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### **Which management practices are contributory to service quality?**

#### **Abstract**

**Purpose** - There are many features which have been regarded as having a critical role in supporting service quality. The purpose of this research is to identify which management practices support service quality.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A questionnaire survey of medium and large sized mass and technological services in the UK was conducted.

**Findings** – It was found that service quality and the management practices were all significantly associated in mass services, but this was not the case in technological services.

**Research limitations/implications** – Further research should consider those management features which were found to be non-contributory to service quality in technological services.

**Originality/value** – This research has clarified the ranking of the management practices in terms of the contribution they have made to support service quality, and also found the differences between the two types of services.

**Keywords:** Service quality, Management practices, Mass services, Technological services

**Paper type:** Research paper

## **Introduction**

This article investigates which management practises support service quality. Three areas of literature were considered: Total Quality Management, areas of service marketing, including internal marketing, and the study of service quality gaps. Each area of literature provides a variety of features which can support service quality, and overviews of research typically focus on only one of these areas. Hence, it becomes extremely difficult, both for academic researchers and for practitioners, to identify those features which are crucial for underpinning service quality.

In this article, these disparate strands in the literature were pulled together to clarify those features which have been identified as critical for the management of service quality. Then, by means of a questionnaire survey, it will be shown which of these features are in fact most contributory to service quality, and also how this varies according to the type of service business under consideration.

## **Literature review**

Issues concerning service quality appear in a variety of literature, in particular Total Quality Management (TQM), areas of service marketing, including internal marketing and the study of service quality gaps – the conceptualisation of service quality as the gap

between customer expectations and perceptions of performance. Within the TQM literature, the soft aspects of TQM have been seen as vital to the service sector (Wilkinson and Allen, 1991; Wilkinson, 1992; 1994; Rees, 1995; Thiagarajan and Zairi, 1997; Collinson et al., 1998), work on internal marketing has highlighted its role as a means to developing a service culture and to encouraging quality service delivery (Grönroos, 1990b; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993; Varey, 1995b; Hogg et al., 1998; Zerbe et al., 1998), and from the service quality literature, the study of service quality gaps has also contributed to the debate on the improvement of service quality (Grönroos, 1990b; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; 2000).

Those three areas were chosen because it has been acknowledged that there are certain similarities between TQM and internal marketing (Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993), and because internal marketing is referred to as the ‘strategies to close Gap 3 – the differences between customer driven service designs/standards and service delivery – as one of the service quality gaps (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; Grönroos, 1990), and it is also argued that the issues of internal marketing have been seen as vital for closing Gap 3 (Grönroos, 1990).

A comparative study of these three areas was carried out which revealed those features which have been focused on by all three areas of literature and hence enables those features which are most crucial in supporting service quality to be identified: these are recruitment & selection; training, teamwork; empowerment; performance appraisals & reward (including measurement and recognition); communication (two-way internal), and

culture (of the organisation) (from TQM: Kanji, 1990; Kanji and Barker, 1990; Bertram, 1991; Bank, 1992; Brocka and Brocka, 1992; Dale and Cooper, 1992; Oakland, 1993; Ross, 1993; Beaumont et al., 1994; Brown, 1994; Anjard, 1995; Powell, 1995; Gatchalian, 1997; Goetsch and Davis, 1997; Laszlo, 1998; Gunasekaran, 1999; from internal marketing; Grönoroos, 1990b; Berry and Parasuraman, 1992; Joseph, 1996; Taylor and Consenza, 1997; Kasper et al., 1999; from strategies to close Gap 3: Grönoroos, 1990b; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996).

Each of them is argued to be critical for the management of service quality, and all three areas of literature are concerned with the search for service excellence in a wide range of service industries. Hence, the seven practices (these will be referred to as '*the seven corresponding features*') could be seen as the predominant attributes in the promotion of service quality.

