

Understanding and Engaging in the Customer Experience

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Module Name: Understanding and Engaging in the Customer Experience

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Executive Summary

Managing customer experience is very essential for every successful organisation of the world. This task is divided into two parts and this report has been carried out from the perspective of Wilko. The first part of the report discussed the marketing mix of Wilko. Secondly, the communication mix was also discussed in this part of the assignment. Thirdly, the identification of both internal and external factors which had an impact on the quality control of the company had been described in this part. The second part of the task described the quality process of Wilko at the time of the Covid-19 situation. Secondly, it discussed the customer experience model. Thirdly, it included the benefits and challenges of customer relationship management during the pandemic time.

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Introduction

Customer experience can be defined as the feeling of a customer about a particular brand. This experience can be gathered at different stages of the consumption process of the customers. For example, at the time of purchasing, consuming, or post purchasing activities. Customer experience generally indicates the good relationship between the organisation and the customer of that particular organisation. Customer experience is regarded as the core of every business organisation. Every business organisation in the world focuses on building good relationships with their customers for ensuring a better customer experience. Good customer experience can help a business organisation to increase the sales of the company as well as retain the customers of the company for a longer period of time (Jain, Aagja, and Bagdare, 2017). The pandemic situation has altered the ways of business operations around the world. This assignment will be conducted from the perspective of Wilko which is a British high street retail business chain that sells homewares and household goods for the customers. Wilko was established in 1930 by James Kemsey Wilkinson. The company has 414 locations around the country according to the information of 2021. In 2021, the company secured £1.283 Billion as revenue and the operating income of the company was £5.05 million in the same year. The assignment will contain two sections. In the first section, it will discuss how both internal and external factors impact the quality systems and controls of the business company during the Covid-19 pandemic (Anderson, 2022). The second part will deal with the ways how the organisation can deal with the new situation for achieving organisational objectives by managing customer relationships.

Part-1

Marketing Mix of Wilko

The marketing mix is regarded as an effective business tool which is a combination of different tools and techniques that can be controlled by an organisation to increase the sales of that particular company. There are seven elements of the marketing mix which are developed by the business organisation properly for facilitating the sales of the company. Wilko has a strong marketing mix strategy that helps the company to attract the customers of the company to sell their products. Proper development of marketing mix has significant importance on the successful business operation as this strategy covers all the aspects of a successful business operation. The marketing mix strategy of Wilko is given below.



Figure: Marketing mix

Source: (Salman, et al., 2017).

Product: This is the heart of every business organisation. The success of every business operation depends on the proper development of products for meeting the needs and wants of the customers of the company. Wilko focuses on developing quality products for meeting the needs and wants of the target customers of the company. The company develops different types of products like homewares, cleaning products, health and beauty products, DIY, confectionary items, kitchen and bathroom products, etc. The company also focuses on selling seasonal products like in the summer, the company focuses on selling gardening products (wilko.com Competitive Analysis, Marketing Mix and Traffic - Alexa, 2022). On the basis of the data of 2020, the company has about 14,000 own brands for selling to its customers.

Price: Effective pricing strategy also puts a great impact on the overall business operation of a particular business operation. For example, setting higher prices can decrease the sales of a particular business. On the contrary, setting a lower price can increase the sales of a particular business but can lower the profitability of a business. Wilko generally applies a low-cost strategy regarding its product. In this regard, the company focuses on ensuring high quality regarding its products at low prices. This effective strategy helps the business organisation to attract a huge number of customers.

Place: Regarding the placing strategy, the company focuses on the places which are convenient for the customers to approach. Generally, the company chooses high street areas for setting up their retail shop selling their goods and services. At present, the company has about 414 locations in the country for setting its products to the customers (Anderson, 2022). The company also focuses on the online selling of its products. In this regard, customers can visit “wilko.com” for choosing and ordering products.

Promotion: Wilko has effective promotional strategies for attracting customers and informing the customers about the products and services of the company. The company focuses on press advertisement. In this regard, the company inserted their advertisement in the newspaper. Nowadays the company is also focusing on social media marketing as social media has been getting higher priority among the customers. The company has about 250k social media followers.

People: People play a significant role in the success of a business organisation. Wilko has several employees for carrying out the operation of the company successfully. It employs different types of an employee at different stages of the operation of the company. According to the data of February 2022, the company has about 13,000 employees who are working at different stages of the company (Wilko's Youth Marketing, 2022). Lisa Wilkinson is the director of the company. Regarding employment, the company focuses on recruiting highly qualified employees.

