

**QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY: A CASE STUDY OF STRATEGIC
CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**

by

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Abstract

Strategic customer relationship management (CRM) can enable service providers to deliver quality service in conjunction with the core competencies of a full-service hotel organization. The purpose of this study was to expand the understanding of critical components (customer centricity, workplace learning, and management controls) within a strategic CRM framework, and to explore the influence of each component on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service, from the perspective of the service provider. By means of a qualitative single case study research design, an award winning full-service luxury hotel was used as a lens to examine how critical components of strategic CRM are employed to contemplate, systemize, and prepare service providers to deliver quality service as a competitive advantage. This study sought to identify ideal service provider characteristics that are related to their ability to deliver quality service within an organization employing strategic CRM. Training methods of service providers and whether they influence the overall success of a strategic CRM initiative in full-service luxury hotels were of interest in this study. Based on the literature, core competencies of the organization were expected to influence the successful implementation of the strategic CRM components. The study identified five distinctive core competencies that enable a service provider to deliver quality service (harmony, service vision, holistic CRM strategy, individualism, and leadership), each enhanced by the critical components of a strategic CRM initiative. The findings reveal a symbiotic relationship between service providers and the organization if quality service is to be delivered. The study concluded that service provider perspectives play an important role in an integrated strategic CRM framework to ensure quality service delivery.

Dedication

This research project is devoted to the three most important people in my life, my wonderful wife, Zully, and daughters, Zully Michelle, and Danna Patricia. Thank you for supporting my efforts and for understanding my commitment to this arduous project. The long hours and many late nights spent over the three years were surely tiresome, and accomplishing this feat would have been impossible without you. Your encouragement and empathy were my strength throughout the entire process. Zully, my wife and soul mate, you are my lighthouse in this precarious world. Thank you for your understanding and unwavering support throughout this project. Zully Michelle and Danna Patricia, you are the reason for my steadfast commitment to excellence as a person and a professional. Together, the three of you are my inspiration in life, and this journey we call life would be impossible without each of you. Your confidence in me has made me the person I am today. I love each of you unconditionally for your indefinite support and motivation throughout this learning journey. It's also important to mention my family for the positive support and motivation over the years. To my brother Paul, although you weren't here physically, your spirit lives within me, and guided me through completion of this project. Lastly, I'd like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, father, siblings, and family-in-law. You've all been wonderfully supportive throughout this educational journey.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Competitive advantage is achievable if an organization has a sustainable, focused, and flexible business strategy (Porter, 1998). Customer relationship management (CRM) is a strategy often employed by service organizations in an effort to attain competitive advantage in the marketplace (Payne & Frow, 2005). Despite the tumultuous economic conditions in the world economy, the full-service luxury hotel segment of the hospitality industry remains fiercely competitive as the fastest growing lodging market in the world today (Hemmington, 2007). Given the competitive nature of the full-service luxury hotel market, organizations may employ a strategic CRM business model as a key differentiator to gain competitive advantage (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010).

Extensive research has been conducted on the economic intricacies related to the implementation of strategic CRM (Bull, 2003; Wu, 2010), value of strategic CRM as a business model (Day, 2003; Solnet, 2006), and the effectiveness of strategic CRM on customer satisfaction in service industries (Evans, Stan, & Murray, 2008; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Payne & Frow, 2006; Valos, Bednall, & Callaghan, 2007). Apart from the existing research, few studies have addressed the link between strategic CRM and quality service delivery in the full-service luxury hotel industry as a possible competitive advantage, particularly from the service provider perspective (Ford, Wilderom, and Caparella, 2008; Svennson, 2006). Three components of strategic CRM that influence quality service delivery from the service provider perspective were of interest in this

study, including customer centricity (Ford et al., 2008), workplace learning (Savanevičienė Stukaitė, & Šilingienė, 2008), and management controls (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006). Understanding the perceived influence these strategic CRM components has on the service provider's ability to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels, from the perspective of the service provider, presents management with an opportunity to increase competitive advantage by recognizing what intrinsically motivates individuals to become exemplary service providers (Grant & Berry, 2011).

Background of the Study

Organizations are intricate entities that have been the focus of academic and practitioner attention for over a century (Burns & Stalker, 1994; Mintzberg, 1979; Morgan, 1996; Schein, 1983; Schermerhorn, 2007; Segal-Horn, 1998). In the 21st century, organizations are managing customer transactions and relationships while providing quality service, a phenomenon that has become an elemental facet of many successful businesses (Bolton, 2004; Day, 2003; Timmerman, 2010). Service industry organizations, full-service luxury hotels in particular, have a need to embrace their client base intimately and meticulously with the intention of gaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). One way this may come to fruition is through strategic CRM. The application of strategic CRM in full-service luxury hotels is a growing phenomenon that enables service providers to deliver quality service through customer centricity (Bolton, 2004; Ford et al., 2008), workplace learning (Plakoyiannaki, Tzokas, Dimitratos, & Saren, 2008; Savanevičienė et al., 2008), and management

controls (Bull, 2003; Kanagal, 2009; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; O'Grady et al., 2010; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006; Svensson, 2006; Wu, 2010; Xu & Chan, 2010; Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2006).

Service Quality in Full-Service Luxury Hotels

The topic of service quality has attained a notable level of importance in the services marketing paradigm, and particularly within the full-service luxury hotel marketplace (Xu & Chan, 2010; Zeithaml et al., 2006). Customers of full-service luxury hotel organizations are assets who hold high expectations and require top-quality service (Hemmington, 2007; Kasavana & Brooks, 2009; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010), making it imperative for organizations to have a customer-focused strategy as a concerted approach to address their needs (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). It is a common practice within service organizations today, and especially in full-service luxury hotels, to focus significant resources on meeting and exceeding customer demands through service excellence (Mohsin & Lockyer; Solnet, 2006; Svensson, 2006). Simply declaring that an organization will provide customer-driven quality service will not lead an organization to success. Over the past two decades, top service industry organizations have realized success from interfacing and building lasting relationships with their customers by adopting CRM as an organizational strategy. Hence, full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM make such efforts to enhance service delivery for the attainment of competitive advantage in the marketplace. (Berkman, 2000; Ford et al., 2008; Zablah, Bellenger, & Johnston, 2004).

Many full-service luxury hotels have recognized the importance of employees in delivering superb quality service by meeting and exceeding customer needs (Ford et al., 2008). Frontline employees, service providers in particular, directly interface with customers on a regular basis. Their performance plays an integral role in the ability of an organization to achieve competitive advantage. As employee satisfaction can relate directly to the level of quality service delivered, service organizations can adopt and implement strategic CRM standards that enhance the intrinsic motivation of service providers, therefore encouraging personal and professional improvement resulting in greater productivity and service effectiveness (Berkman, 2000; Ford et al; Grant & Berry, 2011; Svennson, 2006).

Strategic Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

The basis of the strategic CRM approach is to create value for customers with the premise of creating loyalty and obtaining value from customers in return (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010; Wu, 2010). CRM has been widely accepted and utilized as a strategic marketing tool to enhance an organization's competitive position throughout various industries. Strategic CRM is widely seen as a business model that can be an important driver of quality, profitability, and competitive advantage (Day, 2003; Wu, 2010). Numerous studies (Day, 2003; Elbanna, 2009; Finnegan & Willcocks, 2007; Musico, 2009; Payne and Frow; 2006; Valos et. al, 2007; Wu, 2010) have examined the implementation, practical application, and effectiveness of strategic CRM in business and industry. Elbanna noted that putting a strategic CRM plan into action is a complex process, requiring alignment between the operational, analytical, developmental, and

cultural elements of the plan throughout implementation (Wang & Davis, 2008; Wu, 2010). This study examined the important components of strategic CRM related to ensuring continuity throughout implementation, such as workplace learning (Plakoyiannaki et al., 2008; Savanevičienė et al., 2008), customer centricity (Bolton, 2004; Ford et al., 2008), and management controls (Bull, 2003; Kanagal, 2009; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; O'Grady et al., 2010; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006; Svensson, 2006; Wu, 2010; Xu & Chan, 2010; Zeithaml et al., 2006) that enable service providers to deliver quality service within full-service luxury hotels.

