KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE LEARNING

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION MANAGEMENT THROUGH EFFICIENT

LISTENING TOOLS: A STUDY OF KASAPA TELECOM LTD,

HO, VOLTA REGION

BY

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the CEMBA and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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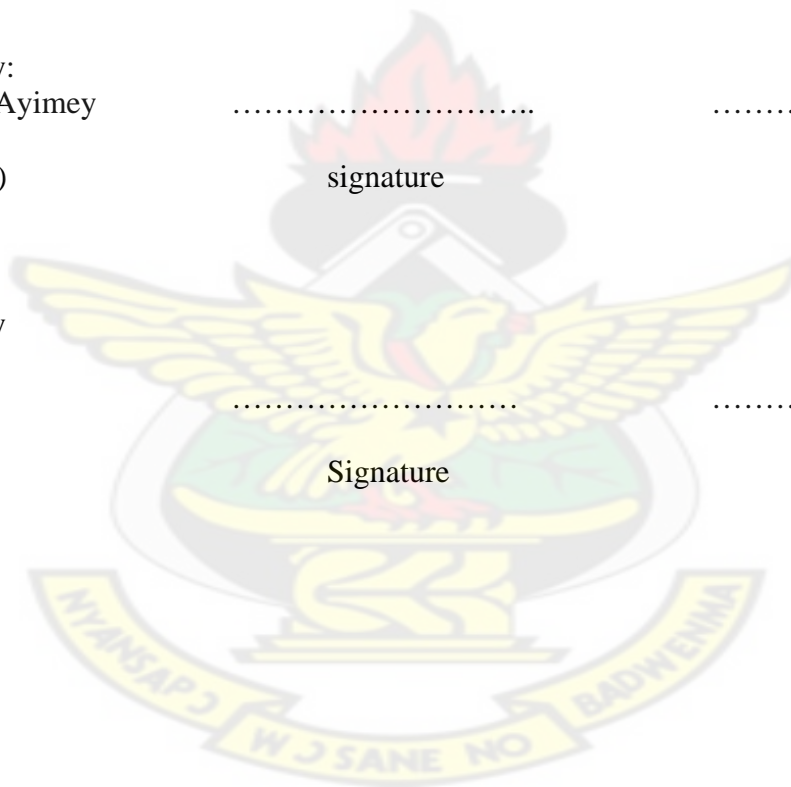
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with love to the following personalities:

My dear wife, Mrs. Matilda Dzifa Yawa Tutu-Ganyaglo,

Our children, Andy and Wendy

My Father, Rev. John Kofi Youngson Korkor and

My mother, Mrs. Juliana Akua Korkor of blessed Memory

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to examine how Kasapa Telecom Limited, Ho, uses listening as a tool for managing customer satisfaction. Two hundred questionnaires were administered to customers of Kasapa in Ho, to ascertain how the Company used listening and other best practice strategies like; customer complaints, critical activity surveys, employee feedbacks, benchmarking and customer visits, as a tool, to collect information for managing customer relationship to improve of service quality. The research revealed that Kasapa Telecom Limited, used customer complaints and customer visits as the most effective listening tools for gathering information to improve service quality. Benchmarking and critical activity surveys were the least used listening tools by the Company for maintaining customer trust and loyalty. It was also revealed that Kasapa used best practice strategies like customer complaint forms and suggestion boxes for managing its customer relationship. The study found out that the greatest challenge facing Kasapa Telecom Limited was competition from rival players within the telecommunication industry. The study recommends the intensification of the use of benchmarking and critical activity surveys as tools for gaining competitive advantage within the industry.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

CRM - Customer Relation Management

HTL - Hutchinson Telecommunication Limited

KIL - Kludjeson International Limited

KNUST - Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

MHZ - Mega Hertz

SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Scientists

SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

TQM - Total Quality Management

WWW - World Wide Web
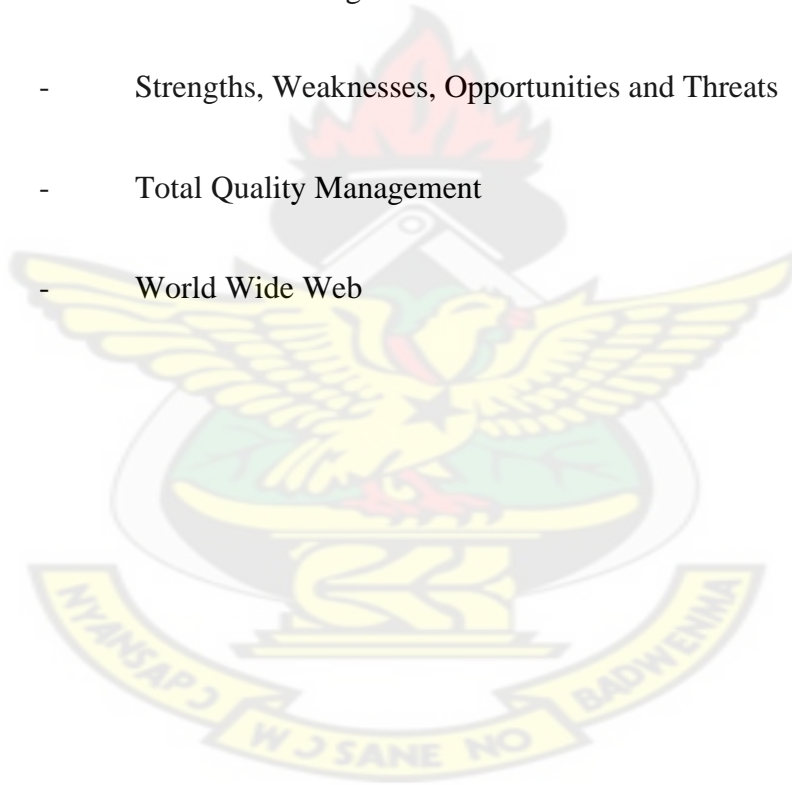
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

It is generally accepted that customer satisfaction is the leading criterion for determining the quality actually delivered to customers (Olga et al, 2003). Customer satisfaction can refer to different areas of the relationship with the customer including satisfaction with the quality of a product or service, satisfaction with an ongoing business relationship, satisfaction with the price/performance ratio of a product or service, or satisfaction because a product/service has met a customer's expectations (Olga et al, 2003).

Now, from the viewpoint of a company, the discussion needs to explore the importance of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction has been defined as the result achieved when service or product features respond to customer needs and when the company meets or exceeds customers' expectations over the lifetime of a product or service (Stevenson, 2005).

As satisfaction is defined from the customers' perspective, all satisfaction improvement projects must start by defining what customers' want and need from a company (Maguire & Koh, 2006). Satisfaction is the customer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under-or over-fulfillment (Oakland & Tanner 2006).

There is considerable evidence to support the view that customer satisfaction is vital to the success of organizations and that customer satisfaction is linked to profits (Oakland & Tanner 2006). There is a connection between customer satisfaction and employee

satisfaction. Maguire and Koh (2006) demonstrated the relationship between satisfied customers and satisfied employees with their cycle of good service. The cycle suggested that satisfied customers will tolerate higher margins that can be used to pay employees more, which boosts employee morale, reduces employee turnover and ultimately helps produce more satisfied customers (Benchmarking Exchange 2007).

In addition, Olga et al. (2003) pointed out that if customers are satisfied, employees will not have to listen to complaints and may feel better about their job, leading to increased employee retention and reduction in the cost associated with hiring new employees. Certainly, satisfied customers will pay a premium for services and reduce a company's cost of providing services because there are fewer complaints to deal with (Oakland & Tanner 2006).

Thus, there may be a further positive impact on profitability over time. Maguire & Koh (2006) explored the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and its subsequent effects on purchase intentions and they concluded that perceived service quality leads to satisfaction, and that satisfaction, in turn, had a significant positive effect on purchase intent. Oakland & Tanner 2006 also found support for this relationship between satisfaction and purchase intentions.

In fact, satisfied customers provide recommendations for the companies, especially those who state that they are very satisfied (Benchmarking Exchange 2007). Moreover, satisfied customers are more likely to respond to cross-selling efforts (Olga et al 2003). Thus improved customer satisfaction means more sales and more profit.

Best practice tool of listening can be used to obtain information about customers' needs, preferences, and perceptions of performance. Many organizations are finding themselves in increasingly competitive business environments. In many instances, they must totally

revamp their business strategy to become more customer-focused. To achieve this objective they may need to ensure that they have strategic intelligence from the marketplace. Maguire et al (2006) propounded two (2) very important frameworks for fitness and implementation of the ten listening tools for effective customer satisfaction management within every customer focused organizations. These frameworks are shown below:

Figure 1. A fitness framework of the ten listening tools

Listening tools
- Relationship Survey
- Dissatisfaction Survey
- Critical Activity Survey
- Customer Complains
- Benchmark
- Lost and why Survey
- Employee feedbacks
- Customer Visits
- Focus group
- Observation

Perceived Benefits
- Provides an overall strategic view of the relationship
- Proactively searches for customer problems, identifies the nature of the problem and the customer's satisfaction with problem solution
- Provides a tactical view of critical interactions with the customer
- Reactively collects complains, identifies the nature of the complaint and the customer's resulting satisfaction
- Provides a strategic view of the marketplace, the company's competitive position(stregth, weakness) in the entire market provides direct insight into the firms competitive advantage
- Provides a measure of actual customer behaviour (lost business) and the customer's reason for their action
- Provides information of now customer needs problems or opportunities
- Making the customer problems, issues and desires more relevant.
- Understanding customer expectations and to determine the importance of product attributes
- Provides a new perspective of the customer as a tool to deepen understanding of customers.

