire, estate agency, financial services, hotels and supermarkets.

(Wikipedia Article, “EasyGroup”, Accessed on 9 August 2022)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EasyGroup>

3. Chosen company to analyze and discuss in this essay: EASYJET

The logo for easyJet, featuring the word "easy" in a lowercase, rounded, orange font, followed by "Jet" in a larger, uppercase, rounded, orange font.

EasyJet is a low cost airline group. British and headquartered in London, UK (more specifically at London Luton Airport, EasyJet is a multinational company that operates international and domestic flights in more than 34 countries on 927 routes via EasyJet Europe, EasyJet Switzerland and EasyJet UK, affiliate airlines. The Greek-Cypriot businessman that founded the airline in 1995. His interest in the aviation field started when Virgin Atlantic offered him the opportunity to become an investor to their Greek franchisee. Stelios Haji-Ioannou has seen the opportunity to launch his own airline instead, easyJet that in 1994 would employ around 70 people. As of September 2021 the original founder is the largest shareholder by owning over 15% stake and all together, the EasyJet affiliates employ around 13,000 people.

(Wikipedia Article, “EasyJet”, accessed on 12 August 2022)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EasyJet>

4. EasyJet: services the company offers to the customers

EasyJet has a list of services for their clients that customers can use in the countries they operate. According to their Wikipedia article, EasyJet makes available the following services:

Multiple ways to book their services: even though the classical way to book flights or other services with airline companies used to be only through phone calls to the phone number printed on their airplanes due to the internet not being as accessible as it is today to the masses, in 2022 EasyJet has many options available for the customers to book EasyJet services. Customers and partners suggested to Stelios Haji-loannou in 1997 to start thinking about a public website for advertising and booking. He replied that the internet as it was at that point was only for nerds and that the average customer will still use the common ways of booking at the time, the telephone. Other executives at the time saw an opportunity and agreed to get a trial website with a new phone number intended only for the booking of services in order to track how the popularity of the website would work. When the positive results became obvious, the decision of the website to keep running has been taken and an e-commerce strategy has been put in place, giving now the customers the possibility to track flights and book them in real time online, this starting already in early 1998 making it the first website for a low-cost airline company in Europe . In 2001 internet bookings through the website became cheaper than the phone call bookings, making this way the online bookings extremely popular.

Cabin structure: the aircraft cabins are not divided into classes, they are actually structured into one single class standard that can fit up to 235 passengers at the time, depending on the aircraft. They are structured as two 3 seat wings one per each side of the central corridor of the plane with some frontal rows with extra space for the legs and cabin bags.

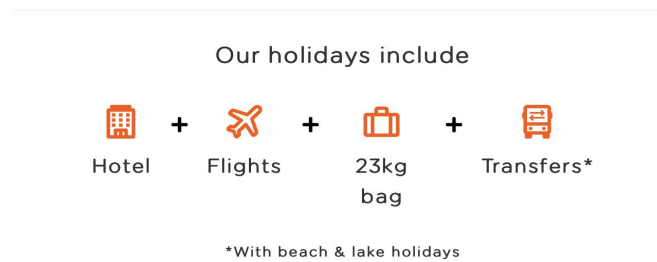
Meals and other on-board sales: the company does not provide meals or drinks included in the flight ticket. The customers have the option to purchase meals, drinks and snacks while on the aircraft from the EasyJet Bistro service with the possibility to enjoy discounts for the Bistro products bought on the flight during the evening. Other products are on sale and can be bought during the flight such as cosmetics, fragrances, gadgets, train and bus tickets from the airport of arrival and some products branded EasyJet.

Business travel and loyalty products: EasyJet offers three different programmes for the loyal customers and these are Flexi Fare, EasyJet Plus and Flight Club (loyalty programme for frequent travellers).

Flexi Fare is a ticket that usually is more expensive and that consists of extra services such as free date changes that are unlimited within a specific period, free route changes, extra 20 kg checked baggage, extra carry-on baggage allowance on board and a £7.50 on-board voucher.