Customer Centric Organizational Culture

From a holistic perspective, an organization's strategic CRM plan provides analytical and operational direction (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Plakoyiannaki, et al., 2008), while the organizational culture synergizes the strategic plan, structure, and goals of the organization (Schein, 1992; Smircich, 1983). The positive effects of strategic CRM on an organization are realized when a customer centric orientation is employed. A component of the strategic CRM approach central to the organizational culture is a value-based set of principles known as customer centricity (Bolton, 2004; Ford et al., 2008; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006). When strategic CRM aligns with a customer centric culture and effective implementation, the organization becomes customer-focused and customer-driven over time, ultimately leading to loyalty, greater profitability, and increased returns on investment (Bolton; Day, 2003). In essence, this means putting the voice of the customer to work in their favor (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). Aligning a customer centric culture with other strategic CRM components like

management controls and workplace learning could evoke the finest performance from service providers at every instance of service delivery. This can be accomplished through individualized professional and personal development focused on operational efficiency and relationship building (Bolton; Brandt, 2008; Ford et al.; Moorehead & McGrory, 2009; Solnet; 2006). Professionally skilled and personally prepared service providers can be intrinsically motivated to accept the responsibility of managing customer relationships (Grant & Berry, 2011; Solnet, 2006). Behavioral management concepts such as motivating employees is important in understanding how a customer centric culture can influence a service provider to deliver quality service, an important factor in maintaining competitive advantage (Kearsley, 2009; Porter, 1998; Schermerhorn, 2007). There is little research concerned with how full-service luxury hotels employing strategic CRM indoctrinate service providers into a customer centric culture (Ford et al.). This inquiry revealed a need to explore the lived experience of this phenomenon to gain insight into how service providers interpret and put a customer centric culture to work within a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM (Creswell, 2007; Ford et al.).

Management Controls

The application of formal and informal controls within service organizations is elemental to the function of management (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988). In combination with formal and informal management controls, the knowledge, skills, and abilities of service providers can influence the delivery of quality service. The delivery of service and individual service provider performance is improvable if an organization understands

the comprehensive effect of management controls being implemented (Bull, 2003; Merchant, 1988; O'Grady et al., 2010).

According to Jaworski and Merchant (1998), many empirical studies associate management controls to the collective performance of an organization. Strategic CRM can help align management controls with the performance of individual service providers (Wu, 2010). Strategic CRM is volatile and has potential for failing if employees do not commit to the goals of the enterprise. Coupled with a customer centric culture and workplace learning initiatives, an organization can use formal and informal management controls to develop and encourage employee engagement, and to manage the momentum of change inherent to strategic CRM consistently over time (Bull, 2003; Mason, 2007; Solnet, 2006). Formal controls may consist of policies and procedures such as the criteria for recruitment of new personnel or financial directives, and informal controls enhance the organizational culture through motivation and synergy (Wang & Davis, 2008). Informal controls exist locally as a departmental, group, or individual tool used in conjunction with formal controls, or as a means to enrich environmental synergy (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988). This study explored whether formal and informal management controls help to align the performance of individual service providers with the CRM strategy of a full-service luxury hotel.

Workplace Learning

Intelligent organizations develop and maintain learning systems designed for continuous improvement of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its workforce. They rely on intellect, rather than the aptitude of its sales force (Deng & Pei, 2009; Zablak et

al., 2004). The ability for a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM to identify and structure an intuitive learning program to develop qualitative service delivery competencies may set them apart from the competition (Plakoyiannaki, et al., 2008; Savanevičienė et al., 2008). By assessing individual employees, full-service luxury hotels can utilize workplace-learning strategies that seek to understand and develop the individual, aligning service provider interests and values with the mission and values of the organization (Baldwin-Evans, 2007; Savanevičienė et al., 2008). A continuous workplace learning initiative based on these principles enhances the organizational culture of a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM, resulting in quality service delivery (Cazzell & Ulmer, 2009; Finnegan & Willcocks, 2007; Klidas et al., 2007; Savanevičienė et al.; Zablah et al., 2004). This study examined workplace learning through the exploration of the “lived experience” of service providers in a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM to understand how workplace learning enables a service provider to deliver quality service (Creswell, 2007, p. 57).

Statement of the Problem

The strategic CRM movement involving the management of relationships between an organization and its customers has seen exponential growth over the last decade (Payne & Frow, 2006). Because service organizations typically face fierce competition (Enz, Canina, & Liu, 2008), their interest lies in building customer loyalty as a competitive advantage (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). Many service organizations have implemented CRM as a strategy to manage their customer relationships with the prospect of creating customer loyalty to gain competitive advantage, as revealed in numerous

studies related to the effectiveness of strategic CRM initiatives in the service industry (Day, 2003; Finnegan & Willcocks, 2007; Musico, 2009; Payne & Frow 2005; Valos et al., 2007; Wu, 2010). Most of these studies focus on the customer perspective and technical issues related to the effective implementation of CRM as a holistic organizational strategy and have measured the impact of CRM strategies on external customers (Day, 2003; Galbraith, 2005). There have been few studies exploring strategic CRM in relation to quality service delivery (Payne & Frow; Payne & Frow; Wu), and no studies were identified that explicitly examined the perspective of the internal customer to understand the role they play in delivering quality service working on the frontline of a full-service luxury hotel that employs strategic CRM. This gap in the literature presented an opportunity to explore the influence of workplace learning, management controls, and a customer centric culture on the ability of an internal customer to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM, from the perspective of the internal customer (Ford et al., 2008; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative case study examined three components of strategic CRM: [a] a customer centric culture [b] management controls, and [c] workplace learning, as they influence the service provider's ability to deliver quality service within the niche hospitality market of full-service luxury hotels (Bolton, 2004; Bull, 2003; Ford et al., 2008; Kanagal, 2009; Klidas et al., 2007; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006; Savanevičienė et al., 2008; Svensson, 2006). These three

components of strategic CRM may be the critical factors required to deliver quality service and to attain the distinctive competitive advantage of customer loyalty in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010; Wu, 2010). This research is intended to expand the understanding of critical components within a strategic CRM framework (Payne & Frow, 2005; Wang & Davis, 2008), and to explore the influence of each component on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service, from the perspective of the service provider.

Rationale

The use of CRM as a strategy in service organizations is a state-of-the-art approach toward competitive advantage (Galbraith & Schendel, 1983; Niu 2009; Payne & Frow; 2005; Porter, 1998). This study explored the influence of the customer centricity, management controls, and workplace learning components of strategic CRM on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service in the full-service luxury hotel industry (Bolton, 2004; Bull, 2003; Ford et al., 2008; Kanagal, 2009; Klidas et al., 2007; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006; Savanevičienė et al., 2008; Svensson, 2006). There has been very little research on the delivery of quality service within full-service luxury hotels employing strategic CRM (Ford et al.), and no research exists in consideration of the service provider's perspective. An opportunity exists for management of service organizations to consider how service providers perceive strategic CRM and can provide insight into the organization's propensity for delivering quality service to attain competitive advantage (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010).

Research Questions

According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), identifying the management dilemma in a scholar-practitioner based study is an essential step in the research process. A management study should be of real world value, being practically applicable by contributing to the resolution of problems or realizing opportunities within business and industry (Cooper & Schindler). From an academic perspective, a management study can also add to the body of knowledge on a particular topic (Robson, 2002). This qualitative study was concerned with the opportunity for management of service organizations to realize the value and potential of each service provider for the collective good of the service organization (Ford et al., 2008; Savanevičienė et al., 2008). The primary management question for this study was: Do customer centricity, management controls, and workplace learning enable service provider's to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM? Additionally, five sub-questions guided the study:

1. Do full-service luxury hotels use customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM to contemplate, systematize, and prepare for quality service delivery?
2. Do full-service luxury hotels use customer centricity, workplace learning and management control components of strategic CRM to deliver quality service as a means of achieving competitive advantage?
3. What characteristics should a service provider possess to deliver quality service within a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM?
4. What service delivery training do service providers receive from full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM to ensure quality?
5. What influence do service providers have on the overall success of a strategic CRM initiative in full-service luxury hotels?

