

**ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF CUSTOMER  
SERVICE PROVIDED AT THE MAFIKENG POST  
OFFICE.**

**BY**

**MARIA MATSHIDISO MOSALA**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION TO THE GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP THE IN FACULTY  
OF COMMERCE AND ADMINISTRATION AT THE NORTH WEST  
UNIVERSITY: MAFIKENG CAMPUS.

**SUPERVISOR : PROF VAN RENSBERG**

**DATE : JUNE 2006**

615453169  
11840893X



060001033D

North-West University  
Mafikeng Campus Library

<b>LIBRARY</b> <b>MAFIKENG CAMPUS</b>
Call No.: TH 658.812 2007-04-12 mos
Acc. No.: 07/40001
<b>NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY</b>

## **DECLARATION**

I, Maria Matshidiso Mosala declare that, the mini-dissertation for Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree with North West University has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University, this is my own work in design and execution, that all material contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

**Maria Matshidiso Mosala**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my special and sincere thanks to the following people, from whose advice and criticism I have benefited.

I first wish to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Van Rensberg for his guidance and unlimited patience throughout the years that I worked on this challenging research.

A special dedication to the further of my two sons, Motheo Norman Mokgatlhe for his patience, continuous support and encouragement through all my studies. He would stay with me, at night keeping himself busy watching television, while I was busy with my research. Not only did he provide moral support he also encouraged me when I felt wedy and thought of dropping the research. I would also like to thank my two sons Omphile and Letlhogonolo, my sisters' children Remofilwe, Kamogelo, Kagiso, Sello and Oduetse for tolerating me when I took out the stress on them as they would oblige to my every request.

My indebtedness also goes to a very special woman, my mother for taking care of my children and providing me with food and tea while I was busy with research. May I also express my special thanks to my deceased family members, Father, Jack Mosala, grandmother Mankgakga Lizzy Seabelo two brothers Gabriel and Tebogo Mosala for raising and nurturing me in order to attain this success.

Also to be thanked are my siblings Mapula, Masego, Diketso Mompoti, Kopano and Toki Mosala. Above all, I wish to thank my heavenly Father for making everything possible for the successful completion of this research project and lastly thanks to my typist Ermet Phala who has sacrifices his weekends to help me with this research.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study set to investigate customer care in the Mafikeng Post Office. This was achieved through the following.

Highlighting any inadequacy of customer care process at Mafikeng Post Office, determining if the current customer care tools utilised are optimal or not, determining the extent at which such tools are utilised and determining where accountability lies for customer care within the organisation.

The measuring instruments utilised was a questionnaire because of the descriptive nature of the study. The questionnaire was in a structured format. 100 respondents participated in filling in the questionnaires. The findings indicated that most respondents are not satisfied with the service provided with only a few who are happy about certain elements of the questionnaire. The methodology adapted in this case was that of survey where a questionnaire was administered. The chapter which? further gave the statement of the problem and the objective of the study.

In chapter two, the nature and scope of customer service was outlined from the literature consulted. The chapter defined terms like service, customer service and customer. The chapter also focused on the important things that customers loves and loathe, approaches to handling a customer especially an unhappy customer. The literature indicates that there is a need for good customer service. Customer service also requires that all the key players should get involved in.

Chapter three presented research problems and posing some research questions. The questionnaire was the key instrument in the collection of data for the study.

Chapter four presented the research design which incorporates the sampling design. The researchers recommends that staff need to be trained on the following: how to be friendly to customers and greet them with a smile. Greet them by name if possible as it will impress the customer to notice that staff members know them. To be polite and pleasant

when talking to clients. To be trained on product knowledge as it improves competency and confidence of client in a person.

Adequate training of staff is important as it ensures provision of quality service to the clients, thus reducing complaints. Even though the results of the study were not satisfactory, it is important for the management of the organisation to concentrate on those unhappy clients.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>No.</b>	<b>Heading</b>	<b>Pages</b>
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Problem Statement	2
1.3	Objectives of the Study	3
1.3.1	Scope of the Study	3
1.4	Importance of the study	4
1.5	Organisation of the study	5

### **Chapter two**

#### **Literature review and theoretical foundation**

2.1	Introduction	6
2.2	Definition of service	6
2.2.1	Definitions of customer service	7
2.2.2	Definition of customer	8
2.3	What customer loves	9
2.4	What customer loathe	10
2.6	Mission and vision of the Post Office	15
2.7	Types of services provided by Mafikeng Post Office	16
2.7.1	Counter service	17
2.7.2	Securemail	17
2.7.3	Freight and courier services	17
2.7.4	Philatelic services	17
2.7.5	Post network	18
2.7.6	Address provision	18
2.7.7	Postbak	18
2.8	Core function of the Post Office	18
2.9	Current management tools	19
2.10	The big five strategic plan	20

2.11	Conclusion	22
------	------------	----

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Defining the problem and research questions**

3.1	Introduction	23
3.2	Rationale to the problem	23
3.3	Secondary problem	25
3.4	Management questions	25
3.5	Conclusion	25

### **Chapter 4**

#### **Research design and analysis**

4.1	Introduction	27
4.2	Data analysis	28
4.3	Sampling	28
4.4	Data collection methods	28
4.4.1	Documentary methods	29
4.4.2	Official documentary reports	29
4.4.3	Questionnaires	29
4.4.3.1	Advantages of a questionnaire	29
4.4.3.2	Disadvantages of questionnaires	30
4.4.4	Validity	30
4.4.5	Reliability	30
4.5	Statistical analysis	31
5.	Conclusion	32

## **Chapter 5**

### **Results and interpretation**

5.1	Introduction	33
5.2	Presentation f results	33
5.3	Survey questions	33
5.4	Respondents skills levels	34
5.5	Conclusion	42

## **Chapter 6**

### **Discussion, Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion**

6.1	Introduction	43
6.2	Discussion	43
6.3	Implication of the results	45
6.4	Recommendations	46
6.3.1	Customer care	46
6.3.2	Skills level of employees	47
6.3.3	Production knowledge of tellers	47
6.3.4	Waiting time in queue	47
6.3.5	Channel to report poor service	48
6.3.6	Problem solving by management	48
6.3.7	Recommendation of Mafikeng Post Office to friends	48
6.3.8	Knowledge on crime buster	49
6.5	Conclusion	49
7	Bibliography	50



## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study on customer services rendered in the Mafikeng Post Office in the North West Province. It commences with the background to the study, followed by the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research methods significance of the study, scope of the study and organization of the study.

The South African Post Office, an independent public company since 1 October 1991, with the state as a sole shareholder, is a prime mover of written and published information in South Africa. It is committed to providing an efficient, affordable communication service to all the people of South Africa. This not an easy task considering that there are some 40 million people in South Africa, scattered geographically across an area of more than 1, 2 million square kilometers. The Post Office, a customer driven organization, with assets of some R 500, 00 million and cover 2 500 outlets countrywide, is geared to meet the postal needs of the entire community.

The Post Office has incurred losses since its corporation and these were traditionally funded through a subsidiary. In an effort to curb these losses, a strategic management partner was sort to re-engineer the Post Office into a profit making operation that contributes positively to the treasury. A strategic management partner was appointed with effect from September 1999. To fund losses that the company endured for year ending 31 March 2001, the Post Office used Post Bank's funds amounting to R 975 million by releasing the investments and using the funds for 113 operating express and capital investment programme.

The current chief executive Officer, Mr Maada Monyatse was appointed in August 2000. Soon after his appointment he realized that the strategic management partner would not achieve the desired objectives, this led to the cancellation of the contract by mutual agreement.

During this period the Post Office suffered a loss of R 1 billion before subsidiary compared to a projected loss of R 224 million. One of the challenges, probably the biggest facing the Post Office today, is to turn itself around from a loss making company to a profit making one. It had to transform itself so that it is in a position that it to address the challenges of the changing environment in which it operates. It is for this reason that a restructuring body know as future forum was formed, it is a consultative forum established to oversee all matters related to restructuring within the Post Office. It is a joint forum made up of Post Office management, communication workers unions and the national productivity institute.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Mafikeng Post Office is faced with numerous problems with regard to postal crime, introduction of one queue system and inadequate management training. The problem has adversely led to the deteriorating of service rendered at the Post Office. The Post Office is a business where the customer entrusts their valuables to it, be it in the form of letters and parcels that need to be moved from one point to the other or in the form of money saved in various Post Banks accounts.

