Customer Satisfaction : The Case Study of a Service Company

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Customer Satisfaction

The Case Study of a Service Company

Emre IÖKME

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Master’s Thesis

Customer Satisfaction
The Case Study of a Service Company

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Abstract

This research was undertaken in Derichebourg Multiservices to gain an understanding of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction and improving the customer service are important as this serves to create loyal customers in the business, since market competition has increased. If a company fails to respond to the customer needs and expectations, the satisfaction will not be provided and so customers will lose loyalty to the company and may eventually change the companies altogether. Thus, the importance of customer satisfaction and related subjects has been highlighted in this research. Satisfaction causes have been identified and the recommendations made to increase the customer satisfaction for Derichebourg Multiservices.

To understand customer satisfaction in a service company, the researcher interviewed eight different Derichebourg Multiservices clients. The majority of the clients emphasized that they feel loyal to the company if they receive good customer service and they are satisfied with the service.

The results show that service companies who deliver a good service create satisfied customers, leading to a greater customer loyalty. This can be achieved by implementing strong supervision, on-time delivery of the products and transparency in invoicing. It has been also concluded that by improving the customer service, a positive impact has been made on customer satisfaction and the development of customer loyalty, while they are using the company services.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1:0 Introduction

There are many clients in Ireland using daily cleaning service from Derichebourg Multiservices and from competitors. I believe conducting research on customer satisfaction and service would provide a valuable and realistic picture of the current service delivery versus customers’ expectation and actual company’s delivery and performance.

This research study examines current service delivery and customer satisfaction of Derichebourg Multiservices cleaning industry clients in Ireland.

Finally, the evaluation of the current service provided by Derichebourg Multiservices versus established models of service management in service delivery would help formulating a diagnosis and an improvement plan for the possible critical areas.

This research project will be the first project to analyse customer satisfaction within the service levels in the cleaning sector in Ireland. The conclusions reached as a result of this research project will assist the company’s management in meeting customer satisfaction standards and will also provide valuable information, into the cleaning services industry in Ireland.

1:1 Company Profile and History

The Derichebourg Group is a major international corporate and environmental services operator and it offers a very wide range of services organised in 3 complementary business areas: corporate services, environmental services and services to airports and
airline companies (Servisair). Derichebourg has all the operational resources and know-how to optimize management of the services entrusted to the group. Present in more than 30 countries on 3 continents, more than 300 sites worldwide, the company generated 4 billion in sales in 2007, has more than 20,000 customers worldwide (www.knights.ie).

Cleaning services constitute one of the main activities of Derichebourg Multiservices performe in France and many other European countries. Derichebourg is currently the partner of prestigious contractors in the private and public sectors with 35 years of experience, more than 250 branches in Europe, more than 60 branches in France, 15,000 private and public clients (www.knights.ie).

The parent company Derichebourg Multiservices bought over Penauille retaining the Servisair brand for certain airport activities. This has been achieved through the merger of the groups CFF Recycling and Penauille Polyservices on July 18 2007, creating an instant new momentum for the group internationally and for Knights Cleaning Services here in Ireland. More than ever Knights Cleaning Services remain a key player in Ireland and will continue developing its level of services and ability to deliver by relying on its well proven processes and its exceptional human and technical resources (www.knights.ie).

1:2 Derichebourg Multiservices Cleaning Activities in Ireland

Knights Cleaning is a subsidiary of Derichebourg Multiservices which serves many flagship contracts in Ireland. Knights Cleaning Services Limited was established in 1985 initially based in Dublin and has expanded its range of services and scope to provide services to many varying clients throughout the 26 counties, support services in cleaning related areas, are the main focus of the business. Over the years the company has out
sourced many additional services, thus, enabling it to provide a fully integrated range of activities related to the core business (www.knights.ie).

In 2001, Knights Cleaning Services Limited became a subsidiary (partially owned) of Penauille Polyservices S.A. This association has enabled Knights Cleaning Services Limited to gather and utilize many of Penauille's resources world-wide to improve its services to the clients and also develop into other areas which heretofore Knights Cleaning Services Limited would not have been involved. After 2005, Penauille bought over all sharings of Knights Cleaning and named as Penauille in the Irish market. The Company is still using the Knights name in the market as it is well known (www.knights.ie).

Knights Cleaning has earned a reputation for being able to provide cleaning to demanding industrial environments and continuing developing the company expertise in the manufacturing and food/petrochemical industries: Industrial customers benefit from the skills and talents the team of management and staff have acquired the ability to use of the learning process. Knights Cleaning is well represented in the commercial sector. Deliver a range of services and products to a large number of customers adopting to their individual requirements (www.knights.ie).

Knights Cleaning employs 1,000 operatives throughout Ireland, with Derichebourg Multiservices globally employing over 63,000. Throughout care and attention is taken in both the recruitment and staff development within the company (www.knights.ie).

1:3 Research Focus of the Study

The aim of this study is to increase our understanding of customer satisfaction of Derichebourg Multiservices clients in Ireland. This research begins with describing the customer satisfaction and its related subjects, such as customer service and loyalty. Although this current research study found that there was a deeper relation between
customer satisfaction and customer service, the companies will need to create customer
loyalty to keep their client in the market. This research discovered that customer service
and satisfaction has an important impact on customer loyalty. After exploring the
importance of loyalty in the cleaning sector, the researcher concluded that good customer
service and satisfaction should be provided to create customer loyalty. This research
study consists of five chapters starting with this chapter; the introduction.

Chapter one examines the foundation of this research study, and begins by describing the
research area as well as giving information about the Derichebourg Multiservices
company profile and the cleaning activities in Ireland.

Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature relating to customer satisfaction and the
customer service.

Chapter Three provides an outline of the research methodology, in the context of this
study. This chapter describes in detail the research methodology used in this research
study.

Chapter Four provides the main findings of the research. These findings are all presented
in this chapter to reach the conclusions and make recommendations.

Chapter Five, the concluding chapter, reviews the main findings of the research.
Recommendations and conclusions are made based on the findings through face to face
interviews. Also findings are clearly stated, implications made for Derichebourg
Multiservices managers and recommendations made for the future research to expand this
study.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

2:0 Introduction

This chapter endeavours to review the literature in relation to customer satisfaction and customer service. The purpose of this section is to show what has been written by other authors in relation to relevant literature in the field of my study.

2:1 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as an overall evaluation based on the customer’s total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time (in Lou & Bhattacharya, 2006).

According to (Bateson, 1999), customer satisfaction should be the mission of the organisation. Customers should be satisfied with the goods and services they typically purchase and consume (Bateson, 1999). Kenny (2002) believes that customer satisfaction will increase retention and profits in a company.

Mallet (2008) states that achieving high marks in customer satisfaction is something that needs to come from every level of your organization. It must permeate the business from training program to associate practices so all employees know what level of service is expected. Consistently monitoring customer feedback is vital to gauging where your company stands and what must be improved (2008: 18).

Jham and Kaleem (2008) note that customer satisfaction is the feeling or attitude of a customer towards a product or service after it has been used and is generally described as the full meeting of one’s expectations. Customer satisfaction is a major outcome of
marketing activity whereby it serves as a link between the various stages of consumer buying behavior. If customers are satisfied with a particular service offering after its use, then customers are likely to engage in repeat purchase and try line extensions. A study conducted by Levesque and McDougall (1996) confirmed and reinforced the idea that unsatisfactory customer service leads to a drop in customer satisfaction and willingness to recommend the service to a friend. This would in turn lead to an increase in the rate of switching by customers (2008: 86).

Brechbühl (2004) states that services give companies the opportunity to increase margins, offsetting the commoditization of products and offering a chance to differentiate their product in the marketplace by adding a value added service to it. Providing or even anticipating desired services also helps move customers along the curve from customer satisfaction to the coveted terrain of customer loyalty (2004: 69).

2:2 Customer Service

Twomey (2002) states that customer service can be defined as the provision of a product or service of sufficient quality and in a sufficient manner that reaches or exceeds the customer expectations. Bradley (2007) notes that good customer service starts with knowing and understanding all about how you can help your organization deliver good customer service. Customer service is the total customer experience with the company (Cook, 1997).

Harris (2006) suggests that customer service is anything that a company does for the customer that enhances the customer experiences. Customers have varying ideas of what they expect from customer interaction. The customer service provider must get to know his or her customers interaction. Cook (1997) believes the perception of service which a customer receives is dependent upon their expectations. If the treatment which the customer receives is better than their expectation this is ‘good service’. If the treatment which the customer receives is less than their expectation this constitutes ‘bad service’.
Differentiated customer service—a service that truly differentiates you from the competition as opposed to merely providing a ‘good service’ optimizes infrastructure, applications, business processes, and people. At the core of market differentiation for any business is the ability to deliver superior customer service through intelligent communications. There is a definite path in the evolution of customer service. Companies are moving from answering the phone to providing totally integrated, fully transparent solutions, using a combination of techniques, and technologies for intelligent communications. Capabilities like communications embedded in business processes will intelligently automate and manage the human collaboration needed to conduct business (CRM Magazine, 2008). Quinn & Dyron (1999) notes that the adoption of a proper approach to customer service has many long term effects on the business. Measurability for example, the results of customer service should make your marketing and service functions fully accountable for their expenditure (1999: 7).

Cole (2005) believes that the customer writes your paycheck; that’s the primary reason to manage customer service as you would other elements of your organization. According to Cole (2005), an unhappy customer advertises a negative encounter to as many as twenty people, while a happy customer communicates their level of satisfaction to five at most. “What message do you want your customers to advertise for you?” (2005: 129). According to Cole (2005) successful companies manage this perception rather than letting it be answered by happenstance. Creating a customer service culture is more than training. It entails defining your desired customer service culture and identifying your crucial ‘moments of truth’ (service encounters) or interactions with the customer and deciding how each of these interactions will be managed (Cole, 2005).