Significance of the Study

In today's competitive business environment, it is in the interest of service organizations to be cognizant of the importance of internal customer satisfaction. Their reputation and ability to stay competitive in the market depend on it (Svensson, 2006). This research has practical, real-world significance, as the financial impact of building lasting and mutually conducive relationships between internal and external customers can have profound effects on the overall profitability of an organization (Payne & Frow, 2006). From an internal perspective, service organizations need to understand the importance of creating positive work environments, motivational ethos, and functional support systems in order to foster stability and consistency for their internal customer service providers to enable them to deliver quality service (Timmerman, 2010). Gaining insight into the perceptions of internal customers through exploring individual experiences, particularly in service organizations, is a valuable endeavor (Robson, 2002). Internal customers, who are service providers, can generate valuable ideas, critiques, perceptions, and knowledge pertaining to company processes and conditions within or outside the organization. By learning and revealing these insights, results of this study contributes to the work on further identifying critical success factors of CRM strategies within service organizations. Scholars and practitioners interested in management, service delivery, organizational development, or strategy may find this research useful as a precursor for continuing the conversation on the importance of the service provider perspective as a tool to gain competitive advantage.

Organizations operating in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace may benefit from this research by learning about the intimate accounts and perceptions of service

providers regarding the influence of strategic CRM components on their ability to deliver quality service (Creswell, 2007). The exploration of workplace learning, management controls, and customer centric culture components of strategic CRM that enable a service provider to deliver quality service can help full-service luxury hotels gauge strengths and weaknesses in their own organizations. This research may lead to the improvement of management controls, an enhanced organizational culture, new strategies for developing customer loyalty, ideas for customer feedback initiatives, and new ways to motivate service providers in full-service luxury hotels.

Definition of Terms

The very nature of conducting research within the studies of organization and management will likely necessitate the use of industry jargon as a means of discussing phenomena, concepts, or theory. As a courtesy to the reader, the following definitions of the terminology used throughout the study can serve as a point of reference.

Organizational studies, the hospitality industry, and the various business-oriented paradigms under study all have a tendency to use acronyms or terms that may be ambiguous to the reader. Definitions for terminology used throughout the study, which are not obvious to the reader, are available in this section.

Behavioral observation. Nonverbal and linguistic observations of service providers (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

Consumer. An individual or group that utilizes or consumes a tangible product or intangible service seeking a satisfactory experience. The term should not be confused with the term *customer* (Zhang, Dixit, & Friedmann, 2010).

Customer. As defined by Zhang et al. (2010), a customer is a person or entity that engages in repeat purchasing habits of a tangible product or intangible service, but does not have a behavioral connection or commitment to the product or service. In this study, the term customer is analogous with the term guest.

Formal controls. This form of management control typically consists of documented instruments used to manipulate employee behaviors to affect the desired results of employee performance. Formal controls are typically in three categories: input controls, output controls, and process controls (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988).

Informal controls. This form of management control is typically unwritten, employee oriented phenomena created to enhance employee behavior and effect communications with customers (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988).

Internal Customer. Analogous with the term service provider. An internal customer is an employee of a service oriented organization, who directly engages customers on the front line to deliver service. Internal customers are in direct communication and contact with customers to deliver the services procured (Hartline, Maxham, & McKee, 2000). Other names used in this study for service providers are *members* and *participants*.

Nonbehavioral observation. Behavioral characteristics of service providers identified by records analysis and physical condition analysis of processes in the work setting (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

Service excellence. The concept of service excellence is an intangible innate action taken by a service organization or individual service provider simply on the premise that she or he enjoys helping and making others happy. Service excellence

requires a commitment to continuous improvement on a daily basis (King & Cichy, 2006).

Service provider. Analogous with internal customer, a service provider is an employee of a service oriented organization, who directly engages customers on the front line to deliver service. Service providers are in direct communication and contact with customers to deliver the services procured (Hartline et al., 2000). Other names used in this study for service providers are *members* and *participants*.

Assumptions and Limitations

The purpose of this study is to expand the conventional discussion on CRM strategies in the organizational studies literature by introducing new research related to the delivery of quality service and the application of strategic CRM in the services sector, from the perspective of the service provider. One assumption in the study is full-service luxury hotel service providers selected, as participants in the study, would have sufficient background and understanding of strategic CRM, the delivery of quality service, and the components of a CRM strategy. The researcher assumed each service provider participant was instilled with the customer centric culture required of a CRM strategy, and that they would have a contextual understanding of the organizational culture and basic CRM principles (Bolton, 2004; Ford et al., 2008; Payne & Frow, 2005). A second assumption is that the researcher's background would help to clarify industry-oriented conditions and to navigate the environment in an effective and efficient manner to maximize observational perspective. The researcher's background facilitated the interview process by way of building confidence and respect with the participants. Such

assistance emerged due to commonalities and mutual experiences, allowing the researcher to relate to each of the participants of the study (Schein, 1992). A third assumption is that this study would be reasonably cost and time permissive in accordance with the researcher's limitations, while attaining the rich and descriptive information necessary to build this exploratory case study. A fourth assumption is that the researcher would have the opportunity to explore the hotel organization with the depth and transparency as assured in the letter granting permission to access participants and company information. Another key assumption is that managerial implications interpreted from this study can be of importance and real world value to service organizations that employ or are considering strategic CRM. Recognizing these assumptions adds credibility to the study through the perspectives of the participants being based on real world experiences, the researcher's subject matter expertise is verifiable, and the researchers understanding of the full-service luxury hotel environment is dependable (Trochim, 2006).

The limitations for this study should be considered when drawing conclusions from the findings of the study. Due to the qualitative and nonexperimental nature of this exploratory case study, the ability to determine causal factors or draw causal inferences are limited (Robson, 2002). The scientific community has been traditionally critical of the case study method because of an assumed deficiency of rigorous protocols, generalizability, timeline issues, and a disregard for quality assurance (Yin, 1994).

The discussion regarding the impact of strategic CRM on the perceptions of customers is inexistent in this study. Part of the basis of the study was the assumption that customers are the central focus of most studies and their perceptions already have a

significant impact on service firms (Bolton, 2004; Payne & Frow, 2005; Svensson, 2006; Zablah et al., 2004). This study has revelatory value in that participants shared similar views in being service providers under the auspices of the CRM strategy employed by the organization. However, the scope of the revelatory value may be limited since all participants originate from a single organization. The outcomes of this study were generalized to include only the perspective of service providers in the hotel industry. The hotel is an immense operation, employing numerous people. Observing unique incidents of service quality, managerial control, workplace learning, or quality service delivery was challenging and time consuming. The inability to be at the right place at the right time may have an adverse affect on the quality of information collected during the observation phase of the study. The hotel chosen for the study is located in a South Atlantic state, which limits the breadth of the study due to a narrow market focus.

This study is limited by the sample being comprised solely of hotel service providers and managers of the organization providing access. The opinions collected may not represent the opinion of the entire population of employees in the hotel. Being that only service providers that interface with customers are of interest in this study, this limits the scope of the research since employees in supportive roles do have a significant impact on the delivery of quality service. The internal customer satisfaction information collected will comprise the opinions of service providers and management interviewed, and may not address all aspects of internal customer satisfaction. The opinions collected from the employees may contain bias, due to management influence. Despite the assurance of confidentiality, contributions made by participants may contain bias due to subconscious feelings of commitment and fear of retribution. To remain objective,

quotes refuting the status quo were included in some instances (Eisenhardt, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Care was taken to preserve individuality in the contributions of participants when reconciling and choosing quotes for the study. In the process of transcribing data, errors may have occurred.