The Post Office is committed to fight Postal crime and will continue to do so, using every means at its disposal. According to Xpress: 2003, it as reported that a client bought a postal order to send to Drs Du Busson and Partners in Pretoria. She complained that her letter and postal order had not reached its destination. The teller who paid out the postal order admitted that a colleague at Evander Post Office had forwarded the letter and postal order to Standerton. Both these employees were dismissed and the case was handed to the Police.

It was also reported that a former Post Office employee, who allegedly offered R 10, 000's worth of stolen revenue stamps to an undercover policeman at 50 per cent discount, was arrested in Pretoria. The Police found stamps worth R 12, 000 at the man's house.

This study is aimed at examining the problem in detail and to possibly identify the factors responsible for long queues and poor performance of workers and to try and find potential solutions especially from a management perspective. The researcher's intention is to explore a wide variety of areas which related to this aspect and to investigate the subject matter further.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- The specific objectives that guide the study in order to achieve, are as follows:
- To analyze customer service delivery and the impact of these services to the customers of Mafikeng Post Office.
- To make recommendations on how to improve customer service standards.
- To determine how the Post Office can curb postal crime.
- To determine how postal crime can affect service delivery at the Post Office.
- To determine how lack of on job training to employees contributes to poor performance on service delivery.
- To examine whether human behavior and customer service are inseparable and form part of delivery process.
- To explore the relationship between customer and service provider.
- To find out the management tools used.
- To determine the financial cost of the problem to the Post Office.
- To determine recommendations for improvement of service delivery.

### **1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study covers customer service of the Mafikeng Post Office but can be extrapolated to other Post Offices across South Africa. The Post office affects the lives of residents in many ways in that they provide services like social grant payments, courier services, post bank, telegraphic money order transfer, secure mail services and accounts can be paid at the Post Office. Since current and future Post Offices will be called upon to render increasingly extensive services to the citizens who control and finance their operations, one approach of method of study is to accept the Post Office as an institution with service obligations.

This is called service test. In this instance, Post Offices are defined as agencies of development of rural and urban areas through programmes of service delivery.

The Post Office is the company with the largest infrastructure in the country and it should be used to serve the community at large, for instance, pension payouts. It can render services that bring dignity to communities and it can also offer quality services to all government customers. The vision for it is to be leading provider of postal and related services in Africa and its retail infrastructure illustrates the challenges and ability to become a truly professional entity (Xpress, 2003 : 2)

The Post Office is an extraordinary organization in the sense of its depth of penetration into the South African Society. It has always been visible. It is still hugely important and quite central to most communities. Employees who render an excellent service to the community are the ones the community sees as the Post Office. It is important for the Post Office to keep abreast of the developments such as the complexity of the marketplace in which it operates and the competitive elements, both in terms of traditional mail and electronic communication. (Xpress 2003: 2). The Post Office employs more than 20 000 people and this demonstrates the important role it plays in South Africa.

#### **1.4 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The collapsing and deteriorating delivery performance of the Post Office in the North West Province and across South Africa, as well as the increasing postal crime, and also inadequate management capabilities has triggered a need for vigorous research as an endeavor to contribute to solving the problems mentioned.

Although this study is limited to the Mafikeng Post Office in the North West Province, it is relevant to all other Post Offices in the province and across South Africa and thereby contributes to a developing base of information on the body of literature and customer service.

## **1.5 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is organised in the following manner. Chapter 1 contain the orientation. This is where the readers are given an orientation of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives; the Scope of the study, the methodology is also presented in this chapter. Chapter 3 present the literature review. This is where some terms will be defined, a theoretical foundation provided and various literature consulted presented. Chapter 3 will the define the primary and secondary problems and posing some research questions. Chapter 4 will present research design which incorporate the sampling design, data collection procedure, data collection instruments, data collection techniques and the summary.

Chapter 5 will present the analysis and interpretation of the results. This is where the data collected will be analyzed from other sources and interpreted in order to achieve the aim of study. Chapter 6 will present recommendations of the study and a summary of the findings.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will focus on the readings, interpretations and evaluation of a selected literature, carried with a view to finding out in written materials any information on customer service. The topic under review seeks to assess the customer service provided by employees at the Mafikeng Post Office. Key drivers to ensure that customers are retained and concepts with similar behaviors like problem encountered in rendering good service from a base.

According to Learners Workbook (2001: 2), customer service is an area where one is able to become different from competitors, become smarter, more effective and to ensure that the lifelong memories and lifelong relationships with customer are instilled. Retaining customers is of extreme importance to the Post Office. As it costs five times more to bring in a new customer than to retain an existing one. The cost of losing a customer is large and has a major implication on the long term profitability of a business.

#### **2.2 DEFINITION OF SERVICE**

The explanation of the terms service and customer service is important for the purpose of the study and more importantly to underline how effective customer service should be implemented to visualize its objectives.

**SERVICE:** - All the activities which create a bond between organisations and their customer (Blem, 1995: 6).

The following types of service are listed by Blem, (1995 : 6) :

- **REPAIR IT SERVICE**

Customers have come to expect and demand that a company's obligation to guarantee the performance of a product should extend further than the date of delivery. Numerous research studies have shown that the average customer who is happy with a product tells

at least three people of his satisfaction. The average customer who has a problem with an organization of product will tell nine or ten people about it. Service is an intrinsic part of the product.

- **GUARANTEE IT SERVICES**

These relate to the product itself. A poor design or a badly manufactured product leads to unhappy customers.

- **HELP ME BUY IT SERVICE**

How a company chooses and monitors sales staff, intermediaries or distributors must convey a positive attitude to the customer.

- **PROTECT ME SERVICES**

A service that covers after sales activities such as all warranties, complaint handling and overall responsiveness to customer problems.

- **ADDING VALUE SERVICES**

It is a service that provides the feeling of politeness and caring when delivered in a person to person context. An airline stewardess who notices that you are feeling a bit tired and brings you a rug, adds intangible value to the delivery of good service. The environment can be seen as the foundation upon which the customer strategy should be built, in order to be effective with respect to customer service. It is important that we understand the environment within which we operate. Sensitivity to customers can only be effectively achieved through being able to be sensitive to one's environment.

### **2.2.1 DEFINITIONS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE**

According to Learners Workbook (2001; 3), customer service is characterized by three main criteria, Which are:

- **CUSTOMER SERVICES ARE INTANGIBLE**

Unlike a physical product, one cannot physically touch or see a service.

- **CUSTOMER SERVICES ARE HETEROGENEOUS**

It is very difficult to copy or redo each service delivery. Clients and employees are different and the service delivery will vary from each transaction.

- **CUSTOMER SERVICES ARE INSEPARABLE**

In that one cannot divorce it from a person and hence from human behavior.

Jude (1998: 6) states that customer service is all about expectations, for example, when me and my customer get face to face or phone to phone or interact, the customer has expectations about the encounter. How a person measures up relative to those expectations will determine whether the service is perceived as good or bad.

Bond and Fink (2001; 111) explain customer service as an orientation, not an event. A passion for customer service must start up at the top of the organization and be communicated to every employee. A commitment to customer service is one of the essential steps that must be taken if the organization wants to be successful in running their business effectively.

### **2.2.2. DEFINITION OF CUSTOMER**

- **A CUSTOMER IS A MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN A WORK PLACE.**

The customer comes first and is more important than the boss.

Organizations owe customers undivided attention all 100% of it.

- **A CUSTOMER IS A PERSON WHO IS NOT AN INTERRUPTION.**

He cannot interrupt the job, for the simple reason, the customer is the job.

The only reason people have a job is to service customers.

The only reason the company is in existence is for the purpose of serving customers.



- **A CUSTOMER IS A FRIEND, NOT AN ENEMY.**

Customers do not usually come to an organization with the idea that they want to beat a service provider to death, physically abuse him or give him a hard time. They don't come armed with assault, rifles and hand grenades.

If a service provider adopts an attitude of the "customer is the enemy" a customer will probably behave that way. Service providers should treat customers with the cordiality that they reserve for their friends and watch the change in customers.

They suddenly become nice to people. All in all, customers are the "life blood" of almost every organization, large and small.

- **CUSTOMERS PAY THE SALARIES**

Customers are far more important than the boss. They must be served politely, patiently and courteously. They must be greeted with a smile and with a friendly and open manner. Every time a service provider is face to face with a customer he/she is on the trial and at that moment, the customer is both judge and jury and ultimate power.

For an organisation to become totally and positively customer driven, for an organisation to have a successfully customer service programme that all the staff members buy into, it has to be driven top down, the managing director must not only preach good customer care but practice it, and be seen to practice it at all times (Jude, 1998: 73)

### **2.3 WHAT CUSTOMERS LOVE**

If the Post Office can duplicate the way they treat their customers then it can become service legends in their lifetime.