EasyJet Plus is a yearly subscription that targets frequent travellers and that offers the option to choose the seat (including XL seats with extra leg room) for free, fast track security, priority check-in, extra cabin luggage and speedy boarding.

EasyJet Hotels and EasyJet Holidays: EasyJet and another company, a subsidiary of First Choice Holidays called Hotelopia started a collaboration and so this is how they launched a co-branded service, an accommodation booking service called EasyJetHotels that allows customers to book accommodation products through the airline network or separately at the EasyJetHotels website. Quotes for hotels at the destination that are in partnership with EasyJet are getting provided for customers that book flights through the airline's website. The partnership with Hotelopia went further to grow and expand by launching EasyJetHolidays in 2007. EasyJetHolidays is a service that with the collaboration with the Travel Trust Association offers the customer the possibility to purchase low cost holidays packages that consist of EasyJet flight (go and return), hotel, luggage of 23kg and transfer between airport and hotel.



(EasyJetHolidays, EasyJet, Accessed on 13 August 2022)

<https://www.easyjet.com/en/holidays/deals/promotions>



5 Stars Protection Promise: EasyJetHolidays offers a 5 points guarantee for the customers of holiday packages in order to encourage new customers to try EasyJet products and to maintain the already existing customers.

“Best price guarantee” gives the customers the guarantee of the best price on market on EasyJet holidays pack. EasyJet promises the customers that the price that they propose for their packages are the best on the market, otherwise the company will discount the difference + 5 British Pounds off the price of the holiday pack.

“Refund guarantee” grants the customer the option to cancel their planned vacations in cases of emergency if cancelled with more than 28 days before with a refund of 100% of the amount paid with the deposit paid back as credit on the EasyJet account for future bookings, unlike most companies that do not refund the paid deposit back to the customers.

“Take your time service” gives the option to the customers to pay their fare in instalments without fees or interest tax.

“Freedom to change” allows customers to change the holidays with ease if changed before 28 days from the date of the already existing purchased holidays.

“Keep your deposit” gives the flexibility to change plans and not lose the deposit, in fact, if something unexpected takes place the deposit will be returned to the EasyJet account as EasyJet credits making so that the deposit does not get lost by the customer.

(EasyJetHolidays, “Protection Promise”, Accessed on 15 August 2022)

<https://www.easyjet.com/en/holidays>

EasyJet App: the whole EasyJet world in your pocket. Accessing all the EasyJet services and products has never been as easy and accessible to most customers. Most of the smartphones operating the most popular OS (Android, iOS and Windows) support the EasyJet app. EasyJet app is user friendly and allows customers to purchase with ease any service or EasyJet product in just few clicks thank to the innovative algorithm that accepts all the electronic payment method making the purchase fast and secure, stores and remembers boarding passes, allows you to check-in comfortably from your sofa and keeps you updated in real time regarding the status of your flight. According to the Apple App Store the main characteristics of the app are the following:

- Search and book: through the app you can easily search and book trips, Apple Pay, Google Pay and any other saved card can be memorized in the app and used with ease for the purchase, the transaction is fast and secured.
- Manage bookings: all the EasyJet bookings in one place, the app helps to keep track of all the flights that are booked, gives you the possibility to easily change flights or add extras such as extra luggage, extra seat space, sports equipment and more.
- Holiday Packages Bookings: get all the information you want about the flights or the accomodation included in the booking in real time