Fitness
- Most relevant for companies in developing strategic initiatives
- Can be used to compare regional performance
- Used as a module in local service quality measurement survey
- Most relevant when system and processes are in place to quickly fix problems
- Most relevant when critical interactions with customers can be identified and directly linked to internal processes
- Most relevant for manufacturer in business - to - business sector
- System and processes must be in place to quickly respond and solve complains
- Most relevant when the firm has a reasonable market share and a reasonable number of major competitors
- Most relevant for strategic planning leading to long term initiatives and breakthrough thinking
- Most relevant when most behaviours can be readily identified
- With the support of internal feedback system
- Building good relationship with customers
- Testing new product/service
- Testing the usability of product/service

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These two frameworks were developed to give a comprehensive and logical understanding of each listening tool's characteristics and their administration in four world-class companies. It is envisaged that these frameworks can be used as a type of reference for other companies that wish to manage customer satisfaction more efficiently via learning from the best practices used by these four world-class companies. Figure 1 shows the fitness framework, which outlines all the listening tools with their key advantages and fitness for use. The listening tools and the advantages were derived from the literature, whilst their fitness for use was the aggregated results of previous experiences and the literature.

Ten key listening tools emerged from this study. It is self-explanatory from the fitness framework that specific tools are fit for specific objectives under prescribed conditions. It can be noted that four listening tools are survey-based, but each of the surveys aims to meet specific objects, e.g. a dissatisfaction survey is mainly used as a module in a local service quality measurement survey and the conditions for such a tool to work is that when systems and processes are in place to quickly fix identified problems.

Customer complaints, customer visits, focus groups and observation are those listening tools that are directly linked to data collection of customer satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction at different stages of the product/service life cycle. Again, a system and process must be in place to quickly respond and solve customer complaints. Customer visits can be used to building good relationships with customers through direct discussion and interaction with them about any satisfaction/dissatisfaction and performance related issues. Observation is a relatively passive method of collecting this data. Customer visits, focus groups and observation could lessen customer complaints. A focus group is a type of

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listening tool that fits the initial product/service development cycle, where ideas and input from customer are sought in testing new products/services. This can be regarded as the most proactive listening tool amongst the rest because early detection of errors or potential future customer dissatisfaction could be eliminated at this stage through revising the new product/service. However, this tool might not be fit for existing products/services. This is another example of the situation where specific tools are fit for specific objectives under prescribed conditions.

The customer's voice could be brought into the organization through a direct link with specific employees, e.g. sales and marketing or service managers/engineers. Therefore, employee feedback is a kind of listening tool that bridges the understanding between the performance perceived by organizations on customer satisfaction and the actual customer satisfaction brought into the organization through this channel. Employees that deal with customers directly should know better whether the customers that they serve are satisfied or otherwise. Management could react accordingly to such feedback and the process would be accelerated via the use of intranet.

The most challenging listening tool amongst them is the use of benchmarking. It could provide a competitive performance analysis against other best practices. It must be noted that this is referred to as external benchmarking. Such a tool would require the organization amongst its competitors and hence provide a valid comparison amongst world-class standards.

The case studies in this research found that the methods of administering the listening tools vary between world-class companies. The variation of administration is clear in the context of its frequency and the party who carries out the administering. Figure 2 shows the implementation framework that highlights the use of the listening tools and how they

are administered in four world-class companies. These results were derived from the interviews.

It can be seen that not one company uses all ten listening tools. They select and use the most appropriate to gain maximum benefits. Firm A uses only four of the listening tools. Firms B and D use five, whilst firm C uses most of the listening tools (eight). The interesting point is to find out which tools they sue and how they use them to provide their high level of customer satisfaction and success.

Through a third-party, firm A carries out a relationship questionnaire survey and a dissatisfaction questionnaire survey three times a year. They use their real-time internal audit system to manage customer complaints. They claim that they benchmark themselves with their competitors periodically but only through subscribing to a market report. This is a defensive strategy to ensure that they are not lagging behind their competitors. This study found that the four world-class companies all benchmark themselves using a similar method, with the exception of firm D, which uses a third-party to conduct face-to-face.

Although firms B and D use the same number of tools, the type of tools they use and the way they administer them are different. Firm B uses a critical activity survey and selected employees in firm B interview their customers on a monthly basis via telephone to follow up progress of critical orders. Their employees also carry out a monthly lost and why survey to investigate the reasons of lost customers and businesses. In contrast, through a third-party, firm D carries out a relationship survey and dissatisfaction survey monthly via face-to-face or telephone interviews. They promulgate the results of their relationship survey on their website as a means of increasing awareness to the stakeholders and customers the strategic initiatives and relationship performances of the company.

Firms B, C and D have all set up a real-time central team to handle customer complaints. One of the key successes of these firms is that they uses a focus group when developing a new product/service, which allows real customers' needs to be considered before launching any new product/service to the market. We found that firm C uses a focus group frequently as compared to firms B and D. This has removed their customer dissatisfaction to a great degree. Firm A does not deploy this listening tool because they felt that it is not suitable in their business environment and the nature of services that they provide is unique, where customers would pay a higher price for a better service.

Through a third-party, firm C carries out a relationship questionnaire survey monthly as a form of 'health check' and also a strategy to retain customers. In addition, their employees conduct a real-time lost and why survey to resolve lost customer issues and behaviours in order to ensure that any unwanted treatment will not be repeated in the next services. T hey also listen to their customers through the use of monthly employee feedback, a monthly customer visit and frequent observation. Such a combination of listening tools used by firm C has resulted in a high level of customer satisfaction and sustained their competitiveness.

Best Practices on Increasing Customer Satisfaction

Customers have greater choice than ever and are not willing to accept sub-standard products or services. They have become more educated and expect higher standards of customer care through their experiences and the provision of superior service by leading customer-orientated companies (Thornton 2001). All best-practice companies are spending more on looking for innovative ways to maintain and satisfy existing customers. They believed that customers' perceptions will be influenced by how they feel they are treated. The challenge is how to succeed in making the customer feel really special and valued and

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looked after by them. Thus superior customer care is important for keeping the existing customer.

We have presented some best practices in relations to listening to customers in the above discussion, such as using multiple listening tools, surveying customers periodically, employing an internal audit system for complaint management. The following typical best practices are generated from different world-class companies, and have been confirmed as making a significant contribution to increasing customer satisfaction and enhancing companies' performance in this field. However, our discussion only focuses on clearly depicting these best practices, and does not attempt to make in-depth analysis of them. The goal of the following section is to make some suggestions for those organizations who want to improve performance in customer relationship management by designing their own unique initiatives.

A Good Service Provider

Employee education and motivation are keys to avoiding mistakes and increasing customer satisfaction (Turpin, 1995). Firm C educates every employee from the following six dimensions:

- Customers like to be called their name. The manager stated: "Remembering a customer's name, giving them individual attention".

- Service providers should give customers their undivided attention – full attention. The manager said: "Every customer wants to be the most important person to you".

- We have to make them feel they belong – belonging.

- Customers want employees to be knowledgeable about company's products.

- Customers want somebody to care about them. The manager explained: "I am sincere; I am not selling; I am caring for you. I let you fill your dream. It is not what I want to do; it is what you want to do".

- Professionalism – keeping promises. The manager stated: "If I say to you I am going to something, I will do it. If I say to phone you back at 4.00 this afternoon. I have to fulfill what I have promised".

Dealing with queries

Firm A employs two customer service teams to deal efficiently with customers' queries. People in the response team are accountable for reacting to customers' general queries. If a customer has a problem which the response agent could not solve, he/she will pass the problem to a support agent who will take the ownership of the problem and follow it through until it is solved. It is a good method for reducing the transferral time of customers.

Proactive customer service

People are likely to avoid giving bad news. Thus, from A launched a new policy of informing the customer, if it is unlikely to deliver its promise on time due to some special case. This new policy made it more successful in the most recent industry market research with 97% of respondents believing the supplier (company) cared in relation to this issue.

"24 -7" service

The customer interaction centre of firm B, which is in a business-to-business sector operates "24 – 7" to deal with all customer service event calls. That is 24 h per day, and 7 days per week.

Preferred employee

Assigning a customer's preferred engineer who is familiar with their case is used as an indicator measurement to satisfy service requests in firm B.

Response time

Always answering the phone on four rings or fewer is Cincinnati Marriott Northeast Hotel's principle (Enz and Sigauw, 2000). The result from this study reveals that firm B considers 15s as a response time which is suitable, and the company measures the response time.

Typical performance

We cannot compare each company's performance as they are not in the same industry. The results below simply show some typical examples:

- 95% of customers say he/she would be likely to recommend firm C's product/service to someone he/she knows.
- 93.1% of customers express themselves as satisfied with firm A.

People satisfaction

Employee satisfaction with intrinsic and spiritual character is the source of excellent quality and customer satisfaction. World-class companies see their front-line and staff support people as valuable and reliable resources who are equal in importance to customers for quickly and efficiently finding out how the organization is performing in the marketplace. These companies look inside as well as outside. Therefore, the companies organize a staff survey every year. Firm A's 2002 staff survey results shows that job

satisfaction remains high at 89%. Employee satisfaction is regarded as a very important key indicator of customer satisfaction. A manager in firm C stated:

"In my view, businesses to not succeed, people succeed. So in other words, in my view, you have to focus on the people. If you get the people right the business will follow".

Building culture

Organization culture has been shown to have a dramatic impact on implementing strategy (Garver, 2001). While this topic is beyond the scope of this paper, here we only present two typical examples that can be considered as a way for building a customer satisfaction culture, which made a strong impression during the data analysis. Firstly, firm C produced the video tapes that are attempting to explain a company's notion through some emotional stories, and distribute to every single employee. Secondly, results from the study reveal that world-class companies are actively engaged in different service campaigns. One manager from firm C states the benefit of recognition programmes:

"…….not only improves service, but lift company morale. The main point of recognition programmes is to make every employee feel service quality is his or her individual responsibility".

