TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF BARCLAYS BANK OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gather information on customer needs at BBK. The research investigated BBK's staff's perception of the quality of employment offered by the BBK Group. The research also investigated whether the BBK Group had embraced TQM principles and practices. Finally, the research investigated the benefits and barriers associated with TQM implementation at BBK.

The study was classified as a single case study because only Barclays Bank of Kenya was selected as the case in point. The population sample of the study was BBK branches, BBK staff and customers in Nairobi. A total of six (6) BBK branches were visited while BBK staff included top management, middle management and subordinate staff. The sample of the customers was broad as it covered different BBK customers in terms of age, occupation and background.

Data was collected from both secondary and primary sources. Primary information was solicited from the target population through questionnaires, interviews and observation techniques.

Research findings revealed that the majority of BBK customers in the study perceived themselves to be receiving satisfactory service from the BBK Group whereas a small number perceived themselves to be receiving poor quality service. This small number should not however be taken for granted in the financial industry where competition is very stiff. On the perception of quality of employment offered by BBK, the top management perceived themselves to be receiving quality employment while the subordinate staff were dissatisfied with the quality of employment offered by the BBK Group. The results indicated that TQM had been implemented in BBK branches and the interviewed staff were aware of the new management style. The research also revealed that the BBK Group had realized some benefits as a result of implementing TQM principles and these included aspects such as improvement on administrative costs and
increased profitability. Finally, the research findings indicated that demotivated staff, inadequate back-up services and staff reluctance to adopt to change were the main hindrances to TQM implementation process at BBK branches.

The major conclusions made from the findings were that BBK customers required flexible banking hours other than the restricted hours currently offered. BBK customers would like the convenience of being able to make transactions worldwide as well as receiving services/products that meet their needs. The issue on overall efficiency and accuracy in services offered is also crucial to the BBK customers. The BBK Group must involve their managers in the front office operations and make them available to customers. The findings further point out to the importance of appreciating staff in order to ensure good results.

The findings from the research amount to an up beat message. Good management practice today comes from treating people decently. The BBK needs to focus on delighting both its internal and external customers. The BBK Group should strive to provide quality service to its external customers by establishing a clear customer focus, emphasizing on high operating standards and continued product development geared to customer needs among other solutions. The internal customers should not be ignored either because their role directly affects the external customers. The BBK Group must emphasize on serious constant training of its staff, better staff selection, development of team methods, offering satisfactory benefits and pay and proper preparation of its staff for the much feared retrenchment programme. TQM principles as advocated by Deming (1982), seem to be the way forward for the BBK Group.