- Check-in: the app offers the possibility to check-in faster than ever with the scanning feature that instantly scans the passport using the phone camera
- Mobile Boarding Passes: more environmentally friendly because not paper wasting, the mobile boarding electronic pass reduces long queues and speeds up the boarding pass. Up to 8 boarding passes can be saved to be used offline through the app and there is the possibility to add the boarding passes to the Apple Wallet and other electronic wallets.
- Flight Tracker: this option found in the EasyJet app allows the user to track planes in real time and check the latest information about departure and arrival with live information. The customer is also able to see the plane live in air by using FlightRadar24 maps.
- Flight Notifications: any important changes get notified to the client as soon as known, give real time information such as gate number in real time and remind the customer to check-in for example.
- Trip partners: through the app customers can manage extras, add excursions, get travel related insurances, hire or rent cars and book parking spots.
- Look & Book: holiday destinations can be searched using just a picture. The app will find the place and suggest flights and trips.
- Cabin bag sizer: augmented reality algorithms check if the size of the baggage conforms to the policy standards.
- Accessibility and Voice Search: EasyJet values the clients with disabilities. The EasyJet app has accessibility and voice search options that ease the searching and booking process for the people with difficulties.

(Apple App Store, "easyJet: Travel App", Accessed on 16 August 2022)

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/easyjet-travel-app/id483568103>

5. Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and the global pandemic starting in 2020

According to NHS.uk, SARS-CoV-2 is an RNA virus belonging to the coronavirus family of RNA viruses that cause disease in mammals and birds affecting the respiratory system, a fact that could have repercussions on the long term individual's health to even take to death in isolated cases. Its most common symptoms initially do not differ from the symptoms of any average cold or flu: increase in the body temperature, cough, change or loss of the taste and smell senses, shortness of breath, etc.

(NHS.uk, "Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms in adults", Accessed on 24 July 2022)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/main-symptoms/#symptoms>

At the beginning of 2020, a global crisis caused by a coronavirus started causing high numbers of casualties and a massive crash of the global economy due to the massive closure of business that were considered not essential at that particular moment. The global pandemic continues in 2022 at the present moment with lower numbers of casualties and deaths thanks to preventive measures in place and vaccines against SARS-CoV-2.

6. The way Covid pandemic affected the customer and organization relationship

The global crisis caused by Covid coronavirus has been changing radically the way we live and approach daily aspects of our life and this change is still in progress.

The awareness in regards personal hygiene, personal space and environment sanitizing and sterilizing. At the beginning, strict policies were put in place. For example face masks and shields, eye glasses, aprons and gloves were mandatory not only when going to hospitals, clinics or other healthcare environments but even for going to the grocery shop around the corner to buy essentials such as food, drinks and personal hygiene products. All healthcare environments would deny the access to visitors and individuals with no vital need for assistance,

shops would allow only a limited number of customers at one time inside of the business with the request to use disinfectant products and to wear appropriate PPE.

Travelling has been severely affected as well by the coronavirus pandemic. For several months travelling has been banned around the world, nationally and internationally, putting flight and traveling companies and the hotel industry on their knees.