Jude (1998: 90-103) explains the twelve circumstances that a customer love.

- **COURTESY**

One of the most important circumstances that the customer loves is good courtesy. The sort of courtesy that shows respect for customers. Courtesy is shown in the time given to a customer. Greet a customer, speak to a customer before demanding to know what they wanted. Courtesy is about caring and about showing genuine interest to customers.

- **CLEAN COMFORTABLE SURROUNDINGS**

Customers should not be expected to climb over boxes, step between the debris and get their clothes soiled just for the privilege of doing business with the organization. Not only should the environment be clean and comfortable, but it should be safe as well, free from toxic fumes, broken glass and any other potential hazards that could cause people harm. Organizations need to treat their customers accordingly, and keep them comfortable, clean and safe.

- **BEING PAMPERED AND SPOILED**

Customers must be pampered and spoiled. Customers love to be looked after and should enjoy having attention lavished on them, so let the organizations do exactly that to their customers.

## **2.4 WHAT CUSTOMERS LOATHE**

According to Jude (1998: 105-117), there are twelve circumstances that really turn customers off. These could be called the cardinal sins of the service world.

- **ITS NOT MY JOB**

When a customer walks into a place of business and hears one of those statements, he/she wants to conclude the relationship right there and then. If everyone in the company has an attitude of 'it's not my job' then the whole company will probably slide gently into loss, with everyone losing their jobs in the process.

The company has to be proactive with their customers and make such that anything that the customer needs, becomes their job, until they can personally pass the customer on to another person better equipped to handle that area.

- **BROKEN PROMISES**

When a customer is promised one thing, and then delivered another, they are bound to be unhappy. Unreturned phone calls also fall under broken promises.

- **SMOKING, EATING CHEWING GUM AND PRIVATE PHONE CALLS**  
**EATING**

When a customer walks into a place of business and the whole place is stinking of vinegar that is a big turn off. It is utterly unprofessional to be eating in the same area where customers are attended. When it is time to eat, go to the back of the store or out of the store to do so.

- SMOKING**

It is simply unacceptable to meet with a customer while smoking. More and more people are passionately anti-smoking. Even people who do not smoke find this offensive. It shows arrogance towards the customer. The smell of stale smoke is not pleasant, so customers should not be forced to endure it.

- PRIVATE PHONE CALLS**

Private phone calls should be terminated immediately when a customer walks in. This is another aspect that customers hate, standing, waiting, while a salesperson is busy with a private conversation.

- **WHEN A JOB IS NOT DONE PROPERLY**

Customers' request must be attended to efficiently and properly. If more time is needed, customers must be told upfront.

- **QUEU**

Customers hate queues and being kept waiting. If customers have to queue for more than three minutes, then there is something wrong with the company. Queue management is important to monitor queue length.

- **PREJUDICE**

Every customer in business deserves exactly the same treatment that is first class treatment. Male or female, black or white, pretty or ugly. As potential customers they all have the right to 100% good customer service. The future of this country depends on all people working together, shoulder to shoulder, to build a better future for everyone.

- **UNTIDINESS**

The organization must ensure that the working area looks smart, neat and inviting. Dirty ashtrays on counters, crumpled papers all over the place and empty cold drink cans should be avoided. If the place looks sloppy, then that service will most probably also match the place. The opposite is also true, if the place looks spick and span, customers can expect to find the service to match.

Service providers should at all times look like the price and the value of the products and services that they are selling. When they look smart, the customer expect to good service.

- **LACK OF PUNCTUALITY**

An appointment for 2 pm means 2 pm and not 2:05. punctuality is important for good customer service.

- **EXCUSES**

Don't agonise, rather provide solutions. It does not matter who messed up. What counts is what can be done to correct the problem. Accept the responsibility without

hiding behind others. Simply apologise and start to solutionise. Work towards a solution driven conclusion, rather than a blaming session.

- **RED TAPE**

Systems have to be streamlined to make sure that customers can deal with them easily without embarrassment. Situation where the system demands that a customer queue at one counter to do one thing then at another for something else should be avoided. Red tape upsets customers, it does not welcome them.

- **LIES**

Customers demand and have the right to demand honesty and integrity. Tell the truth at all times.

- **ARGUMENTS AND RUDENESS**

It is importance at all times to maintain an attitude of respect and equality. There is never an excuse for talking down to customers and patronising them.

- **HANDLING UNHAPPY CUSTOMERS**

According to Jude (1998 : 119 - 120), an unhappy customer is still hanging there looking for a solution that will allow a win-win situation. While clearly not angry yet, the unhappy customer has the potential of going either way. Treated well, the Post Office can win him or her back reasonably easy. The secret to handling unhappy customers is to try to catch them before they become irritated and in this way avoid problems.

- **LISTEN TO WHAT THE CUSTOMER IS SAYING**

When coming in contact with an unhappy customer, handle the person with care, show interest and empathy.

When customers feel that they are being understood and being taken seriously the problem seems so much smaller. All the listening skills must be used to ensure that the customer gets the feeling that they are being listened to. Listen to facts not

feelings, when customers are unhappy, they often tend to use more emotional language and this often hides the real message. Service providers have to sift through the emotional camouflage to find the actual, factual parts of the message. (Jude, 1998 : 120) .

Remain quiet and listen attentively to all the customer has to say and acknowledge his/her frustration. Do not act defensively, don't interrupt. By letting an unhappy customer talking, more facts will be grasps & (Griffin 1997 : 198).

- **APOLOGISE**

If a customer is unhappy, for whatever reason, then apologise. It does not matter whose fault it was, what matters is that the customer is not happy. If the customer feels that a service provider was at fault, it is up to him to correct a problem, and not to prove a customer wrong. Jude (1998:121) states that any apology should be sincere. Even if the organization is completely in the right, the customer has still suffered some inconvenience and therefore some frustration. Employees should always endeavor to avoid the customers losing if they want to retain them (Griffin,1997:95).

- **TAKE NOTES**

Any small mistake may turn an unhappy customer into an irritated customer. The easiest way to avoid making mistake is by taking notes. Make sure that the problem is defined and that all the details are correct. When face to face with the customer and if they see notes taken it gives the impression that an employee really is serious about the problem (Jude 1998: 122). Paraphrase back to the customer his/her description of the problem. The perception of the problem must match the customers, if they are ultimately to be satisfied. Let the customer know the information is being recorded in writing. (Griffin 1997: 198).

- **RESTATE THE SITUATION**

To avoid an unhappy customer turning into an hate customer, ensure the awareness of the situation and the implications. The easiest way of doing this is by restating the

situation, the customer will either agree or tell where you have gone wrong. (Jude, 1998: 122).

- **ASK FOR SUGGESTION**

Ask customers what they would like to happen in order to resolve a problem, they will often come up with a reasonable suggestion that can be met, if the suggestion is in line with what an employee is able to do, then it is best to give the customer what he/she wants. By meeting the customer's demands, an employee is smoothing over any ill feeling that may have been created, and show the customer that he/she really is on their side.

The customer feels satisfied, and the chances of resuming a good working relationship are high (Jude, 1998: 123)

Griffin (1997:199) states that most customers will be far. They will probably not be asking for a refund or replacement simply to get your merchandise for free. If the customer leaves you unhappy with the outcome, the chance of winning future sales from the person are slim.

- **GET AGREEMENT**

Once it has been decided to go along with the customer's suggestion, it is important to make sure that all parties are in agreement with the decision. This is not the time for any misunderstandings, so there should be customer's consensus that the solution is fully in line with their expectations (Jude, 1998:123).

## **2.6 MISSION AND VISION OF THE POST OFFICE**

According to Blem (1995-67), the mission statement should spell out the target market, the type of service offered to, that market and the distinctive means of approach which the company will use.

As every good business across the globe knows its success depends upon its customer satisfaction.

Creating a customer driven culture is the only way to ensure survival, and the Post Office continues to invest in creating employee awareness of how to deal with customers.

### **THE POST OFFICE MISSION IS:**

“We will connect people through the distribution of information, goods and financial services, building on our strength as a provider of postal services and by embracing chance, technology and innovation, thus ensuring that we create shareholder value and deliver high level of customer, employees and community satisfaction”.

### **THREE SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES THAT HAVE BEEN SET WHICH UNDERWRITE THIS MISSION ARE TO:**

- Improve delivery performance.
- Curb postal crime
- Reach financial break- even point as soon as possible.

The vision of the Post Office is “to be the leading provider of postal and related service in Africa. (Green Paper on Postal Policy (1997: 4).