Process: Process is a set of activities that are required for purchasing a product from a particular organisation or brand. Wilko maintains a very simple process regarding selling its products. Products of the brand are displayed in the store and customers can visit the store and choose products to buy. After choosing they can pay the price at the counter for buying the products.

Regarding the online process, customers can order the product by visiting “wilko.com” (Holmes, 2022). The delivery man sends the products to the customers.

Physical evidence: Physical evidence also puts a major impact on increasing the selling of the product to the customer. Physical evidence, the company’s logo, packaging, store decoration, etc. put a significant impact on driving the mind of the customers.

Communication mix

For a successful business operation, it is crucial to maintain an effective relationship with the customer. This is also very essential for increasing relationships with the customers. A communication mix is a set of components that help the business organisation to communicate effectively with the customers. Maintaining communication with the customers is very essential to building a relationship with the customers. In this regard, a communication mix strategy can help the business organisation to maintain effective communication with the customers that can drive good relationships with the customers. Wilko can also follow this model to increase the relationship with the customers.



Figure: Communication mix

Source: (Rusdi Hidayat, et al., 2018).

Advertising: Advertising can help the business organisation to maintain good communication with the customers. In this regard, Wilko will have to focus on providing a strong message to the customers about the products that can help to attract the mind of the customers.

Personal selling: Personal selling can also be an effective tool to communicate with the customers properly to inform them about the products and services. For this reason, both big and small business organisations focus on recruiting skilled salespeople to strengthen their personal selling experience.

Sales promotion: Sales promotion like discounts or freebies puts a major impact on attracting the mind of the customers. Wilko also provides different discounts and offers for attracting the mind of the customers (Kim and Lee, 2020).

Public relation: Public relation is all about managing and disseminating information to the customers about the products and services of the business organisation. In this regard, there are different platforms where brands can conduct public relations activities. For example, social media has been a good platform for carrying out public relation related activities.

Direct marketing/ internet marketing: Direct internet marketing is also playing a great role in maintaining a good relationship with the customers. Social media, emails are direct marketing platforms that can help the business organisation to maintain direct communication with the customers (Spivakovskyy, et al., 2020).

Packaging: Packaging also plays a significant role in maintaining communication with customers. For example, packaging can put a major impact on the mind of the customers by attracting them. In this regard, Wilko can use attractive and informative packaging for attracting the mind of the customers.

Critical analysis on internal and external factors that have an influence on quality systems and controls of the customers of Wilko at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought a great impact on the operation of business organisations around the world as this pandemic hit almost all the countries of the world. The business organisation faced great difficulties regarding their business at that time as a public

movement was strongly barred by almost all the countries of the world. The UK is no exception in this regard. The government of the UK adopted a lockdown approach for stopping the public movement to decrease the spread of coronavirus among the customers. The decline of footfall on the high street affects the business operation of Wilko negatively. In the pandemic year, the sales of this company decreased by 5.7% than that of the previous years (Shafi, Liu, and Ren, 2020). In this period, the company faces both internal and external influences that affect the business operation of the company negatively. Both internal and external factors that affected the quality system and controls of the customers of the company are given below.

Internal factors

Several factors had an impact on the overall business operation of the company during the pandemic situation. These internal factors were directly related to the internal business operation of the company. Covid-19 brought different changes in the overall business operation of the company. In this regard, Wilko was forced to adopt a different policy regarding their business operation which brought negative impacts on the overall business operation of the company. These internal factors of the company are given below.

Shortage of employees: During the lockdown time, the company maintained the operation of the company as the brand is regarded as an essential brand for the customers. However, the company faced a lack of employees during the pandemic period (Elavarasan, et al., 2020). Employees affected by this virus didn't join the workplace which created a shortage in the labour of the company. This shortage of labour creates problems regarding quality maintenance and control of customers during this pandemic time.

Disruption in the supply chain: Disruption in the supply chain management is another issue that had a great impact on the overall business operation of Wilko during the pandemic time. The supply chain of the company was greatly disrupted during the pandemic period because of a lack of employees at different stages of the supply chain. Many products are sourced from China and India where there were complete lockdowns. This disruptive chain also put a negative impact on the overall quality issues of the business of the company.