Cole (2005) also notes that a company with a customer service culture also uses frustrations or breakdowns in customer service as opportunities to add value to the customer while at the same time improving the customer-service delivery system. Cole (2005) recommends the implementation of an accountability system to ensure employees are using the desired behaviors and the customer is getting the desired level of service. This can be achieved by organizational change. Organizational change requires two
tracks: The first is to define the structural components of the change process. These are the system changes that underwrite customer service, e.g., defining the desired customer service culture, staff meetings to work with moments-of-truth, and measurements. The second track consists of employees adapting behaviors that will improve customer service. Both tracks must be in gear to successfully improve an organization’s customer service culture, which in turn, “should guarantee customer loyalty” (2005: 129).

2:3 Customer Loyalty

Murley (1997) states that understanding what creates customer loyalty and how that loyalty translates into increased revenue and profits, means that business results can be traced back to activities and its benefits set against costs. Measurability also makes it easier to test the effectiveness of different approaches to customer service, giving you the tools to improve results (1997:3).

Mullen (2007) suggests that the connection between customer loyalty and increased revenue has been confirmed and explored by Reichheld (2001), who has shown that customer loyalty is the mark of distinction for successful businesses in all industries and can lead to profitability. Reichheld (2001) found that within long-term care, there are three signs that your facility is meeting customer loyalty standards; growth of a waiting list, increased referrals and increased staff retention. Staff retention is crucial, as it indicates that the facility or organization has taken the first steps absolutely necessary toward building customer loyalty and reduced the high costs of employee turnover. Specifically, “it has addressed the needs of staff directly” (2007: 67).

Ely (2008) purposes that “each time companies communicate with a client, companies are working to build loyalty. Keep the name of the company top-of-mind by sending out regular newsletters and event notices. Include an option on the company web-site where clients can sign up to receive news. Companies have to make sure all communication reflects the brand communication can lead to loyalty”, (Ely, 2008: 60).

Barsky and Lin (2004) purpose that recommendation is one of the best signs of loyalty because of the customer’s commitment in making it. When customers act as references, customers go beyond indicating that they have received good economic value from a company; they put their own reputations on the line. Customers will risk this only if they are intensely loyal (2004: 16).

Soljacich (2004) notes that one of the best ways to build customer loyalty is actively listen and give customers what they need. Present their products and services in a persuasive way. Establish on going dialogue with the customers using their channel preferences to form a relationship. One of the best ways to achieve improved customer loyalty is to get to know customers wants on a personal level. By studying their buying patterns and preferences companies can build individual customer solutions across all over the business channels. Companies can improve customer loyalty by increasing marketing efficiency, anticipating customer’s expectations, and analyzing customer’s data to increase effectiveness and profitability (2004: 18).

Driggs (2007a) believes that the loyal customer is perhaps the most elusive subject in all of management science. Driggs states that in the psychology at the heart of customer buying patterns and preferences is far more complex than previously thought. The notion that loyalty is all about improving customer satisfaction is perhaps the most common mistake. The frustrating truth is “that what customers say about being satisfied turns out to be a poor indicator of loyalty” (2007: 48).
2:3:1 Customer Loyalty and Employee Engagement

Bell & Patterson (2007) suggest that organizations now have metrics that convincingly demonstrate the link between employee engagement and customer loyalty, as well as the tie between customer loyalty and profitable growth. Happy employees make happy customers and happy customers buy, advocate, forgive, and most importantly, return. While there are plenty of resources on how to keep score on employee engagement, far fewer resources describe how to raise and sustain that score (2007: xii-xvi).

Thornton (2001) proposes that businesses are becoming selective about the clients. They do not want every consumer—they want the higher value customers that they can look after and keep for many years. Maintaining customer loyalty is becoming a key strategy for business today. Once you have acquired a customer "the challenge is to keep that customer satisfied and loyal to your company" (2001: 8). Bell & Patterson (2007) also note that loyalty is like motivation—a spirit housed inside someone. Loyalty can be fostered, created and nurtured only with the permission of its owner. According to Thornton (2001) imposed loyalty is manipulation and it leads to compliance that ultimately is negative for the service provider while alienating the customer. According to Thornton (2001) loyalty creators are servers that "attract loyalty from customers by delivering those experiences that customer's value" (2007: 3).

Kyule (2008) states that every company executive will "raise their hand and say, they believe having loyal customers is a key to business success" (2008: 11). Most will point to their customer care training or Customer Relationship Management System and state, "that's how we take care of loyalty here" (2008: 11). While some will also point to their monthly newsletter or discount program to demonstrate their efforts, they are not enough. Fostering true loyalty and engagement with customers starts at a basic level. The following principles will guide any organization in their efforts to create greater loyalty and engagement within your organization (2008: 11).

According to Kyule (2008) satisfying your customers with product quality creates loyalty: Satisfaction is the difference between your customer expectations and your
service delivery. Know your customer’s expectations and be prepared to evolve your product. According to Kyule (2008) building loyalty by exceeding expectations and building opportunities for repeat business is important: Be acutely responsive to customer questions, comments and complaints. If companies resolve a complaint quickly, companies can actually grow loyalty, drive product development to offer more value for less cost and give your customers a chance to be loyal by offering products for repeat business. According to Kyule (2008) engaging the customers by reaching out to create a dialogue creates loyalty: Engagement strengthens your company’s relationship with your customer by providing an open channel for communication and feedback and an engaged customer is more than satisfied and more than loyal. Customer’s support the company during both good and bad times because customers believe what company has to offer is superior to others. Kyule (2008) also notes that engagement takes your customer beyond passive loyalty to become an active participant and promoter of your product. All this translates into a more engaged customer who will spend more money with the company over time. This can be achieved with loyalty programmes (2008: 11).

2:3:2 Loyalty Programme Goals

Butscher (2002) suggest that a customer loyalty programmes primary purpose is to build a relationship with customers and turn them into long term loyal customers. The second main goal is to attract new customers through the loyalty programme. This happens in two ways; satisfied loyalty programme members increase their ‘word of mouth’ advertising. The other way a customer loyalty programme can lead to new customers is that “the value of the loyalty programme benefit is so attractive that non customers join the loyalty programme” (2002: 39). A third main goal is the “creation of a customer data base” (2002: 40). Customers prefer to deal with the companies who have implemented the loyalty programmes. In many industries, loyalty programmes have become a customer expectation (2002: 40).
2:4 Customer Expectations

Zeitmal *et al.*, (2006) state that customer expectations are beliefs about service delivery that serve as standards or reference points against which performance is judged. Knowing what the customer’s expect is the first and possibly most critical step in delivering quality service. Being wrong about what customers want can mean loosing a customer’s business when another company hits the target exactly. “Being wrong also means expanding money, time, not surviving in a fiercely competitive market and other sources that do not count to the customer” (2006: 81).

Bacal (2005) believes that companies should make things easier for the customer, not more complicated, without being condescending; customers expect that companies will not make them wait unnecessarily. “Customers want their sensitive information kept private and customers need to feel the sense that they are important” (2005: 12).

Compton (2004) proposes that organizations may have certain ideas about the optimal mix of price, speed and quality to optimize the operations but unless those offerings map closely to customer expectations and interests, that information means little. Once the business is geared to the metrics that customer’s value, it will be easier to create and deliver value propositions that serve customer needs (2004: 52).

Cooper *et al.*, (1998) notes that customers tend to hold expectations that can be considered quite basic. Of greatest importance to customers is a basic solid performance and that promises are kept. Customers desire a quality service or product provided in a friendly and courteous manner. Customer service expectations fall into two categories: (1) service as an end result or outcome that involves reliability or the ability to perform a promised service both dependably and accurately; and (2) service process, which consists of the following dimensions, including assurance (the ability of staff to convey a high degree of trust and confidence based on knowledge and courtesy), responsiveness (a demonstrated willingness to help customers and provide prompt service), empathy (providing caring, individualized attention to customers), and tangibles (the appearance
of physical facilities, the amount of equipment and the degree of communication that exists between the service provider and its customers) (2008: 1-42).

Customers expect more today from customer service than ever before. Businesses must ask themselves some telling questions to ensure they're providing the best possible service to their customers. "Are agents empowered to completely serve a customer? How does your customer service compare to your competitors?" Customers are raising the bar for customer service. To ensure satisfied customers, organizations must continually evaluate the total customer experience (CRM magazine, 2008: 15).

Lytle (2008) proposes that the smallest things in dealing with customers can sometimes have the most dramatic impact. McConnell (2008) states that it is the small things that generate the best 'word of mouth'. It might be observing a unique aspect about a customer and complimenting him for it. Maybe, it means giving the customer a lollipop or something unexpected. It might be "pulling aside regular customers and asking for an idea to improve your systems, processes, or programs" (2008: 12). If your agency goes above and beyond a customer's expectations, the customer leaves happy and many times tells of their experience to others, ultimately, influencing more customers to visit your facilities and take part in your agency's programs (2008:13).

McConnell (in Lytle, 2008) believes that understanding your client and his culture and expectations is key: "Just as the most successful athletes tend to be students of their chosen game the most successful organizations usually know their clients, their cultures, and their markets better than anyone (2008: 13). Those who are truly outstanding at customer service thrive on learning, "uncovering their customers' new and evolving expectations" (2008: 13).

Bell & Patterson (2007) believe that when it comes to service, customers require consistency for trust. Customers want the service from branch A, to be as good as branch B. Customers do not like having to choose a specific location or specific teller, floor person or waiter because opting for others represents a roll of the dice. They want every service encounter to live up to their expectations every time (2007: 150).
Murley (1997) believes that a positive outcome leads to improved customer service, but positive outcome can relate to many policy areas: use of the right contact media; the right frequency and quality of contact; use of customer information to provide the right solution; right first time solutions to problems; and complaints well handled, that is a negative outcome followed by a positive outcome. Murley (1997) also states that well-handled complaints, for example, or time taken to adjust a product to customer’s need, may do more to reinforce purchasing behavior than no-problem contacts or products which are from the beginning absolutely right for the customer. This is usually because when your customers complain, they receive higher quality attention than is normal (1997: 5).