A limitation of this study was the Front Office Managers unwillingness to provide insight into service provider characteristics, citing the need to maintain confidentiality of proprietary information for competitive advantage. Participants B and D did not have a thorough understanding of the definition of a customer centric culture, as assumed in Chapter 1 of this study. Once explained, the concept became clear and each participant provided perspective of the customer centric culture of the Legendary Hotel. Support employees were not interviewed as participants of this study. Interviewing support employees may have been advantageous in differentiating their perspective of the strategic CRM components from service provider perspectives.

This study is limited in that the principles of a phenomenological approach are restricted to the perspectives of participants employed within the hotel to establish general causal links within the case study. The researcher's interpretation of the setting, actors, processes, and events observed may contain bias due to prior professional experience. The researcher's perception in observational accounts, isolated information thought to be pertinent to the case, and pertinent information disregarded or ignored may have proven to be valuable to the case. The final limitation is the pilot study phase of the study tested the interview instruments with a single participant of the managerial and service provider categories. Testing the parameters of informal observation occurred in a single instance due to limited access to the research site. Recognizing these limitations

of the study helps to minimize any potential for harming the participants or any stakeholders, and may help to add validity to the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Future research will be needed to test the results of this study.

Conceptual Framework

The goal of this study was to explore the perceptions of service providers and the perceived influence of CRM strategies on their ability to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels. Several elements vital to the success of a CRM strategy were of interest in this study, to understand their perceived impact on the service provider's performance.

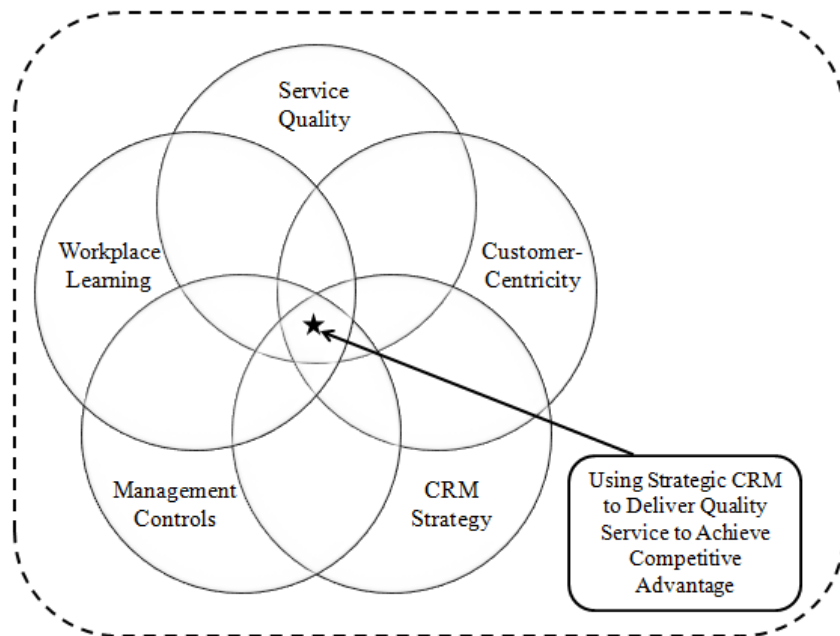


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

This study addressed the juncture depicted in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) between customer centricity, service quality, workplace learning, and management controls to understand if service-oriented organizations prepare service providers to achieve competitive advantage using strategic CRM. Examination of these four elements, along with the overall CRM strategy itself, helps to understand if service providers are prepared individually and collectively to drive the organization toward achieving competitive advantage.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

In the subsequent section of this study, the literature review highlights the concept of how service providers in the hotel industry receive CRM strategy. The literature review supports the opportunities outlined in the study, with research on organizational design, strategy, organizational culture, quality service, workplace learning, and management controls, all of which affect individuals, and collectively, the organization. The definition of CRM strategy varies in the literature, and discussion of definitions will appear in more depth in the following section. In Chapter 3, the methodological approach to conducting multiple case study research is discussed, along with the mechanics of data collection, analysis procedures, validity and reliability concerns, and the intricacies of conducting fieldwork. Chapter 4 presents the data and findings of the study. Chapter 5 concludes the study through richly descriptive within-case analyses, the delineation of themes and patterns from a within case analysis and interpretations of the findings, as well as recommendations for potential future research opportunities.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of theoretical, critical, and empirical literature pertinent to the study. Topics of interest to the study include strategic CRM, customer-centricity, managerial controls, workplace learning, and quality service in the hotel industry. The construction of this inductive literature review will originate from a compilation of quantitative and qualitative research, which allows the researcher to be interpretive by honing in on the most relevant theories and concepts related to service organizations (see Appendix A).

Organizational Studies

For over a century, scholars and practitioners in the organizational sciences and business management have explored the fundamental elements that make organizations exemplary and recognizably notorious for outperforming their competition on a consistent basis. Today, organizations are incredibly intricate entities that derive their success from a variety of sources. The need to delve into to the business press focusing on organizational strategies, design structures, and operational competencies, is vital, as is the organizational science literature devoted to the social characteristics of an organization. Within such literature, various theories, models, analogies, and metaphors appear in the research on organizations (Burns & Stalker, 1994; Mintzberg, 1979; Morgan, 1996; Schein, 1983; Schermerhorn, 2007; Segal-Horn, 1998).

Organizations are diverse social entities that prioritize goals by virtue of structured designs that actively interface with the external environment (Daft, 2004).

Morgan (1996) composed a classical theorist's conceptual definition of an organization as,

A network of parts: functional departments such as production, marketing, finance, personnel, and research and development, which are further specified as networks of precisely defined jobs. Job responsibilities interlock so that they complement each other as perfectly as possible and are linked together through the scalar chain of command expressed in the classical dictum "one man, one boss." (p. 18)

Organizations generally exist to serve a purpose: to conduct transactions to fill the needs of their customers, constituents, or stakeholders. Scott and Davis (2007) pointed out the uniqueness of organizations, highlighting that their premise tends to focus on the execution of a vision and mission that would not typically be achievable by an individual. Organizations are comprised of people interacting with one another to accomplish a common set of goals (Daft, 2004). In this regard, the size of an organization may vary from being a small business to an international conglomerate, and may serve an economic purpose in such a way as to be for-profit or not-for-profit.

Bureaucratic Organizations

No matter the size or economic purpose, Scott and Davis (2007) maintain that organizations have been classically designed and structured to operate as bureaucracies in a machine-like fashion. The mechanistic nature of organizations in today's business environment pertains to the type of system through which they operate, under a stable

and consistent set of protocols allowing management to control and measure performance and activity (Burns & Stalker, 1994). The mechanics of organizations has a long history, dating back centuries to the military leader of Prussia, Frederick the Great. He has credit for automating, structuring, and standardizing his military operations in order to mechanize systems and complete tasks. Such mechanistic attributes later applied to business and industry, to become a benchmark for developing and operating organizations. The mechanistic framework of modern-day bureaucratic organizations consists of rational systems of formal controls, hierarchical structures, policies, and procedures designed to operate in a machinelike fashion in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness (Morgan, 1996; Schermerhorn, 2007).

Bureaucratic organizations are rooted in both classical management and scientific management theories (Schermerhorn, 2007). Seminal scholars such as Max Weber, Henri Fayol, F. W. Mooney, and Lyndall Urwick contributed significantly to the advancement of classical management, scientific management, and bureaucratic organizational literature. Their common goal was to benchmark the design and processes of organizations by way of mechanistic systemization (Morgan, 1996).