### **2.7 TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE MAFIKENG POST OFFICE**

In terms of the Post Office not in source Act, 1958 the post office enjoys exclusive rights and privileges including a monopoly on letter mail up to 1 kg, it also state the following services. The post office handles an average of six million letters a day 70% of which are prepaid mass - mailed letters sent out by companies using franking machines. All franking machine systems in operation operates on remote meter settings. The system enables the user to frank, date and seal the article, print a return address and count the items at the same time as it takes to stamp, thus solving time and money. The exact postage due can be franked onto an envelope or label, as opposed to affix a number of postage stamps to make up the postage due. Machine inspections are done at the premises from time to time.

#### **2.7.1 COUNTER SERVICE**

In additional to letter mail and parcel services, the Post Office offers a range other mail services, such as courier services, agency services such as pension payments and the collection of third party payments on behalf of organizations such as Telkom, the SABC



and local governments. It also offers savings and money transfer service through the Postbank.

### **SECUREMAIL**

Securemail is a business unit handling security and sensitive items such as credit cards. It was established with the full co-operation of major financial institutions to minimize postal theft and fraud. Since its inception, there has been a significant decrease in credit card theft. Over 99% of cards handled are now successfully delivery.

### **2.7.2 FREIGHT AND COURIER SERVICES**

The courier and Freight Group (Pty) Ltd of the South African Post Office became the biggest distribution company in Southern Africa when it took over the customer base of Fast Forward.

Services available are:

- Parcel distribution, express and courier services
- Mini container services
- Parcel and mini container services to neighboring countries
- Document exchange
- Speed services couriers.

### **2.7.2 PHILATELIC SERVICES**

The sale of postage stamps is traditionally associated with the post office. Stamps do not only play an important role in the daily postal delivery system, but also serve the interest of many stamp collectors and philatelists by keeping pace with historic events and parading the country's culture and diverse artistic splendors.

### **2.7.3 POSTAL NETWORK**

The Post Office uses road transport on most of the major routes in the country for the dispatch of domestic mail. Sea mail is carried to all parts of the world as and when ships

are available. The international air and surface parcel service is available to some 220 countries.

#### **2.7.4 ADDRESS PROVISION**

The Post Office Office is committed to provide every household in South Africa with a postal address. By September 2000, mail was delivered to 8.3 million postal addresses. This included delivery to more than 4.2 million street addresses, more than 4.1 million post box addresses and to some 17 000 private bags.

#### **2.7.7 POSTBANK**

Postbank is aiming at remaining a profitable entity within the Post Office infrastructure. It services its target market through a carefully defined and expanded mix of innovative and traditional products, using cost effective distribution channels, including the Post Office network. New legislation provides for the separation of Postbank from the Post Office to position itself to respond to the needs of the poor who do not have access to the current banking system.

Postbank is in the process of refining and expanding its product range to cater for the needs of the "unbaked" part of the South African population. This will include loan facilities and other basic banking products. As part of the restructuring process, of being corporative to ensure that it plays a greater role in development activities.

These would include addressing the financial service needs of low-income communities and improving access to credit for small business.

#### **2.8 CORE FUNCTION OF THE POST OFFICE**

In an effort to ensure a more accessible, equitable, efficient and effective postal service. Government embarked on a process of reforming postal service by launching the Green Paper on Postal Policy on July 1997. It is envisaged that the process will transform the postal service into a vital and dynamic component of the country's communication infrastructure and make it a valuable national asset. In addition to its letter mail and parcel service, which account for 85% of its revenue.

The Post Office also provides the following functions

- Pension
- Collecting payments for Telkom, SABC TV Licence, local authorities, electricity accounts
- Selling scratch cards
- Postbank
- Money transfer service
- COD parcels
- Money orders
- Philately services couriers
- Fastmail
- Parcel plus
- Information advertisement mail
- Business reply service

## **2.9 CURRENT MANAGEMENT TOOLS**

The Post Office has developed a code of conduct for all employees. The objectives of the implementation of the code of conduct was not only to make the company more profitable, but also to make it a much more professional business entity.

Express (2003 : 4) Customers are turning increasingly to electronic forms of communication at the expenses of the more traditional and slower post. However the postal system has some unique features with which electronic forms of communication cannot (Coupete Xpress 2003:5).

While some companies use other communication methods to raise awareness and increase sales, the vastness of the country and the importance of reaching urban and rural consumers limit their support. The Post Office has one of the most comprehensive road transport, mail delivery and retail network in the country. Mail is posted, processed, transported and delivered daily to just about every city, town and settlement in South Africa (Xpress, 2003 : 5).

With regard to postal crime, employees caught in the act of crime, do not only face a disciplinary hearing, but also possible dismissal. The company reports all forms of theft and fraud to the South African Police Services, and the country's courts considered all postal offenses in a serious light. The Post has also introduced a crimebuster hotline where all kinds of fraud can be reported. (Xpress, 2002 : 1).

The Post Office is serious about transforming itself into a truly world class organization. Part of what world class companies are doing across the world is to involve employees in the running of their organisation. In keeping with his promise, to involve all Post Office employees in the running of the company, the chief executive officer Maada Manyatse has requested the strategic planning division to conduct an employees satisfaction survey. The main objective of the survey is to ensure the involvement of the employees in the management of the Post Office by getting their views on how they perceive the company to be managed and in what areas they feel management should bring about change (Xpress, 2002 : 1).

## **2.10 THE BIG FIVE STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES**

- **Achieving Operational Excellence**

It is being planned to accelerate the automation of computer operations to enhance effectiveness and efficiencies. "We will reengineer reprocess to improve productivity, implement change management procedures and enhance the integration between Business continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning" (2001 : 6). Existing technology based security and crime prevention system will also be promoted and improve.

- **SAVING MONEY**

Implementation of cost recovery systems and a time - recording system to analyse the effectiveness of time against services is being considered. Economics of scale" are negotiated in procurement process. Technology is also replacing expensive contractors with full time, skilled employees.

- **GROWING CUSTOMER BASE**

By offering products and services that meet the changing needs and expectations of the customers. To get more customers, technology is actively pursuing genuine partnership with the business. Technology has initiated a research programme to identify new technology and trends.

This helps the business to plan new products and services. Technology provides professional support and advisory service to the business, and in the process they gain new clients.

- **CREATING FUTURE WEALTH**

To be the leading provider of postal and related services in Africa. This will be achieved by developing and implementing high return' customer focused business solutions that increase the market share in defined markets, and support achievement of the Post Office's vision and mission. Technology's job is not merely getting more business from the Post Office itself. If the Post Office is ready for a new business venture, say, paying postbox rental over the Internet, using a card, technology must be ready for it.

- **DEVELOPING PEOPLE**

Technology has already made a number of changes to develop. Changes to structure ensure clear lines of responsibilities. Technology has come a long way in a year in reducing dependency on contractors.

In just a year the, the number of contractors has been reduced by 50% permanent staff appointed to replace them. Contractors are used only, where absolutely necessary and where their skills can be transferred to permanent staff. Roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined so that each person knows exactly what he is responsible for.

## **2.10 FINANCIAL COST ENCOUNTERED BY THE POST OFFICE**

The money the Post Office lost in the 2001 / 2 financial year owing to theft and fraud is a stunning R 16 million. This amount was determined from 1604 reported cases but still there are cases that were not reported. (Xpress, 2003 : 4). The high incidence of fraud at Post bank, banking in general and cheque fraud was further examined by Security and Investigation Services. The findings were given to the various business units to implement corrective action.

## **2.11. CONCLUSION**

From this literature review, the following conclusion can be made.

Good customer service is very important in order for the company to be successful.

Customers are the most important people in the work life and should be treated like royalty.

Employees should enjoy what they are doing because if they are not enjoying themselves, customers will also not enjoy their encounter with them. Behavior breeds behavior. It is important that the job is done right first time, every time customers should not be forced to come back two or three times to get things done. The next chapter focuses on problem definition and research questions.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the reader to the problem statement of the research. The employee, the customer and the service system are critically analysed with the objective of identifying problem areas in the process and putting in place controls to eliminate problem areas from occurring

The problem as perceived by customers within the company? The topic reads thus "analysis of customer service at Mafikeng Post Office. The Post Office has the obligation to serve its customers whether they have different perceptions about service or not. The Post Office must understand its customers. By being friendly to the customers, treating them with dignity and respect can have one result, the customer will enjoy doing business with the Post Office. A satisfied customer is also an advertisement for the organization causes nothing.