Murley (1997) purposes that customer satisfaction leads to recommendations certainly, but satisfaction after good problem resolution may lead to stronger recommendations than just routinely good service. According to Murley (1997) the key here is to estimate changes in lifetime buying behavior, both of the customers affected and of those they tell about it. According to Murley (1997) naturally, the longer your company has been measuring the connection between, on the one hand, good customer service and on the other buying and recommending behavior, the more accurate your estimates will be (1997: 5).

Murley (1997) states that we all know what customer service means to us personally. One knows when one receives good customer service, great customer service and dreadful customer service. Every company looking for sales growth and profit recognizes —and usually acknowledges —the immense benefit to be derived from having a reputation for caring about the people who buy or might buy one of its products. “Few, though, have really capitalized on this most crucial aspect of business behavior” (1997: 197).

Murley (1997) notes that it is exceedingly difficult to deliver well at all points of contact with the customer. It requires vision, flair, drive and commitment. It is a long term strategic position to aim for. According to Murley (1997) quite often companies are too involved in today’s problems to consider tomorrow and too little thought is given to market positioning and gaining sustainable competitive advantage. According to Murley
(1997) the emphasis is on short term tactical promotions and discounting or on the latest loyalty program, without recognizing the greater reward that these strategies would have if they were underpinned by the service ethic. According to Murley (1997) finding out what service people want and delivering that experience is vital. So, too, is recognition of the power of harnessing customer service as part of companies brand establishing it as a brand value, driving that value through every part of the business and then promoting it as a product. According to Murley (1997) the number one product is the product that leads customers to the company and builds the company reputation and customer perception. Customer “perception can be change by listening your customers” (1997: 197).

2:4:1 Listening to Customers

Quinn (2006) states that if the companies can learn to listen effectively to the customers all the rest “will follow almost automatically” (2006: 57). Quinn also notes that some of the listening channels are; “customer panels, customer comment forms, customer service desks, handling customer complaints positively, inviting customer enquiries directly to staff, managerial staff accessible to customers, formal market research and media comment” (2006: 64).

Klein (2007) believes that companies sometimes are so anxious to sell their services that they forget to listen to customers. The only way that to meet or exceed customer needs is listening not just to what customers are telling you, but to get beyond that and understand customers unstated needs. According to Klein (2007) service providers who understand the unstated needs of the customers can create better connection and exceed customers’ expectations. That’s because great service and effective communication are more than a set of skills. It’s a mind-set of respect and accountability where you do what you say you’re going to do for the customer. If every associate in your firm models the mind-set, “it will create a great experience for the companies” (2007: 7).
2:4:2 Why Excellent Customer Service is Rare

Weinstein (2007) believes that there are many creative ways to get clients to speak well of your goods and services, but the surest way is to provide excellent customer service, which means, first and foremost, treating customers fairly (2007: 22). Malandruccolo (2006) states that providing excellent customer service can distinguish you from your competition and increase your customer referrals. Excellent customer service is usually associated with higher-end services, and affluent people will gladly pay more to receive excellent customer service (2006: 32).

Klein (2007) states excellent customer service is rare. Despite the fact that many companies tout their focus on service in advertising. Klein believes that overall customer satisfaction is declining. Customers leave a business relationship because of a perceived attitude of indifference on the part of the company. It’s not that the associates are actually indifferent—it is the perception that they are (2007:7). Klein (2007) states that customers may get what they need from the company but if it was delivered with indifference, that interaction still would not leave a positive impression.

Klein (2007) believes that one factor is that customers are not as easily satisfied as they used to be. They have much higher expectations for service as they face far greater demands in their own lives. Another factor, is that companies themselves aren’t quite sure how to deliver great service. They think they're doing enough by talking about it in a company policy manual or telling their associates to do it, but Klein (2007) states that you can’t just put it in a document and assume it’s going to get done (2007: 7).

Klein (2007) proposes that customers want to feel they have a relationship with a firm. They want to make a connection and feel important. If a customer brings up a complaint, it should be handled. Company representatives should not just spout information nor cite policies and procedures they should be genuinely interested in helping. According to Klein (2007) just listening to a complaint, instead of cutting it off, will increase the
chances of maintaining that customer's loyalty. Some entrepreneurs don't realize they need to make connections with their clients, and that they need to do that with courtesy, empathy, and professionalism (2007:7).

Klein (2007) states that it really depends on how responsive the company is to inquiries, sales, and complaints. Customer service representatives should demonstrate a sense of urgency in solving complaints. They should be proactive, instead of just responding to customers. It is important that they show integrity and follow up when they say they will, and not ignore problems (2007:7). Klein (2007) believes that inadequate service gives the customer the sense of nothing more than a business transaction. Excellent service is a personal interaction that builds relationships, encourages repeat business, and gets the customer telling their friends about your company. It's important for the associates to be knowledgeable about the product and accurate about company policy, but there are also soft skills involved here and a need for personal bonding with the client. In a bad transaction, the customer may get the product, or get their question answered, but they don't feel good about how they were treated (2007:7).

Harris (2007) notes that customer service is rare because it requires two things for the average person and organizations are unwilling to commit to spending money and taking action. Customer service is much more than having a great attitude or being a 'people person'. "To prepare to provide excellent customer service, one must develop the skills to be successful. Excellent customer service can be achieved by understanding the obstacles while delivering the service" (2007: 3).

2:4:3 Obstacles to Customer Service Delivery

Harris (2007) states that numerous obstacles stand in the way of the delivery of excellent customer service. Some of the common barriers include management philosophy; making it difficult for customers with a problem to contact a company or, the person who can really help, unreliable equipment, policies, difficult to understand warranties or owners
manuals, out of date procedures, or a lack of understanding of the value of service. Harris (2007) notes that some barriers to excellent customer service are within the control of the customer service provider. These challenges can be overcome through diligent effort, allowing the customer service provider to do the best possible job. Most common barriers to excellent service are; “staff laziness, poor communication skills, poor time management, staff attitude, staff moodiness, lack of adequate training for staff, inability to handle stress by staff, insufficient authority in place, serving customers on autopilot and inadequate staffing levels” (2007: 15).

According to Zanetti (2006), service needs to be professional and of a high quality to ensure that customers are satisfied. Requirements for satisfied customers can vary greatly from customer to customer: “One customer will place more value on the advice you have to offer, while for another, warranties and delivery periods are of more importance, and yet another will be mainly interested in your prices” (2006: 9). Zanetti (2006) notes that if it is a company’s declared aim to exceed the customer’s expectations, it will first have to define exactly what each individual customer’s expectations are: “The only way to do this is to interview customers or, have them fill out questionnaires. This is less difficult for a small consultancy with just a hundred clients, but problematic for a large scale retailer or insurance company with several thousand customers. There is no way such a company can do this, unless it has a unique service for meeting customer needs” (2007: 10).

2:5 Customer Needs

Bacal (2005) notes that the key to customer service is doing the right thing at the right time. To be able to choose the right techniques and use them effectively, Bacal believes that you have to understand what customers want. Knowing what they want will help you make sense of the techniques that are needed. Bacal identifies the most important customer wants and needs as follows: it is not always possible to give customers what they want, so instead create positive perceptions by addressing the other less obvious
customer wants. Customers expect that the company will make an effort to address their problems. Customers who feel understood and acknowledged feel important. Customers want to feel they are making the decision and that the company is assisting them, not the other way around. According to Bacal (2005) when customers feel helpless or powerless they become frustrated; customers expect that the company will treat them in a consistent way and that the company will do what it said it would. According to Bacal (2005) what is interesting is that while money is part of the value equation, it is only a part. When customers look at value, they also take into account how they are treated, and the quality and expertise of the advice they receive (2005: 11).

Harris (2007) notes that every customer comes into the customer situation with differing needs and wants while wants are frequently hard to identify and may occasionally be unrealistic. Harris believes that all customers have the following five basic needs: Service; customers expect the service that they think is appropriate for the level of purchase that they are making. Price; many products previously considered unique are now considered commodities. This means that while a consumer previously had to travel to the local hamburger restaurant to purchase a hamburger, now it can be acquired at many other locations. This makes the component of price even more important to the customers. Quality; customers want the products that they purchase to be durable and functional until the customer decides to replace them. This requirement of quality mandates that manufacturers and distributors produce products that live up to the customer’s expectations of durability. Customers are much less likely to question price if they are doing business with a company that has a reputation for producing a high quality product. Appreciation; Customers need to know that the company appreciates their business. Customer service providers can convey this appreciation with customer mailing lists, informational newsletters, special discounts, courtesy and name recognition. Action; customers need action when a problem or question arises. Customers are human beings and like to think that they are an important priority and that when a need or question arises someone will be ready and wanting to help them. Companies can turn a negative to a positive by offering service recovery while handling the customer complaints (2007: 5).
2:5:1 Service Recovery

Arnould et al., (2004) proposes that consumer research in service environments suggest that if a bad service is followed by effective service recovery, customers may be more satisfied overall than if they had not experienced bad service in the first place. In other words, apologies and gifts improve customer satisfaction: “Effective service recovery however, cannot offset repeated service failures” (2004: 755).