In 1911, Fredrick W. Taylor presented the foundation of scientific management as a goal to achieve the maximum level of success for both the organization and its employees by balancing the desires of both parties' interests. The principles of Taylor's scientific management are significant, as they posited, "decisions about organizations and job design should be based on precise, scientific study of individual situations," (Daft, 2004, p. 25). Morgan (1996) differentiated classical management theory from Taylor's scientific management theory by explaining that the objective of scientific management

theory is to focus on the purpose of management and to define individual roles of employees, while classical management theorists mainly concentrate on the macro level of organizational design and structure, therefore neglecting the natural social construct of an organization.

Research indicates that bureaucratic organizations function using mechanic design and management principles that tend to be formal and rational in nature (Schermerhorn, 2007). Scott and Davis (2007) elaborated on Weber's theory of bureaucracy by highlighting the foundations of authority, logic, and order as formulating the framework of a calculated, rational bureaucratic organization. "Such elements as clearly defined authority and responsibility, formal recordkeeping, and uniform application of standard rules" are fundamental to the application of mechanistic systems within the bureaucratic organization (Daft, 2004, p. 25).

The Living Organization

The use of metaphors in explaining organizational phenomena has become popular throughout the academic organizational studies literature of today, helping to develop visual images that allow readers to transfer language into visual imagery (Cornelissen & Kafouros, 2008; Taber, 2007). When viewing organizations as organic open systems, the concept of considering those organizations as living organisms is possible (Scott & Davis, 2007). From a constructivist perspective, Morgan (1996) identified the primary characteristics of organizations that pose resistance to a purely mechanistic framework, pointing out the need to address biological attributes of organizations, such as "survival, organization-environment relations, and organizational

effectiveness” (p. 34). Using metaphor as a framework to evaluate organizations as an organism, inferences and correlations are made between the ecological significance of living organisms and the considerations for managerial and organizational responsibilities in relation to the business and natural environment. The emphases on internal and external environmental relations are of significant importance in determining how individual thoughts, motives, interests, and levels of contribution affect the process outcomes of systems. From the perspective of organizational survival, a living organization does not view goals as a terminal objective; rather, it integrates initiatives to foster continuous improvement and effectiveness to meet the needs of environmental forces (Morgan; Schermerhorn, 2007).

The discussion over whether organizations are living systems is ongoing in the literature (Hancock & Cotlar, 2010), but what is not debatable is that organizations are comprised of social systems fostered by human interaction (Morgan, 1996). The human element has been of interest in the study of organizations for many years, as consideration of the exchange of social interaction occurs outside the scope of mechanistic approaches to organizational design. Individuals are simply components of a living organization that have a profound effect on constructing and portraying organizational identity. Collectively, individuals are influential in the effectiveness and overall success of an organization due to the human aptitude for choice and ability to create and live within personal reality (Miller & Rice, 2003; Savanevičienė et al., 2008).

Contingency theory. Burns and Stalker established the contingency approach to organizations in the 1950s. This approach stresses that for an organization to be effective, it can work toward the goal of “achieving a ‘good fit’ internally—in terms of relations

between organizational structure, managerial styles, technology employed, and needs, values, and abilities of employees—and externally—in relation to the environment”

(Morgan, 1996, p. 44). Morgan summarized the contingency theory as a “dominant perspective in modern organizational analysis” by indicating the following,

1. Organizations are open systems that need careful management to satisfy and balance internal needs and to adapt to environmental circumstances.
2. There is no one best way of organizing. The appropriate form depends on the kind of task or environment with which one is dealing.
3. Management must be concerned, above all else, with achieving alignments and good fits.
4. Different approaches to management may be necessary to perform different tasks within the same organization.
5. Different types or species of organizations are needed in different types of environments.

This strategic and organic orientation has a direct impact on several factors important to development of an internal environment that encourages service providers to deliver quality service, including management controls, organizational culture, and operational protocols. Within such a framework, variations in managerial controls and operational protocols arise from the type of organizational strategies pursued by an organization, especially a service organization (Xu & Chan, 2010). Managers can develop effective management controls and operational protocols to tactically orient the organizational culture with the principles of a customer centered philosophy (Bowen & Lawler, 1995).

Organizational systems thinking. Scott and Davis identify three organizational systems thinking categories employed by organizations in business, each with distinct operational attributes and characteristics: rational, natural, and open systems.

Rational systems. The perspective of the rational systems theory is a conviction that organizations are a means of efficiently attaining a specific set of goals using social structures formally designed to define policy, procedure, and roles of individuals within the organization. Such structures function to calculate, standardize, formally control, and synchronize the actions of individuals for the primary purpose of achieving maximum efficiency (Schermerhorn, 2007; Scott & Davis, 2007; Ulrich & Barney, 1984).

Natural systems. The natural systems theory holds the belief that organizations are a collection of participants who may have incongruent motives, but who contribute joint efforts toward a shared interest in the continued existence of the organizational system. Such organizations typically have informal structures, allowing flexibility to groups of participants for proactive engagement in activities that ensure the survival of the system (Scott & Davis, 2007). The natural systems theory is in accordance with the constructionist approach, as each individual reality garners respect, but collectively constructs and establishes a single reality toward a common goal (Lit & Shek, 2007).

Open systems. Scott and Davis (2007) elaborated on the perspective of the open system theory, which advances the belief of organizations as a systemization of co-dependent behaviors and actions of affiliated individuals who regularly engage in qualitative exchanges with the environment. Open systems require the individual affiliations within organizations to continuously attain and transmit information through communication or activity. Scott and Davis explained the goals of the organization,

processes of inputs and outputs, the assessment of feedback, and learning derived from the exchanges received significant consideration. In contrast to the closed nature of mechanistic systems, by definition, open systems are organic in the sense that the theory analogizes complex living organisms to the like of organizations and social groups. The level or degree by which open systems may exist varies, depending upon the boundaries or “range of inputs of the environment,” as inputs act as a source of sustenance for organisms to digest for the purpose of expelling outputs (Morgan, 1996, p. 40).

Morgan (1996) claims that although the mechanistic style of operating an organization has proven to be efficient through the implementation of management controls and the measurement of employee activity, organizations may be metaphorically compared to living organisms. Because they are complex systems made up of people dependent on the organization for psychological and physical health, organizations are equally reliant on each individual’s contributions toward its success. This seemingly symbiotic relationship is indicative of an organization operating within the framework of an open-system.

Quality Service

In an evaluative review of empirical services marketing literature, Svensson (2006) inductively constructs a conceptual framework presenting a process model for quality service delivery from the perspective of the service provider. The conceptual framework associates important variables such as the behavioral nature of the service provider, human interaction within the service encounter, and the actions and reactions of individuals in the service encounter. Important to this research, Svensson finds the

perspective of the service provider is abnormally neglected as a lens in empirical research, indicating that most studies are concerned with the perspective of the consumer. The validity of the facts presented in this study is supported by a context analysis of the seminal empirical literature on quality service. The author finds that service organizations overlook the value of the service provider's perspective in relation to the successful delivery of quality services, which presents a vast opportunity for future research in the quality services paradigm. Svensson suggests further research be conducted using the service provider perspective as a lens, and is a significant concept used in this study. The study neglects to provide background on the topic of relationship marketing and to go beyond the service encounter to discuss the value of relationship building from the perspective of the service provider, both being integral elements of the marketing concept (Dev, Zhou, Brown, & Agarwal, 2009).

An important contribution to the service quality literature, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988) used an inductive data analysis to develop a conceptual model called SERVQUAL, a twenty-one item instrument used to define and measure gaps in service quality. This instrument is used to evaluate customer behavior, desired serviceability at various levels, levels of tolerance for poor service delivery, and perceptions on loyalty, value, and quality. Numerous studies have used the SERVQUAL model to conduct replication studies on the customer perception. Researchers have not yet modified SERVQUAL to evaluate the perception of the service provider versus that of the customer (Hartline et al., 2000; Wallace & De Chernatony, 2009).