#### **3.2 RATIONALE TO THE PROBLEM**

The research seeks reasons why customers are leaving the Mafikeng Post Office. No company will prefer to lose its clients. Post Office clients are perceived to be unhappy with the service delivery they get from the Mafikeng Post Office. Skilled, adaptive and innovative human resource have become the single most important ingredient for successful customer satisfaction. In the service industry the primary requirements for increasing customers revolve around people, that is providing high quality services and ensuring satisfaction in order to guarantee repeated visits. Mafikeng Post Office is currently marked by a limited skills based management personnel as well as a shortage of well trained customer friendly subordinates. In a company where service delivery most of the valued added, this is considered to be a critical problem.

### **3.2 PRIMARY PROBLEM**

- **The first primary problem centers around a perceived drop in the number of clients visiting the Post Office.**

The objective is to analyse possible reasons to what factors have contributed to the decrease in client numbers. Various factors could have contributed to the above statement.

- **A second primary concern includes marketing.**

There is insufficient marketing of the Post Office products.

- **A third primary concern includes Postal Crime.**

The Post Office is a business where the customer entrusts their valuables to, be it in the form of letters or parcels that need to be moved from one point to the other, or in the form of money saved in various Post Bank accounts. A high incidence of fraud occurs at the Post Office. Tellers fail to account for deposits made by clients and rather pocket money which does not belong to them. In this instance, the client will no longer have further trust in the Post Office and in turn will most probably leave the Post Office for another institution and tell others about the incident.

- **A fourth primary concern includes long queues.**

Most customers hate long queues and being kept waiting. During the weekends most of the staff are off duty, they refuse to take their off-days during the week which in itself is a negative signal for growth as well as an indication of the lack of loyalty shown by numerous staff members. A loyal and dedicated staff member is the one who knows that the customer is the most important person, who actually pays the staff member's salary.

### **3.3 SECONDARY PROBLEM**

Sales at Mafikeng Post Office has gone down because of:-



- **Inadequate staff training**

Poor performance of workers is probably due to inadequate training and attending workshops by both management and subordinates. Training should be ongoing, since trained staff members deliver a high quality service and customers would return for more business.

- **Low staff morale.**

Morale of staff is low, because there are no incentives for work well done.

There is nothing at the Mafikeng Post Office which motivates staff to an extra mile for customers. A trophy for a teller of the month can perhaps do wonders, because every worker will work harder to qualify to receive the trophy.

### **3.4 MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS**

The management questions emanating from the above perceived problems are as follows.

- What is the causes of the decrease in customers?
- Is marketing and advertising sufficient enough to increase the number of clients visiting Mafikeng Post Office?
- Could the service standards have contributed to the problem?
- Are competent staff members available willing to go an extra mile for customer satisfaction?

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

It is important for the company to realise that there is a need for the measurement of customer satisfaction which will provide the yardstick for success. For what is not measured cannot be managed.

The organisation needs to attain the idea of how they have improved over a period of time is improving customer service. The research design and analysis will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter four presents the research design and analysis used to carry out the study. It is based on the objective of the study discussed in chapter one. The rationale of this chapter is to outline the research design and different methods used in collecting and analyzing data.

The research design used in this study is qualitative, regarding documents collected and questionnaires administered. The choice was particularly opted because the type of research being undertaken was one which concentrated more on behavioural tendencies as people's behaviour changes and they respond differently when exposed to different circumstances.

Higson (1995: 63) defines research design as the planning of any scientific research from the first step to the last step, in this sense it is a programme to guide the research in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed facts. Research design helps the researcher to illustrate how data will be organised and presented in that it list the instrument that will be used for gathering data. Research design provides the glue that holds the research project together.

A design is used to structure the research, to show how all the major parts of the research project work together to try to address the central research questions (Trochim, 1993: 3). Cooper and Schindler (2003: 147) have proposed a list which shows the significance of research design.

- The design is an actively and time – based plan.
- The design is always based on the research questions
- The design guides the selection of sources and types of information
- The design outlines procedures for every research actively.

## **4.2 DATA ANALYSIS**

The research used primary data in analysing the level of customer service provided at the Mafikeng Post Office. The primary data was collected through a questionnaires that were distributed to a sample of the population. This method was selected because costs effectiveness and convenience for respondents. Before analysing the data, the researcher reviewed all replies gathered and compiled them for comprehensive analysis.

## **4.3 SAMPLING**

Sounders (et al, 2002 : 2) describes sampling as a process of selecting a fractional part of the whole relevant group of population. The basic idea is that by selecting some of the elements in a population and focusing research attention on this finite group, the findings of the study may be applied to the whole population of interest.

Sampling design is one of the most crucial stages of this research. In view of this research, Post Office clients were identified as the population. A stratified sampling process was used in order to get access to a random sample of these types of customers. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003 : 194), there are three reasons why a researcher choose a stratified random sample.

- To enable different research methods and procedures to be used in different strata.
- To increase statistical efficiency of a sample
- To provide adequate data for analysing the various sub -populations.

Stratified sampling was used for this study to represent different age groups, different income group and customers who have different educational levels. A total population consisted of 100 customers. 100 clients were issued with questionnaires to complete and return to the researcher for analysis.

## **DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

### **4.3.1 DOCUMENTARY METHODS**

Documents are written materials that contain information. Documents are developed with research in mind. Most document studies are qualitative but they may be quantitative content analysis techniques. The main aim of document analysis is to transform non quantitative data into quantitative data. Any research study can be called out without employing some of the documentary methods. (Sarantakos, 1997: 274).

### **4.3.2 OFFICIAL DOCUMENTARY REPORTS**

Records which may include customer service information, census information, and political speech transcripts are very valuable official documents that can help in most case study researches. These records may even include less obvious available forms of communication like inter-office memorandum, printed e-mail messages, and minutes of meeting and organizational newspapers. These materials convey important and useful information that a researcher can effectively use a data (Borg, 1998: 182).

### **4.3.3 QUESTIONNAIRES**

All questionnaires are hand delivered and questions and answers will be collected once completed. Before the questionnaires are distributed, it will be pre-tested by using a postmaster and two supervisors that are not part of the sample. The purpose of the pre-testing is to ensure that

- The vocabulary and instruments are simple and clear.
- None of the words are ambiguous
- None of the statements are inappropriate
- The attention of the respondents is aimed at the duration of the procedure.

#### **4.3.3.1 ADVANTAGES OF A QUESTIONNAIRE**

Using questionnaires was found to have several advantages and the following are advantages as stated by Bailey (1994 : 148):

- **Considerable savings of money:** A mailed study costs far less than interview study with the same sample size
- **Time saving:** Mailed questionnaire are sent to all respondents simultaneously and most of the replies will be received within two weeks, while interviews are generally performed sequentially and may take months to complete.
- **The questionnaire may be completed at the respondent's convenience.**
- **Greater assurance of anonymity:** Since there is no interviewer present who can identify the respondent later, the respondents may be more willing to answer as honestly as possible.
- **Standardized wording:** Comparison of respondent's answers is facilitated by the fact that each respondent is exposed to exactly the same type of questions. However, differential understanding of questionnaires the entire respondent to consult records, confer with colleagues or conduct a preliminary study before answering the questionnaire.
- **No interviewer bias:** There is no opportunity to be biased by an interviewer.
- **Accessibility:** Respondents who are widely separated geographically can all be reached for the price of a postage stamp as compared to the expensive travel of the interviews.

#### **4.3.3.2 DISADVANTAGES OF QUESTIONNAIRES**

Although this method of data collection seems to be a cheaper and convenient approach to research, it has its disadvantages. According to Bailey (Ibid) the following were found to be disadvantages.

- **Low Response Rate.** In an interview, the target majority of interviews are successfully completed and the reason for non – responses is generally low. However, mailed studies sometimes receive response rates as low as 10% and 50% is considered adequate. To avoid the low response rate, the questionnaires are addressed to known people and followed up to get 100% response rate.
- **Many questions may remain unanswered with no supervision while filling in the questionnaire, the respondents may leave some questions unanswered.**

Thus while 60% of all questionnaires may be returned, the researcher might find that only 10% of respondents answered a particular question.

- No control over date of response. Lack of control over the time the questionnaire is completed can damage the study greatly. To avoid this, respondents were phoned time and again to be reminded to fill in and return completed questionnaires
- Lack of flexibility. With no interviewer present, there can be no variation in questions asked and no probing for more specific answers if the respondents, first answer are too vague or too general to be useful. Also if the respondents misunderstand the question he or she cannot be corrected.

#### **4.3.4 VALIDITY**

Validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is suppose to measure and assist the researcher in solving the research problem. The measuring instruments also help to predict some outcome which is based on criterion-related validity. To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the contents were thought adequate to ensure the level of customer service provided at the Mafikeng Post Office.

