

QUALITATIVE MARKETING RESEARCH FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF BANK STAFF SATISFACTION

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Abstract: *We carried out this study in order to identify bank staff satisfaction and to analyse the factors that influence employee satisfaction. The aim of this qualitative research is to identify, clarify and define what is important regarding the topic under research and to offer bank employees the possibility to understand the essence of the human resources policy applied by the bank.*

Key words: *bank staff, satisfied employee, motivation, organisational climate.*

1. Introduction

Employee work satisfaction is an essential concern of organisations that desire higher employee performance for reaching company targets. Employee satisfaction may be influenced by certain factors such as motivation, organisational climate, the quality of relationships between employees, the level of skills and abilities.

This study was carried out at the following two levels:

1. The identification of bank staff
2. The analysis of factors that influence bank employee satisfaction

Both levels reveal aspects of the human resources policies applied by the bank that shall be solved or corrected and they can influence and modify the perceptions of bank employees about the human resources policies of the bank.

The aim of our qualitative research is to identify, clarify and define what is important in the topic under research and to offer bank employees the possibility to understand the essence of the human resources policy applied by the bank.

The object of qualitative marketing research is to identify bank employee expectations, satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

2. Hypotheses and Objectives of our Qualitative Marketing Research

The objectives of our qualitative marketing research are the following:

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- The identification of employee satisfaction with the benefits offered by the organisation,
- The evaluation of elementary physical conditions that influence employee satisfaction,
- The identification of employee satisfaction regarding job content,
- The evaluation of employee satisfaction within the organisational framework they work in,
- The identification of staff satisfaction with human relationships at the workplace.

The hypotheses of our research are the following:

- ◆ Half of the employees interviewed are not satisfied with the economic benefits, of which wage is the most important, but as far as social benefits are concerned, where we can list holiday tickets, travels, the possibility to acquire experiences, promotion, most of the employees are satisfied.
- ◆ The great majority of the employees of Bank X are satisfied to the maximum with the elementary physical conditions.
- ◆ The majority of the employees interviewed are satisfied with the content of their jobs.
- ◆ The satisfaction of the employees interviewed with the organisational framework they pursue their activities in are divided because problems regarding decision making, the flux of information arise that each employee perceives differently.
- ◆ The majority of employees are satisfied with human relationships at the workplace.

Satisfaction at work is a positive emotional state that results from the personal opinion of employees about work or their work climate, a state of balance that is reached by individuals when they completely satisfy certain conscious or unconscious needs or expectations.

In order to study employee satisfaction in Bank X, we used the qualitative research method represented by the focus group.

The advantages of a focus group are the following:

- it offers the possibility to generate a great quantity of information about the topic studied
- it offers the respondents the possibility to express in detail their feelings, opinions and attitudes
- the cost is relatively low
- it offers us the possibility to find out what the respondents really think
- it is an opportunity to immediately express reactions
- they may generate ideas and areas of interest that have not been initially taken into consideration
- it develops their taste for discussion

The results of a qualitative research may not be generalized to the entire target population and they only indicate points of view, the motivations of the subjects participating in our study.

3. The Research Methodology

Focus group type qualitative research implies the definition of the problem or topic that we shall discuss during our meeting. 5 persons were invited to the focus group meeting, all employees at Bank X, holding similar positions.

We established the place, date and hour of the meeting and the participants were also informed about the approximate duration of the interview. We prepared the location of the focus group, rendering it well-arranged, harmonious, full of light, with comfortable seats where the persons interviewed can be seated. The focus group guide formed of topics and questions that were addressed to the persons interviewed. Annex 1. The focus group meeting began with a presentation of the topic and addressing it by the guests.

As the participants are bank employees (employees of Bank X), we may consider that the answers received, the opinions of our guests are sufficient and may be taken into consideration for the analysis and elaboration of the Final report of our research.