Relationship marketing. Relationship marketing is a strategic approach used by organizations to understand their customer base, with the premise of developing customer

loyalty. It is as much about customer retention, as it may be about new customer development. The primary objective of relationship marketing is for organizations to bond with their customer base, with the intention of delivering the maximum level of satisfaction in each customer experience. With an understanding of relationship marketing, a service organization can develop employee competence to bolster performance in the delivery of quality service that meets or exceeds customer expectations (Evans et al., 2008; Savanevičienė et al., 2008).

In a quantitative dyadic experimental study described as a “between subjects experiment,” Evans, Stan, and Murray (2008) studied the factors of importance related to customer expectations in service encounters (p. 216). One of the more important factors under study was the concept of trust in the relationship between a service provider and customer during service delivery. The study was comprised of 38 dyads consisting of customers and service provider pairs from the life insurance industry. Service encounters occurred and each dyad executed a survey. Described as a purely quantitative study, the authors used a narrative description approach in their writing style. It is possible that this study fits a mixed methodology framework. Counter to the customer centric philosophy (Bolton, 2004), an implication of the study is a warning to practitioners to be cautious when making the decision to increase customer involvement in the service encounter. Customers must be socially integrated into the service encounter process, requiring customer loyalty to be a consideration for inclusion. The study determined that as more information was provided to the customer throughout the service encounter, the customers trust in the service provider declined. Trust is a central theme in the relationship marketing literature and stable relationships require trust (Hernandez &

Cincotto, 2010). Highlighting the social exchange theory as a lens, the study found the concept of trust revolves around the beliefs of each counterpart in an exchange relationship. A customer's perception of an organizations goodwill, integrity, and transparency is dependent upon how much trust they have for the organization, and more importantly, the providers of service in the transaction. The social exchange theory is the underlying framework of relationship marketing, which sets forth the idea that trust is an essential element within any relationship. Particularly in reference to personal relationships, a relationship forms when trust is established (Evans et al., 2008).

Relationship marketing requires planning, organization, and attention to detail (Gronroos, 2001). Day and Van Den Bulte (2002) elaborated on the characteristics of strategically relating to customers as [a] orientation, defined as the organization's corporate values, behaviors, and philosophy; [b] information, which relates to technical and operational competencies for assembling qualitative and quantitative data about customers; [c] configuration, referring to the organizational design, management controls, and incentives in place. In considering these critical variables to relationship marketing, hotel organizations can adopt the strategic CRM approach to manage relationships with internal and external customers (Galbraith, 2005; Morgan, 1996), ultimately leading to a competitive advantage for the organization (Porter, 1998). To address the unique issues pertaining to customer interaction within the services industry, Gronroos (1982) was one of the first scholars to differentiate product marketing from services marketing.

Services marketing. Researchers today view the theory of services marketing as an important component of the relationship marketing theory. One can distinguish services from products by framing the service encounter as a phenomenon formed by

interaction between two or more parties that is experienced and concluded concurrently, and which can never be duplicated (Dev et al., 2009; Gronroos, 1982). The art and primary goal of services marketing is for an organization to target, acquire, and retain qualitative, profitable customers (Zeithaml et al., 2006). This concept focuses on business-to-consumer interactions, which has brought the significance of service encounters and building customer relationships to the forefront of the marketing paradigm. The value of building and maintaining personal relations with customers is a priority for any organization, giving importance to the efficiency of systems and processes that establish and continuously reinforce customer relations as a competitive advantage (Gummesson, 2002; Porter, 1998).

In an exploratory research study that surveyed 219 service executives, Gronroos (1982) debated the difference between product and services examining customer perceptions of service quality through the development of the perceived service quality model comprised of three factors of service delivery: the outcome, the process, and the interactivity between service providers and customers. The objective of this participatory study sought to develop a theory of strategic management for services marketing, used as a benchmark to benefit all service organizations. The study concluded that customer perceptions on service quality are dependent upon variables outside the scope of the conventional marketing mix, but are relative to the marketing domain. He emphasized internal marketing aimed at formulating employee attitudes and behaviors are imperative to the success of quality service delivery. Also significant, the study suggested the ultimate responsibility of service marketing rests with senior management, and the decision making process must be strategic so to have a positive impact on internal and

external customer perceptions. In a letter to the editor, Gronroos (2001) updates his perspective on services marketing. He discusses another dimension that should be added to the service quality model, customer involvement. Customers set high expectations derived from prior service experiences and a keen awareness of their involvement in the service transaction, requiring that a dynamic element be added to the service quality model that allows for customer involvement and perspective to be integrated in the service delivery process. Gronroos suggests organizations that invite customer participation into the service delivery process extract the intrinsic value of customer feedback, a priceless asset that is easily acquired without expense.

Service organizations. Interfacing with customers requires a service organization to be dynamic in meeting the demands and spontaneity of interpersonal exchanges (Zeithaml et al., 2006). High levels of service are internally challenging and the expectations of consumers can be demanding (Gummesson, 2002). Service organizations should prepare for such a challenge and potential for conflict in service encounters due to the variability of behaviors, perceptions, and expectations of the actors within a transaction (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). To address the internal challenges inherent to customer relations (Dev et al., 2009), service organizations designed as open systems can hastily align service delivery processes with customer needs to meet expectations and secure viable relationships (Scott & Davis, 2007; Steyn, 2003). The effective management of service delivery processes is imperative, and each individual involved in a service encounter should be prepared with the skills needed to anticipate customer needs and expectations (Homburg et al., 2008; Svensson, 2006; Xu & Chan, 2010).

Taking a pragmatic approach, one key study on service organizations used an exploratory mixed methodology to examine the components related to service provider's performance during the delivery of service. Recognizing the seminal work on SERVQUAL by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988), Wallace and De Chernatony (2009) praise their study on understanding the customer perspective of service delivery, but indicate the importance of seeing the service encounter through the perception of the service provider. Wallace and De Chernatony credit service provider performance as the catalyst giving life to an organizations brand, thereby establishing and maintaining customer loyalty. This study uses a two-part methodology to collect data from 956 service providers working in Irish banking and grocery organizations. The first phase of the research consisted of interviewing 20 service provider participants, resulting in rich qualitative feedback. The second phase of the research, the authors issued 1,750 survey questionnaires to service providers, and received a response from 956 respondents at a response rate of 55%. The authors failed to elaborate on the precautions taken to minimize bias, therefore raising questions about the validity of the research results. Limited in correlating the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected, the study finds management controls, organizational culture, and ethics to be directly associated with the attitudes and expectations of the service provider, a finding that influenced the management control and customer centricity variables in this study. Another significant result from the service provider perspective found the value system of service providers must be directly aligned with that of the service organization for a service provider to successfully deliver quality service. The authors neglected to provide suggestions for further research, limiting the prospects of future inquiries, with the

exception of inspiring the focus on the service provider's perception in this study.

Wallace and De Chernatony provided the motivation to explore and understand how strategic CRM influences a service provider's ability to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels, from the perspective of the service provider.

In definition, the structure of a service organization is different from that of a manufacturing business that primarily produces products (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010), particularly in the case of full-service luxury hotel organizations (Dev et al., 2009). Many full-service luxury hotels operate on a personal and intimate level with their consumers (Miller & Rice, 2003), while others provide service on a distant or hardly identifiable level (Gronroos, 1982). Most likely, service-oriented businesses, such as hotels, provide both tangible goods and intangible services in a transaction. Unlike tangible products of substance, which organizations produce and can count, touch, or view, the products and services sold in full-service luxury hotels are time sensitive and highly perishable (Armstrong & Kotler; Homburg et al., 2008).

Full-service luxury hotels. Full-service luxury hotels operate within the hospitality segment of the services sector, providing different levels of services and products to meet the needs of various markets (Kasavana & Brooks, 2009). Researchers have defined the hospitality industry as a deliberate, natural exchange between people that is expected to be mutually beneficial to all parties in the transaction, through the offering of lodging, food, and beverage (Hemmington, 2007; Wood & Brotherton, 2008).