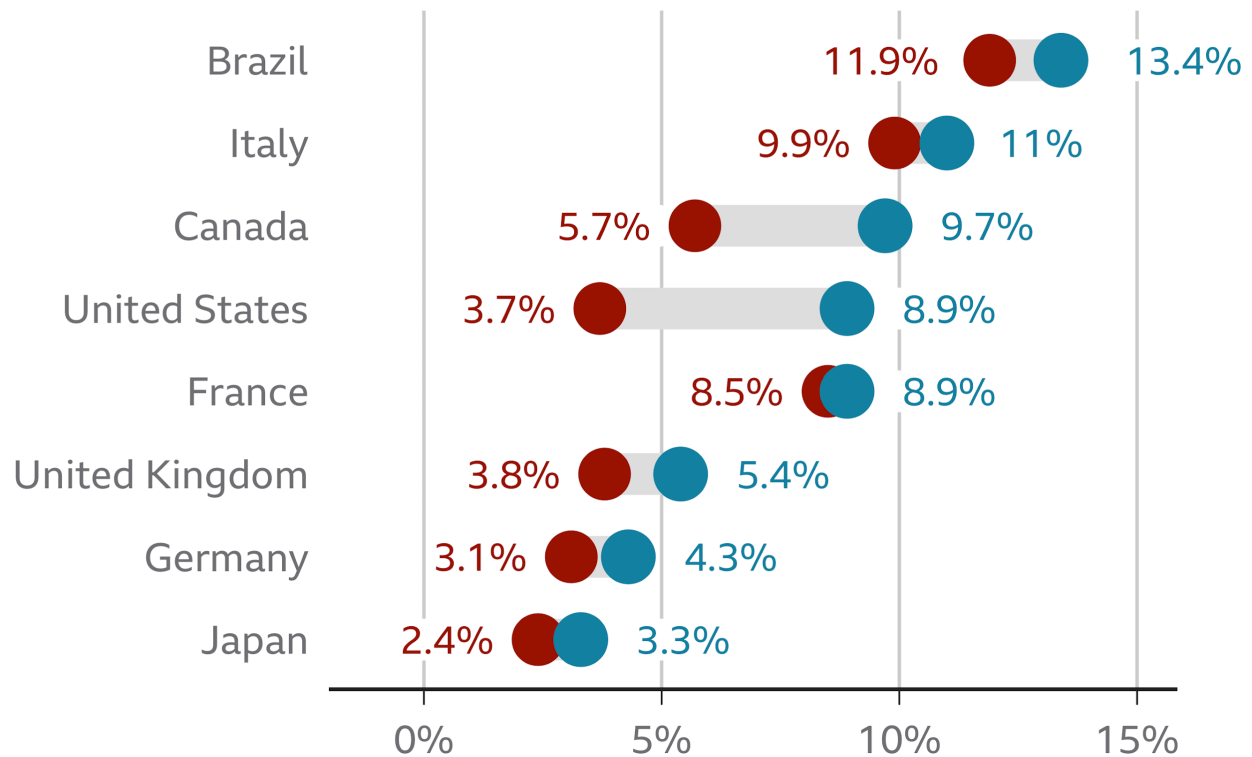
The professionals that could work remotely (as for example individuals covering office roles that would spend most of the time in front of a computer anyways) have been asked to work from their own home to prevent the increase in the number of people that would get in contact with the virus.

Many professionals that had jobs that were considered non-essential found themselves unemployed from one day to another, being therefore forced to do essential jobs to which they were not familiar or stay unemployed, making many individuals lose all their savings.

According to **BBC** global unemployment percentages increased affecting mostly every country in the world.

World economies struggling with rising unemployment

Yearly unemployment rate change, **2019** and **2020** compared



Source: International Monetary Fund



(BBC.co.uk, "Coronavirus: How the pandemic has changed the world economy", Accessed on 24 July 2022)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51706225>

7. How the global crisis affected the organisation and its users

With the global pandemic at the door, the organizations found themselves with new restrictions everyday, some of them more strict than others. Travelling has become extremely

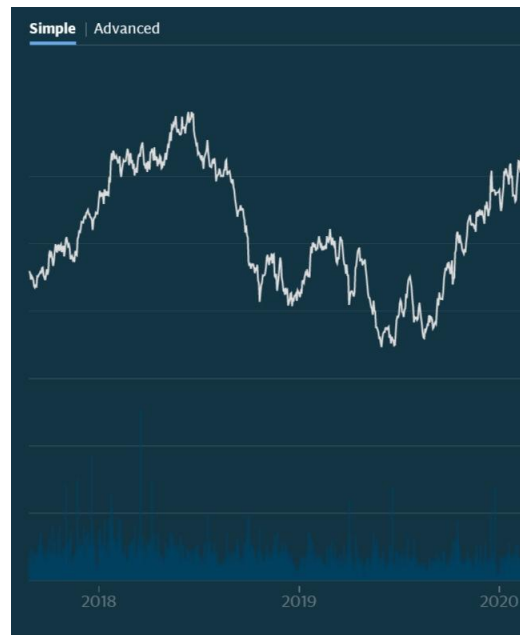
hard if not almost impossible. National and international travelling has been banned if not for extreme situations, usually family or health personal situations. Hotels and travel and airline companies have seen themselves forced to reduce their operating capacity to the minimum.