Conclusions

Observing best practice and current experiences from large organizations interested in improving their knowledge and understanding of the complete issues surrounding the management of customer satisfaction has produced a number of interesting results. Measuring customer satisfaction identifies ways of improving product/service quality, which in turn leads to increased competitive advantage (Perkin's 1993). Increasing customer satisfaction and CRM have become the main focus of many firms to boost repeat

business and benefit from positive word-of-mouth, thus increasing long-term profitability. As a result, increasing customer satisfaction is an important goal in business practice today, measurement of satisfaction is becoming increasingly common, and customer satisfaction and relationships research are by far the most popular means of gathering customer feedback. Since customer tastes and requirements are always changing, a major part of the quality effort must be devoted to market research.

World-class companies use a variety of different customer listening tools to collect customer information for fully understanding customers' needs, preferences, and perceptions, and this article has introduced some new customer listening tools to the literature. This provided the underlying knowledge for the two frameworks that were created to capture essential characteristics of each listening tool. In total, 10 listening tools were discussed.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Measurement of satisfaction must be a continuous process that infuses the voice of the customer into the firm's decision process. Maguire & Koh (2006) believed that there are three reasons for this. Firstly, very few firms ever achieve 100% customer satisfaction but by striving for it, a company will continuously improve, and so will employee morale and satisfaction. Secondly, because customers' views are constantly changing, if a customer satisfaction programme presents only a one-off glimpse of those views, the customers may drift away. If their needs are dynamic and the firm is static, gaps will emerge. The third reason involves competition. Although some competitors may not change, many will. If a firm is not engaging in competitive benchmarking on a continual basis, competition may overtake it. The firm may be improving, but at a slower rate than its competitors. The results will be competitive vulnerability, followed by poorer financial performance (Ming-Change Lee 2006).

Olga et al (2003) also stated that there are five factors that are important in developing an effective customer satisfaction programme: customer information; senior management support; employee input and action; benchmarking; and financial evaluation. Indeed, a customer satisfaction programme is a comprehensive system approach for effectively managing customer needs and experiences. It involves systematically listening to multiple customer voices, analyzing, prioritizing and responding to customer issues.

Typically, a customer satisfaction programme as discussed by Maguire & Koh (2006) has been used by many major US organizations and is defined as follows:

1. Capture and multiple customer voices – direct and real-time feedback

2. Analyse and integrate of multiple customer voices and prioritization of key focus areas

3. Respond and appreciate owners performing root-cause analysis to resolve key focus areas

4. Verify and communicate improvement results to customers, obtain new inputs from customers.

If a company wants to maximize the value it provides, it must maximize its understanding of its customers. Whether it is the lifestyle a consumer wants to project or a problem a company is seeking to solve, the underlying premise is the same. Value rests not in its products and services, but what they allow its customer to achieve (Reddy & Sharma 2007). Real value is only possible with a real understanding of customers. The following discussion focuses on capturing multiple customer voices. To a limited degree, the literature identifies some customer listening tools including: relationship surveys,

transaction surveys, analysis of customer complaints, total market surveys, focus groups, and observations.

Measuring customer satisfaction leads to identification of ways of improving product/service quality, which in turn leads to increasing a company's competitive advantage. This best-practice study intends to examine the customer relations/satisfaction management at the Kasapa Telecommunications Ltd, Ho Branch. The study is to assess customers' perception of the services of Kasapa to see whether they meet the quality expectations of majority of its customers. The primary contribution of this study is to examine a variety of different customer listening tools a company can use to improve its customer satisfaction management to maintain their trust and loyalty.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions of the study are therefore stated as follows:

1. How does customer relations/satisfaction management use listening as a tool to obtain information about customer needs, preferences and perception of performance from customers?

2. What best practices are available to Kasapa for managing customer perception and satisfaction?

3. What are the challenges facing Ho Branch of Kasapa in providing quality services and products to meet customer satisfaction?

4. What can Kasapa do with information it gathers through listening to customers to improve quality of service and customer satisfaction?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine best practices that can lead to improvements in the quality of services rendered and the degree of customer satisfaction by Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine how customer relations/satisfaction uses various listening tools to obtain information about customer needs preferences and perceptions of their performance.

2. To identify some best practices for managing customer perception and satisfaction.

3. To identify the challenges facing Ho Branch of Kasapa Tel in providing quality services and products to meet customer satisfaction.

4. To determine what Kasapa Telecom Ltd should do to improve quality of service and customer satisfaction through the use of information it gathers through listening to customers.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Quality service has been defined as the ability to identify and meet or exceed the expectations of the customer. For any organisation to stay in business and have comparative advantage over its competitors, the proper and efficient management of its customer satisfaction is critical. This study is significant because it contributes to the volume of available literature on customer relations management for maximisation of profits for shareholders. Secondly, the study would provide policy makers in business with a greater insight into the philosophy of customer relation management as far as the use of listening as a tool for managing customer satisfaction is concerned. Finally, the study

would serve as a reference material for future research works on customer relations management.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study is limited to Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho Office. This is so because of my inability to extend the research to two or more telecommunications companies in Ho which will allow for a comparative analysis of customer relations management and satisfaction among them. The results are, however, not expected to be affected by the inability to do comparative studies.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The following are the three-point limitation of the study.

The researcher is/was constraint by time factor considering the period allowed for the writing and submission of the dissertation.

The researcher also faced the problem of limited financial and logistical support in the course of writing the dissertation.

Finally, the inability on the part of the researcher to conduct comparative studies of customer relations management and satisfaction among the telecommunications companies in Ho.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study is presented in five chapters. Chapter one deals with the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter two is devoted to the review of literature, whilst chapter three concentrates on the methodology of the study. Chapter four on the other hand, deals with

the presentation and analysis of data. Finally, chapter five will handle summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.9 Definition of Key Concepts

1. *Customer*: A person who buys goods or a service

2. *Customer Relations*: The relationship between two things i.e. a seller and a buyer showing the connection or similarity between them.

3. *Listening Tools*: A device to which attention can be given or a thing that you can hear

4. *Satisfaction*: A pleasant feeling you get when you receive something you wanted or when you have done or are doing something you wanted to do.

5. *Telecommunications*: The sending of and receiving of messages over distance especially by telephone, radio and television.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the review of literature most relevant to the study. The review is presented under the following sub-headings; Customer satisfaction, satisfaction and profitability, and customer satisfaction programmes.

2.2   Customer Satisfaction

It is generally accepted that customer satisfaction is the leading criterion for determining the quality actually delivered to customers (Vavra 1997). Customer satisfaction can relates to different areas of the relationship with the customer including satisfaction with the quality of a product, satisfaction with an ongoing business relationship, satisfaction with the price/performance ratio of a product, or satisfaction because a product met a customer's expectations (Broetzmann et al., 1995). Now, from the view point of a company, the discussion needs to explore the importance of customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction has been defined as the result achieved when service or product features respond to customer needs and when the company meets or exceeds customers' expectations over the lifetime of a product or service (Juran, 1991; Kelsey and Bond, 2001). As satisfaction is defined from customers' perspective, all satisfaction improvement projects must start by defining what customers want and need from a company (Oliver, 1981). Satisfaction is the customer's fulfillment response, or the product or service, itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption related fulfillment, including levels of under-or-over-fulfillment (Oliver, 1997).

2.3   Satisfaction and Profitability

There is considerable evidence to support the view that customer satisfaction is vital to the success of organizations, and that customer satisfaction is linked to profits (Bitner, 1990; Heskett et al., 1994; Schneider, 1990). There is a connection between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. Vavra (1997) demonstrated the relationship between satisfied customers and satisfied employees with their cycle of good and service. The cycle suggests that satisfied customers will tolerate higher margins that can be used to pay employees more, which boosts employee morale, reduces employee turnover, and ultimately helps produce more satisfied customers (Kelsey and Bond, 2001; Schneider and Bowen, 1985; Vavra, 1997).   In addition, Bernhardt et al. (2001) pointed out that if customers are satisfied, employees will not have to listen to complaints and may feel better about their job, leading to increased employee retention and reduction in the cost associated with hiring new employees. Certainly, satisfied customers will pay a premium for services and reduce a company's cost of providing services because there are fewer complaints to deal with (Bloemer et al., 2002). Thus, there may be a further positive impact on profitability over time.

Rust and Zahorik (1993), explored the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and its subsequent effects on purchase intentions and they concluded that perceived service quality leads to satisfaction and that satisfaction, in turn, had a significant positive effect on purchase intent (Rust and Zahorik, 1993). Oliver and Swan (1989), Swan and Trawick (1981), and Oliver (1980) also found support for this relationship between satisfaction and purchase intentions. In fact, satisfied customers provide recommendations for the companies, especially those who state that they are very satisfied (Thornton, 2001). Moreover, satisfied customers are more likely to respond to cross-selling efforts (Bloemer et al., 2002). Thus, improved customer satisfaction means more sales and more profit. The

discussion now turns to examine the literature on the customer satisfaction management models.

2.4   Customer Satisfaction Programmes

Rossomme (2003) pointed out that customer satisfaction measurement is the principal tool by which organizations assess the health of their relationship with their customers. A customer satisfaction programme provides the ability to diagnose and strengthen relationships with 'at risk' customers – those clients with negative service experience, new customers, and customers in competitive markets (Heskett et al., 1994). Likewise, it can help define and maintain an ideal subset of customers where the firm can consistently deliver superior value (Reichheld, 1996). It was pointed out that it is critically important to establish an evaluation system for determining customer satisfaction by surveying customers directly as managers can use research results in identifying their own organizational strengths and weaknesses (Janes, 1996' Nicolls et al. 1998). An evaluation system can include the following:

1. Identify how well the business process is working (Kelsey et al., 2001).
2. Know where to make changes to create improvements.
3. Determine if the changes led to improvements (Hayes, 1998).