Before proceeding to the quantitative analysis, it is necessary to review briefly what has been established in the literature about the direct relationships between each of '*the seven corresponding features*' and service quality.

### *Recruitment & selection*

Recruitment & selection of the best possible personnel have been seen as vital in order to deliver service quality (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; 2000) since a major cause of poor service quality is that the wrong people are recruited (Berry and Parasuraman, 1992). It is commonly acknowledged that staff

turnover in many service organisations is very high (e.g., Schneider, 1986; Keltner and Finegold, 1996; Campbell et al., 2000). Yet, staff retention should be maintained, because low staff turnover tends to produce superior service quality (Schneider and Bowen, 1985).

### *Training*

Training is claimed to be one of the essential features for improving quality (Brown, 1994; Patel, 1994; Perry, 1995), and to deliver service quality competently and confidently (Berry and Parasuraman, 1992). Since poor training is one of the reasons for a lack of quality in human service (Joseph, 1996), and training will be able to minimise the risk of service failure.

### *Teamwork*

Teamwork is often seen in the academic literature as a means of supporting willingness to deliver service quality (Berry and Parasuraman, 1992). Through support from team members, motivation for providing quality service is likely to continue (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996), and effective teamwork tends to develop capabilities for delivering a high level of service quality (Tjosvold et al., 1999). Other studies have found that weak service performance is strongly associated with a lack of teamwork; hence, service failure can be minimised by teamworking (Redman and Mathews, 1998). When effective, a team tends to develop employee commitment towards customer service, and the capability of delivering a high level of service quality (Tjosvold et al., 1999).

### *Empowerment*

Empowerment of front-line staff could be fundamental to achieving and improving the level of service quality (Berry and Parasuraman, 1992; Ghobadian et al., 1994; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; Lin and Darling, 1997; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1998). However, empowerment of front-line staff has both positive<sup>1</sup> and negative outcomes<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, since different degrees of empowerment are applicable to different services (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Lashley, 1997; 1998; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1998), it is possible to achieve a high level of service quality from a medium degree of empowerment. Therefore, the association between service quality and empowerment may not be straightforward. It is not necessarily the case that the higher empowerment, the higher service quality.

### *Performance appraisals & reward (including measurement and recognition)*

It has been argued that management does not have direct control over quality during the production of the service (Grönroos, 1990a) or over service employees' behaviour (Schneider and Bowen, 1995), and hence, performance appraisals & reward which give the right directions to the workforce become more critical in the service sector. Performance appraisals could give direction to the workforce (Nevling, 1992) via communicating managerial expectations to employees (Elmuti et al., 1992), and top management could guide employees' behaviour (Palmer, 2001) via rewarding and recognising outstanding employee behaviour (Parasuraman, 1986).

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<sup>1</sup> For example, making rapid decisions, dealing with complaints promptly and hence quickening service delivery, customisation (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990; Ripley and Ripley, 1992; Bowen and Lawler, 1995; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1998; Van Looy et al., 1998)

<sup>2</sup> For example, causing slower or inconsistent service delivery, declining total service productivity, breaking organisational rules, creating feelings of discomfort when empowering the wrong people (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; 1995; Ashness and Lashley, 1995; Lashley, 1997; 1998; Boshoff and Leong, 1998; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1998; Martine and Adams, 1999)

Although some authors address negative effect from appraisals and reward (Deming, 1986; Elmuti et al., 1992; Oakland, 1993; Palmer, 2001), when designed carefully and administered appropriately, these techniques will have a positive effect on quality (Shadur et al., 1994; Redman and Mathews, 1998) by identifying employee's desirable performance and setting up a reward system linked to customer satisfaction (Palmer, 2001). If not, these techniques can point in the wrong direction (Van Looy et al., 1998).