The traditional categories of hotel classification have been by the size, class of service, and type of operation. The classification of hotels results in a highly segmented approach to meeting the demands of various market variables such as geographic,

demographic, psychographic, and behaviorist characteristics. One of the most demanding hotel categories consists of establishments with 300 to 600 rooms serving the luxury leisure market. Hotels that provide full-service using a luxury-oriented approach in meeting customer needs and expectations understand the importance of delivering high quality service, and they distinguish their product on the perceived value of services (Dube, Enz, Renaghan, & Siguaw, 1999; Kasavana & Brooks, 2009).

In a systematic review of the literature on how the hotel service experience translates to brand equity, Xu and Chan (2010) indicate, “hotels often use advertising, referral marketing, and services marketing to help guests acquire brand-related information” (p. 174). In this study, the authors inductively build a “hotel brand equity framework” (p. 182). Taking a constructivist position, the authors elaborate on various management implications resulting from their proposed framework. One implication suggests that hotel organizations can learn how effective service marketing translates into a quality hotel experience, resulting in brand equity. Hotel business units may initially benefit from the brand equity of its parent company, but can only maintain loyalty by providing quality service delivery, and a satisfying hospitality experience. A key implication identified the need for a cost effective relationship management initiative implemented at the business-unit level to ensure brand equity. The theoretical implications and suggestions for future research were central to this study. They indicate the opportunity to explore whether holistic organizational strategies and service performance translate into service quality, ultimately resulting in brand equity. The author does not present assumptions or limitations to the study. Without testing the

theoretical relevance of the framework presented in this study, the validity of the study is at question.

Quality service delivery in full-service luxury hotels. The structure of the hotel industry today is highly complex due to the broad range of ownership types, such as large corporations, independently owned and operated units, and independently owned and franchise operated organizations, to name a few. Due to these complexities and fierce competition in the hotel industry, it is vital that hotels have a robust CRM strategy in place to obtain customer loyalty and competitive advantage (Berkman, 2000; Kasavana & Brooks, 2009; Marchand, 2006).

Understanding the perceptions of hotel customers on the concept of quality service delivery is highly variable (Kasavana & Brooks, 2009). In a nonexperimental quantitative study, Mohsin and Lockyer (2008) administered an anonymous survey questionnaire among a sample size of 271 four and five star hotel customers that sought to assess their perception of service quality. The purpose of the study was to assist hotel management in identifying the variables related to meeting and exceeding customer expectations. Based on a Likert scale with a range of 1 to 7, descriptive statistical results showed that respondents consider seven variables most important to their perception of quality service delivery. Mohsin and Lockyer indicate all seven variables have a means score over six from the maximum possibility of 7 on the Likert scale:

- Value for money of the hotel,
- Receiving confirmation on reservation,
- Making a reservation,
- First impression of the hotel,

- First contact with hotel staff,
- Helpful and friendly staff, and
- Furnishings in the room.

By understanding these most important variables, the authors imply that managers can implement controls designed to meet and exceed customer expectations. This managerial implication is of importance, since validity is of high importance in this study. The authors call attention to various limitations of the study, indicating that bias may exist due to the large majority of participants being male, the geographic limitation of the study being isolated in India, and the admission that the small sample size may result in subjectivity (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010).

According to King (1995), in the hotel industry, a transactional relationship exists between a paying customer and the employees, who possess knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver the goods and services desired. Service providers should have social skills and training to anticipate customer needs throughout the service process. The delivery of quality service is a vital part of the luxury hotel product and overall strategy approach to appeasing their customers. Based on a critical literature review, King constructs a socially conscious metaphor for delivering quality hospitality service based on understanding the customer, supporting service providers, managing social policies and procedures, streamlining communication channels, managing human capital, displaying generosity, and building customer relationships. In developing lasting customer relationships with guests in the hotel industry, King noted the importance of cultivating an internal culture designed to motivate service providers to be conscious of customer needs (as cited in Hemmington, 2007, p. 749).

Service provider and employee performance play a major role in delivering the quality that constitutes a hotel's competitive advantage. Motivation and empowerment significantly influence a service provider's ability to deliver that quality and fulfill customer expectations while remaining compliant within the boundaries of formal controls. They are indoctrinated into the organizational strategy and philosophy in order to shape their belief systems, which results in motivation and empowered behavior patterns to enhance service delivery experiences (Klidas, Van den Berg, & Wildrom, 2007). In a historical critical literature review of twenty-two studies, Hemmington (2007) inductively debates various perspectives of the hospitality concept. Building on the work of King (1995), Hemmington takes a constructivist view bridging the gap between the theoretical and practical characterization of quality service delivery. A theoretical model that influenced the workplace-learning variable in this study is presented, offering five dimensions of hospitality within a guest experience that hotel organizations should use to train and raise the awareness of service providers:

- Trust in the relationship
- Generosity
- The show
- Spontaneous niceties and surprises
- Safety and security

Hemmington's conceptual article emphasizes that a successful hotel business unit focuses on these dimensions to create unforgettable guest experiences that tantalize the five senses. This model is presented as an exploratory descriptive theory, but the author neglects to discuss the systematic research methods used for data collection, analysis, and

interpretation of the findings. The conclusive remarks in the study fail to identify managerial implications and do not offer suggestions for future research, leaving the reader to ponder this theory aimlessly. The central theme of the study infers substantial strategic planning is required to develop a multidimensional approach for delivering quality service in hotels. The service strategy should be individually customer focused and task oriented to construct a positive guest experience. Bassi and Guido (2006) support such a customer centered strategic approach that recognizes the customer as the final product.

Customer Relationship Strategy

The origin of the word *strategy* derives from the Greek word *strategos*, defined as “the thinking and action of a general” (Patton, 2002, p. 37). A business-oriented definition of strategy has four principles: “[a] scope, which they define in terms of product/market matches and geographic territories, [b] resource deployments and distinctive competences, [c] competitive advantages, and [d] synergy” (Galbraith & Schendel, 1983, p. 155). According to Morgan (1996), understanding of an organization can spring from the type of strategy it has adopted.

Research into the concept of customer relationships expanded into what is now an approach to marketing (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990), which should be apparent at every level of an organization within its strategic framework (Day, 2003). In a qualitative research study that extensively reviews the marketing literature, Kohli and Jaworski conducted 62 unstructured interviews with managers of various organizations to develop a definition of the marketing concept. This grounded theory research resulted in the construction of a

theoretical framework for building an organizational strategy using marketing as the central theme. In this study, the authors imply that three variables including employee dispositions, customer behavior, and the management of internal and external customer relationships are elemental in implementing marketing as an organizational strategy. These variables have been the basis for various research studies related to the topic of customer relationship management and strategy, and strongly influenced the CRM strategy variable in this study (Bull, 2003; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006; Valos, et al., 2007; Wang & Davis, 2008; Wu, 2010; Zablah et al., 2004).

In a descriptive literature review examining the role of relationship marketing in a competitive marketing strategy using the hotel industry as a lens, Kanagal (2009) identified the essential underlying factors of relationship marketing (RM) in a competitive marketing strategy. By correlating the transaction cost analysis with the social exchange theory, the author prematurely theorizes eight factors of a competitive marketing strategy as: “[a] guiding moments of truth, [b] RM to improve profitability, [c] RM builds partnering, [d] address 'customer needs better,' [e] buy- in of customer attention, [f] protect emotional well-being, [g] understand consumer psyche, [h] build trust with customer” (p. 109). Being that this study is nonexperimental in nature and the results are solely based on the author’s interpretation, the validity of the eight factors presented may be questionable based on the positivist perspective. The author failed to recognize limitations of the study, so further viable research is necessary to validate the conclusive results presented in the management implications section of the study. Recommendations for future research were not provided. Although this study is scientifically unsound from the positivist perspective, its qualitative, exploratory nature

offers empirical value by presenting original concepts regarding competitive marketing strategy.