Measuring satisfaction must be a continuous process that infuses voice of the customer into the firm's decision process. Nauman et al. (2001) believe that there are three reasons for this. Firstly, very few firms ever achieve 100% customer satisfaction by striving for it, a company will continuously improve, and so will employee morale and satisfaction. Secondly, because customers' views are constantly changing, if a customer satisfaction programme presents only a one-off glimpse of those views, the customers may drift away. If their needs are dynamic and the firm is static, gaps will emerge. The third reason

involves competition. Although some competitors may not change, many will. If a firm is not engaging in competitive benchmarking on a continual basis, competition may overtake it. The firm may be improving, but at a slower rate than its competitors. The results will be competitive vulnerability followed by poorer financial performance. Naumann et al. (2001) also states that there are five factors that are important in developing an effective customer satisfaction programme: customer information; senior management support; employee input and action; benchmarking; and financial evaluation.

Indeed, a customer satisfaction programme is a comprehensive system approach to effectively manage customer needs and experiences. It involves systematically listening to multiple customer voices, analyzing, prioritizing and responding to customer issues. Typically, a customer satisfaction programme as discussed by Vora (2002) has been used by many major US organizations and defined as follows:

1. **Capture**: multiple customer voices – direct and real-time feedback.
2. **Analyze**: integration of multiple customer voices and prioritization of key focus areas.
3. **Respond**: appropriate owners performing root-cause analysis to resolve key focus areas.
4. **Verify**: communicate improvement results to customers, obtain new inputs from customers.

If a company wants to maximize the value it provides, it must maximize its understanding of its customers. Whether it is the lifestyle a consumer wants to project or a problem a company is seeking to solve, the underlying premise is the same. Value rests not in its products but what they allow its customer to achieve (Unisys, 2001). Real value is only possible with a real understanding of customers.

The following discussion focuses on capturing multiple customer voices.

2.5   Steps for Managing Customer Satisfaction

It is a well known fact that no business exists without customers. In the business of telecommunications, it is important to work closely with customers to make sure the service being provided is as close to their requirements as can be managed.

Adrian Thompson identified seven steps in managing customer satisfaction as follows:

1. *Encourage face-to-face dealings*

    It is important to meet customers face to face at least one or even twice during the course of a project. This might be the most daunting and downright part of interacting with the customer, but have tendency of assuming a good experience with customers.

2. *Respond to messages promptly and keep clients informed*

    Meeting the information needs of customers to reduce anxiety is the reason for this step. It might really not be easy to meet the problem of the customer right away but all the same, the customer must be aware that his/her problem is being worked on (Alexander, 1996).

3. *Be friendly and approachable*

    Being friendly and courteous towards customers is very important. It is very vital to keep a clear head, respond to clients' wishes as best as possible and at all times remain polite and courteous.

4. *Have a clearly defined customer service policy*

    A clearly defined customer service policy saves a lot of time and effort in the long-run. It explains the solutions to anticipated customer problems (Gitomer, 1992). It

spells out the various options available to the firm to use in solving customer concerns to ensure total customer management and care.

5. *Attention to Detail*

In order to make your customer feel welcome, wanted and valued, then the firm needs to pay attention to every detailed aspect of the customer. Sending goodwill messages to clients will make them feel important and valued (Ford, 1991).

6. *Anticipate your clients needs and go out of your way to help them out*

This involves achieving supreme level of understanding of clients to enhance good working relationship.

7. *Honour your promises*

This is the most important point in the steps conveying a simple message: when you promise, deliver.

Clients do not like to be disappointed even though it is sometimes paramount that you might miss the deadline unintentionally. This can stem from projects being late, technology failure and the inability of contractors to deliver on time (Bullis, 1992). A quick apology and assurance is required when customers are disappointed.

Customer satisfaction and service management, like any aspect of business, is a practice art that takes time and effort to master (Green leaf 1995). All you need to do to achieve this is to stop and switch roles with the customer. Treat customers like your friend and they will always come back (Mackay, 1988).

2.5   Multiple Customer Listening Tools

To a limited degree, the literature indentifies some customer listening tools including: relationship surveys, transaction surveys, customer complaints, total market survey, focus groups, and observation.

2.5.1   *Relationship Vs. Transaction Surveys*

The literature has long debated the most appropriate conceptualization of customer satisfaction. Some researchers argue that satisfaction is a transaction specific emotion resulting from the disconfirmation of expectation model (Oliver, 1980). In this manner, satisfaction is the result of a specific interaction with the vender. In contrast, other researchers have conceptualized and measured satisfaction as a global construct, being the result of many previous interactions with a specific vender (Oliver, 1997). Recently, researchers have accepted both views of satisfaction and have modeled satisfaction (Boulding et al., 1993). Customer satisfaction triggers better relationship and vice versa. Better customer relationship management (CRM) means understanding the need of the customer and being able to listen to them and provide the expected services (Elliot, 2004). To do this, it is important to keep in mind that overall relationship surveys and transaction surveys are complementary rather than competing concepts (Johnson, 2001; Johnson et al., 2002).

However, little research has explored how organizations use these two surveys in practice. Garver (2001) suggested that each survey needs to be standardized so that results can be combined and synthesized for better understanding. To accomplish this task, both surveys should have the following identical characteristics: overall survey format, question formats, measurement scales, number of scale points, and exact wording of attributes, sub-attributes, and overall performance questions. Surveys should be as consistent as possible (to the

degree that it makes sense) with the overall relationship survey asking about overall perceptions and the transaction survey directed towards a specific interaction.

2.5.2 *Customer Complaints*

Early in the total quality management (TQM) movement, collecting customer compliant data was the primary method of listening to customers (Gale, 1994). Today, gathering customer complaints is a standard practice for most companies. Research has shown that effective handling of customer complaints has a dramatic impact on customer retention and loyalty (Singh and Wilkes, 1996). Collecting customer complaint data is common practice in many companies and has received substantial research attention. Research has focused on processes to handle complaints (Homburg and Bettina, 2001), the customer's experience (Smith et al., 1999), analysis of complaint data (Blodgett et al., 1995), and the relationship to important business outcomes. The biggest challenge is that only a small percentage of dissatisfied customers actually complain. Vavra (1997) pointed out that only 5% of all customers who have a problem actually voice it to management. Hence, Blodgett et al. (1995) suggested that service providers should encourage customers who are dissatisfied to complain and seek redress, so that the firm has a chance to remedy the problems and retain those customers.

Garver (2002) believed that relationship and transaction surveys along with customer compliant data are the cornerstone of any systematic programme designed to listen to customers. Yet other listening tools are occasionally discussed in the literature as well. These tools include: total market survey, life cycle surveys, focus groups, and observation.

2.5.3 *Total Market and Life Cycle Surveys*

Total market surveys are used to gather perceptions of the entire market, not just a company's current and regular customers. Researchers have noted the importance of gathering perceptions of the market place because regular customers are often satisfied with the vendor and supply relatively high performance scores (Gale, 1994). Inflated performance scores are a problem with satisfaction data (Oliver, 1997), one that is overcome with market surveys.

Life-cycle surveys are rarely discussed as a customer listening tool, yet are frequently used by academic researchers (Garver, 2003). Research findings suggested that satisfaction often varies throughout the life-cycle of a product and that the importance of product attributes change over time (Mittal et al., 1999). Woodruff and Gardial (1996) found that customers that may 'devalue' certain products overtime, expressing declining levels of satisfaction as product usage evolves. Furthermore, Gardial et al. (1994) found that customer expectations and the importance placed on certain attributes often change throughout the life-cycle.

For example, new-car buyers place more importance on styling and image, whereas reliability becomes more important at the end of the life cycle (Mittal et al., 2001). While these tools are commonly used in academic research, discussion of practitioner use has been limited.

2.5.4 *Focus Groups and Observation*

Focus groups are commonly used in practice and have received a considerable amount of attention (Garver, 2001).

They are most often used to understand customer expectations and to determine the importance of product attributes. More advanced users will employ them on the back end of surveys to add insight into quantitative results (Woodruff and Gardial, 1996). With more complex offerings, focus groups are also used to gain in-depth evaluation of the offering (Unisys, 2001).

Observation is a powerful tool, yet infrequently used by practitioners and researchers. Observation overcomes the main limitation of surveys and focus groups, a sole reliance upon verbal reports. Observation instead relies upon actual behaviours and actions, inferring the participants' thought processes and motivations (Garver, 2001). Many innovative products have been inspired and developed from this research method (Woodruff et al., 1996).

It was suggested that a systematic, ongoing programme, which gathers customer satisfaction data, is critical to managing a sustainable competitive advantage (Woodruff et a., 1996).

Garver (2001) noted that practitioners should use a variety of tools that help the organization listen to customers' needs, preferences and perceptions of a firm's performance. While academic researchers suggested that multiple tools should be used to listen to customers (Narver and Slater, 1990), little empirical research has explored this area and many questions remain. For example, how do leading-edge companies collect customer satisfaction data? Specifically, what research tools are used to listen to customers? For example, how frequently do they utilize the listening tools and how do they implement their approach? Currently, these questions have not been explored in the literature, leaving companies without a framework to guide their decisions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This describes the procedures employed in the collection of the data for the study. This among other things includes the description of the source of data, the target population, sample size, sampling procedure, methods of data collection and methods of data analysis.

3.2   Sources of Data

The study was based purposely on both primary and secondary data as the main sources of data.

3.2.1   Primary Data Sources

The researcher went to the field to solicit the necessary data/information needed from the respondents through the administration of open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires, personal interviews and observations.

3.2.2   Secondary Data Sources

Some previous scholarly works which include books, articles, journals, newsletters, brochures and other related literature about the topic under study were consulted.

3.3.   Target Population

The study involved both male and female clients/customers of Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho Branch. The reason for the selection of this target population is that, they constitute the clients/customers of the case study and as such offer the researcher the opportunity to develop and have an understanding of the respondents' feelings and perception of quality service and customer satisfaction.