#### *Communication (two-way internal)*

Communication is regarded as critical in supporting service quality. Downward communication enables employees to deliver what customers expect from the company (Gilmore and Carson, 1995; Grönroos, 2000; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). Upward communication allows employees to provide management with information about customers (Grönroos, 2000). It also enables front-line staff to articulate what they need in order to meet customers' requirements (Grönroos, 2000). Therefore, a lack of communication will result in frustration when important information is not transferred and which in turn could cause customer dissatisfaction and poor service quality (Grinstead and Timoney, 1994a/b; Ingram and Desombre, 1999). Moreover, communication maintains employees' motivation and interest which in turn will lead to their commitment to the firm and to service quality (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996).

#### *Culture (of the organisation)*

A strong culture which enhances customer/service orientation and an understanding of service quality is identified as crucial for the successful management of quality (Grönroos, 1990b). It has been argued that organisational culture or a service-oriented culture has a powerful impact on employees' behaviour/service delivery (Schneider, 1986; Siehl, 1992; Zerbe et al., 1998). Employees' behaviour is critical for delivering quality services (Parasuraman, 1986). This is because employees' behaviour/service delivery affects customer perceptions of the service quality which they receive (Schneider, 1980; Schneider and Bowen, 1985; 1993; 1995; Grönroos, 1990b; Schneider et al., 1992; 1998; Siehl, 1992; Clark, 1997; Zerbe et al., 1998; Bowen et al., 2000). Moreover, management in the service sector do not have direct control over quality (Grönroos, 1990a) nor over service employees' behaviour (Schneider and Bowen, 1995), so a strong service-oriented culture which truly inspires employee behaviour can give guidelines for right and proper behaviour toward customers (Siehl, 1992; Zerbe et al., 1998).

#### *Summary of literature review*

There are a range of managerial practices which support quality in the service sector, and three distinct areas of literature concerning service quality were examined, in particular TQM, internal marketing, and the strategies to close Gap 3. From a comparative study of the literature in these three areas, it was found that there are seven practices common to all three areas of literature. These are recruitment & selection, training, teamwork, empowerment, performance appraisals & reward, communication, and culture, and each of them is regarded as critical for the management of quality in the service sector. A



review of the literature on '*the seven corresponding features*' reinforced the role of each '*corresponding feature*' with regard to service quality.

### **Research issues**

The association between service quality and '*the seven corresponding features*' has been clearly established. However, the literature has not clarified which of '*the seven corresponding features*' are more influential to service quality than others, and hence, the purpose of this article aims at ranking '*the seven corresponding features*' in terms of the contribution they have made to support service quality. Since the association between service quality and '*the seven corresponding features*' does not represent a specific service, a wide range of service business could be targeted in this research. Yet, mass and technological services are of greatest interest. This is because, '*the seven corresponding features*' can be seen to match many practices within HRM, and from the perspective of managerial practices, there seems to be four types of service businesses: professional services, the service factory, technological services and mass services (Heskett et al., 1990). However, the approaches to the management of human resources in professional services and in the service factory are clearly distinctive as they lie at the extremes, but the management practices of mass service and of technological service are less clearly differentiated (Heskett et al., 1990). Hence, in this research, only mass and technological services are targeted as to how different management practices support service quality since '*the seven corresponding features*' in these two services may vary considerably.

## **Methodology**

The strategy for data collection was initially by a mailed questionnaire, and a variety of techniques were used to improve the response rate, e.g., paying return postage, personalisation, follow-ups and offer of a copy of the results. The FAME database (a computerised database containing company information as well as UK standard industrial classification of economic activities) was used to identify appropriate organisations. The content of the questionnaire was drawn from survey items used in previous research. Some of the items were derived from existing statements in the literature in order to address specific issues raised. It was designed for completion by middle managers or equivalent. This is because, due to the nature of the questions, the respondents must be aware of company policy and have contact with front-line staff. All questionnaire items are presented in Appendix A.

