In the Mind of the Employee

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Learning Community 05 Sociology 101 & English 101, Professors Richard Ocejo & John Staines

Introduction

In our studies we researched different types of retail stores and how their different managers affected stress levels of employees, and how/why they attracted different types of clientele.

Thesis Statements

**Brandi:** "The manager has a negative attitude at times, which affects the team members. Her negative attitude mostly comes from her personality, the workload she deals with everyday, shoplifters, and rude customers. But instead of turning that negative energy into positive work, she brings it out on the employees which causes workplace conflict and stress at work."

**VJ:** "When you work in retail it is very easy to get stressed out from customers and agitated employees. Either a store in complete chaos, or a store that has order where everything flows together."

**Onur:** "A workplace such as a gas station shows how "McDonaldization" of society and the workplace has many negative effects on workers, such as stress."

**Alexa:** "No matter what the hair salon, a manager has a strong influence over its everyday activities. The manager can affect the clientele as well as the happiness of employees."

The Employees

**Marshall's:** Have families, multiple jobs, rely on minimum wage, older, focused on work, short-tempered, minority, working class.

**Banana Republic:** Mostly student, relaxed, African American, Hispanic, over 20 years of age, middle-class.

**Family Dollar:** Jamaican, less education, rude, working class, have families, low wages (except manager).

**Gulf Gas Station:** Minority, undocumented immigrants, stressed out, unhappy, some with families, long hours.

**Hair Salon:** Experienced/skilled, high level education, some have families.

Findings

**Onur:** In the research of the gas station attendants, it was clear that "McDonaldization" (Workplaces becoming more efficient) had a negative effect on the workers and created a lot of stress. This was because work became too rational of too simple which bored the workers. This made their hours longer and wages lower since their work became easy. There is no doubt that stress springs out of the negative changes that "McDonaldization" of the workplace has brought. It undermines the workers in pursuit of a more efficient and a more calculable way of doing business which is always horrible for the workers.

**Brandi:** I found that when a manager is inexperienced and has no knowledge of how to handle stress in a positive way, they react very irrationally towards their workers and customers. During this experience, I was able to witness my manager in two different types of behavioral settings, when she has a good day, the entire day will run smoothly until someone or something upsets her. The employees are affected behind this negative behavior, which causes stress at work, because they all have to stay on top of our work in order to not hear her complain, or to deal with the attitude that she gives them.

**Alexa:** I found that female managers tend to like to keep their employees and clients for long amounts of time. There tends to be less change in the salon’s clients and workers when a female manages the salon. With the male managers, the workers tend to come and go, as do the clients. There were a lot of walk-in appointments, because the employees were always changing so it is hard to maintain a solid clientele base. Most employees at Heads Up have been with the salon for 5-10 years minimum. They have all completed hair school and continue their education though hair classes arranged for by the manager. Most have kids, besides the shampoo girls who are still attending hair school and will eventually become hairdressers. Most employees at BHC (Beautiful Hair Color) have been there for 1-3 years. They do have many years of experience, but tend to have a hard time keeping one job for a long time. They also tend to be younger, either just married or have one small child. They did say that they love their jobs, but they aren’t trying to make a long-term career out of it. Its just something to “put bread on the table, for now”.

**VJ:** From my research I found that the type and quality of the merchandise attract a certain type of customer. At Marshall’s, for example, the merchandise is cheaply priced but good quality. The cheap prices attract a lot of people and create a hectic work environment. When I compared these findings to my findings at Banana Republic, I discovered that having more expensive items led to hiring more employees, so everything is clean all the time. The piles are nice and neat and the hangings are perfect. The pricey items seem to attract a different kind of customer. These customers try to make as little of a mess as possible. The store is always neat the employees have little work to do because they all work together helping each other out.

Workplaces & Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Store Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heads Up Hair Salon</td>
<td>84 franklin avenue, Thornwood NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Dollar</td>
<td>4118 Farragut road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall's</td>
<td>96-10 Rockaway Blvd, Ozone park Queens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana Republic</td>
<td>625 Rockefeller center in the concourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf Gas Station</td>
<td>3309 Sunrise Highway, Islip, NY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Conclusions

We concluded that many things affect the stress that employees feel, and stress that clients feel when going into a retail store.

Everything from the quality of products, to the amount of technology in a work place can affect the stress levels of employees.

Also, we found that managers, whether male or female, or experienced or not, can effect the types of clientele attracted to these shops.