

**Measuring quality of service in the public Health Care Sector in Mauritius –
A study of patients' satisfaction**

Critical issues

- ❖ The public health care sector provides free health care to all the citizens of Mauritius and demands keep on increasing.
- ❖ Mauritius ranks 2nd in the world for the incidence of diabetes (Diabetes outlook 2000)
- ❖ There is increasing morbidity and mortality due to cardiovascular problems.
- ❖ Rapid economic growth with lifestyle becoming more and more sedentary.
- ❖ Health care needs to reflect international norms and standards whilst taking into account local health care priorities
- ❖ Clear benchmarks should be set with performance targets to manage resources effectively for each specialty areas.
- ❖ A total quality culture to be promoted
- ❖ Co – opt patients as partners in their care to increase compliance and speed their recovery
- ❖ Obtain regular feedback from the users (patients) to improve overall quality

Policy options

Development of a Service Culture

Create a Vision, decide on key mission and core values .

After determining the vision, the next step is to decide on the key mission and core values of the hospitals. Translate vision into tangibles goals that will move the organisation forward and make it perform to its optimum.

Know the service users and other stakeholders.

Set performance standards and measures

Recognize and reward service excellence.To instill and maintain motivation of staff to provide excellent service, their performance should be recognized and rewarded

Leadership and Management issues. They need also to lead by examples

Training – To provide high calibre personnel

Motivation.-

Meet patient satisfaction at every level in the hospital.

Specific suggestions and recommendations for different dimensions.

Admission Process.

As Hopson and Scally (1991) point out, the first four minutes between a patient and the service provider is very important as it is during that period that rapport is to be built.

Well organised admission process.

Whenever a hospital admission is required, it should take place fairly quickly.

Waiting time.

Excessive waiting time prior to the allocation of a bed is frustrating and annoying for patients. Comfortable waiting areas and accessories like books, toys, and television may be provided to keep patients occupied while they are waiting.

Improve communication with patients.

Take into consideration patients' beliefs, practices and customs.

Patients' beliefs, practices and customs significantly affect the way patients view the health care services being offered

Patients' Amenities and Ward/Hospital Environment.

Pain Management.

Giving patients the right help.

A person to serve as primary conduit of information.

Obtain regular patients feedback.

Creating a comfortable Ward/Hospital Environment.

Cleanliness and hygienic conditions.

Coordinate individual, family, and hospital resources to facilitate discharge.

Post discharge follow up.

Policy recommendations

- ❖ Creation of a strategic health body with clear lines of accountability.
- ❖ A strategic health framework for priority areas – based on health care needs which transcends the various political affiliations.
- ❖ Set standards of care in the hospitals and publicize the results regularly
- ❖ Provide high caliber personnel in the health care sector
- ❖ Effective team to manage the resources effectively – draw on management skills and techniques from the business sector.
- ❖ Create a patients' charter of rights

- ❖ Involve patients' in the decision and planning of care to increase compliance
- ❖ Perform regular feedback to assess level of satisfaction of patients with the care
- ❖ Create a TQM culture
- ❖ Reward outstanding performances
- ❖ Daily short sessions (15 minutes) of health care promotion using various appropriate medias eg primetime TV to educate people on important health matters in simple language

CRM as an emerging paradigm : Myth or Reality?
A study on the Mauritian IT sector.

Critical issues

- Trend in GDP composition of Mauritius over the last decade - towards the services industry. Agriculture 6.1%, manufacturing 30.3% and the tourism and services sector is 63.6% of total GDP. (*Source: World Bank Country Report, 2004*).
- Fierce international competition due to the new WTO rules effective as from January 2005 after the removal of preferential access to European and US markets for both sugar and textile products.
- Closure of many factories resulting in laying-off of many workers.
- With new free trade agreements and tourism reaching its limits, Information and communication technology (ICT) is seen as the best potential to emerge as a powerful engine of growth and employment creation.
- In the international context, Mauritius is ranked 46th out of the 102 countries in the Competitiveness Growth Index (GCI) and Business Growth Index (BGI) of the Global Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum Report 2004).
- A third index, the Technological Progress, which gives the development of ICT, is now associated to a country's overall economic growth (*World Economic Forum Report, 2004*).
- Businesses exist to create *profits*; such goes the saying. But businesses also seek to safeguard their customers by creating, growing and nurturing an ongoing relationship with their customers (Chattopadhyay, 2001). Merging the two aspirations is at the heart of CRM. This paper, which is based upon the findings of a survey of 30 IT companies, will help to explain how Mauritian IT companies can make use of CRM techniques and other marketing tools to take a 360-degree view of their customers.
- This urge to get closer to customers and develop ongoing relationships with them is at the heart of this CRM discussion.