SERVQUAL is the best known instrument for service quality measurement (Ekinci and Riley, 1999), and it has been used to measure service quality in a wide range of service businesses (Ingram and Daskalakis, 1999; Palmer, 2001). Yet, service quality was measured by the performance only measurement using SERVPERF. This is because, unlike SERVQUAL, it does not seek to compare customer experience and perceptions, and measures post-consumption perception only (Palmer, 2001). Thus, SERVPERF avoided the problem of SERVQUAL with regard to assessment of customer expectations (Clow and Vorhies, 1993; Iacobucci et al., 1994; Buttle, 1996; Van Looy et al., 1998), is much easier to administer, and the data are easier to analyse, and arguably it is more suitable to assess service quality (Cronin and Taylor, 1994; Buttle, 1996).

Only four out of five dimensions of SERVPERF were used: items on ‘tangibles’ were excluded, because it did not seem to be affected by *‘the seven corresponding features’*. Moreover, it was measured from a managerial perspective rather than a customer perspective. This is because managers’ perceptions most directly affect the design, development and delivery of the service (Tsang and Qu, 2000). According to the study of Nel and Pitt (1993), managers had a reasonably good understanding of customer expectations. Although management tend to perceive their service quality as more successful than customers perceive it (Tsang and Qu, 2000), the main objective of this research is to examine how management practices of *‘the seven corresponding features’* support service quality. Therefore, managers’ perceptions of service quality were used.

Extensive pilot testing was undertaken to ensure that the questions were both comprehensible and easy to complete. The pilot sample was analysed using exploratory factor analysis and reliability testing. A total of 2,495 questionnaires were distributed to named managers who were responsible for the promotion of service quality in UK businesses with 100 or more employees, and 371 useable responses were returned which made the response rate a little under 15%. In order to assess the construct validity and refine items where necessary, the total sample was evaluated with confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS.

The total sample was divided into two sub-samples. The literature specifies that mass services include distribution, financial services, hospitality, transport, retail, and

wholesale (Schmenner, 1986; 1995; Oakland, 1993; Lashley, 1997; 1998; Silvestro, 2001), while technological services comprise construction, maintenance and repair companies including computer and network repair firms (Schmenner, 1986; 1995; Heskett et al., 1990; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1998; Silvestro, 2001). Therefore, in the analysis which follows, the size of the sample for mass services became 188, and for technological services, 119.

In order to establish whether the following results could be confounded by the influence of company or respondent demographics, all items on the questionnaire were tested by One-Way ANOVA (with Post Hoc Test). This showed that there were no differences in the results by size of organisation, whether or not an organisation had ISO accreditation, the existence of a documented quality system, the level of turnover, or the respondents' job titles.

## **Results and discussion**

### *The association between service quality and 'the seven corresponding features'*

T-tests indicated that the differences in mean values of each of *'the seven corresponding features'*, and of service quality between the mass and technological services sub-samples were not statistically significant (Appendices B and C). However, although the mean values of the two services were similar to each other, it may not necessarily mean that the relationships between variables are the same. Therefore, canonical correlation analysis was applied to the sub-samples in order to measure the strength of the relationship between service quality and *'the seven corresponding features'*. In order to compare the

strength of associations between service quality and each of *'the seven corresponding features'*, all the canonical correlations are brought together in the following table.

Table 1: Summary of all canonical correlations

<i>'The seven corresponding features'</i>	Service quality		
	Mass (sig.)	Tech (sig.)	* Differ
Culture	.595 (.000)	.511 (.000)	.084
Communication	.586 (.000)	.585 (.000)	.001
Teamwork**	.584 (.000)	.424 (.017)	.160
Training	.549 (.000)	.491 (.001)	.058
Recruitment & selection	.470 (.000)	.542 (.000)	.072
Performance appraisals & reward	.453 (.000)	.370 (.114)	N/A
Empowerment	.451 (.000)	.290 (.300)	N/A

Order of the strength of Mass service sub-sample

\* Difference between the mass and technological service sub-samples

\*\* Canonical correlation analysis was applied only to those companies which had some form of teamwork (76 per cent in mass services and 68 per cent in technological services).