Less communication with the customers: During the pandemic period, the company got less scope to communicate with the customers of the company as the customers were forced to stay at

home. For this particular reason, the company got less scope to get information about the needs, wants, and requirements of the customers which put a negative impact on the overall business operation of the company (Beraha and Đuričin, 2020). So, got less scope to ensure higher quality in their products and services to fulfil the needs of the customers during this period.

Lack of supplies: Wilko sells homeware and retail goods for the customers. In this regard, the company requires raw materials for producing their goods properly. However, the outbreak of this pandemic has brought great difficulties regarding the overall business operation of the world. In this regard, the company faced huge problems regarding getting their supplies properly for operating their business operation properly (Holmes, 2022).

All these internal factors put negative impacts on the overall business operation of Wilko during the pandemic period. These factors were also responsible for managing the quality and controlling the customers of the company during the pandemic period.

External factors

Several external factors were also responsible for the quality management and customer control of the company during the pandemic period. These external factors were out of the control of the business operation of Wilko and these external factors are given below.

Government policies: During the pandemic period, the government of the UK adopted different rules and policies for controlling the movement of the people of the country. This also put a negative impact on the overall business operation of the company (Elavarasan, et al., 2020). Because of this policy, Wilko had the scope to confront fewer customers daily as they kept themselves inside the house to protect themselves from the spread of the virus. For this reason, the company has little scope to maintain relationships with the customers.

Changing customer behaviour: During the pandemic period, most of the customers focus on their basic needs. In this regard, they trimmed down the purchase of unnecessary things at that time. From this perspective, Wilko wasn't capable of controlling its customers to increase the sale of the company in that particular period.

Economic slowdown: During the pandemic period, the sale of the company plummeted which caused an economic slowdown for the company. This economic slowdown brought major

impacts on the business to ensure higher quality regarding the products and services of the company (Shafi, Liu, and Ren, 2020). Not only that, but the economic condition of the customers also deteriorated and had also a negative impact on the quality process of the business operation of Wilko during the pandemic period.

Task-2

Ways to fulfil customer requirements and maintain a good relationship with the customers during a crisis like COVID-19

COVID-19 pandemic has brought several changes regarding the business operation. It altered the ways of the existing operating system of the business organisation. Fulfilling the requirements of the customers and maintaining good relationships with them is always a higher priority regarding the successful business operation. In this type of crisis moment, business organisations will have to focus more on fulfilling the requirements of the customers as well as maintaining a good relationship with them for bringing success in the overall business operation (Kumar and Reinartz, 2018). Wilko can adopt these strategies in the future to tackle this sort of crisis regarding their business operation.

Identifying the primary requirement: In this type of situation, customers generally focus on purchasing highly required items that are required for their daily life. So, Wilko should emphasise defining the primary requirement of the customers in this type of situation. After identifying the requirement of the customers, a business organisation should emphasise selling those most needed products for the customers.

Ensuring workplace safety: For the proper operation of the business in this type of crisis period, the organisation needs a certain number of employees for carrying out the business operation properly. A good flow of employees can also help to ensure good customer relationships and fulfil their requirements (Hassan, et al., 2015). In this regard, maintaining workplace safety is essential that can help the company to operate business properly.

Maintaining direct communication with the customer: This sort of situation can curb the scope of maintaining communication with the customers. In this regard, Wilko will have to give priority to maintaining communication with its customers. For example, the company can adopt an email or social media strategy to maintain communication with the customers to understand their needs and requirements. This communication can also help to maintain a good relationship with the customers.

Adopting convenient process: Emphasis should be given regarding convenient processes to sell products and services to the customers. For example, during the COVID-19 situation, it was very tough for the customers (Raab, Ajami, and Goddard, 2016). So, in this type of situation in the future, Wilko can adopt the more convenient approach for supplying the product to the customers more conveniently.

All these approaches will be helpful for Wilko to fulfil the requirements of the customers as well as maintain a good relationship in this type of crisis in the future.

Application of critical understanding of the quality process in the workplace

The success of a business organisation depends on maintaining quality in all aspects of business operation. For this particular reason, business organisations focus on maintaining proper quality in all aspects of their business operation. Ensuring quality in the customer service of the company can help the business organisation to gain a competitive advantage in the market. This SERVQUAL model will be effective for Wilko for ensuring quality regarding the customer service of the company.