Zeitmal et al., (2006) suggest that service recovery refers to the actions taken by the organization in response to a service failure. Service maybe delivered late or too slow, the outcome maybe incorrect or poorly executed or employees rude or uncaring. Service recovery increase customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and generates positive ‘word of mouth’ communication. A well designed, well documented service recovery strategy also provides information that can be used to improve service as part of continuous improvement effort. “This, in turn, reduces the costs of failures and increases initial customer satisfaction” (2006: 215). When you address these, you create positive customer perceptions and customer relationships.

2:6 Customer Relations Management

Haley (2008) believes that in the ‘old days’, all you needed to keep track of customers was a rolodex but, in today’s technological environment with the internet, mobile technology, and globalization, the world of customer relations has expanded. Fortunately, customer relationship management (CRM) software and online tools make things easier for the company. CRM is a simple technology that allows businesses to collect customer information from client history, advertise, generate marketing leads, and receive customer complaints all in one program. According to Haley (2008) it is generally based
around three components: sales automation, marketing, and customer support. Salespeople can use the product to document accounts and deals. Executives can track their leads and their results, and customer service departments can collate a customer's entire history of problems, questions, and complaints (2008: 60).

Krause (2007) states that CRM is supposed to be a centralized system for contacts and business information. Campell & Roberts (2007) purports that CRM provides a way to deliver personalized communications on a macro scale. According to Krause (2007) personalized communication can help gain insight into what our constituents want and what motivates them. Companies can then use this knowledge to communicate with their clients in meaningful ways. An inability to do this is becoming more and more noticeable. CRM is the compilation of three primary business practices: contact management, campaign management, and data-driven decision making: “If your organization is considering or currently involved in the implementation of a CRM strategy, it is important to approach each of these practices in phases” (2007: 80).

Driggs (2007b) believes that CRM today demands that front strategies align with the changing environment, yet also align with business strategy. Multiple dimensions deserve consideration throughout the process of aligning the back and front strategies specifically, cost to serve, level of customer experience differentiation, and exclusivity of brand image. Driggs also notes that using the brand promise as a guide, companies must create a customer treatment blueprint. The blueprint when implemented correctly can help integrate a firm’s front and back strategies to create an integrated, cost effective road map that serves the customer best (2007: 46).

Zanetti (2006) states that marketing managers spend a lot of time gathering information on their customers—information that, unfortunately, is seldom analyzed and even more rarely put to any practical use to improve the service to customers. This field of activity is called Customer Relations Management (CRM) and is implemented with the aid of a great deal of money and even more time in many companies. Zanetti (2006) poses the question “what is the use of gathering and storing this data”, if it is not used to provide better service for the customer? (2006: 11).
Zanetti (2006) notes that customers want good service, but they complain of getting poor value for their money such as unfriendliness and inefficiency. Zanetti believes that only by providing customer oriented service will a company get its customers to perceive a service they would normally take for granted as something special. According to Zanetti this gives the company several decisive advantages for example; the customer sees the price–performance ratio as positive. According to Zanetti (2006) where the service they get is unique, customers will no longer draw comparisons with rival products. According to Zanetti (2006) the impressed customer will tell others about it, providing free advertising, so your paying customer is helping sell the products. It also gives the company an image boost. According to Zanetti (2006) people will perceive the company as innovative and better than the competitors. “All these points will result in increased consumer awareness of your company” (2006: 18).

2:7 Summary

Customer service is the provision of a product or service that matches or exceeds the customer’s expectations. Good customer service stems from knowledge of the customers needs and wants based on market research and intelligent communications embedded in business processes. The goal is differentiated customer service that not only provides good customer service, but distinguishes the company from the competition. A coordinated approach to customer service that utilizes the resources of the marketing department to the full has long-term gains for the company. While a happy customer generates positive ‘word of mouth’, unhappy customers are four times more likely to be vocal, so customer service must nullify this possibility. A company utilizing an effective customer service process will turn a customer complaint into a positive. Good customer service should create customer loyalty and generate repeat business and revenue. Staff retention and co-operation is crucial to this, by opening channels of communication with customers. Customers want to feel appreciated in terms of inquiries, sales, and
complaints. Customers don’t want hollow promises. Customer service and satisfaction has become more important to deliver the expected service in the eyes of the customers, therefore, it is imperative to understand what the client thinks about the company service on offer. This then has the positive benefit of improving the relationship by utilising customer service. This can easily be achieved by implementing a good customer service operation and by creating a sense of loyalty between your company and the client. This research intends to deduce the importance of customer service and satisfaction while clients make use of the company’s services.
Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3:0 Introduction

This chapter will describe the research methods used in this current research study. It will also describe the characteristic of qualitative research, the research process, the research purpose, research approach, research strategy, sample selection and collection, qualitative data analysis and criteria for quality measurement (validity and reliability) of the research.

3:1 Research Process

Flick (2006) believes that research design may ultimately be described as the means of achieving the goals of the research. Flick links theoretical frameworks, questions, research, generalization, and presentational goals with the methods used and resources available under the focus of goal achievement. Also realization is the result of decisions reached in the research process (2006: 141).

In order to be able to conduct this project, elements of the research process that had been meticulously compiled by Flick were accordingly followed.

3:2 Research Purpose

Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest that the researcher should describe intent in conducting the research – its purpose. Generally, embedded in discussion of the topic
(often only a sentence or two but important nonetheless), a statement of the purpose of
the study tells the reader what the research is likely to accomplish. Historically,
qualitative methodologists have described three major purposes for research: to explore,
explain or describe a phenomenon. Synonyms for these terms could include understand,
develop or discover. Many qualitative studies are descriptive and exploratory. They show
relationships (frequently as perceived by the participants in the study) between events and
the meaning of the relationships (2006: 33).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of the study</th>
<th>General Research Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploratory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To investigate little understood phenomena,</td>
<td>What is happening in this?</td>
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<tr>
<td>To identify or discover important categories of meaning</td>
<td>What are the salient themes, patterns, or categories of meaning for participants?</td>
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<tr>
<td>To generate hypotheses for further research</td>
<td>How are these patterns linked with one another?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanatory</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To explain the patterns related to the phenomenon in question</td>
<td>What events, beliefs, attitudes, or policies shape this phenomenon?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify plausible relationships shaping the phenomenon</td>
<td>How do these forces interact to result in the phenomenon?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To document and describe the phenomenon of interest</td>
<td>What are the salient actions, events, beliefs, attitudes, and structures and processes occurring in this phenomenon</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emancipatory</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To create opportunities and the will to engage</td>
<td>How do participants problematize their circumstances and take positive actions</td>
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The research purpose in this study is exploratory and descriptive. The exploratory part
of this research project is to understand and investigate customer satisfaction and extend the
findings for conclusions. The researcher will try to explain customer satisfaction and the research problem and the relationships between customer service and the satisfaction. This research project will increase the knowledge about satisfaction in a service company. Further, by investigating this area it will give me an insight into the new phenomenon of customer satisfaction. This research project also is descriptive as intentionally, it relies on customer's beliefs and attitudes about customer satisfaction.

3:3 Research Approach

Creswell (2003) proposes that distinct from this theoretical orientations are qualitative studies in which theory (or some other broad explanation) becomes the end point for a study. It is an inductive process of building from the data to broad themes to a generalized model or theory. The researcher begins by gathering detailed information from participants and forms this information into categories or themes. These themes or categories are developed into broad patterns, theories or generalizations that are then compared with personal experiences or, with existing literature on the topic (2003: 133).

Mason (2006) suggests "the theory comes first" view is probably most closely allied with deductive reasoning or what is sometimes called the hypothetico – deductive method, whereby theoretical propositions or hypotheses are generated in advance of the research process and then modified usually through a process of falsification by the empirical research. This is often characterized as moving from the general to the particular (2006: 180).

In terms of this study in question, the inductive approach was chosen as a result of research already completed based on personal experiences. Upon analysis it was deduced that it had similar comparisons with existing material dealing with this topic and thus the inductive approach would be used perfectly to fit the task at hand.
3:3:1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Approach

Mason (2006) believes that the qualitative approach is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted. While different version of qualitative research might understand or approach these elements in different ways (focusing on social meanings, interpretations, practices, discourses, processes and constructions), all will see at least some of these as meaningful elements in a complex, possibly multi-layered and textured social world. Mason also notes that data generation which are both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced, structured or entirely abstracted (2006: 3).

Creswell (2003) states a quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses postpositivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and then test of the theories), employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data (2003: 18).

This research study seeks to gain a better understanding of customer satisfaction in a service company. The concept of customer satisfaction is related to individual experiences as well as the customer’s perception relating to the company service on offer. This is a key factor in deciding on a qualitative approach for this current research project.

3:3:2 The Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Creswell (2003) states qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. The methods of data collection are growing, and they increasingly involve active participation by participants and sensitivity to the participants in the study. Qualitative researchers look for involvement of their participants in data collection and
seek to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study. The actual methods of data collection traditionally based on open ended observations, interviews and documents; now include a vast array of materials such as sounds, emails, scrapbooks, and other emerging forms (2003: 181).

Creswell (2003) believes that qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive. This means that the researcher makes an interpretation of data. This includes developing a description of an individual or setting, analyzing data for themes or categories, and finally, making interpretation or drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned, and offering further questions to be asked. It also means that the researcher filters the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment. One cannot escape the personal interpretation brought to qualitative data analysis (2003: 182).

3:4 Research Strategy

Creswell (2003) proposes that strategies associated with the qualitative approach are as follows. Ethnographies, in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational data. The research process is flexible and typically evolves contextually in response to the lived realities encountered in the field setting. Grounded theory, in which the researcher attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information (2003: 14).

Creswell (2003) notes that case studies, in which the researcher explores in-depth a program, an event, a process or one or more individuals. The cases are bounded by time
and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. Phenomenological research, in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, is described by participants in a study. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns. Narrative research, a form of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives. This information is then retold and restoried by the researcher into a narrative chronology. In the end, the narratives combines views from the participants life with those of the researcher’s life in collaborative narrative (2003: 15).