Since *'the seven corresponding features'* influence service quality directly as well as indirectly through employee attitudinal and behavioural factors<sup>3</sup> (Schneider and Bowen, 1985; Maister, 1993; Bowen and Lawler, 1995; Zeithamland Bitner, 1996; Ingram and Desombre, 1999; Tjosvold et al., 1999), the statistical associations in Table 1 are highly satisfactory and demonstrate a clear linkage between service quality and *'the seven corresponding features'*. Moreover, despite the relatively identical mean values of *'the seven corresponding features'* (Appendix B) and of service quality (Appendix C) between mass and technological services, the analysis found differences in the strength of canonical correlations between the two services.

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<sup>3</sup> These include turnover/retention, involvement, participation, commitment, satisfaction, and motivation of employees.

Some of '*the seven corresponding features*' were found to be more influential to service quality than others. Since the literature states that all of them were found to support service quality, the level of service quality can depend on each of '*the seven corresponding features*' to some extent. The association between service quality and each of '*the seven corresponding features*' will be discussed in turn.

### *Culture*

Culture appeared to be the most strongly associated with service quality in mass services. In technological services, it appeared to have less impact on service quality. This may be because hybrid businesses (e.g., construction, maintenance and repair) may not have fully regarded themselves as service businesses and hence failed to recognise service elements in their day-to-day activities, and this could contribute to the restricted development of a service-oriented culture. This hybrid nature may also imply that top management commitment in technological services may be placed elsewhere (e.g., sales, profit) rather than focusing on service quality. Such culture might have appeared to be less supportive to the promotion of service quality in technological services than in mass services.

### *Communication*

The association between service quality and communication emerged as the second strongest in mass services, and the strongest in technological services. It is possible that, in comparison to mass service, culture did not contribute as much to service quality as communication in technological services. Nevertheless, the difference in the strength of canonical correlation between service quality and communication between the two

services was only .001 (Table 1). This suggests that communication was equally vital and contributed to service quality in both services. Although the literature on communication suggests that it is one of the features which improves corporate culture (Lievens et al., 1999), and also enriches quality via strengthening employee commitment to the firm and quality (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; Allen and Brady, 1997; Savery et al., 1998), it has not yet been suggested that communication and service quality are so strongly associated.

### *Teamwork*

Teamwork was seen to be a more influential factor on service quality in mass services than in technological services. However, this does not necessarily indicate a lack of team performance in technological services. The mean values on teamwork were very similar between the two services (Appendix B). This suggests that the level of teamwork was more or less equivalent in both services, and eliminates the possibility that in technological services, there were more problems in teamwork which made teamwork contribute less to service quality. In addition to the very similar mean values, there was not a huge difference in the proportion of teamwork employed in mass (76%) and technological services (68%) that might have affected the strength of the canonical correlation. Therefore, it could be considered that, with regard to service quality, teamwork was less important and hence a less influential factor in technological services than in mass services.

### *Training*

In mass services, training seemed to have contributed more to service quality than recruitment & selection. It is likely that training is important either when the wrong people are recruited or due to high staff turnover (24%) in order to maintain or achieve reasonable service quality. In technological services, on the contrary, recruitment & selection were found to have a more important role in the promotion of service quality than training. It could be seen that when the right people with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver excellent service quality are recruited, training is then less important. In addition, due to low staff turnover (12%), training may not be required as much as in mass services. Despite the distinctive circumstances, the canonical correlations in both mass and technological services were comparatively small, and were, in fact, the fourth strongest in both services. Moreover, there was not much difference in the mean values on training between the two services. Hence, training has generated more or less the same contribution to service quality in both services regardless of their differing circumstances. Hence, training in both services seemed to have contributed more or less equally to service quality.