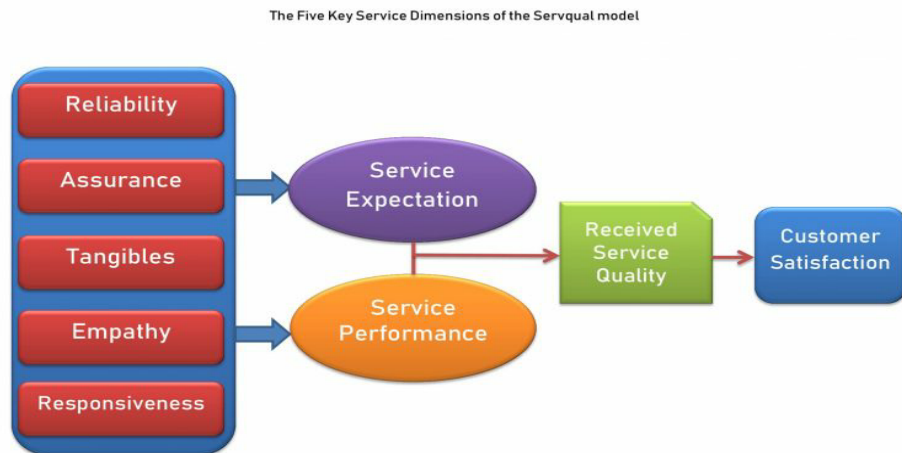


Figure: SERVQUAL model

Source: (Wang, et al., 2015).

This model discusses five dimensions that are essential for maintaining quality in the customer service experience. Reliability is all about building reliability among the customers and Wilko is able to ensure quality service to the customers. In this regard, the company will have to be persistent regarding its service delivery. Assurance means building trust among the customers about the quality of the service of the company. For ensuring assurance, Wilko will have to focus on four dimensions and these competence, courtesy, credibility, and security. Forgiving assurance to the customers about their service quality, Wilko will have to focus more on the overall skills and operational activities of the business operation (Ali, and Raza, 2017). Tangible issues of the business organisation also put major impacts on the overall customer service experience of the business operation. For example, the packaging of the products of the brand can put a major impact on driving the mind of the customers of the company. Besides, the decoration of the stores can also put positive impacts on the mind of the customers that can be helpful for successful business operation. The empathetic behaviour of the employees of Wilko help to keep a good focus on the customers of the organisation. This empathetic behaviour can be effective to ensure personalised service for each customer of the organisation (Prentkovskis, et al., 2018). The employees of Wilko should have to be highly responsive regarding all the aspects of their business operation. Proper responsiveness of the employees can help to ensure good service for the employees of the Wilko.

Analysis of the customer's experience from the perspective of Wilko

Customer experience can be defined as the overall perception of a customer regarding his/her experience with a particular brand or company. Positive customer is wanted by every business organisation of the world and it has different impacts on overall business operation. Customer experience depends on the overall interaction of the customers to a particular brand. For ensuring proper customer experience, Wilko will have to focus on different aspects of its business operation. Bringing value to different aspects of business operation can help the business organisation to ensure an effective experience for the customers.

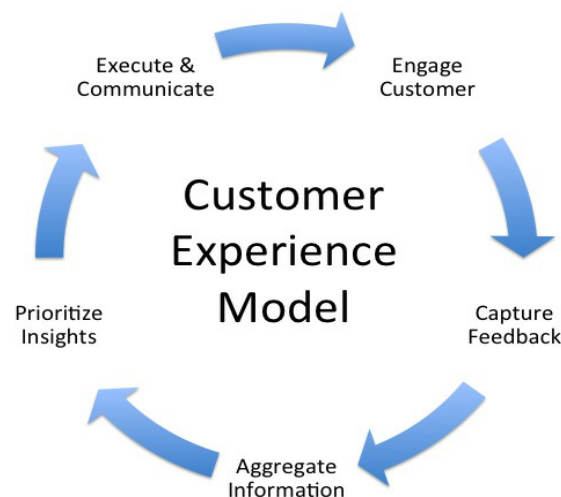


Figure: Customer experience model

Source: (Aliekperov, 2020).