The researcher has found that the grounded theory method is the most suitable mode of research for this research project after considering other research approaches.

3:4:1 Sample Selection

Silverman (2005) notes purposive sampling allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested. This does not however, provide a simple approval to any case we happen to choose. Rather, purposive sampling demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are studying and choose our sample case carefully on the basis (2005:129). Denzin and Lincoln (in Silverman, 2005) states that many qualitative researchers employ purposive, and not random, sampling methods. They seek out groups, settings and individuals where the processes being studied are most likely to occur (2005: 129).

Silverman (2005) also notes that theoretical and purposive samplings are often treated as synonyms. Indeed, the only difference between the two procedures applies when the purpose behind purposive sampling is not theoretically defined (2005: 130).
Mason (1996) states that theoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions your theoretical position and most importantly, the explanation or account which you are developing. Theoretical sampling is concerned with constructing a sample which is meaningful theoretically, because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which help to develop and test your theory and explanation (1996: 93 – 4).

In this research study, purposive sampling has been followed; eight Derichebourg Multiservice clients were interviewed to deduce the satisfaction that they get from the company. In order to comprehend their customer satisfaction, the researcher identified companies that use Derichebourg Multiservice as their daily cleaning service. The researcher visited eight companies whereupon the researcher interviewed their representatives about customer satisfaction. Having formed an opinion on the current research project, I then focused on the people whose thoughts seemed to relate most to the customer satisfaction concept and who would actually be able to share with me their honest experience and opinions.

3:5 Data Collection

Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest that qualitative researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering information: participating in the setting, observing directly, interviewing in-depth, and analysing documents and material culture. Several secondary and specialised methods of data collection supplement them. Primary and the secondary methods to be considered in designing qualitative study (2006: 97).

Hitzler and Eberle (in Flick, 2006) believes a range of methods for collecting and analysing data can be allocated to these research perspectives as follows: the first perspective is dominated by semi-structured or narrative interviews and procedures of
coding and content analyzing. In the second research perspective, data is collected from focus groups, ethnography or (participant) observation, and audio/visual recordings. Then, this data is analyzed by using discourse or conversation analyses. Lastly, the third perspective collects data by recording interactions and using visual material (photos or films) that undergo one of the different versions of hermeneutic analysis (2006: 21).

Creswell (2003) notes that in interviews, the researcher conducts face to face interviews with participants, interviews participants by telephone, or engages in focus groups interviews with six to eight interviewees in each group. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are a few numbers and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (2003: 188).

In this current research study interviews were the main source of data collection with this research study adopting a procedure of face-to-face interviews to gather the data. E-mail and direct phoning were used to make appointments, confirming dates and times with the active participants of the study. When it came to choosing the interviewees, I applied purposive sampling as it was very important to interview those with enough knowledge and experience to answer the questions regarding the cleaning operations and customer satisfaction. I choose contacts that are in charge of the day to day cleaning operations on behalf of the clients, asking if they would be interested in participating in an interview. Finally, the researcher set the time and date for the meetings. Over the course of my interviews, I used a dictaphone to record eight interviews for interpretation. After the interview all recordings were transcribed word by word, contacting clients relating to any element that was unclear over the next twenty four hours.
3:6 Criteria for Quality Management

Flick (2006) purposes that concerning the criteria for assessing the procedure and result of qualitative research, the following alternatives were discussed. In this study the researcher applies classical criteria like validity and reliability to qualitative research or to reformulate them in an adequate way for this purpose (2006: 368).

Silverman (2005) states that ‘validity’ is another word for truth. Sometimes one doubts the validity of an explanation because the researcher has clearly made no attempt to deal with contrary cases (2005: 210). Mason (2006) believes that if your research is valid, it means that the researcher observing, identifying or measuring. Reliability involves the accuracy of the research methods and techniques (2006: 39). Hammersley (in Silverman 2005) notes that reliability refers to a degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (2005: 210).

In this study, the necessary attention was paid ensuring an increase in the validity. Allowing my supervisor to make critical inputs into building the research and the interview questions contributed significantly to the validity of this study. The validity was also improved by conducting face-to-face interviews with the company representatives who were very experienced and knowledgeable about the cleaning operations. Making use of observations gathered from face-to-face interviews, I believe that I have increased the validity of the research study immeasurably and provided what I feel is a good insight into understanding the research problem.

To increase the reliability of the research project, interview questions were designed making use of general questions for the interviewees, allowing an understanding into customer satisfaction. Questions were tested and examined by my colleagues and by my supervisor linked to the research project to determine its clarity. Reliability was enhanced due to the fact that during the face-to-face interviews, a dictaphone device was used to record conversations and also notes were hand written in relation to the specific matters. The interviews lasted fifteen to twenty minutes and covered main points of the project but
also developed other areas of interest that arose during the conversations. After the interviews were over, the recordings were transcribed word by word and the relevant information was organized according to the structure of the research questions together with the notes that were hand written. These notes were compared, discussed and cross checked before writing the final text of the empirical data collection. Unclear information and doubts were also addressed by phone conversations with the interviewees. All these measures were taken to increase the reliability of the research study.

3:7 Qualitative Data Analysis

Darlington and Scott (2002) purposes that there are many different approaches to qualitative data analysis, in practice most approaches involve similar strategies. Whatever the research question and the research purpose certain analytic choices have to be made to focus the analysis and structure the research report. Data for analysis may come from many sources and maybe in many forms. They may be obtained through interviews, observation or content analysis of existing materials and may include interview tapes or transcripts, observation field notes, notes on interview context and process, analytic notes and memos or journal articles (2002: 142).

Silverman (2005) states the two main social science traditions which inform the analysis of transcripts of tapes are 'conversation analysis' and 'discourse analysis' (2005: 183).

Flick (2006) notes that conversation analysis denotes a research dedicated to the investigation, along strictly empirical lines of social interaction as a continuing process of producing and securing meaningful social order. The procedure of conversation analysis are; getting or making records of natural interaction, transcribing the tapes, analyzing selected episodes and reporting the research (2006: 321).
Mason (2006) believes that discourse analysis can mean a range of things, and some forms have been associated with post postmodernism and an emphasis on text and talk as data sources. There is an analysis of the ways in which discourses can be read in texts and talk to constitute the social world. This approach can, therefore, use interview transcripts for data analysis, also a much wider range of documentary sources and discursive expressions. The idea is that conversation and discourse analysis can be observed in the detail of naturally occurring conversations (2006: 57).

Darlington and Scott (2002) suggests that coding is the process of creating categories and assigning them to selected data. In qualitative research coding is part of data management and involves numerically transforming the data in preparation for analysis. This is also an integral part of the analysis, involving shifting through the data, making sense of it and categorizing it in various ways (2002: 145). This study applied a coded method for case of analysis.

3:8 Limitations of the Study

Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest that all proposed research projects have limitations; none is perfectly designed. As Patton notes (in Marshall and Rossman, 2006), “There are no perfect research designs. There are always trade offs”. Marshall and Rossman (2006) also note that a discussion of the study’s limitations demonstrates that researcher understand this reality. The Researcher will make no overweening claims about generalizability or conclusiveness about what she or he has learned (2006: 42).

This research study uses purposive sampling to sample the clients directly applicable to this study in the Dublin region. This decreases the generalizability of the findings of this study. This research study endavours to understand the customer satisfaction in the cleaning sector of Derichebourg Multiservices clients in Ireland. This research therefore
is limited, as it does not have the time or resources available to cover customer satisfaction of international clients in other countries.

3:9 Summary

In the methodology section every single step has been followed to comply with the research findings. The result of the research findings and analysis of the data are presented in the next chapter.
Chapter 4
Findings and Analysis

4:0 Introduction

The main findings from the face-to-face interviews are presented thematically in this chapter. The eight interviews were conducted with Derichebourg Multiservices clients to understand customer satisfaction with the respondents who are in charge of day to day cleaning operations. Full transcripts of the interviews are available from the author upon request. As indicated in the chapter on research methodology (Chapter 3), the questions emerged and were developed from the literature review chapter. These were used to design the 'interview guide'. This guide provided the basis for the discussion of the topics in this chapter. All interviewees agreed to the use of quotations attributed to them for the purpose of this research.

4:1 Customers Satisfaction Causes

As mentioned in chapter two, good customer service creates satisfied customers. Clients are primarily interested in buying the service and expect every element of the service to be up to required standard. This research has found that improving customer service, developing loyalty, supervision, on-time delivery of the cleaning products, transparency in invoicing leads to the clients to be satisfied. The empirical findings will be presented under the sub-headings below. Developing loyalty and improving the customer service will be presented under the main headings.

- Supervision
• On-time delivery of the cleaning products

• Transparency in invoicing

• Developing loyalty

• Improving the customer service

4:1:1 Supervision

A significant finding from this research study is that clients nowadays do not want to interact and spend their time with the frontline staff of the service providers. Therefore, service providers designate a supervisor to carry out this duty. This study has found that clients would be more loyal and appreciate of the service providers if their employees complete their daily tasks, uninstructed by the client and fully supervised by their service providers:

*I think Derichebourg Multiservices could grow customer loyalty by providing a good customer service. I expect a good service and I expect to not have to tell the cleaners what to do everyday they have a supervisor, they have a list of daily tasks that they should know what to be doing everyday and I think that the less I have to speak to them the more I would appreciate the company*

(Helena Tynan, Office Administrator, Superquinn).

An important finding through this research study is that well supervised cleaning staff leads to customer satisfaction. It is imperative that the service companies provide adequate supervision to their staff to create the customer satisfaction. Clients expect the supervision implemented in the operations at all times and the supervisor to be proactive instead of clients checking the cleaning operations themselves:
I think that one of the major flaws that I have with your cleaning services is that supervision of the staff. I find from my own spot checks that if the staffs are not supervised they seem to work to their own devices which is a deterrent to all your cleaning services. When they are not supervised and when nobody is checking on them the level of cleaning comes down so that's a flaw

(Michael Wrafter, Board Member, St Bridges School).