#### *Recruitment & selection*

In spite of the emphasis on recruitment & selection in the literature (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990; Berry and Parasuraman, 1992; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; 2000), the association between service quality and recruitment & selection of front-line staff was only the fifth strongest in mass services while it was the second strongest in technological services. Therefore, recruitment & selection of front-line staff in technological services seemed to have a stronger impact on service quality than was the



case in mass services. Despite the differences in staff turnover between mass (24%) and technological services (12%), differences in the mean values on recruitment & selection between the two services were not noticeable (Appendix B). Since staff turnover can be very detrimental to overall service quality (Zithaml and Bitner, 2000), high staff turnover in mass services, focusing on recruitment & selection of front-line staff did not contribute to service quality as much as it did in technological services.

#### *Performance appraisals & reward*

The association between service quality and performance appraisals & reward in technological services appeared non-significant while it was moderate in mass services. The mean values of performance appraisals & reward in the two services were not statistically different (Appendix B). Therefore, some organisations in both services had not fully utilised performance appraisals & reward. Performance appraisals & reward could be seen to become more difficult to apply when services were more customised and more intangible. Therefore, both mass and technological service could face a problem in setting criteria for performance appraisals & reward, because of the highly intangible nature of mass services (Lashley, 1998), and the high customisation of technological services (Heskett et al., 1990; Schmenner, 1995; Lashley, 1997; 1998). Therefore, it is not surprising that not all service businesses may have adopted performance appraisals & reward for front-line staff.

The association between service quality and performance appraisals & reward in both services appeared positive although in technological services, it emerged as non-

significant so that their relationship is direct which indicates that performance appraisals & reward did not undermine service quality. The non-significant association in technological services may imply that performance appraisals & reward were not a contributory factor to supporting service quality. Service quality may not be affected by the level of performance appraisals & reward, therefore, service quality could be achievable regardless of the presence of performance appraisals & reward in technological services. On the other hand, in mass services, although performance appraisals & reward did not make the strongest contribution to service quality, these techniques did at least have some recognisable effect on the level of service quality. Hence, higher utilisation of performance appraisals & reward in mass services helped to achieve a higher level of service quality to some extent.

### *Empowerment*

The literature on empowerment identifies that although empowerment is vital in pursuit of service excellence, different degrees of empowerment are applicable to different services (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Lashley, 1997; 1998; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1998). Moreover, empowerment can be harmful sometimes (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Lashley, 1997;1998; Boshoff and Leong, 1998; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1998; Martin and Adams, 1999). The association between service quality and empowerment is not straightforward. Nevertheless, the non-significant association between service quality and empowerment in technological services was totally unexpected while in mass services, there was a significant association between empowerment and service quality even though it was not particularly strong. These results suggest that empowerment of front-line staff in

technological services did not influence service quality at all or service quality was achievable regardless of the level to which staff were empowered in technological services. On the other hand, in mass services, although empowerment of front-line staff was not the strongest contributor to service quality, at least it did affect the level of service quality. Hence, a higher level of empowerment in mass services tended to achieve a higher level of service quality to some degree.

### **Conclusion and areas of further research**

The purpose of this article is to clarify which management practices support service quality. By reviewing a wide range of literature, it was found that seven practices occur most frequently in the three areas of the literature and may be regarded as the predominant features in the promotion of service quality. In empirical analysis based on data from a questionnaire survey, the relative importance of *'the seven corresponding features'* was ranked, and it was found that service quality and these management practices were all significantly associated in mass services but this was not the case in technological services.