#### **4.3.5 RELIABILITY**

Reliability instruments work at different times and under different conditions. This implies that the respondents and their environment should be consistent.

This is not possible in this study since each respondent has his or her own opinion about the same issue.

#### **4.4 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

Descriptive statistical analysis was used in this study.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented an overview of the research methodology that was employed in the study. The questionnaire was employed as the main instrument in the collection of data because of its advantages. The advantages and disadvantages of the methodologies used were looked at. Decisions and objectives were based on the merit of the problem. More information will be shed to the study according to the responses that will be discussed in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the results on the investigation on the analysis of the level of customer services provided by the Mafikeng Post Office's employees. The objectives have been broken down into research questions. A questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect data. The bulk of questionnaires were administered by direct contact. Responses obtained from questionnaires would served as the attainment of the aim of the study.

#### 5.2 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Of the 100 distributed questionnaires, only 64 were completed and returned to the researcher; because of time factor, there was no extension of filling in the questionnaires. The results interpretation will therefore only be based on responses from 64 participants.

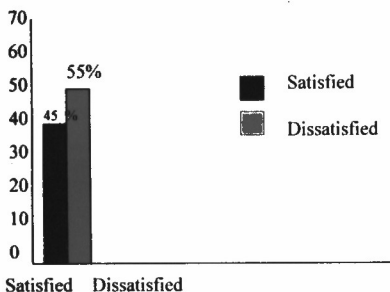
#### 5.3 SURVEY QUESTIONS

**TABLE 5.1**

##### **SERVICE SATISFACTION LEVEL**

<b>RESPONSES</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGES</b>
Satisfied	29	45
Dissatisfied	35	55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>



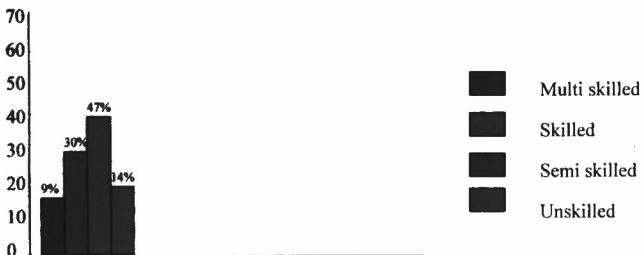


**FIGURE: 5.1 SERVICE SATISFACTION LEVEL**

According to Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1, 35 (55%) of respondents are dissatisfied regarding the service that they receive from the Mafikeng Post Office, whilst 29 (45%) are satisfied.

**5.4 TABLE 5.2: RESPONDENTS SKILLS LEVELS**

SKILLS LEVEL	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
Multi skilled	6	9
Skilled	19	30
Semi skilled	30	47
Unskilled	9	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

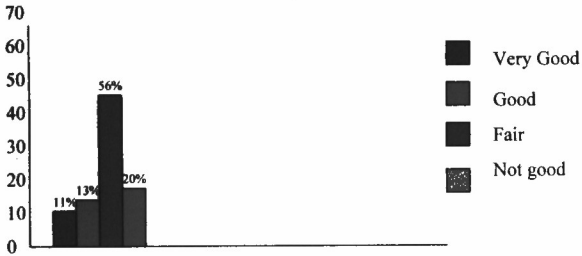


**FIG 5.2 : RESPONDENTS SKILLS LEVELS**

Table 5.2 (figure 5.2) shows that the majority of respondents 30 (47%) are semi skilled and skilled 19(30%)

**TABLE 5.3 PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE OF TELLERS**

PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Very Good	7	11
Good	8	13
Fair	36	56
Not Good	13	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>



**FIG 5.3 : PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE OF TELLERS**

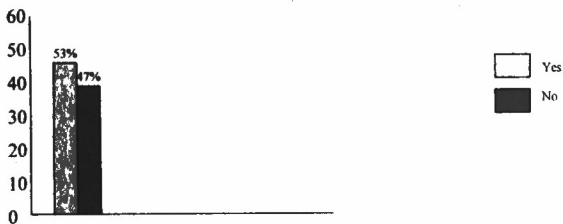
Most of the respondents 36(56%) as per Table 5.3 have a fair knowledge about the product they are offering to their customers whilst 7(11%) of respondents indicated that employees have a very good product knowledge.

**TABLE 5.4 : CHANNEL TO REPORT ON POOR SERVICE**

CHANNEL OF REPORTING	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	34	53%
No	30	47%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100%</b>

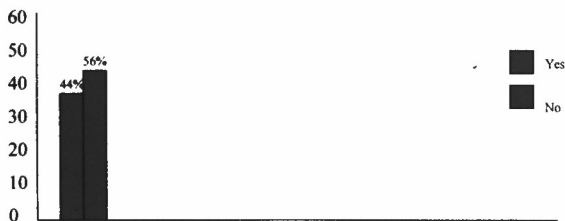
**FIG 5.4 : CHANNEL TO REPORT POOR SERVICE**

Table 5.4 and Fig 5.4 show that 34(53%) of the respondents know channels to report poor service whilst 30(47%) of respondents don't know channels to report poor service.



**TABLE 5.5 : PROBLEM SOLUTION BY MANAGEMENT**

PROBLEM SOLUTION BY MANagements	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	28	44
No	36	56
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

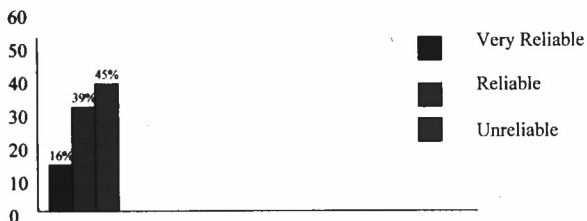


**FIG 5.5 : PROBLEM SOLUTION BY MANAGEMENT**

According to Table 5.5 and Fig 5.5, 36(56%) of respondent problems have been solved by management whilst 28(44%) of respondents' problems have not been solved by management.

**TABLE 5.6 : RELIABILITY OF MAFIKENG POST OFFICE EMPLOYEES**

RELIABILITY OF EMPLOYEES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Very Reliable	10	16
Reliable	25	39
Unreliable	29	45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

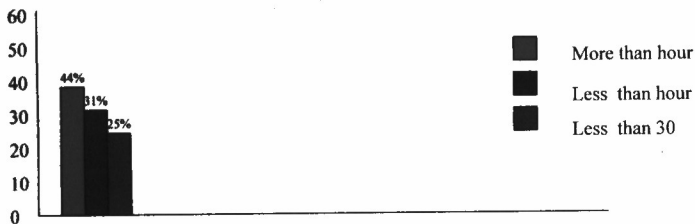


**FIG 5.6 : RELIABILITY OF MAFIKENG POST OFFICE EMPLOYEES**

According to Table 5.6 and Fig 5.6 29(45%) respondents have indicated that Mafikeng Post Office employees are unreliable whilst 10(16%) of respondents have indicated that the Mafikeng Post Office employees are very reliable

**TABLE 5.7 : WAITING TIME IN QUEUE**

WAITING TIME IN QUEUE	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
More than one hour	28	44
Less than one hour	20	31
Less than 30 minutes	16	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

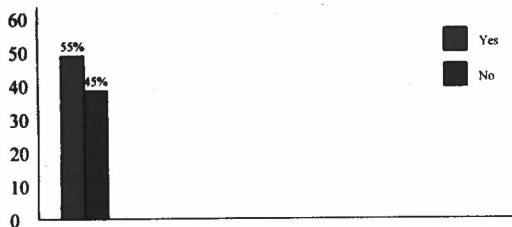


**FIG 5.7 : WAITING TIME IN QUEUE**

Table 5.7 and Fig 5.7 show that 28(44%) of respondents wait more than an hour before they can be assisted whilst 16(25%) respondents wait for less than 30minutes before they can be assisted

**TABLE 5.8 : RECOMMENDATION OF MAFIKENG POST OFFICE TO FRIENDS**

RECOMMENDATIONOF POST OFFICE SERVICE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	35	55
No	29	45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

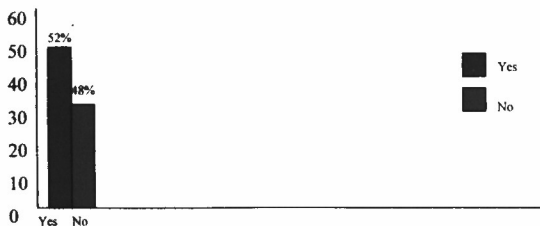


**FIG 5.8 : RECOMMENDATION OF MAFIKENG POST OFFICE SERVICE TO FRIENDS**

According to Table 5.8 and Fig 5.6 35(55%) respondents can recommend Mafikeng Post Office to friends whilst 29(45%) respondents cannot recommend Mafikeng Post Office to friends