This study has found that supervision of the staff and the supervision frequency in the cleaning industry is one of the key aspects that leads to customer satisfaction for Derichebourg clients. A finding emerging in this study, is that frequency of the supervision especially reduces the client complaints and it builds up the trust between company and the client. This study has found that this can be achieved by increasing the supervision frequency. From the client's point of view, supervision should give confidence that there is an element of external control over the cleaning operatives which will take the burden off the client to manage the cleaning operative on the site:

We have one cleaner on site and he is extremely good, very reliable and very thorough. The reason that I wouldn't score any higher is we very rarely see supervisors coming in. Plus, when they do come in, they haven't actually checked the standard of cleaning so, we are really managing the cleaner ourselves and we don't see the added benefit of supervisors. Again we have absolutely no complaints regarding the representative here on site on a daily basis. He is extremely helpful, so we don't have any issues. I refer back to the supervisors coming in and looking at the standard of cleaning that is there. We manage it ourselves if we see something that we want to improve on we direct it to Sam because we don't see any supervisors

(Catherine Kelly, General Manager, DHL Citywest).
This research study reveals that good practice of supervision enhances the customer satisfaction. It is important that supervisors implement their knowledge in the operations as this creates trust between the customer and the company. Imparting the knowledge to the operations via supervision companies can enhance their customer service. This research study has found that supervision is a vital part of the operations. Managing, motivating and training the staff is one of the important tools that companies can use to improve their customer service and satisfaction. Another finding reveals that imparting the knowledge through the supervisors to the cleaning operatives is one of the principal functions and it increases the proactivity of the cleaning operatives and the customer satisfaction:

If we continue the way we are going now with a very good supervisor that is the new girl Donna on board who has carried out the duties and imparting her knowledge to the new members of the staff and so it is working quite well. Also Emre giving follow up phone calls and his presence on the premises has made a huge difference and if that continues Derichebourg will improve the customer services

(Gay Nolan, Newlands, General Manager, Golf Club).

4:1:2 On-time Deliveries of the Cleaning Products

This research study reveals that on-time delivery of the cleaning products causes employee engagement and customer satisfaction. In chapter two, it was never mentioned that delivery of the products causes the employee engagement. This research study has found in relation to Derichebourg Multiservices that it is possible to provide the employee engagement for the on-time delivery of the products and it also creates customer satisfaction:

I don’t know how often your supervisors would contact your representative but, I
suppose coming in and acknowledging the work that they do and if it is a good job. One area that I feel that there is little support, in is when your representative is placing an order for supplies. The time that he has to wait for the product is upsetting his performance here on site so to actually react quickly to these guys who are the interface with your customers, would be good they need to be seen and acknowledge they are the face because if they don't fit in, the likelihood is the company will go else where so, you need to understand how important they are as your interface for the customers. I do not know how the ordering system works with supplies. I think that you need to have a look into this. Because it takes so long to get supplies in to allow your staff on site to do their job

(Catherine Kelly, General Manager, DHL Citywest).

4:1:3 Transparency in Invoicing

This research study finds that transparency in invoicing gives the clients an opportunity to understand their spending and make their decisions based on the service providers invoicing. According to this study, the clients are more satisfied once they know how much they are paying for material and labour. In the cleaning sector, usually client’s get monthly invoicing stating one price. This study has found that invoicing does not show how much material has been sent to the cleaning operations. A finding emerging from this study reveals that it is important for clients to know how much cleaning material has been sent as on occasions clients buy their own materials and they would like to know the total amount of material that has been used in the cleaning operations. This research has found that it is important that cleaning companies display on their invoices how much cleaning material has been sent to the operations including the price, the material and the labour:

I would say the level of the materials that are being provided for the cleaners on site. I can’t get a quantity or an estimate figure on what is being provided. It seems to me that over the years we seem to be providing a lot of the cleaning

40
products. Now, I know that a lot of cleaning products we do have to provide ourselves anyway, but there’s a break down there from my point of view, I can’t get a figure on it and can’t get a handle on the level of cleaning products being provided. Other then that it is nothing major

(Darren Power, General Manager, Jacks and Court Hotel).

4:2 Developing Loyalty

This research study notes that an important element of customer loyalty is being consistent in the service delivery. This creates loyal customer. This study can report that companies can foster loyalty through their consistency in service delivery. This study has found that companies can build loyalty through consistency; this can be achieved by implementing the supervision and increasing the frequency in the field, as clients do not want to hear from their own staff that the service they bought is not satisfying their needs. According to this study, supervision in the cleaning industry is an interaction-communication channel between the cleaning provider and the client and this gives service providers an opportunity to create long term loyal customers. This study has found that supervision builds up trust and loyalty, and this leads to consistent service delivery. Service providers can only achieve this by providing an in-field supervision. An important finding in this research, is that supervision is a vital component of a consistent service delivery and a problem solving mechanism which ultimately reduces client’s complaints and creates satisfied and loyal long term clients:

I think good communication from a management level right across the board is important but, I think one of the keys customer levels is consistency. So, being consistent from day one to day three hundred. Be as consistent as possible and the following year be more consistent. This is something that can help grow loyalty with the customer. Really references go back to five years. Number one, when we
employ a cleaning service we basically are looking for that company not to give us problems. Not to give us issues. Not to have our teachers complaining about not wiping the tables and little things that happen on a daily basis so, from a customer loyalty aspect we want your consistency and your standard to go right through the board that's what we need to ensure we become loyal customers of your company

(Michael Wrafter, Board Member, St Bridges School).

This research study reveals that investing the staff training grows the customer loyalty. A significant approach should be taken to a staff training while growing the customer loyalty. Also service providers should train the staff in parallel to the client’s expectations and all staff should be empowered to work to benefit the client’s expectations to grow the loyalty. Another significant finding through this research study, is showing flexibility to the clients while there is an issue from the client side as clients expects the problem solved in the best of company ability. Showing excuses and giving reasons to the client not to solve the problem will lose the customer in the long term, and will have a negative impact on the customer loyalty therefore, companies should be more flexible in their dealings and establish a partnership while there is an issue to be solved:

_Derichebourg Multiservices can grow customer loyalty by continuing to invest in staff training, show flexibility to customer and establish a partnership approach to problems_

(Stephen Hall, Facility Manager, SAP).

A major finding from this research study, is that delivering a good service grows the customer loyalty. When the companies deliver what customers expect from them, they feel loyal to the service providers. Another significant finding through this research study, is that good communication with the clients fosters the loyalty. If the companies establish a good communication and be honest in their dealing, clients will develop loyal
behaviour:

*Simple, give us a very good service and grow the customer loyalty. As long as a company provides a good service and loyal communication and be honest with us we will always be to you a loyal customer. I think being honest good communications, good work ethics make can grow good reliability at present we have that communications have been good and follow up calls a very good the service has been loyal*

(Gay Nolan, Newlands, General Manager, Golf Club).

This research study shows that if the clients are appreciated by the company representatives they feel loyal to the service providers. It is imperative that company representatives establish a good relationship with the contact person to foster the loyalty. Showing appreciation to the clients is a skill that every employee has to have and is a good investment of increased loyalty:

*I feel like a loyal customer. You don't have to do anything more for me as I feel like a loyal customer. I get on very well with Marion (Area Supervisor) and Yvonne (Region Manager). I feel like they appreciate me. We have no problems at all*

(Joanna Norman, RDS, Office Administrator).

This research study reveals that reducing the service price for loyal customers have a positive impact on growing customer loyalty. Clients feel they are valued and appreciated once they have cost reduction in the services they use. Price is an important factor when developing loyalty. Service providers should put this factor under the scope and understand customers are developing loyalty if the price is right. There are customers that value the price when buying the service or when using the service therefore, a cost reduction would give service company an opportunity to keep the business and this will
gain the customer loyalty:

Reduce your cost to grow customer loyalty. I've been with you for eight years, so I suppose that qualifies for a loyal customer. Like I said, its customer service you are seeing on site all the time that your taken and interest in the place and that the guys that are on the ground operating for you are working on their own initiative not to be told to do everything all the time. So, cost I would say, and in places like this where there is so many staff. It is a big operation and if everybody plays their own part it takes the pressure off management

(Darren Power, General Manager, Jacks and Court Hotel).

A finding emerging in this study is that keeping the promises that you make with your clients grows the customer loyalty. It is important that the service providers implement the cleaning operations that have been written in the contact. Most of the cleaning providers when they are pricing the jobs they cut back on the cleaning hours to get the business and create a price advantage towards the competitors. This can create unsatisfied clients as frontline cleaning staff might think the hours has been given is not enough to complete the cleaning job. It is imperative that the cleaning hours allocated matches clients expectations and it is not going to lead a conflict between the cleaning staff and the service provider. This leads to a disappointment and a loss of trust. This study has found that it is important to implement what has been said in the cleaning operations to answer client’s wants and needs to make them loyal:

I think that the obvious thing would be to have a look at the cleaning contract before you guys come on board. We promise to do this and this. This is our list of tasks. This is what our cleaners will do. We provide these amount of cleaners to do the work so to do what you said you were going to do really not to be mislead to say that we would do all this work and then the cleaners might say we don't have the time to do this work so they have been given a job to do that maybe they think it isn't possible to do in that length of time so, I think things like that. Do
what you say your going to do to make me a loyal customer

(Helena Tynan, Office Administrator, Superquinn).