Although the mean values on *'the seven corresponding features'* and on service quality were very similar between mass and technological services, there were some distinctive associations between *'the seven corresponding features'* and service quality between the two services. The questionnaire data confirmed that in mass services, all of *'the seven corresponding features'* were associated with service quality. Yet, in technological services, the association between service quality and empowerment, and between service

quality and performance appraisals & reward were not statistically significant. These results were unexpected since *'the seven corresponding features'* were drawn from TQM, internal marketing, and the strategies to close Gap 3 all of which are concerned with the search for service excellence in a wide range of service businesses. Moreover, the literature review on each of *'the seven corresponding features'* was focused on the service industry as a whole: not specifically on one particular service business. Furthermore, the approaches to the management of human resources practices of mass and of technological services are not distinguished as clearly as these practices of professional services and of the service factory (Heskett et al., 1990), and this is also applicable to the degree of empowerment (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; 1995; Lashley, 1997; 1998; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1998). These areas could be investigated further via in-depth interviews.

## Appendix A Questionnaire items

### Recruitment & selection

	The current hiring process in this company emphasises awareness of, and achievement of, quality.	Abraham et al. (1997)
1	Our organisation views the costs of recruitment and selection as an essential investment for quality service performance.	Developed from Bowen and Lawler (1992)
2	A formal recruitment procedure and appropriate selection criteria are utilised in this organisation.	Developed from Campbell et al. (2000) and Jameson (2000)
	In our organisation, recruitment and selection are highly focused.	Developed from Lashley (1997)

### Training

1	In this organisation, employees are properly trained to perform their service roles.	Caruana and Calleya (1998) adopted from Money and Foreman (1996)
	Our organisation views the development of knowledge and skills in employees as an investment rather than a cost.	
	We teach our employees 'why they should do things' and not just 'how they should do things'.	
	The company is committed to training.	Hogg et al. (1998)
2	Extensive use of scripts is made for service interaction.	Developed from Lashley (1997)
	Customer perceptions of service quality are always measured before the contents of training are decided and provided.	Developed from McColl-Kennedy and White (1997)
3	Training skills are provided for managers who cascade training down to lower levels in the organisation.	Developed from Palumbo et al. (1994); Cowling and Newman (1995)
	Training is cascaded down through the organisation and therefore, reaches all employees.	

### Teamwork

1	Team-building activities have beneficial effects.	Howard and Foster (1999)
	Teamwork encourages team members to take on new responsibilities.	Developed from Cook (1994)
	Teams are often a form of empowerment in this organisation.	Developed from Bowen and Lawler (1995)
	Team members help to train each other.	Developed from Macaulay and Cook (1995)
	Encouraging suggestions and involvement helps to develop team spirit.	
2	The team is constantly reminded of the importance of their work in achieving organisational goals.	Developed from Parker (1992)
	Co-operation between internal units is good.	Lewis and Gabrielsen (1998)
	Teams are given clear goals.	Developed from Berry and Parasuraman (1992); Macaulay and Cook (1995); Zeithaml and Bitner (1996)
Individuals are given clear goals.		
3	Individual and team objectives are measured by teams and/or members of a team.	Developed from Shrednick and Stutt (1992)

### Empowerment

1	The company encourages employees to make their own decisions.	Hogg et al (1998)
	The company encourages initiative in employees.	Hartline et al. (2000) adopted from Cook et al (1981)
	The company allows employees a high degree of initiative.	
	The company trusts employees to exercise good judgement.	
2	The company allows employees complete freedom in their work.	
	The company lets employees do their work the way they think best.	

### Performance appraisals & rewards

1	Feedback on performance appraisals helps to improve communication between management and employees.	Developed from Edmonstone (1996)
	Performance appraisals identify the scope for performance improvement	Developed from Nevling (1992)
2	Performance appraisals are used to identify training and development needs.	Developed from Nevling (1992)
	Feedback on performance appraisals is frequent, regular and effective.	Developed from Beach (1996)
3	We measure and reward employee performance that contributes most to our organisation's vision.	Caruana and Calleya (1998) adopted from Money and Foreman (1996)
	In our organisation, those employees who provide excellent service are rewarded for their efforts.	
4	Our performance measurement and reward systems encourage employees to work together.	Lewis and Gabrielsen (1998)
	Our reward systems improve staff performance.	
	The evaluation and reward system motivates employees to deliver good service.	