3.4 Sample Size

A sample size of 180 respondents was chosen. The researcher has chosen this size because of time constraints and funds available for the study to be carried out effectively. Also, this size made it possible for the accuracy of result so that correct judgment was made about the population.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

There are basically two types of sampling techniques; probability sampling and non-probability sampling were used for this research work.

3.5.1 Probability Methods of Sampling

Probability sampling employs strict probability rules in the selection of the sample units in that every unit of the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample. Under this method of sampling, the simple random sampling was used in selecting staff of Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho Branch.

3.5.2 Non-Probability Methods of Sampling

Non-probability method of sampling was adopted in selecting a sample size of 180 customers of Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho Branch for administering questionnaires and interview schedule. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the customers of Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho Branch for purposes of collecting information on customer listening tools a company can use to improve its customer relation/satisfaction management to maintain the trust and loyalty.

3.6   Data Collection

The researcher employed personal observations, administration of highly structured questionnaires with pre-coded and open-ended questions and interviews to solicit the data from the respondents/target group.

The administration of the questionnaires was done by the researcher himself with the questionnaires being completed by the respondents.

3.7   Data Analysis

The following were used in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

1. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences)
2. Frequency Distribution.

3.8   Description of the Study Area (Kasapa Telecom Ltd)

Kasapa Telecommunication Limited is a telecommunications company in Ghana. It became operational in January 2003. Kasapa is a joint venture with Hutchison Telecommunication Limited (HTL) owning 80% share and Kludjeson International Limited (KIL) with 20% shares. HTL is a division of the Hong Kong based Hutchison Whampoa Limited, a conglomerate with interest in telecommunication property development, parts and related services, retail, manufacturing and infrastructure, energy, finance, and investments.

Kasapa was chosen for the following reasons:

1) To make it easy for customers to identify themselves with the product, in line with positioning as a local brand, a brand not necessarily for the affluent in society.

2) The Ghanaian culture of speaking emphasizes the choice of work in every communication. The company stress on politeness and respect and "Kasapa reminds users of these. It is a polite brand, a brand that respects its customers.

3) The word Kasapa is an identification that the people will enjoy their conversation on the network without bothering about the cost of airtime.

Kasapa is the direct, sharing, caring, honest, and very simple brand. The current commercial operation covers Accra, Tema, Aburi, Ho, Kasoa, Mampong and many other places. The plan is to expand annually to other cities and regions that will result in the coverage of 80% of Ghana's land area.

The telecommunication developed by Kasapa is based on the 800MHZ, advance mobile phone service (AMPS) standard.

Vision
The vision of the company is "Kasapa for more people in more places" (affordable and reliable communication for Ghanaians).

Mission
The mission of Kasapa is "to be the leading provider of telecommunication services in Ghana with a brand synonymous with quality, affordability, uniqueness, value for money, honesty and be socially responsive through high customer satisfaction and fostering of mutual satisfying long-term relationships with stakeholders".

Objectives of Kasapa

The objectives include

- To achieve 70% awareness of the product or service in the entire country

- To hit the subscriber level of over 3.5 million by 2007

Product and services offered by Kasapa are as follows:

Products

- Connected mobile phones

- Connected fixed home phones

- Prepaid cards

Services

- Local and IDD

- Data (SMS)

- Credit Transfer (Bounce)

Geographical Location of Case Study (Kasapa Telecom Limited)

Kasapa Telecommunications Ltd Head Office is located at Abelemkpe near Lincoln Community School, Accra and Ho Branch Office is located on the BISS PLAZA, K. K. House Traffic Light, Ho.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and analysis of data gathered. The presentation is done under the following sub-headings; the use of listening tools to obtain information about customer needs, preferences and perception of performance by Kasapa Telecom Limited; best practices for managing customer perception and satisfaction; challenges facing Kasapa Telecomm Limited of Ho in the provision of quality service and products to meet customer satisfaction; and the use of information gathered through listening to customers for improving quality service and customer satisfaction by Kasapa Telecom Limited.

The research questions addressed in the presentation and analysis of data were: How does the management of Kasapa Telecom Limited, use listening as a tool to obtain information about customer needs, preferences and perception of performance from customers? What best practices are available to Kasapa for managing customer perception and satisfaction? What are the challenges facing Ho Branch of Kasapa in providing quality services and products to meet customer satisfaction? And what can Kasapa do with information it gathers through listening to customers to improve quality of service and customer satisfaction.

4.2 Use of Listening Tools to Obtain Information about Customer Needs, Preferences and Perception of Performance by Kasapa Telecom Limited, Ho.

Under this sub-heading of the presentation and analysis of data addressed the question: 'How does customer relations/satisfaction management use listening as a tool to obtain

information about customer needs, preferences and perception of performance from customers?' The main tools for listening to obtain information about customers are; relationship survey, dissatisfaction survey, critical activity survey, customer complaints records, benchmarking, lost of customers and why survey, employee feedback, customer visits, focus groups and the use of observation.

When the staff and management of Kasapa were asked which of the listening tools mentioned above they were familiar with as tools for obtaining information about customer needs, preferences and perception 36.7 % of them stated they were familiar with customer complaints, 16.7 % for customer visits, 10 % for employee feedback whilst only 3.3 % were familiar with benchmarking as a tool for obtaining information on customer needs and preferences as indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Familiarity with listening tools among Staff of Kasapa

Category of Responses	Freq	% age	Cases
Relationship survey	3	10.0	27.3
Dissatisfaction survey	2	6.7	18.2
Critical Activity survey	2	6.7	18.2
Customer complaints	11	36.7	100.0
Benchmarking	1	3.3	9.1
Employee feedback	3	10.0	27.3
Customer visits	5	16.7	45.5
Observation	3	10.0	27.3
Total responses	30	100.0	272.7
0 missing cases; 11 valid cases			

Source: Field Data, May 2009

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When staff and management of Kasapa Telecom Limited Ho, were asked which of the listening tools they employed most in obtaining information from customers, it was revealed that Customer complaints and Customer visits each recorded 21.3 %, relationship survey recorded 14.9 % , employee feedback recorded 12.8 %, whilst benchmarking recorded 2.1 % as stated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Rating of Effectiveness of listening Tools among staff of Kasapa

Category Responses	Freq	% age	Cases
Relationship survey	7	14.9	63.6
Dissatisfaction survey	4	8.5	36.4
Critical Activity survey	1	2.1	9.1
Customer complaints	10	21.3	90.9
Benchmarking	1	2.1	9.1
Lost and why survey	2	4.3	18.2
Employee feedback	6	12.8	54.5
Customer visits	10	21.3	90.9
Focus group	2	4.3	18.2
Observation	4	8.5	36.4
Total responses	47	100.0	427.3
0 missing cases; 11 valid cases			

Source: Field Data, May 2009

The research has revealed benchmarking and critical activity survey as the least used tools for gathering information from customers by Kasapa Telecom Limited as indicated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.3: Application of Standard Deviation Tests to Listening Tools

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Relationship survey	3	1.33	.577	1	2
Dissatisfaction survey	3	2.33	1.528	1	4
Critical Activity Survey	3	2.67	1.528	1	4
Customer complaints	3	1.33	.577	1	2
Benchmarking	3	2.67	1.528	1	4
Lost and why survey	3	2.67	1.528	1	4
Employee feedback	3	2.00	1.732	1	4
Customer visits	3	1.33	.577	1	2
Focus group	3	2.67	1.528	1	4
Observation	3	2.00	1.000	1	3

Friedman Test

Source: Field Data, May 2009

When standards deviation test was applied to the responses received on effectiveness of the use of listening tools for getting information, it became clear that relationship survey, customer complaints and customer visits had the least standard deviation of .577 each which is less than one (1). This means they recorded the less deviation from the standard deviation of one (1). By implication, Kasapa Telecom Limited used relationship survey, customer complaints and customer visits as the most effective listening tools for collecting information from its customers about their needs, preferences and perception about the quality of services as indicated in Table 4.3.

On the contrary, dissatisfaction survey, critical activity survey, lost and why survey and benchmarking all recorded standard deviation of 1.528 each whilst employee feedback recorded standard deviation of 1.732. This means these tools of listening were the least effectively used of all the listening tools employed by Kasapa during the period as contained in Table 4.3.

Table 4.4 Rating of the Effective use of Relationship Survey

Relationship survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	3	27.3	33.3	33.3
	Very Good	4	36.4	44.4	77.8
	Good	2	18.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	9	81.8	100.0	
Missing	System	2	18.2		
Total		11	100.0		

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Relationship survey as a tool for listening recorded 27.3 % excellent use as indicated in Table 4.4, whilst dissatisfaction survey as a tool for listening recorded 18.2 % very good as stated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Rating of the Effective use of Dissatisfaction Survey

Dissatisfaction survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	1	9.1	25.0	25.0
	Very Good	2	18.2	50.0	75.0
	Average	1	9.1	25.0	100.0
	Total	4	36.4	100.0	
Missing	System	7	63.6		
Total		11	100.0		

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Table 4.6 Rating of the Effective use of Critical Activity Survey

Critical Activity Survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	1	9.1	33.3	33.3
	Good	1	9.1	33.3	66.7
	Average	1	9.1	33.3	100.0
	Total	3	27.3	100.0	
Missing	System	8	72.7		
Total		11	100.0		

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Critical activity survey as a tool for gathering information from customers recorded 9.1 % each for excellent, very good and good as indicated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.7 Rating of the Effective use of Customer Complaints Survey

Customer complaints

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	7	63.6	63.6	63.6
	Very Good	4	36.4	36.4	100.0
	Total	11	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, May 2009

The use of customer complaints as an effectiveness a tool for listening recorded 63.6 % excellent and 36. 4 % for very good. This implies the use of customer complaints as a tool for listening is the most effective method employed by Kasapa Telecom Limited as stated in Table 4.7

Table 4.8 Rating of the Effective use of Benchmarking Survey

Benchmarking

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	1	9.1	33.3	33.3
	Good	1	9.1	33.3	66.7
	Average	1	9.1	33.3	100.0
	Total	3	27.3	100.0	
Missing	System	8	72.7		
Total		11	100.0		

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Benchmarking as earlier pointed out, recorded the least effectiveness as a tool for getting information from customers as indicated in Table 4.8.