Another important finding through the research study is companies can grow the customer loyalty by informing the clients about the supervisory frequency and what the visit involves before they sign up a contract with the client. This will develop loyalty especially if the cleaning companies make an agreement about supervisory frequency and the details of the visit:

You can grow the customer loyalty by saying what you do and doing what you say. A help might be to set up standard work for supervisors outlining how often they visit, what the visit should involve etc.

(Vera Burke, PWA, Administration Assistant).

4:3 Improving the Customer Service

This research study found that continuous improvement in the service delivery creates satisfied and loyal customers in the long term. It is important that service providers enhance their communication and problem solving abilities to keep their business, as unsatisfied clients are always ready to change the company for a better service. During operations, cleaning issues may occur but regular occurrence will result in a negative impact on the client relationship as clients do not wish to deal with the chronic issues that may be involved. Clients want the problems solved and not to be repeated:

It's all about continuous improvement. Our customers are demanding higher standards from us better turn times, better communication and resolutions to issues raised. They give us a market feedback on a quarterly basis and if we
do not listen to and respond to what they are saying they give the business to someone else. The same applies to our suppliers. We need to receive the service we are paying for. We need a positive response when we raise an issue. We need to have fixes put in place and we need those fixes to work and not have the same issue called up again less than 6 months into a new contract. As I mentioned, the three girls who carry out the daily cleaning service do their best but they need to be kept motivated

(Vera Burke, PWA, Administration Assistant).

A finding emerging from this study is the importance of a good relationship between the client and the company representatives and this would also improve the customer service. Another important finding through the research study, is that clients expect company managers and supervisors to be prompt and accurate in their dealing with clients and implement the expectations in the operations as soon as possible as this will be perceived as an improvement in customer service. This research study has found that being accurate and prompt in problem solving is very important as it builds up trusted relationship between the client and the company:

Well at present being a new board member, I find that I have a good relation with Emre. I find that anything that I have asked of him has been done accurately and promptly. So, with this relationship building and our communication building, I think that it will improve the customer service and at present I am quite happy but, I think that there are issues and flaws that we need to address but I am sure that through communication, we will sort them out

(Michael Wrafter, Board Member, St Bridges School).

A significant finding through this research study is that supervisor’s visits improve the customer service delivery in the eye of the customers. Customers visited by the area supervisors regularly will perceive these visits as an effort leading towards improved
service. Another interesting finding through this research study is regular visits to the client prevents negative emotions and reduces the problem solving time:

*More focus on the repeated supervision would improve the customer service. An added incentive would be if the supervisor also requested my opinion on the standard of service as this does not happen. An example of this is shown with our customer services manager, who is one of the main contacts and has not been contacted in the last six months or actually in the last twelve months. Thus, the supervisors have no way of knowing if we are happy with the service or if there is anything else that they could do to improve or that we could do to help. With our customers, we would have a monthly meeting. I am not saying that we need to have a monthly meeting but, even quarterly meeting you know even a phone call to say how are things going? Is there anything that you needed to look at when we are in next to supervise? I mean very simple and if it was done in a regular basis, it would stop the built up of emotion or it would address the problem quicker*

(Catherine Kelly, General Manager, DHL Citywest).

An important finding through this research study is that area supervisors should communicate regularly with the client to improve the customer service. It is imperative that supervisors keep in touch regularly with the client to understand what the clients think about the service as it might change from week to week. Providing the communication and visits through phone calls or face-to-face visits would eliminate the service failure and create satisfied customers:

*More communication from supervisors would improve the customer service*

(Stephen Hall, Facility Manager, SAP).

A finding emerging from this study is that cleaning staff know that client expectations improve the customer service delivery. Cleaning staff that directly interacts with the
client have a big impact on service delivery, as they know the client best and they can change the customer’s perception about the service delivery and loyalty. It is an expected from customers that front line staff understands what clients really expect in a cleaning operation and be responsive to those expectations. This will create good customer service delivery and clients will feel happy about the service they are getting:

As I said earlier, we are working with you so long here that I'd say we're reasonably happy with your customer service and the way things are going. Even the guys that are working at the tree stop they kind of know what we're looking for, they know what we expect of them so if you had that situation in all your establishments, in all your customer basis from my point of view, that's what a premises is looking for. The staff knows what they have to do and get out and do it themselves. Take on that extra bit if needs be

(Darren Power, General Manager, Jacks and Court Hotel).

A major finding from this research study is that extra staff with adequate English creates happy clients. It is important that service provider’s draws attention on the levels of English that extra staff speak as it is perceived as a good service delivery. Another interesting finding through this research study, is that cleaning staff who wear their uniform at all times pleases clients, and this improves the customer service. It is imperative that cleaning operatives wear the uniforms as it distinguishes the people from others and tells them which company they are working for. It is also a good way of building a brand name through dressing the frontline staff:

Maybe not your customer services but one problem I have sometimes with certain things is some of the staff haven’t got great English, and when we get staff in they need to be able to communicate with our employees. It is only if we get extra staff in. The staff I've got now have very good English, but, if we need extra staff sometimes, they don’t have great English. I think they should have a uniform of some sort. They don't wear a uniform in the office in the evening and I think they
should be distinguished as to who they are when they are coming into the office. So, I think maybe they could maybe use the uniform or maybe if there is a policy it should be enforced that they wear the uniform while cleaning in the office. They come in, in just general clothes. Otherwise, I'm very happy with Derichebourg Multiservices

(Joanna Norman, RDS, Office Administrator).

4:4 Summary

This chapter provided the findings from the face-to-face interviews in relation to customer satisfaction, developing loyalty and improving the service delivery. Information from the daily cleaning service users has been presented to analyze the data and make recommendations.
Chapter 5
Conclusions and Recommendations

5:0 Introduction

In this chapter conclusions and recommendations will be presented based on the findings through the face to face interviews.

5:1 Creating Satisfaction for Derichebourg Multiservices Clients

In order to promote customer satisfaction with the service they are using, it is important that certain elements are provided to the clients to ensure satisfaction. This comes from a good service delivery underpinned by strong supervision, on-time delivery of the cleaning products and transparency in invoicing. This research identified important factors which causes satisfaction in the service delivery of Derichebourg Multiservices as follows.

5:1:1 Supervision

The findings of this research imply that supervision has a vast impact on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and improving the overall customer service. Cleaning companies should understand that main selling point of the cleaning business is supervision. The importance of supervision was never mention in the literature review. This is a new finding in this research. Harris (2007) specified the customer needs in the literature review as price, service, quality, appreciation and action but supervision was not highlighted as one of the fundamental needs in the cleaning industry. Companies who invested in supervision and trained supervisors will develop satisfied clients.
The following conclusions from this research study concerning customer satisfaction are outlined as follows:

- Clients should not interact with the frontline cleaning staff as this duty should be done by the area supervisors (Chapter 4:36). If there is a site supervisor on the sites the client should interact with the supervisor in the site.

- Cleaning companies to provide proactive supervision on any occasion. The main satisfaction that comes through in this case clients are paying not to interact with frontline staff that is why supervision is important.

- Well supervised cleaning staff are more motivated and they work enthusiastically therefore, cleaning staff regularly should be supervised to provide the motivation.

- Supervision frequency has got a big impact on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty therefore, cleaning companies will increase the frequency of the supervision in the key accounts.

- A significant finding through this research study is that supervisor’s visits improve the customer service delivery in the eye of the customers. It is imperative that cleaning supervisors establish a regular contact with the contact persons in the sites they are supervising to understand the state of the client in relation to service delivery. Also it is imperative that regular visits provided to the client to prevent negative emotions and reduce the problem solving time.

Throughout this research study, the importance of supervision and frequency of supervision has been emphasized and it has an important impact on the customer satisfaction especially, the presence of area supervisors reducing the client’s complaints and building up trust between the company and the client. The majority of interviewed clients seriously considered changing the service providers if they do not see the supervisors on the job. Therefore it is imperative that the presence of supervisors by provided Derichebourg Multiservices to the clients.
5:1:2 On-Time Deliveries of the Cleaning Products

This research study has shown that on-time delivery of cleaning products is an important element of customer satisfaction and employee engagement (Chapter 4:38). This was not highlighted in the literature review. The best practice of on-time delivery of products leads to happy clients, therefore improving on-time delivery is important to creating satisfied customers and happy employees. In the cleaning industry, there must be cleaning products provided for the cleaning staff to be able to consistently work, as they are constantly using the products while they are cleaning. Late delivery of cleaning materials means that labour loss and client will not accept cleaning staff losing their cleaning time waiting for a cleaning product to be delivered.

5:1:3 Transparencies in Invoicing

This research study has found that clients are more satisfied with transparent invoices once they know how much they are paying for material and labour (Chapter 4:39). Clarity and transparency in invoicing is an important element of the customer satisfaction an issue that did not come to therefore in the literature review. Bacal (2005) identified customer wants and needs but specific issue such as transparency in invoicing is not highlighted. In this research study we have seen that showing the breakdown of the cost of the service is an important element of the customer satisfaction. Clients will have their decision based on the service provider invoicing and it has to be accurate and breakdown of the service has to be shown. In the cleaning industry service providers invoicing does not show what cleaning material has been sent to the cleaning operations. Cleaning companies only send the total price which includes labour and material therefore, clients cannot see the breakdown of product quantity, price and product type in their invoicing. Labour and material should be separately shown in the invoices to assist the clients about their buying decision as some of the clients buy their own material and would like to know what has been spent in the cleaning operation for their accounting and decision making.
5:2 Recommendations for Creating Satisfaction

Through this research study we have seen cleaning companies can create satisfied customers through their supervision mechanism. To foster the customer satisfaction companies need to value the supervision and invest in training supervisor regularly in relation to human interaction. In the cleaning market in Ireland, cleaning companies who developed competencies of cultivating successful supervisors will develop distinct competitive advantages, and will differ themselves in the market. In the cleaning business, supervision is the unique selling point of the business therefore, cleaning companies need to open up an internal supervisor training school and try to cultivate successful supervisors.