All airline companies had to reduce their flights by 90% causing financial, economical and social instability. For example, EasyJet flights from London Gatwick to Venice Marco Polo and return operate in normal circumstances about 3 times a day. Due to the global situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, flights on this route went down to 1 flight every three days or in some periods they have been completely restricted.

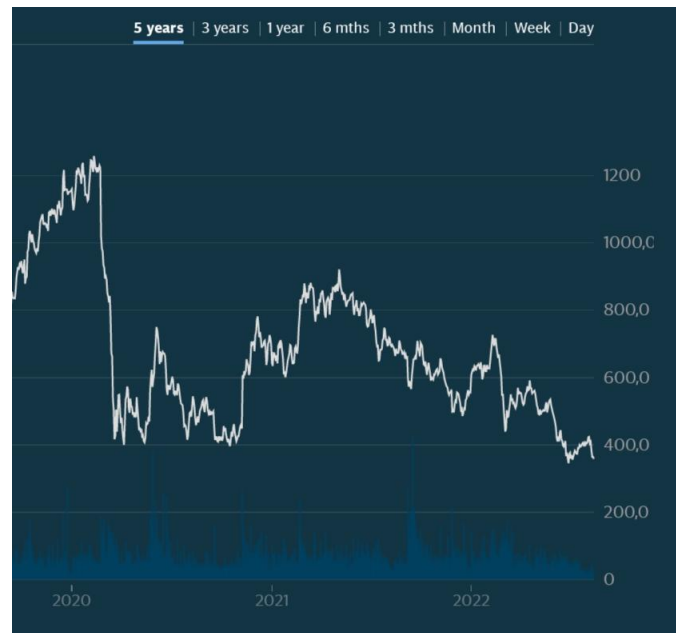
8. Market share of the organization until December 2019 and from January 2020

Like all the airline companies, EasyJet as well had to keep all the aircrafts at ground and follow the temporary lockdown regulations from the different countries' governments. Lockdowns in the first half of the year 2020 have been very strict, reducing in a drastic way the amount of fights allowed to travel with most countries locking their borders. Most regulations around the world were similar and sound more or less the same: nobody to travel unless in cases of extreme situations and emergencies, usually involving family, health or death situations. Most of the hotels and restaurants around the world had to lock their doors and keep their employees home because they were unable to operate at all.

The EasyJet company's profits dropped drastically putting the organization and the employees around the world in awkward positions.



This graphic provided by the Telegraph shows the share market of the organization until right before the beginning of the lockdown situations. Despite all the ups and downs, EasyJet was an organization with a stable trend of popularity, maintaining a mean of the trend in continuous growth, as shown by official graphics.



With the beginning of the lockdown situations all around the world, the share market of EasyJet has dropped with an extremely negative trend of profits the whole year of 2020. In 2021 with the lockdown restrictions not as strict and with the number of the flights increasing again, the company started to get back towards levels of profits they used to have before the pandemic even if such levels have not been reached so far.

(Telegraph, “easyJet PLC EZJ(London Stock Exchange)”, accessed 14 August 20220

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/markets-hub/share/S1691/EZJ/easyJetPLC>

9. Coronavirus SaRs-CoV2 and EasyJet in 2022:

The actual situation in 2022 in the UK is different compared to the first year of lockdown. In 2022 the lockdown situation is up and the restrictions regarding the Coronavirus SaRs-CoV2 are not as drastic as they used to be. Even though sanitization and disinfection procedures of cleaning of aircrafts are still in place and highly recommended, the number of passengers and the number of flights have returned to normal. Most destinations do not require anymore

vaccination proofs or locator forms to be presented before and after the flight. The use of face masks FFP2 is still mandatory on the flights as a precautionary practice.