- The research carried out in the IT sector in Mauritius revealed that a great majority of the IT companies were aware of the concept of CRM, 76.7%, contrary to what was expected, there seems to be no significant difference across demographic groups of companies concerning the practice of CRM.

Summary of policy options:

- Developing the Mauritian IT sector through closer network of relationships is viewed not a cost; but as an investment.
- Customer Records - effective use of databases. CRM-gearred companies need to have an *intelligence system* focusing on customer satisfaction and customer needs and desires; it forms a valuable source of information for decision-making. (Gronroos, 1990) - the results show this is not being done effectively.
- Online data bases - 63.3% of the surveyed population had a web page and out of this portion, 52.6% used their web pages as a means of feedback via feedback questionnaires
- Data mining and Warehousing - In many organizations such data can be cleaned, summarized, integrated and stored in data warehouses to support decision-making (Sugumaran and Bose, 1999). Only 28.6% of the Mauritian IT companies performed '*data mining and warehousing*'
- Factoring (finance management) - Of the 93.3% companies that hold a database, very few had information about the Credit Rating (14.3%) and Credit limit (28.6%) of their customers. Many small to mid-sized IT companies can use factoring to:
 - ☞ Generate instant working capital
 - ☞ More easily predict and manage cash flows
 - ☞ Increase sales by offering customers competitive extended credit terms
 - ☞ Avoid cash flow problems caused by customers with long payment cycles.

Thus by outsourcing such activities, companies can concentrate on what they do best - *taking care of their customers.*

- Service oriented culture - customer feedback and after sales service
- Knowledge Management - The common denominator in all *internal marketing* perspectives is *knowledge* renewal. E.g. to answer customer queries effectively, front-line and support staff need to know procedures, have product knowledge and regular updates. Only 30% of IT companies focused on the '*spread of knowledge*' in companies; it can be deduced that IT companies have not yet realized the importance of knowledge management amidst organizations.
- Cost benefits selected customers only
- CRM softwares - IT companies that have not yet invested in CRM software must perform a cost-benefit analysis of CRM softwares see how this can enable a more systematic way of managing customer relationships on a larger scale
- The new leader recognizes that CRM technology must become as central a part of the CRM equation as *customers* and *employees* are themselves. An effective leader will ensure that CRM technology is embraced by the entire organization to drive its overall success.
- Encourage innovation strategies - including broadband, teleworking, and best rural e-business - making it attractive to businesses of varying size, in all market sectors and across the island
 - best use of mobile & wireless technologies, advanced supply chain and best rural e-business.
- Encourage an IT culture through:
 - E- Education and Training: Culture and Skills

In respect to the shortage of IT skills and the urgency to create an ICT culture an IT training programme was launched under the responsibility of the NPCC (National Productivity Competitiveness Council) to train 20,000 persons annually comprising of students, teachers, the working community and members of the public.

E- Governance

The ability for citizens to have on line access to Government services on a 24 hr/ 7 days a week basis. Examples of such possibilities are: the payment of Tax On Line, Registering purposes, etc.

- Encourage all industry sectors including manufacturing, distribution & logistics, arts & leisure and finance, banking, insurance & legal to make use of IT technologies in innovative ways and really transform the way they work.

Implications

- Further encourage home computer ownership 29.4% - NCB survey 2002
- Offer more packages to Internet connection of Mauritian households - 23.8% NCB survey.
- Further liberalize the telecommunications sector to make prices more competitive

Policy recommendations

- Promote an IT culture - create critical mass of IT professionals
- Create high calibre trained personnel to take up high end posts in IT
- eEducation and training - access to rural and remote sectors
- Make access to computers through computer centres, social and community health centres to those who cannot afford it
- Leverage on strengths eg bilingual, lower costs, know how to gain advantage from an international point of view in BPOs
- Make access to internet facilities in community and health centres
- Update data bases to inform decision making process
- Ensure data protection and confidentiality of information
- Make effective use of IT to become more competitive across the businesses and the wider community in order to compete globally.
- Ensure regulatory framework in place for safety and security