4. The Results and Interpretation of the Qualitative Data Received

As a result of the discussions with the focus group participants, we may assert that almost half of the employees are not satisfied with the economic benefits offered by their employer. They consider them too small as compared to the standard of living. The participants consider that their wages are not satisfactory as these do not meet their expectations and in many cases they may not be negotiated with the employer.

On a scale from 1 to 5, the working schedule was rated with 3 because the employees considered it too long compared to the wage they received in exchange.

As for the social benefits, the bank employees are satisfied because they have the possibility to win travels or bonuses as a result of internal competitions. Moreover, discounts for holiday tickets are also offered at the centers of Bank X.

The great majority of Bank X employees are satisfied with the elementary conditions they pursue their activities in. They characterise the conditions as follows: pleasant, harmonious, warm, full of light, elegant, clean.

Employer satisfaction with the content of work is divided. The great majority considers that the harder the work and the higher the qualification needed, the greater the satisfaction.

Employer satisfaction with the organisational framework they pursue their activities in is also divided. Only some employees are satisfied with the decisions taken by their superiors, while the others consider that there are cases when certain departments within the organisation should be consulted. The way in which the employees are informed of the changes needs improvement.

As for employee satisfaction with human resources, we may assert that the majority of persons interviewed maintain good relationships with their colleagues and they consider that communication between colleagues, between employees and superiors is the key to good relationships at the workplace.

The results of our marketing research are the following:

- ◆ the employees are not satisfied with their wages and therefore they may not maximise their efforts in order to obtain maximum results;
- ◆ as compared to benefits, the work schedule is at a medium level and it could be improved;
- ◆ from the point of view of social benefits, the employees are satisfied and this may represent an incentive;
- ◆ the employees are satisfied with the conditions in which they organise their activities
- ◆ as for the organisational framework, we may not talk about satisfied employees. Here the communication system has to be improved;
- ◆ collaboration and communication is good between the employees. The employees are satisfied.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

For an efficient management, a balance has to be found as far as employee satisfaction is concerned: on the one hand, this balance should not allow for the individual or collective performances to be affected due to some dissatisfaction and, on the other hand, it should stimulate performance by finding efficient ways for improving employee satisfaction.

Line managers should be preoccupied with the identification of employee needs and motivational factors for each employee, while the company management should take into consideration all these in their incentive programs.

The introduction of a Code of conduct in which the values of the organisation are set and described for the employees is recommended. The Code of conduct and the internal regulations shall have clear provisions regarding the integration of entry-level employees into the work environment. Norms of behaviour regulating relationships with persons outside the organisation (collaborators, clients, partners etc.) will also be imposed through the Code of conduct.

In order to improve the organisational culture it is recommended: to obtain a balance between orientation towards results and orientation towards the means used to attain these results; to establish a human resources department for the Sfântu Gheorghe branch which would have individual discussions with the employees in order to identify dissatisfaction factors and to apply corrective measures for the problems signalled.

It is recommended that in the future greater attention should be paid to ensuring the conditions for a recreational space for breaks and lunch. At the same time, the diversification of recreational spaces could also be taken into account. In the future, it is recommended to also take into consideration the possibility of partial reimbursement for holidays, as well as other benefits, aspects that are cause for employee dissatisfaction.

Senior managers are advised to pay greater attention to the feedback they should provide to their employees and to enhancing professional comfort at the workplace.

Taking into consideration the process of periodical analysis and redesigning of certain positions so that the work volume and the nature of tasks should reach an acceptable level is another way to improve the working system of the bank. Job rotation would eliminate the continuous performance of certain tasks, encouraging the professional development of employees and the prevention of activity interruptions. Therefore, when an employee leaves the unit, there would be at least one other person to replace him/her and to perform the tasks related to the vacant job.

In order to improve communication and trust in superior managers, decreasing the hierarchical distance through the organisation of informal events/actions within the framework of which open communication is encouraged could also be taken into account.

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