**TABLE 5.9 : KNOWLEDGE OF “CRIME BUSTER”**

KNOWLEDGE OF CRIME BUSTER	RESPONSES	PERSENTAGE
Yes	33	52
No	31	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

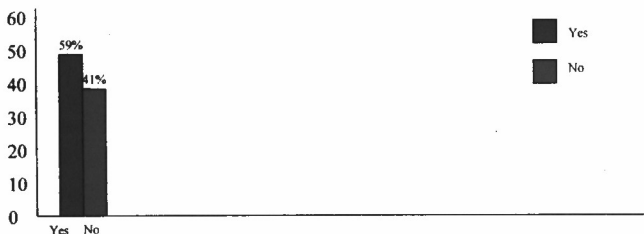


**FIG 5.9 : KNOWLEDGE OF “CRIME BUSTER”**

Table 5.9 and fig 5.9 shows that 33(52%) respondents have knowledge of “Crime Buster” whilst 31(48%) of respondents have no knowledge of “Crime Buster”

**TABLE 5.10 : IMPORTANCE OF “CRIME BUSTER”**

IMPORTANCE OF CRIME BUSTER	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	38	59
No	26	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>



**FIG 5.10 : IMPORTANCE OF “CRIME BUSTER”**

According to table 5.10 and fig 5.10 38(59%) of respondents know the importance of “Crime Buster” whilst 26(41%) of respondents don’t know the importance of “Crime Buster”.

**5.5 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

1. 29(45%) the respondents are satisfied about the service they receive at the Mafikeng Post Office. However there is a need to focus on the other 35(55%) so as to improve customer service to 100%.



2. 19(30%) respondents thought employees are skilled, 6(9%) respondents voted employees as multi skilled and 39(61%) was a combination of semi skilled and unskilled.
3. When looking at the product knowledge of tellers 7(11%) respondents indicated that there very good, 8(13%) respondents voted good and 49(76%) was a combination of fair and not good
4. Whilst 34 (53%) respondents as knowing the channel to report on poor service, 30(47%) need to be focused on.
5. 28 (44%) respondents said that problems have been solved by management, the other 36(56%) indicated that problems have not been solved by management.
6. When looking at reliability of employees 10(16%) respondents voted very reliable, 25(39%) voted reliable but the other 29(45%) voted unreliable which should be looking into.
7. 28(44%) of respondents wait more than an hour in a queue, and 36(56%) is looked?
8. 35(55%) respondents can recommended Mafikeng Post Office to their friends.  
However there is a need to focus on the 29(45%) so as to improve service delivery to 100%.
9. 33(52%) said indicated they know what is Crime Buster, 31(48%) said they do not no.
10. 38(59%) said Yes on importance of Crime Buster, 20(41%) said No on importance of Crime Buster

## **CONCLUSION**

The overall response is fair. However it is important for the Mafikeng Post Office to focus on clients who are not satisfied with the service they receive as they are also important.

This chapter has outlined the findings on the investigation conducted to analyse the level of customer service provided by the employees of Mafikeng Post Office.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Recommendations are made on aspects researched on this study. Conclusion based on the findings obtained from the questionnaires returned by respondents, are discussed. The aims of the study depend on the attainment of the research question to be addressed. It is the purpose of the chapter to look into the extent to which questions have been answered. All questions were designed to have important in addressing the research questions.

#### 6.2 DISCUSSION

On analysing the information, research objectives and questions guided the research. The aim of the questionnaire distributed to Post Office clients was to achieve the following objectives and questions in chapters 1& 3. To establish whether the decrease of Post Office clients is caused by either of the following:-

- insufficient marketing and advertising
- Postal crime
- Long queues
- Inadequate staff training
- Low staff morale
- Lack of product knowledge

The results of Table 5.1 reveals that the majority of the respondents 35 (55%) are dissatisfied with the service they receive from the Mafikeng Post Office. This is an indicating on that Post Office employees do not render service according to client' s expectations.

Table 5.2 revealed that the majority of the Mafikeng Post Office employees are both semi skilled and skilled as indicated by the respondents and percentages given 30 (47%) and 19 (30%) respectively. The sum total of these response patterns is 49 (77%) and

represents the majority of responses. It can thus be concluded that the Mafikeng Post Office employees are multiskilled. They can serve Post Office clients with confidence, and they are dedicated to their work.

According to Table 5.3, Mafikeng Post Office tellers are fair and not good with regard to product knowledge. The total number of respondents who answered fair and not good is 49 (76%). The response of this table answered the research question. "Does decrease in Mafikeng Post Office clients caused by lack of product knowledge?" It can thus be concluded that staff cannot relate and identify customers' needs, because customers' needs changes continuously and a market is determined by these needs.

The results of Table 5.4 show that the majority of respondents, namely 34 (53%) know the correct channels to report poor service, while 30 respondents (47%) do not know the correct channels of reporting bad service. This shows that even if customers know the correct channels of reporting bad service, most of them do not report it because sometimes it is stressful and very uncomfortable to complain. As a result even when bad service is received they do not complain about it but rather deal with it in other ways.

Table 5.5 shows that 36 (56%) of the respondents indicated that management has not solved their problems to their satisfaction and 28 (44%) of the respondents indicated that their problems have been solved by management. The results of these responses address the research question. "Does the decrease in clients in the Mafikeng Post Office is caused by low staff morale?"

According to Table 5.6 Post Office employees are reliable. The total number of respondents who indicated reliable and very reliable is 35 (55%). It can thus be concluded that the Mafikeng Post Office employees have the ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately, they must continue ensuring that they meet customer's expectations from a reliability point of view.

According to Table 5.7, 28 respondents (44%) indicated that they wait for more than one hour in the queue, while 20 respondents (31%) stated that they wait for less than one hour. 16 respondents (25%) said that they wait for less than 30 minutes.

The 44% of respondents who indicated that they are standing in a queue for longer than one hour should be looked into because customers hate queues and being kept waiting. This answered the research question. "Does decline in Mafikeng Post Office clients caused by long queues?"

The results from Table 5.8 indicated that the Mafiekeng Post Office clients 33 (55%) can recommend the Post Office service to their friends. Obviously this is something which is good about the service to an extent that it can be recommended to other clients.

The majority of respondents in Table 5.9 33 (52%) indicated that they have a knowledge of "Crime Buster" the Mafikeng Post Office does not tolerate any sort of crime, that is the reason they have educated people on "Crime Buster." Knowing where to report any kind of crime helps the customers to trust the Mafikeng Post Office. This answered the research question. "Does the decline in Mafikeng Post Office caused by Postal Crime?"

Table 5.10 revealed that the majority of respondents 38(59%) knows the importance of Crime Buster. This is an indication that trustworthiness can be created between Mafikeng Post Office employees and clients.

### **6.3 IMPLICATION OF THE RESULTS**

- Following the perceptions and concerns clients have concerning the services provided by the Mafikeng Post Office, not all clients are dissatisfied with the service they receive from the Post Office. More than 50% of the respondents believe that the Mafikeng Post Office workers are skilled and reliable. They have also indicated that they can recommend Post Office service to their friend.
- The majority of respondents know more about "crime buster" and where to report crime.

- Only 28 (44%) of respondents wait for more than hour in a queue, the other 36 (56%) wait for less than hour in a queue.
- A large number of respondents are dissatisfied with the service they receive from Mafikeng Post Office.
- Most of the respondents have indicated that tellers are not good in product knowledge.
- The majority of respondents have indicated that management has not solved their problems to their satisfaction.
- In general a large proportion of the respondents are not happy with the service they receive from Mafikeng Post Office.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations are made accordingly to optimize the customer care process.

### **6.3.1 CUSTOMER CARE**

Attracting a new customer costs three to five times more than retaining an old one.

#### **Recommendations**

##### **Staff must:**

- always be polite to customers.
- greet them with warmth.
- treat customers with respect.
- Address customer by name, if they know the customer's name.
- Show interest to customers at all times.
- always be neat.
- make customers feel special when they deal with them.

### **6.3.2 SKILLS LEVEL OF EMPLOYEES**

Customers feel uncomfortable with staff who do not know their work.

#### **Recommendations**

- In order to provide an excellent customer service the Post office must ensure that the staff is well trained and equipped to do the job proficiently.
- Staff must ensure that they have skills to do the job and should take a critical view of themselves and understand those areas which need improvement.
- With ever changing technology it has become more and more important for staff to keep themselves up to date and equipped to be effective in the organization.
- Management has to let go and allow employees to take risks, this leads to empowering front-line employees.