Table 4.9 Rating of the Effective use of Lost and Why Survey

Lost and why survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	1	9.1	25.0	25.0
	Good	2	18.2	50.0	75.0
	Average	1	9.1	25.0	100.0
	Total	4	36.4	100.0	
Missing	System	7	63.6		
Total		11	100.0		

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Lost and why survey recorded 9.1 % excellent and 18.2 % very good as a tools for getting information from customers as contained in Table 4.9.

Table 4.10 Rating of the Effective use Employee Feedback Survey

Employee feedback

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	3	27.3	33.3	33.3
	Very Good	2	18.2	22.2	55.6
	Good	3	27.3	33.3	88.9
	Average	1	9.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	9	81.8	100.0	
Missing	System	2	18.2		
Total		11	100.0		

Source: Field Data May 2009

The use of employee feedback as a tool for listening to customers for gathering information recorded 27.3 % excellent for effectiveness, 18.2 % as very good and another 27.3 % as good.

Table 4.11 Rating of the Effective use of Customer Visits Survey

Customer visits

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	5	45.5	45.5	45.5
	Very Good	4	36.4	36.4	81.8
	Good	2	18.2	18.2	100.0
	Total	11	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, May 2009

One of the best used tools for listening to customers by Kasapa Telecom Limited is the resort to customer visits. Customer visits recorded 45.5 % excellent, 36.4 % very good and 18.2 % good in rating as a tool for gathering information from customers by the Company as indicated in Table 4.11.

Table 4.12 Rating of the Effective use of Focus Group Survey

Focus group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	1	9.1	20.0	20.0
	Good	3	27.3	60.0	80.0
	Average	1	9.1	20.0	100.0
	Total	5	45.5	100.0	
Missing	System	6	54.5		
Total		11	100.0		

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Focused group, recorded 27.3 % good and 9.1 % excellent rating in effectiveness as a tool for gathering information on customer needs, preferences and perception of the performance of Kasapa Telecom Limited.

Table 4.13 Rating of the Effective use of Observation Survey

Observation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	2	18.2	25.0	25.0
	Very Good	2	18.2	25.0	50.0
	Good	3	27.3	37.5	87.5
	Average	1	9.1	12.5	100.0
	Total	8	72.7	100.0	
Missing	System	3	27.3		
Total		11	100.0		

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Observation recorded 18.2 % each for excellent and very good and 27.3 % good in rating for effectiveness as a tool for gathering information by the Company. From the discussions, it has become clear that Kasapa uses several listening tools in gathering information about customer needs, preferences and perception. The Company used relationship survey, customer complaints and customer visits as the most effective listening tools for collecting information from its customers about their needs, preferences and perception about the quality of services, whilst dissatisfaction survey, critical activity survey, lost and why

survey and benchmarking were the least effectively used tools for gathering information on customer needs and perception of quality of service rendered by Kasapa.

4.3 Best Practices for Managing Customer Perception and Satisfaction

All best-practice companies spend more on looking for innovative ways to maintain and satisfy existing customers. They believe that customers' perceptions would be influenced by the way they are treated. The challenge is, would Kasapa succeed in making its customers feel really special and valued in order to remain loyal to the Company? Superior customer care is important for keeping the trust and loyalty of existing customers.

Kasapa Telecom Limited Ho, has deployed certain measures, like the use of suggestion boxes; filling of customer complaint forms; number of visits (repeat purchases); comment cards; personal contacts with customers; monitoring of Internet chart groups as best practices strategies for managing its customer relationship.

Among the best practice strategies available to Kasapa Limited, the most used ones were personal contacts with customers (36.8 %), suggestions box (31.6 %) and the filling of complaint forms (15.8 %), whilst the least used best practice strategy was comment cards which recorded (5.3 %) as indicated in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Most used Best Practices for Managing Customer Perception

Category Responses	Freq	% age	Cases
Suggestion Box	6	31.6	54.5
Filling of customer complaint forms	3	15.8	27.3
Number of visits(Repeat purchase)	2	10.5	18.2
Comment cards	1	5.3	9.1
Personal contacts with customers	7	36.8	63.6
Total responses	19	100.0	172.7
0 missing cases; 11 valid cases			

Source: Field Data, May 2009

With respect to the effectiveness of these best practice strategies, the use of suggestion boxes recorded 29.0 % rating in effectiveness, personal contact with customers recorded 25.8 %, whilst the filling of complaint forms recorded 22.6 % effectiveness use as a best practice strategy for managing customer perception and satisfaction as indicated in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Most Effective Best Practices for Managing Customer Perception

Category Responses	Freq	% age	Cases
Suggestion Box	9	29.0	81.8
Filling of customer complaint forms	7	22.6	63.6
Number of visits(Repeat purchase)	5	16.1	45.5
Comment cards	2	6.5	18.2
Personal contacts with customers	8	25.8	72.7
Total responses	31	100.0	281.8
0 missing cases; 11 valid cases			

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Best practice tool of listening was used by Kasapa to obtain information about customers' needs, preferences, and perceptions of performance. The organisation finds itself in an increasingly competitive Ghanaian business environment where other telecommunication companies are struggling to increase their market shares. This competitive business environment has compelled Kasapa to resort to the use of best practice strategies to manage its customer relationship. The study revealed personal contact with customers, filling of complaint forms and the filling of customer complaint forms as the most effective best practice strategies employed by the Company as indicated in Table 4.16.

4.4 Challenges Facing Kasapa Telecom Limited in the Provision of Quality Service and Products to meet Customer Satisfaction

Kasapa claims it benchmarks its performance with other competitors in the telecommunication industry in Ghana continuously in order to be abreast with the challenges facing the industry. This is a defensive strategy to ensure that they are not lagging behind their competitors in terms of technological advancement, financing, training and development of staff, customer relation management, market shares and maximisation of profits for shareholders.

Table 4.16: Challenges Facing Kasapa in the Provision of Quality Service

Category of Response	Freq	% age	Cases
Competition among players in the industry	9	31.0	81.8
Technology(types and rate of change)	7	24.1	63.6
Financing	4	13.8	36.4
Human Resource(calibre and conditions)	3	10.3	27.3
Customer relation/Satisfaction Management	6	20.7	54.5
Total responses	29	100.0	263.6
0 missing cases; 11 valid cases			

Source: Field Data, May 2009

In the opinion of staff and management of Kasapa Telecom Limited the greatest challenge facing the Company is competition among players in the telecommunication industry (31.0 %), type and rate of technological change (24.1 %) and customer relation and satisfaction management (20.7 %). Ironically Kasapa does not consider the hiring of the right calibre of staff and creating conducive conditions for them as a great challenge as it recorded only 10. 3 % as indicated in Table 4.16.

Table 4.17: Reasons for Choosing Kasapa by Customers

Category of Responses	Freq	% age	Cases
Expertise/Technical excellence	36	20.1	23.8
Value for money	76	42.5	50.3
Customer Service	40	22.3	26.5
Previous experience with Kasapa	11	6.1	7.3
Personal contact	16	8.9	10.6
Total responses	179	100.0	118.5
23 missing cases; 151 valid cases			

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Table 4.17 indicates that 'value for money' (42.5%) is the most significant reason from customer-point-of–view on the choice and use of Kasapa Telecom Limited, followed by 'customer service' which represents 22.3% of the responses and the least is 'previous experience with Kasapa' which is accounted to 6.1% of the total responses.

The views of Kasapa Customers on the use of Listening as a Tool are presented below:

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Table 4.18: The most used Listening Tools by Kasapa in the opinion of Customers

Category Responses	Freq	% age	Cases
Relationship survey	88	27.4	56.8
Dissatisfaction survey	34	10.6	21.9
Customer visit	72	22.4	46.5
Focus group	50	15.6	32.3
Observation	77	24.0	49.7
Total responses	321	100.0	207.1
19 missing cases; 155 valid cases			

Source: Field Data, May 2009

According the customers of Kasapa whose opinions were sampled, the most used tools for gathering information on customer needs, preferences and perception of performance rating were relationship survey 27.4 %, observation 24 %, and customer visits 22.4 %. The least used tool was dissatisfaction survey which recorded 10.6 %.

Table 4.19: Best Practice Strategies used by Kasapa from the perspective of
Customers

Category of Response	Freq	% age	Cases
Suggestion box	13	7.4	8.0
Filling of customer complaint forms	42	24.0	25.8
Comment cards	9	5.1	5.5
Personal contact	111	63.4	68.1
Total responses	175	100.0	107.4
11 missing cases; 163 valid cases			

Source: Field Data, May 2009

Customer complaints, customer visits, focus groups and observation are the listening tools
directly employed by Kasapa to collect information on customer satisfaction or
dissatisfaction at different stages of their service life cycle. Of the available best practice
strategies, according to customers, the use of personal contacts recorded the highest of 63.4
%, followed by the filling of customer complaints forms which recorded 24.0 % whilst the
use of comment cards recorded the least with 5.1 %. This corresponds with the finding on
staff and management on the use of best practice strategies.

Table 4.20: Preferred Communication Network among Kasapa Subscribers

Category of Responses	Freq	% age	Cases
Kasapa	127	43.5	73.8
MTN	89	30.5	51.7
Vodafone	34	11.6	19.8
Tigo	31	10.6	18.0
Zain	11	3.8	6.4

Source: Field Data, May 2009

When respondents were asked to rank their preferred telecommunication network, 43.5 % opted for Kasapa, 30.5 % preferred MTN, 11.6 % selected Vodafone, whilst the least preferred among them was Zain with 3.8 % as indicated in Table 4.20.