### Communication

1	In this organisation, there is regular communication between those who serve customers (e.g. service and maintenance personnel), and those who make promises to customers (e.g. salespeople).	Caruana and Pitt (1997)
	Communication is frequent, regular and effective in this organisation.	Developed from Beach (1996)
	Communication is good between internal units.	Lewis and Gabrielsen (1998)
2	Information on customers' requirements and complaints are communicated to front-line staff.	Developed from Berry and Parasuraman (1992)
	Communication enables employees to respond to customers' requirements and complaints promptly.	

### Culture

1	In our company, management and employees work together towards a common goal.	Lewis & Gabrielsen (1998)
	The internal working environment in the company is positive and optimistic.	
	In our company, we are all closely welded together.	
	The manager attempts to create a good social environment in our company.	
2	The internal working environment in the company is good.	Powell (1995)
	Top executives actively champion our Quality programme.	
	Executives actively communicate a Quality commitment to employees.	

3	In this organisation, employees see their roles as an integral part of the whole operation in terms of contributing to customer satisfaction.	Developed from Zeithaml and Bitner (1996)
	Employees know how this organisation operates.	
	In this organisation, every employee knows what is expected from them.	Developed from Bowen et al. (2000)

### Appendix B: Mean values of *'the seven corresponding features'*

'The 7 corresponding features'		Mass Mean (SD)	Tech Mean (SD)	Sig.
Recruitment & selection	[1] Quality conscious	5.00 (1.30)	5.02 (1.15)	.871
	[2] Formality and structure	5.17 (1.51)	5.03 (1.40)	.412
Training	[1] Customer focus	5.16 (1.22)	5.24 (1.22)	.555
	[2] Standardised training	3.51 (1.36)	3.38 (1.42)	.420
	[3] Cascade training	4.38 (1.53)	4.44 (1.68)	.739
Teamwork*	[1] Team benefits	5.18 (.99)	5.06 (.97)	.378
	[2] Team support	4.91 (1.08)	5.11 (.97)	.181
	[3] Individual as well as teams	4.70 (1.28)	4.74 (1.30)	.802
Empowerment	[1] Delegation	4.80 (1.12)	4.88 (1.20)	.567
	[2] Freedom of action	3.57 (1.30)	3.82 (1.39)	.115
Performance appraisals & reward	[1] Performance appraisals for facilitation	4.98 (1.51)	4.92 (1.59)	.762
	[2] Performance appraisals as feedback	4.68 (1.46)	4.52 (1.52)	.338
	[3] Reward as an encouragement for good performance	4.47 (1.45)	4.35 (1.54)	.474
	[4] Reward for individual and teams to improve quality	4.11 (1.51)	4.03 (1.61)	.655
Communication	[1] Overall communication	4.52 (1.27)	4.52 (1.33)	.978
	[2] Customer centric communication	5.12 (1.28)	5.23 (1.14)	.456
Culture	[1] Esprit de corps	4.67 (1.20)	4.66 (1.20)	.867
	[2] Top management commitment	4.71 (1.66)	4.66 (1.71)	.804
	[3] Customer focus	4.70 (1.26)	4.75 (1.24)	.733

7 = Agree Strongly      1 = Disagree Strongly

The number in the square brackets correspond to question categories in Appendix A.

(SD) means standard deviation.

Sig. means significance level.

\* The questions on teamwork were answered by only those companies which adopted some forms of teamwork. Hence, the total number of cases for analysis was 142 for mass services, and 79 for technological services.

### Appendix C: Mean values of service quality

Four dimensions of SERVPERF	Mass	Tech	Sig.
Reliability	6.96 (1.10)	7.10 (.91)	.261
Responsiveness	7.04 (1.22)	7.09 (1.09)	.753
Assurance	7.08 (1.10)	7.23 (.89)	.168
Empathy	6.99 (1.27)	7.13 (.92)	.314

9 = High

1 = Low

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