10. CRM: Customer Management Relationship

Customers are the core of any organization whether it is a business or a non profit organization. Organizations would be meaningless without customers. The main target of every organization is to deliver goods or services to customers. Organizations develop relationships with their clients that ideally last long and stay on good terms in order to maintain old loyal customers and attract and acquire new customers. In order to do so, organizations find and put strategies in place called CRMs. CRM is an acronym and it stands for Customer Relationship Management. According to QBRAINX, Customer Relationship Management is a method meant to manage relationships between companies and their clients in order to keep old loyal customers satisfied in order to make them stay customers and attract new customers by using specific techniques. CRM starts with the organization gathering data about customers in order to learn about their preferences and their habits which gets saved in databases. By gathering information about customers, companies can anticipate and develop new strategies and services meant to increase client satisfaction and develop long term and stronger company and customer relationships. Nowadays this data gets collected by complex software meant to help businesses understand their customers preferences. Gathered data usually gets collected in anonymous ways and results are collected and calculated mathematically and statistically. Automatization of softwares that collect data has advantages such as increased efficiency, accuracy and reduced costs and time waste by reducing the manual labour to collect and analyze the data. It improves the business performance by making the database and the changes in results transparent and available at any time and in real time and remotely. Statistics say that nowadays it is more difficult to maintain clients to stay loyal rather than gathering new customers. CRM helps with maintaining long term customer relationships by retaining old customers by calculating and predicting the change in their customer behaviour as it occurs.

(QBRAINX, "Importance of Customer Relationship Management (CRM)", Accessed on
21 August 2022)

<https://www.qbrainx.com/blog/importance-of-customer-relationship-management-crm/>

11. **Task 1:** CRM within EASYJET organization

At EasyJet they understood how important applying Customer Relationship Management methods is. Their strategy has been studied and updated through the decades that they have been operating. According to the public publication on their official website, they focus on developing strategic positions in some of the biggest and most popular airports around Europe and by maintaining flights between these airports with an optimised frequency. Due to their structural and engineering strategies, EasyJet is able to offer to the customers fares that are more affordable and therefore more accessible to everyone. This strategy consists of some factors such as aircraft configuration, characteristics that enable more seating positions to be available per each aircraft.

Five strategic priorities enable EasyJet to deliver its strategy. These five strategic priorities are the following:

- *Number one or two in primary airports:* besides good pricing, the customers are very interested in traveling between the most important airports around Europe. At EasyJet they try to remain the leading airline company making available frequent flights between main airports while maintaining a good price.
- *Winning the clients' loyalty:* good memories and experiences regarding the use of services is very important, clients that have good customer experience while using a company service tend to become loyal and increases the probability of that client to appeal again to the same company for the same or similar services.
- *Value by efficiency:* low cost not by scarcity of quality of products and services offered but by planning and investing efficiently where it matters for the customers and

employees while finding and implementing new solutions to reduce the impact on the environment.

- *The right people*: customer experience has to always be optimal, for this reason the employment process is complex and focused on recruiting the best candidates for the roles in order to make an efficient and pleasing environment on EasyJet flights.
- *Innovating with data*: anonymously collected data get processed in order to develop new strategies to improve the customer experience. EasyJet aims to be the leading data-driven airline in the world.

(EasyJet plc, "Strategy", Accessed on 27 August 2022)