### **6.3.3 PRODUCTION KNOWLEDGE OF TELLERS**

Customer needs changes continuously and it is important that staff can relate and identify these changing needs. A market is determined by customer needs.

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Mafikeng Post Office engage in development programmes for the growth of the company especially in the service delivery section, in order to turn the Post Office into profit making organisation.

### **6.3.4 WAITING TIME IN QUEUE**

Customers hate queues and being kept waiting.

#### **Recommendations**

- It is necessary for management to monitor length because this can help in improving customer service.
- Mission, Vision and Goals of the Post Office should be clearly stated and emphasized to employees, so that they know what is expected of them.

It is important to develop and implement high return customer formed business solution that will increase the market share and support achievement of the Post Office's Mission and Vision.

- New legislation should be implemented for the separation of the Post Office from the Post Office? This will ensure that customer do not wait too long just to make a single transaction.

### **6.3.5 CHANNEL TO REPORT POOR SERVICE**

Imagine arriving to see someone and you do not find your way, you do not know which counter to go to and you cannot find anyone to help you.

#### **Recommendation**

- Clearly laid our communication material should be put where everyone can see them for example clear sign post.

### **6.3.6 PROBLEM SOLVING BY MANAGEMENT**

Very often a customer is handled rudely and ignored by management. A competent supervisor is someone who can use her or his knowledge to solve clients problems.

#### **Recommendations**

- Management should show interest to customers at all times.
- Friendliness is also very important as it helps to secure a long term relationship. A smile when greeting a person reflects friendliness.

### **6.3.7 RECOMMENDATION OF MAFIKENG POST OFFICE TO FRIENDS**

At work, staff are representing the organization, first impression counts, clients may like or dislike a person before they even speak to them.

### **Recommendation**

- Staff must dress to suit their customers
- They must always make sure that they are neat in appearance and appear friendly at all times regardless of how they are feeling.
- They must wear a smile and make their customers feel special.
- Staff must make their customers welcome when they are at the Post office.

### **6.3.8 KNOWLEDGE ON CRIME BUSTER**

Customers always place a lot of trust in the organization they deal with.

Staff must be trustworthy at all times which in turn leads to credibility

### **Recommendations**

- Staff must be reliable at all times
- Staff must always give a realistic dead line.
- If there is a problem, inform a client in advance and do the best to accommodate that customer
- A final recommendation is that further study be done to see how the above aspects will benefit and improve performance of Mafikeng Post Office

### **6.5 CONCLUSION**

Analyzing customer service is difficult and time consuming, but to succeed, it requires management support and appreciation. Organisations wishing to have a high perceived service quality must create recovery strategy. Customers have high expectations of such strategies and will be dissatisfied if there is a service failure and no recovery strategy in place. Organisations that are effective in service recovery anticipate in advance the areas within the service delivery process where failures are most likely to occur. When a service failure occurs, the faster the company responds to the problem, the better the message it sends to customers.



## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bailey, K. D. 1994. *Methods of Social Research*. New York: Macmillan Publishers.
2. Blem, N. 1995. *Service Please*. South Africa. Kenwyn: Juta.
3. Bless, and Smith, H. 1995. *Social Research Methods*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Kenwyn: Juta.
4. Borg, W. R, and Gall, M. D. 1989. *Educational Research: An introduction*. New York: Longman.
5. Cartwright, M. A. and Roger. I. 2000. *Mastering Customer Relations*. London: Macmillan Publishers.
6. Cooper, D. R and Schindler, P. S. 2003. *Business Research Methods*. (8<sup>th</sup> edition), New York: Mcrow Hill.
7. Dufour, S. Fortin and Dufour, S. 1993. *Case Study Methods*. Newburg Park, California: Sage Publishing.
8. Craven, R. 2002. *Customer is King*. Lodon:
9. Gerber, P. Nel, P. S and Van Dyk, 1997. *Human Resources Management*. 93<sup>rd</sup> Edition), Cape Town: Southern Africa.
10. Griffin, J. 1997. *Customer Loyalty: how earn it, how to earn it, how to keep it* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
11. Grugulis, I. Sturdy, and Willmott, H. 2001. *Customer Service: Empowerment and Entrapment*. New York: Polygrave.
12. Higon, S. 1995. *Fundamental of Social Research Methods an African Perspective*. Londsdowne.
13. [http: link. wits. Ac. 29/research/wn 2002.htm?](http://link.wits.ac.za/research/wn2002.htm)
14. Legotlo, M. W. 1996. *Some Elements of Research*. Mmabatho: UNW
15. Lehmann, D. R. 2002. *Mafikeng Management*. (11<sup>th</sup> Edition). Upper Saddle River: Printive Hall.
16. Leppard, J. and Molyneux, L. 1994. *Auditing your customer service: The foundation for success*. London and New York:
17. Linton, I. 1993. *Building Customer Loyalty*. London: Pitman.
18. Palmer, A. 1998. *Principles of Services Marketing*. New York: Mc Grow Hill.
19. Polit, O. D. Hungler, and Beradelte, P. *Nursing Research Principles and Methods*. (4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Priladephia: J. Blippincoll.

20. Post Office, *Customer Service module*. Morgan University Alliance.
21. Post Office. *The Customer Service environment*. Morgan University Alliance.
22. Sarantakes, S. 1997. *Social Research*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Basinglake: Polgrave.
23. Saunders, C. C. Saunders, D. and Saunders, B. 2000. *Research Methods for Business Students*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Halow, England: Printive Hall.
24. Sjoberg, G. , Feagin, J, and Orum, A (Eds). 1991. *A case for case study*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
25. Welman, J. C and Kruger, S. J. 1999 *Research Methodology for the Business and Administrative Sciences*. Johannesburg: International Thomson Publishing.
26. Xpress, 2002. *Official Staff Newspaper of the Post Office*. Silverton: Corporate Communications.
27. Express, 2004. Official Staff Newspaper of the Post Office. Silverton: Corporate Communications.
28. Express, 2005. Official *Staff Newspaper of the Post Office*. Silverton: Corporate Communications.
29. Express, 2005. *Official Staff Newspaper of the Post Office*. Silverton: Corporate Communications.
- Yin, R. 1994. *Case Study Research Design and methods*. Thousands Oaks, Lalit: Sog.

## ANNEXURE A

P. O. Box 559  
Mafikeng  
2745  
15 September 2005

To all respondents

Sir /Madam

Assessment on analysis of customer service.

I am conducting a research study to analyse customer service provided at Mafikeng Post Office

You are one of the valued customers to participate in this assessment questionnaire to obtain reliable information, it is necessary that you answer the questions as honestly as you can. Your opinion is very important in this research . You are not required to give your name.

The information that you provide, will be treated as confidential

Yours Faithfully

---

Matshidiso Mosala

## ANNEXURE B

### THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MAFIKENG POST OFFICE CUSTOMERS.

#### TOPIC: ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SERVICE PROVIDED AT MAFIKENG POST OFFICE

#### SECTION A

#### BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Gender:

Male	1
Female	2

2. What is your age group?

YEARS	
Below 20	1
21-30	2
31-40	3
41-50	4
Above 50	5

3. Which of the following best describes your present work?

Unemployed	1
Employed in a formal sector	2
Employed in a informal sector	3
Self employed	4
Student	5
Pensioners	6

## 2. Customer Service

1. How satisfied are you with the quality of Mafikeng Post Office Services?

2.

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	2
Dissatisfied	3
Very dissatisfied	4

2. Mafikeng Post Office appear to be:-

Multiskilled	1
Skilled	2
Semiskilled	3
Unskilled	4

3. Are Mafikeng Post Office teller good in product knowledge?

Very good	1
Good	2
Fail	3
Not good	4
Student	5
Pensioner	6

4. What is your highest educational qualification?

Grade 9 and below	1
Between grade 0 12	2
Grade 12	3
Diploma	4
Degree	5
Honours	6
Masters	7
Doctorate	8
None of the above	9

5. Do you know where to report if are not happy about the service?

Yes	1
No	2

6. Does management solve your problems accordingly?

Yes	1
No	2

7. Would you recommend Mafikeng Post Office service to friends?

Yes	1
No	2

8. Are Mafikeng Post Office employees reliable?

Very reliable	1
Reliable	2
Unreliable	3

9. For how long do you wait in a queue

More than an hour	1
Less than an hour	2
Less than 30 minutes	3
Less than 15 minutes	4

10. Do you know what Crime Buster is?

Yes	1
No	2

11. Are you aware of the importance of Crime Buster?

Yes	1
No	2