Table 4.21 Assessment of Service Quality and Satisfaction by Customers of Kasapa

Indicators	Frequency	Percent
I strongly agree	84	48.3
I agree	40	23.0
I disagree	2	1.1
I strongly disagree	6	3.4
I do not know	10	5.7
Total	142	81.6

Source: Field Data, May 2009

4.5 The use of information gathered through listening to customers for improving quality service and customer satisfaction

When customers of Kasapa were asked **'**How in their opinion, listening to customers can be used as a tool for improving customer satisfaction' the following is a summary of some of the responses received. The customers of Kasapa were of the opinion that they were in the best position to point out shortcomings in quality of services being provided by the Company for improvement. They also pointed out that contacting customers for feedback on the quality of service being rendered by Kasapa was an important strategy for managing customer relations and urged the management of the Company to take the necessary measures to meet customer expectation and complaints. Customers emphasesd that handling customer complains with much seriousness and seeking their view on how things should be done should not be an event, but a continuous process. They noted that Kasapa could improve service delivery by identifying customer needs and by explaining all technical problems affecting the quality of service to them. Customers contented that listening to the customer; Kasapa can directly know exactly what the customers feel and experiences.

Customer further pointed out that customer information should be treated with care and the necessary action taken on them. Customers noted that since they buy what they want; listening to them helps the Company to know what they want. Customers stated that listening can be used for identifying the major problems facing customers and for developing innovative ways to solve them. Listening in their opinion, enables customer complaints to reach management for solution to guarantee the satisfaction of customer needs and maximisation of profit.

Customers noted that listening to them can be used as a tool for improving the quality of customer service and satisfaction because the customer would be able to express himself or herself in any language to the service provider. Listening to customers is a very important tool for fighting customer complaints according to the customers. The customers contented that when they lodge complains and the Company listens attentively to them, it gives room for tackling problems to improve company-customer relations. Listening to customers would make the Company aware of the customer's needs and requirements and enable the Company to know the importance of customers' expectations and devise means to satisfy them accurately.

4.6 Summary of Findings

The research sought to find answers to following questions: How does Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho, use listening as a tool to obtain information about customer needs, preferences and perception of performance from customers? What best practices are available to Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho for managing customer perception and satisfaction? What are the challenges facing, Ho Branch of Kasapa Telecom Ltd, in providing quality services and products to meet customer satisfaction? What can Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho do with information it gathers through listening to customers to improve quality of service and customer satisfaction?

The research found out that Kasapa Telecom Limited used various listening tools to obtain information about customer needs, preferences and perceptions of their performance. The main tools, Kasapa Telecom Limited, used for listening to obtain information about customers were; relationship survey, dissatisfaction survey, critical activity survey,

customer complaints records, benchmarking, lost of customers and why survey, employee feedback, customer visits, focus groups and the use of observation.

Relationship survey, customer complaints and customer visits were the most effective listening tools used by Kasapa for collecting information from its customers about their needs, preferences and perception about the quality of service. The use of customer complaints as an effectiveness tool for listening recorded 63.6 % excellent and 36. 4 % for very good. This implies the use of customer complaints as a tool for listening, was the most effective method employed by the Company.

The research revealed that benchmarking and critical activity survey recorded 2.1 % effectiveness each, and was the least used tools for gathering information from customers by Kasapa Telecom Limited.

With respect to best practices for managing customer perception and satisfaction, Kasapa Telecom Limited Ho, deployed certain measures, like the use of suggestion boxes; filling of customer complaint forms; number of visits; comment cards and personal contacts with customers as best practice strategies for managing its customer relationship.

Among the best practice strategies available to Kasapa Limited, the most used ones were personal contacts with customers 36.8 %, suggestions box 31.6 % and the filling of complaint forms 15.8 %, whilst the least used best practice strategy was comment cards which recorded 5.3 %.

The greatest challenge facing Kasapa as a Company is competition among players in the telecommunication industry with 31.0 % rating, type and rate of technological change 24.1 % and customer relation and satisfaction management recorded 20.7 % rating. Kasapa does not consider the hiring of the right calibre of staff and creating conducive conditions for them as a great challenge as it recorded only 10. 3 %.

The most significant reason from customer-point-of–view, for choosing and using Kasapa is 'value for money' which recorded 42.5%. This was followed by 'customer service' which recorded 22.3% among customer respondents. From the available best practice strategies of Kasapa, according to customers, the use of personal contacts recorded the highest of 63.4 %, followed by the filling of customer complaints forms which recorded 24.0 % whilst the use of comment cards recorded the least with 5.1 %. This means Kasapa does not effectively use comment cards as a best practice strategy for managing its customer relations.

Customers were of the opinion that listening to them can be used as a tool for improving customer satisfaction because the success of every business depended on the ability of the Company to identify and meet the needs of customers, command the trust and loyalty of customers, improve the quality of service, train and retrain staff in order   to maximise profit for shareholders.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the conclusions and recommendations of the research. The main objective of the study is to examine best practices that can lead to improvements in the quality of service rendered and the degree of customer satisfaction obtained by Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions have been made:

1. Kasapa Telecom Limited, uses listening as a tool for obtaining information about customer needs, preferences and perceptions of their performance. The most effective listening tools that the Company uses are addressing customer complaints and making customer visits. The least used and the least effective listening tool employed by Kasapa were benchmarking and critical activity survey.

2. Kasapa employed certain best practice strategies to manage customer perception and satisfaction. The most prevalent and most effective were the use of suggestion boxes and personal contacts with customers, whilst the least used best practice strategy was comment cards.

3. The greatest challenge facing the Company, in the opinion of staff and management, is competition from other telecommunication firms in Ghana.

5.4 Recommendations

In view of the findings the researcher recommends the following:

1. Kasapa Telecom Limited, Ho, should intensify the use of benchmarking and critical activity survey as listening tools for competitive advantage in the telecommunication industry.

2. The Company should radicalize the use of comment cards as a best practice strategy for managing customer perception and satisfaction because it is cheaper, more effective and easy to administer.

3. The Company should invest in advanced technology and prioritise the attraction and retention of the right calibre of staff as a means of gaining competitive advantage in the telecommunication industry in Ghana.
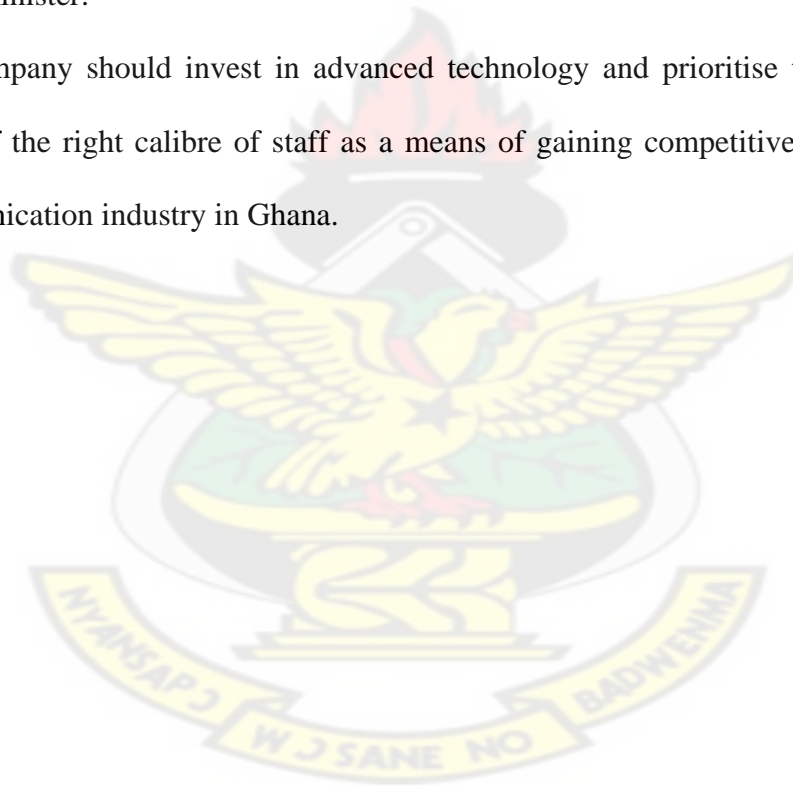
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Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)
Institute Of Distance Learning

A Questionnaire Designed For Staff/Management
Of Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho Branch

On The Topic:

Customer Satisfaction Management Through Efficient Listening Tools.

A Case Study of Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho Branch, Ho, Volta Region.

Answers To These Questions Will Be Used For Academic Purpose Only.

Please Tick ☑ Where Applicable

Questionnaire for Staff/Management of Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho

Section A: Personal Data

1. **Gender**:   Male ☐   Female ☐

2. **Age**:   Below – 20 ☐

20 – 29 ☐

30 – 39 ☐

40 – 49 ☐

50 – 59 ☐

60 and above ☐

3. **Educational status**:
   - University/Polytechnic ☐
   - Secondary/Technical ☐
   - JHS/Middle School ☐
   - Primary ☐
   - Others …………………………………. (Specify)

4. **Occupation**: ……………………………………………………………….