<https://corporate.easyjet.com/about/strategy>

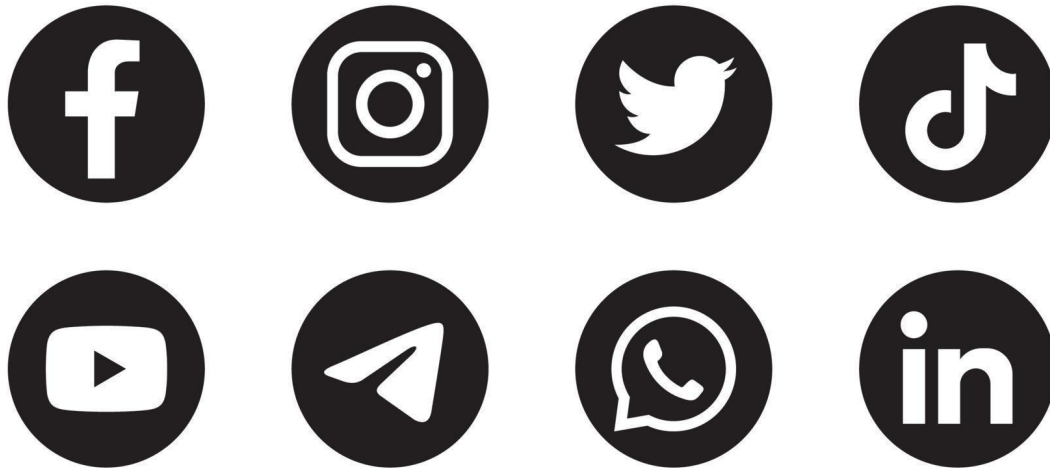
Our purpose	Seamlessly connecting Europe with the warmest welcome in the sky				
Our priorities	#1 or #2 in primary airports Giving customers the leading offer in the airports they want to fly to.	Winning our customers' loyalty Making it easy, enjoyable and affordable to travel again and again for business and holidays.	Value by efficiency We are low cost, driving efficiency and investing only where it matters to our customers and our people.	The right people Creating an inclusive and energising environment that attracts the right people and inspires everyone to learn and grow.	Innovating with data Using the millions of data-points we collect to make smart decisions and shape the future of travel, as the world's leading data driven airline.
Our promise	We are: Safe and responsible On our customers' side In it together Always efficient Forward thinking				

(img source:

https://corporate.easyjet.com/~/_media/Images/E/Easyjet/content-images/inner/strategy-image-v2.JPG)

EasyJet is also present and responsive at their call centre that customers can reach by dialing the phone number available on their website, online on their live chat where customers can chat in real time to either a human adviser or a chatbot. They are also available and responsible on the biggest social media platforms such as Facebook,

Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, etc. where customers get updated with offers and promotions and where they can get in touch with staff to solve issues or situations.



12. **Task 2:** How to improve EASYJET's customer services 24/7/365 and suggestions on how to improve services and customer experience

EasyJet's customer relationship management strategies have been studied and are the result of several years of data gathering and research over the customers and their tastes, what they are and how they tend to change over time.

From my point of view, as a customer of EasyJet for years I can list the following suggestion in order to boost and improve the customer services 24/7/365 and the customer experience:

- overbooking: overselling or overbooking is a very common practice in the hospitality and traveling sectors and it occurs when a company sells more goods or products than the availability of the stock. EasyJet should find a solution to replace this old dated practice in order to avoid their customers finding themselves in the awkward situation of traveling

all the way to airports with heavy baggage and not being able to travel due to overbooking.

- self check-in machines: unlike supermarket self checkouts, airport self check-in machines are not that easy or obvious at all to use, most of the time requiring the assistance of human staff anyways. EasyJet should invest more in their members of staff.
- baggage tolerance: the cabin baggage size limits quite often are over exaggerated making mostly every kind of bag to be out of the size range. EasyJet should be more tolerant when it comes to cabin luggages considering that they get carried by the customers themselves and not by members of staff.

13. Conclusion: reflection

By studying client relationship management theories and methods applied to examples drawn from organizational situations and by applying them to practical scenarios we can conclude that the relationship with the client and strategies to manage and improve it are an extremely valuable tool that an individual needs to have and develop in order to improve themselves in order to improve and grow professionally and within an organisation. By developing customer relationship management methods and skills, organizations can complete tasks and make the best decisions in more efficient ways and with minimum amount of effort and waste of resources in order to improve the customer experience and client satisfaction. By doing so, all the parties (organisation, employees and clients) benefit and develop strong partnerships that work more efficiently and last longer while bringing profits.

14. List of references

(Wikipedia Article, “EasyGroup”, Accessed on 9 August 2022)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EasyGroup>

(Wikipedia Article, “EasyJet”, accessed on 12 August 2022)

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<https://www.easyjet.com/en/holidays/deals/promotions>

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(Apple App Store, “easyJet: Travel App”, Accessed on 16 August 2022)

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