This model will be helpful for Wilko for ensuring an effective customer experience that can positively impact the overall business operation of the company. In this regard, the organisation should have to focus on engaging the customers in the property. Appropriate customer engagement can also help the business organisation to ensure a high level of customer experience. Customer engagement is about maintaining a close relationship with the employees that can make them engaged with the business organisation. A higher level of customer engagement can increase the experience of the customers. Getting feedback from the customers is also essential in this aspect. In this regard, Wilko can gather product and service-related

feedback of the company from the customers (Worlu, Kehinde, and Borishade, 2016). Then employees of Wilko should aggregate all the information taken from the customers of the organisation. Proper aggregation of information of customer feedback can help the company to identify the problems of the customer regarding the service and products of the company. At this moment, Wilko will have to identify the areas which need to be solved first based on their priority. At the next step, Wilko should have to focus on executing the plan properly for managing the customer experience properly. For example, during the pandemic time, customers may have a problem regarding the timely delivery of online products. In this regard, Wilko can focus on solving this problem first by getting feedback from the customers as delays in online delivery can destroy customer satisfaction.

Sound customer experience can be defined as the key to the success of a particular business operation. In this regard, managing the overall customer experience is very necessary for the business organisation (Ali, and Raza, 2017). Wilko, in this regard, can focus on this model for managing the experience of the customers of the company.

Critical evaluation on the benefits and challenges of maintaining good customer relationships in the business

All the successful business organisations of the world put a higher emphasis on maintaining and developing a good relationship with the customers of that particular company. A higher level of the customer relationship can benefit a business organisation in different ways. For this particular reason, maintaining a good relationship with the customers is always prioritised by the business organisations of the world. Different benefits of an effective customer relationship are given below.

Benefits of customer relationship

There are several benefits of maintaining and developing an effective relationship with the customers of a business organisation (Kumar and Reinartz, 2018). The benefits of maintaining and developing customer relationships are given below.

Increased sales: Better customer relationships can help Wilko to increase the sales of the company. A good relationship with the customer can increase the loyalty among the customers towards the particular brand. So, the sales of the company can be increased in this regard significantly.

Retaining customers: Retaining the customers or increasing the rate of repeat buyers is very essential for the success of a business organisation. Retaining the customers to a particular company can be possible only by maintaining and developing good customer relationships. Wilko can also increase the rate of customer retention by maintaining a good relationship with the customers of the company.

Increased customer satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is also linked with the maintenance of a good relationship with the customers. Good customer relationships depend on the higher level of service of the business organisation (Hassan, et al., 2015). So, it can be said that a good customer relationship can increase the level of customer satisfaction that is very essential for a successful business operation.

Increased profitability: One of the indicators of successful business operation is the increased profitability of that particular business organisation. Every business organisation longs to increase the profitability of the business organisation. Wilko is no exception in this regard. Maintaining and developing a good relationship with the customers can help the organisation to streamline the sale of the company which can ultimately influence the profitability of the company.

These are the major benefits of maintaining and developing a good relationship with the customers of a particular business organisation (Raab, Ajami, and Goddard, 2016). Wilko can grasp this opportunity by strengthening its relationship with the customers.

Challenges of customer relationship

Business organisations face different challenges while developing and maintaining effective relationships with the customers of the business organisation. Some potential challenges of maintaining and developing customer relationships are given below.

Maintaining effective communication: Maintaining effective communication with the customers is the key to maintaining good relations with the customers. However, the business organisation can't maintain a higher level of relationship with the customers of a company. Wilko also faces several challenges while maintaining communication with the customers of the company (Hassan, et al., 2015). For example, the company faces complexities while maintaining communication with all the customers of the company.

Ensuring quality products: Ensuring effective quality products is very necessary for maintaining a good relationship with the customers. However, sometimes products may go below the expectation of the customers which can hamper the customer relationship. This is another challenge for the management of Wilko to maintain a proper relationship with the customers of the company.

Dealing with huge customers: Wilko is a large organisation that has been operating its business for a long period. In this regard, the company has a huge number of customers. So, the company faces difficulties to maintain a good relationship with a huge number of customers (Kumar and Reinartz, 2018). For this particular reason, it is sometimes very difficult for Wilko to maintain a strong relationship with all the customers of the company properly.

Proper maintaining and developing customer relationships can help the business organisation significantly regarding its successful business operation. In this regard, Wilko should provide topmost emphasis on building a good relationship with the employees.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be said that successful management of customer experience is very essential for successful business operation. In this regard, a business organisation like Wilko should underscore on different aspects of their business operation. Managing customer experience, during a crisis situation like Covid-19, can be very tough for the business organisation. In this regard, a business organisation can emphasise both internal and external factors of business operation that have significant impacts on successful customer experience management. Improving the overall quality process of the business organisation can influence the overall experience of the company.

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