SECTION B:

Use of Listening Tools to Obtain Information about Customer Needs Preferences

And Perception of the Performance of Kasapa Telecom Ltd, Ho Branch

5. Which of the following listening tools for obtaining information about customer needs, preferences and perception are you familiar with?
   (a) Relationship survey ☐
   (b) Dissatisfaction survey ☐
   (c) Critical Activity Survey ☐
   (d) Customer complaints ☐
   (e) Benchmarking ☐
   (f) Lost and why survey ☐
   (g) Employee feedback ☐
   (h) Customer visits ☐
   (i) Focus group ☐
   (j) Observation ☐

6. Indicate in, five (5) of the most used listening tools in obtaining information on customer needs, preferences and perception of performance.
   (a) Relationship survey ☐
   (b) Dissatisfaction survey ☐
   (c) Critical Activity Survey ☐
   (d) Customer complaints ☐
   (e) Benchmarking ☐
   (f) Lost and why survey ☐
   (g) Employee feedback ☐
   (h) Customer visits ☐
   (i) Focus group ☐
   (j) Observation ☐

7. Indicate in, the five (5) least used listening tools in obtaining information on customer needs, preferences and perception of performance.
   (a) Relationship survey ☐
   (b) Dissatisfaction survey ☐
   (c) Critical Activity Survey ☐
   (d) Customer complaints ☐
   (e) Benchmarking ☐
   (f) Lost and why survey ☐
   (g) Employee feedback ☐
   (h) Customer visits ☐
   (i) Focus group ☐
   (j) Observation ☐

8. How would you rate the effectiveness of the five (5) most used of listening tools within your organization as indicated in Q 6?

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor
(a) Relationship survey					
(b) Dissatisfaction survey					
(c) Critical Activity Survey					
(d) Customer complains					
(e) Benchmarking					
(f) Lost and why survey					
(g) Employee feedback					
(h) Customer visits					
(i) Focus group					
(j) Observation					

SECTION C:

Best Practices for Managing Customer Perception and Satisfaction

9. Which of the following practices for managing customer perception and satisfaction of performance do you use?
   (a) Suggestion Box ☐
   (b) Filling of customer complaint forms ☐
   (c) Number of visits (Repeat purchases) ☐
   (d) Comment cards ☐
   (e) Personal contacts with customers ☐
   (f) Monitoring of Internet chart groups ☐

10. Indicate the three (3) most effective best practices for managing customer perception and satisfaction of performance that you use.
    (a) Suggestion Box ☐
    (b) Filling of customer complaint forms ☐
    (c) Number of visits (Repeat purchases) ☐
    (d) Comment cards ☐
    (e) Personal contacts with customers ☐
    (f) Monitoring of Internet chart groups ☐

11. How would you rate the effectiveness of the three (3) most used best practices for managing customer perception and satisfaction of performance within your organization?

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Poor
(a). Suggestion Box					
(b). Filling of customer complaint forms					
(c) Number of visits (Repeat purchases)					
(d). Comment cards					
(e). Personal contacts with customers					
(f). Monitoring of Internet chart groups					

SECTION D:

Challenges Facing Kasapa Tel Ltd. In The Provision of Quality Service/Product

to Meet Customer Satisfaction

12. Which of the following challenges in the telecommunications industry in Ghana would you consider as the three (3) most critical to the survival of your organization?
    (a) Competition among players in the industry ☐
    (b) Technology (types and rate of change) ☐
    (c) Political and legal environment ☐
    (d) Financing ☐
    (e) Human Resource (calibre and conditions of service) ☐
    (f) Customer Relation/Satisfaction Management ☐
    (g) Others ……………………………………….…………. (Specify)

13. State reasons for your answer
    ………………………………………………………………………………
    …………..……

14. How can the challenges you have indicated above be overcome in order to improve the quality of service to customers?
    ………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION E:

The Use of Information Gathered Through Listening To Customers for

Improving Quality Service and Customer Satisfaction

15. To what use do you put the information gathered through listening to customers?
    ………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………………..………

16. How would you rate the effectiveness of the use of information gathered through listening to customers?
    (a) Excellent ☐
    (b) Very Good ☐
    (c) Good ☐
    (d) Average ☐
    (e) Poor ☐

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17. "The use of information gathered through listening to customers is a very effective strategy for improving the quality of customer service and satisfaction".
    (a) I strongly agree ☐
    (b) I agree ☐
    (c) I disagree ☐
    (d) I strongly disagree ☐
    (e) I do not know ☐

18. In your opinion, how can listening to customers be used as a tool for improving the quality of customer service and satisfaction?
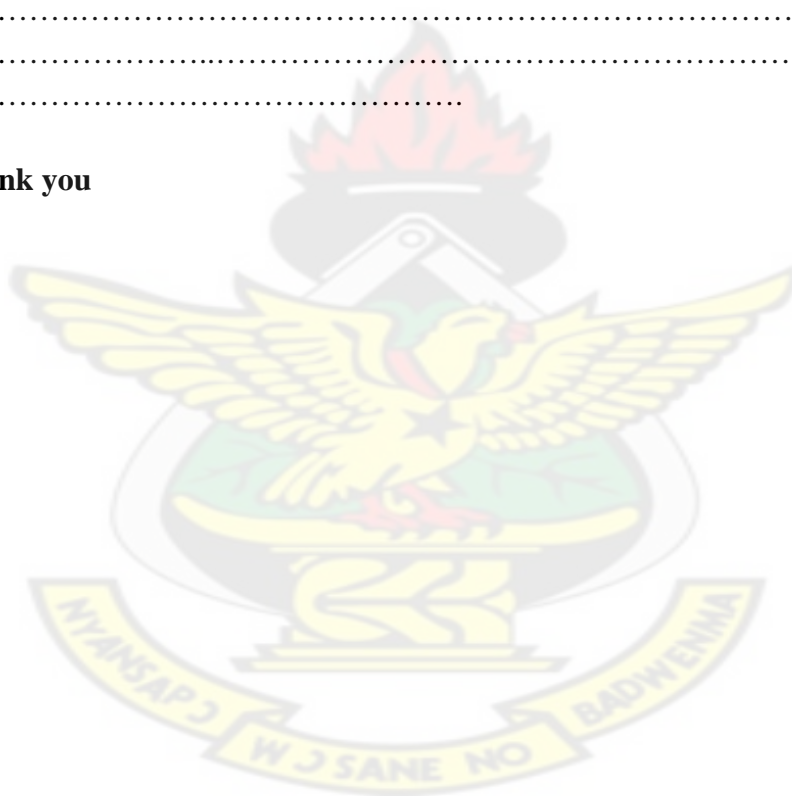   …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………………..…………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………..

    Thank you

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Customers of Kasapa Telecom Ltd

Section A: Personal Data

1. **Gender**: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. **Age**: Below – 20 ☐

   20 – 29 ☐

   30 – 39 ☐

   40 – 49 ☐

   50 – 59 ☐

   60 and above ☐

3. **Educational status**:
   - University/Polytechnic ☐
   - Secondary/Technical ☐
   - JHS/Middle School ☐
   - Primary ☐
   - Others ………………………………. (Specify)

4. **Occupation**: …………………………………………………………………….

5. Do you have a mobile phone?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

6. If yes, which of the following networks do you use?
   (a) Kasapa ☐
   (b) MTN ☐
   (c) OneTouch ☐
   (d) Tigo ☐
   (e) Zain ☐

7. Why did you choose Kasapa?
   Expertise/Technical excellence ☐
   Value for money ☐
   Customer service ☐
   Previous experience with Kasapa ☐
   Personal contact ☐
   Other
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …… (Specify)

8. Indicate in three (3) of the most used listening tools by KASAPA TEL LTD, in obtaining information from you on your perception of their performance.
   (a) Relationship survey ☐
   (b) Dissatisfaction survey ☐
   (c) Customer visits ☐
   (d) Focus group ☐
   (e) Observation ☐

9. How would you rate the effectiveness of the use of listening tools by KASAPA as mentioned in Q 8 above?

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor
(a) Relationship Survey					
(b) Dissatisfaction Survey					
(c) Customer visits					
(d) Focus Group					
(e) Observation					

10. Which of the following practices have you ever used in relation to Kasapa Tel Ltd.?
    (a) Suggestion Box ☐
    (b) Filling of customer complaint forms ☐
    (c) Comment cards ☐
    (d) Personal contacts ☐

11. Which of the following practices for managing customer perception and satisfaction is/are most used by Kasapa?
    (a) Suggestion Box ☐
    (b) Filling of customer complaint forms ☐
    (c) Comment cards ☐
    (d) Personal contacts ☐

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12. How would you rate the effectiveness of these practices by Kasapa
    (a) Excellent ☐
    (b) Very Good ☐
    (c) Good ☐
    (d) Average ☐
    (e) Poor ☐

13. On a scale of 1 – 5, please indicate your views on the overall service provided
    5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Good, 2 = Average, 1 = Poor

		5	4	3	2	1
a.	Quality of service	○	○	○	○	○
b.	Value for money	○	○	○	○	○
c.	Range of service offered	○	○	○	○	○

14. Similarly, please indicate your views on specific aspects of the service.

Aspects of Service		Excellent 5	Very Good 4	Good 3	Average 2	Poor 1	Not Applicable
a.	Speed of response to your initial enquiry	○	○	○	○	○	○
b.	Ease of getting through to the right person	○	○	○	○	○	○
c.	Understanding your needs	○	○	○	○	○	○
d.	Attitude of Kasapa staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
e.	Quality of documentation/presentations etc	○	○	○	○	○	○
f.	Keeping you informed of progress	○	○	○	○	○	○
g.	Ability to meet your technical needs	○	○	○	○	○	○
h.	Completion of the service	○	○	○	○	○	○

On time & to contract

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i.	Access to technical experts	○	○	○	○	○	○

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j.	Opening hours/access	○	○	○	○	○	○

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k.	Timeliness of invoicing	○	○	○	○	○	○

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15. "The use of information gathered through listening to customers is a very effective strategy for improving the quality of customer service and satisfaction".
    (f) I strongly agree ☐
    (g) I agree ☐
    (h) I disagree ☐
    (i) I strongly disagree ☐
    (j) I do not know ☐

16. In your opinion, how can listening to customers be used as a tool for improving the quality of customer service and satisfaction?
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………………………..

    Thank you