Derichebourg Multiservices is buying cleaning products from an external supplier therefore the company has no control over the supplier’s delivery system and times. This is creating unsatisfied client and cleaning staff. It is highly recommended that Derichebourg Multiservices opens its own cleaning product store to deliver the products on time and gain price advantage. The Company is paying more currently and products are delivered too late. This is the outcome of working with an external supplier and it is not beneficial for the company. It would be beneficial for the company to expand vertically or open up a supply division in the company to gain more control over the supply chain, this, increasing customer satisfaction.

The purpose of transparency in invoicing is to increase the customer satisfaction and give the client an opportunity to make decisions based on the service provider invoicing. This research can now recommend that cleaning companies should specify the breakdown of the material separately in the invoicing to create satisfied customers.

The majority of interviewed clients expected a rapid response from Derichebourg Multiservices when the clients have an operational issue as this is the key factor of customer satisfaction in the cleaning sector. This research study recommends responding
ideally within five hours. By doing so, cleaning providers show due care and attention to the client and this will make the clients feel the issue correctly handled. It is highly recommended that all clients have one contact number nationwide and every issue delivered internally to the region managers and area supervisors is logged centrally. This will give the company a statistical opportunity to understand customer satisfaction. By logging all incoming calls from clients, cleaning providers will gain control over the issue handling process and responding time. This can also be achieved by establishing a nationwide central call centre and it is a very professional way of improving the customer satisfaction and the brand name nationwide.

5:3 Developing Loyalty

Throughout this research study, the researcher examined how important customer satisfaction is in creating loyal customers and the researcher, concludes that satisfied clients develop customer loyalty and trust in the services they get from the company. This research study justifies that the satisfaction of the client's plays an important role in growing the customer loyalty and trust. This can be achieved by providing proactive supervision and frequency in cleaning industry (Chapter 4:40). Supervision is an important element of customer satisfaction in the cleaning industry and companies that provide good supervision and frequency will develop customer loyalty. Supervision and frequency did not emerge in the literature review under the loyalty heading. Kyule (2007) notes that product quality, knowing and exceeding your customer's expectations, responsiveness to customers, solving problems, engaging customers by creating the dialogue builds loyalty but issues in relation to supervision and the frequency did not surface. Throughout this research the study, the researcher found that the consistency in the service delivery has an important impact on customers loyalty (Chapter 4:40). When performing the interviews the researcher found clients perceiving the consistency in service delivery as an important element of loyalty and this also did not come to the surface in the literature review under the heading of loyalty. Soljacich (2004) outlined the
best ways of building loyalty in the literature review but being consistent in service delivery building loyalty did not come to the surface.

The majority of Derichebourg Multiservices clients interviewed, emphasized the importance of good customer service, which in turn makes the customers loyal to the company. It also interesting to note that a good relationship with region managers and area supervisors was one of the aspects that fosters loyalty.

The following conclusions from this research study concerning developing loyalty are outlined as follows:

- Supervision builds customer loyalty and trust.
- Investing in staff training grows customer loyalty.
- Flexible approach to a problem solving develops loyalty.
- Establish a partnership problem solving.
- Deliver what client expects.
- Appreciate the clients through the region managers and area supervisors.
- Reduce the cost for your loyal clients.
- Keep the promises and deliver what you promised.
- Inform the client about the supervision frequency.

5:4 Recommendations for Developing Loyalty

In this research study, empirical findings proved that customers are loyal if they get good customer service and that they are satisfied with the company. This study can report that especially in the cleaning industry, supervision fosters customer loyalty and satisfaction. Therefore, it is highly recommended that companies use the supervision to boost customer loyalty. Area supervisors and cleaning operatives are the face of the company that customers see everyday. The bullet points above proved that customer loyalty can be
achieved through well trained supervisors in the cleaning operations. It is important that area supervisors are trained based on the problem solving abilities.

Loyalty programmes have not yet been introduced into the cleaning industry in Ireland. These programmes are always perceived to create loyalty in the retail industry. The researcher believes implementation of a loyalty programme would foster customer loyalty and create more customer satisfaction in the long term in the cleaning industry in Ireland. Most of the clients have set prices even been with the company ten years or one year. Therefore, to create notion of loyalty it is important that cleaning companies to apply a price quota based on the length of the service to the customers and give them a reduction on the price they are paying.

This research can recommend training management staff based on the fact that human interaction is a vital tool to gain the customer loyalty and satisfaction. Nowadays, NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) training is vastly used to increase customer loyalty and satisfaction as well as in sales.

This research study also recommends providing the employee engagement to create loyal customers. Loyal customers are more profitable than those who are not loyal. In addition to this, loyal employees will create loyal customers and so it is important cleaning companies provide employee engagement. This should be provided to all level employees across the hierarchy. It is highly recommended for cleaning companies to appreciate each worker and to organize days out once a year with their ground operatives as this will make them feel appreciated by the management of the company. This will boost customer loyalty indirectly and will also create satisfied clients.
5:5 Improving the Customer Service

Throughout this research study it has been concluded that improving the customer service will lead customers to be satisfied and that customers will develop loyal behaviours (Chapter 4:44). The main start point of satisfaction comes through delivering good customer service and constantly improving it. When good service delivery and satisfaction are provided, customers will develop loyalty. The researcher believes that delivering expected service and improving it contributes hugely to the customer satisfaction and leads to happier customers.

Following conclusion concerning improving the service as outlined as follows:

- Provide continuous improvement.
- Enhance communication and problem solving abilities.
- Establish good relationship with the client.
- Be prompt and accurate in your dealings and problem solving.
- Provide regular visits to the clients through area supervisors.
- Increase area supervisor’s communication with the client.
- Empower the cleaning staff in relation to client expectations.
- Employ cleaning staff who can speak adequate English to communicate with the client.
- Cleaning staff should wear their uniforms at all times.

5:6 Recommendations for Improving the Customer Service

In this research study, it has been shown that clients that get good customer service increased the satisfaction and develops loyal behaviour.
It is imperative that companies carry out regular quality inspections and benchmarking cleaning services to improve the service. Comparing the service with across service providers would give a good insight to improve the service and give a good momentum for innovation.

Monitoring the daily cleaning operations is important to achieve good customer service delivery therefore, increasing the supervision frequency and communication in the key accounts would improve the service. Service providers can apply robust performance management to their cleaning operation top to bottom. It is important that performance management implemented from the activities of day-to-day cleaning tasks are applied to the strategic responsibilities of managers engaged in the longer term planning of the service.

This research study highly recommends using e-mails to survey key clients once a week in relation to the service delivery. E-mails are usually used by the clients to express their issues. In turn, most of the providers, waiting to receive an email from the client, choose to respond operationally. The nature of HTML format (Hyper Text Mark-up Language) is very interactive and it offers advantages while surveying the clients. The surveying of clients can be implemented through questionnaires, which provide weekly customer views to evaluate customer service delivery and also give updated information to the management to in response to cleaning operations.

This research study highly recommends the implementation of key account management systems nationwide to improve the service delivery. It is important for cleaning companies to enhance the service and set up a unique communication channel through the key account managers. This will increase the service value, business objectives and plans will also be delivered rapidly to the cleaning operations to improve service delivery.
5:7 Implications for Derichebourg Multiservices Management

In this research study, the purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of customer satisfaction in a service company and the causes of satisfaction and related subjects presented. At the end of the conclusions it has been proved that clients receiving good customer service are satisfied and feel more loyal to the service providers. Empirical findings through this research study proved that service companies that improve their services would benefit from satisfaction and create loyal customers. To create satisfied clients, Derichebourg Multiservices has to invest in their operations and view the strategy in the market. It is highly recommended from the findings of this research for Derichebourg Multiservices managers to respond to the current environmental changes and proceed on the service delivery and increase the market share.

Derichebourg Multiservices should:

- Transfer the core competencies to provide a standard service nationwide.
- Implement more operational control systems.
- Continue to develop internal customer relationships.
- Evaluate customer needs and wants every six months.
- Use vertical integration to buy out a supplier to gain control on the supply chain.
- It is important to make efficient use of the building blocks of competitive advantage to create satisfied clients. Derichebourg Multiservices might create a service that better satisfies the customers’ needs by focusing on innovation, excellent quality, customer responsiveness and efficiency. It is important that a superior skill to be developed in the next two years to achieve a unique service, which satisfies the customers’ needs to a much greater degree than their competitors do.
5:8 Recommendations for Future Research to Expand on This Study

• This research study has focused on the cleaning industry in Ireland and has done the interviews with the clients in Ireland. Future researcher could bring this research into a larger scale across other countries in order to understand how companies service delivery in other countries.

• Future researcher could make a comparative study between the cleaning operations in Ireland and operations in abroad in relation to customer satisfaction and the service delivery.

• Future researcher could examine client’s perception and rating of Derichebourg service in Ireland versus other business units of the group, and other industry standards.

5:9 Summary

In this chapter, conclusions and recommendations have been made in relation to customer satisfaction, service delivery and developing loyalty. The implications for Derichebourg Multiservices have been presented and recommendations made to expand on this study.
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Appendix

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is your opinion of Derichebourg Multiservices Daily Cleaning Services?

2. What are the most important criteria for choosing Derichebourg's Daily Cleaning Services?

3. Are there any flaws in the Daily Cleaning Service Provided by Derichebourg Multiservices?

4. In your opinion, what should we do to show our employees that we appreciate them and their work?

5. How do you think Derichebourg Multiservices can grow customer loyalty?

6. What do we have to do to make you a loyal customer?

7. Have you had a situation where we had to make a service recovery? What was the outcome of this?

8. Have you any suggestion as to how we could improve our customer services?