Levels of organizational strategy. Organizational strategy has four distinctive levels: enterprise, corporate, business, and functional strategies. An enterprise level strategy determines the social identity of an organization. It is the top tier level of an organization's strategy and ultimately is where the firm actualizes its political orientation. At this level, the organization realizes its values, philosophies, and social responsibilities. The image of the organization emerges at this top tier level, wherein the enterprise strategy relates directly to the way in which internal customers view and understand the organization. The creation and embedding of the values and moral expectations of internal customers are within the culture of an organization. To construct the culture, leadership establishes the organizational vision and develops strategies for indoctrinating internal customers on the critical mission of the organization and the role each individual plays in the collective success of the organization (Steyn, 2003).

Patton (2002) described corporate strategy as an approach designed by leaders to guide decision-making and set goal-oriented directives for managers and employees to execute in pursuit of the organizational mission. At the corporate level of strategy, leaders define the overall organizational design and structure, allocate resources, and contemplate considerations for the stability of the organization (Thomas & Droege, 2006). Organizational leaders strategize issues pertaining to growth, strategic relationships, mergers, acquisitions, organizational competencies, contingency planning, and resource allocations. Leaders and managers consider all variables for creating value by assessing the organization's interests and positions in various markets at a macro

level. Decisions are made to ensure financial health and stability of the organization, while enabling technical competencies that facilitate customer satisfaction in support of the enterprise level of strategy (Steyn, 2003).

Galbraith and Schendel (1983) asserted that business level strategy strikes a balance between the corporate level and functional level strategies by taking an important position on the marketing and financial strategies of the business unit. Business level strategy refers to a competitive approach taken by organizations within the marketplace and industry in which the business unit exists. The business level strategy pertains to a single operating unit of a company, or a single business company independently owned and operated. If the business unit is singular and independently owned and operated, the business level strategy will likely be indistinguishable from its corporate level strategy. In companies operating several businesses, every business should and will have its own business level strategy. Typically, construction of a business level strategy is similar to that of a corporate level strategy, only focusing more on competitive market segmentation variables, differentiation, pricing structures, and cost allocations relative to the single business units place in the environment (Steyn, 2003).

Roberts and Stockport (2009) discussed the fundamentals of an organization's functional level of strategy, which they defined as the operational and individual business functions of an organization. Primarily, a business unit ensures that enterprise level policies are instilled within the entity, and employees implement corporate level directives implicitly in line with the framework of the business level strategy. At this point, management considers operational interests and translates strategies into actionable tactics, aligning short-term objectives with managerial controls. The strategic focus of

each department is to create cross-functional synergy between such areas as marketing, operations, and accounting to create a practical model for synchronizing efforts to execute the objectives and directives of the upper level strategies. According to Widodo (2011), the job of management at the functional level of strategy is to detail the strategic plan and tactical methods used to achieve customer satisfaction goals by allocating the appropriate resources to do the job. An open system design encourages communication and allows the organizational culture to thrive across departments. Each functional area must contribute to meeting upper level goals, while tactically establishing operational policies and procedures that enhance competitive advantages.

The marketing initiatives of a service-oriented business unit should maximize the company's interaction with the external environment. The focal point should be on the key stakeholders of the business unit, both internally and externally, with the collection of information at the forefront of the marketing initiatives. The marketing strategy develops as internal customers make decisions and take actions while interfacing with external customers to build relationships. Collectively, leaders consider these socially oriented relationship building initiatives, the role of technology, and external environmental variables, such as regulation and biological factors when structuring the functional strategy of the marketing department. Overall, the goals of the functional strategy are to address the needs of the key stakeholders of each department to link social interactions and transactional outcomes to the macro-level strategies (Steyn, 2003).

Competitive advantage. Practitioners often think that any good strategy will result in competitive advantage for a service organization, which is not always the case. According to Kanagal (2009), the basis of an organization's competitive advantage is

reliant on three dynamics: [a] the organization's marketing strategy, [b] the execution of the marketing strategy and [c] the context of the industry based on Porter's (1998) model.

In his landmark study on the economics of competition, Porter (1998) emphasized that any good competitive advantage should be a highly localized process. Porter constructively built a theory for competitive advantage, defining it as the advantage gained over an organization's competition through the creation or perceived value to the consumer.

In an exploratory study designed to formulate topics for quantitative testing, Niu (2009) conducted a qualitative content analysis using a directed approach to develop a conceptual understanding for competitive advantage in a global context. Using Porter's theoretical framework as the basis for understanding competitive advantage, Niu contrasts 22 studies to conclude that an organization achieves value by reducing costs and raising profit margins, or by differentiating the position of the organization by way of providing superior benefits and services, ultimately justifying the price paid by customers. Niu further explained competitive advantage is largely dependent on the cohesion between an organization's enterprise and business level strategy.

Customer Relationship Management. CRM derives from the seminal work on customer relationships by Drucker (1954), which posited that an organization should consider its customers as the basis for its existence. The term CRM first appeared in the mid-1990s as a catch phrase of the information technology and business practitioner community (Pombriant, 2007). CRM has been closely associated with the use of information technology from its inception. Due to a commitment by academics and scholar practitioners, the conceptual view of CRM has changed into a key strategic

business phrase over the past decade. CRM is a topic of importance in the marketing, management, information technology, and business strategy disciplines, and Pombriant claimed it relates closely to concepts such as quality management, service marketing, and customer loyalty.

Customers play an important role in the process of delivering quality service. Their perceptions have a direct impact on the results of a service encounter. Employing a CRM initiative can help to close the gap between customer expectations and their perception of the service process is important in the pursuit of delivering quality service (Deng & Pei, 2009; Wu, 2010). Developing a CRM approach to deliver better quality service is a trend deeply rooted within business and industry. In a review of the literature examining the failure of CRM initiatives, Wu systematically synthesizes relevant literature on the CRM process regarding three research variables: [a] causes of CRM failure, [b] the failure to implement CRM due to poor time management, and [c] how essential CRM may be for an organization. Conclusions similar to the results of Zablah et al. (2004) discuss how CRM failure can be avoided address each research variable. CRM initiatives fail due to poor planning and management, ineffective information collection and interpretation, and inadequate decision-making. The implementation of CRM has risks and expenses involved, which leaders fail to understand. Accountability should be assigned to management and controls must be in place to monitor progress of the implementation process. Management must be trained on the holistic ideals of a CRM initiative leading to the creation of a strategy, and the technology involved must be flexible to adopt qualitative and quantitative aspects of the CRM initiative. The study is

limited in that it does not address validity and reliability of the research used within the literature review.

Strategic customer relationship management. In a descriptive ethnographic study surveying senior managers and employees of 342 medium-to large-sized organizations operating within the services industry, Day (2003) studied the capability of organizations that relate to their customers to gain competitive advantage through the development of relationships, and ultimately, the retention of customers. This emergent study revealed the factors contributing to the retention of customers, which included the organization's orientation of the customer, the configuration of the operation, technological innovation, and the use of information to hone in on customer needs and desires. Day indicates, "Most companies think of information technology first when they consider CRM capabilities instead of last as they should" (p. 79).

Technology is certainly an important component in the customer experience equation, but CRM is much more than a technology-based solution. Organizations can meld the combination of the human, technological, and business orientation of a CRM strategy into virtually any type of organization if properly planned (Pombriant, 2007; Valos et al., 2007). Depending upon the industry, CRM strategies will differ in the intensity of information technology tools and solutions used. Every industry's approach relating to customers is different, particularly in service-oriented industries. Regardless of the approach, the ultimate goal of a CRM strategy is to personalize every transaction with a customer to make him or her feel like an individual (Finnegan & Willcocks, 2007).

In an emergent qualitative study that examined five core characteristics of a CRM initiative, Payne and Frow (2005) formulated a conceptual framework for implementing

CRM as a business strategy. Using a grounded theory research design, the authors gathered and analyzed CRM literature and discussed the findings of a theory building context analysis with a focus group consisting of business executives that were qualified CRM experts. A qualitative method for testing instrumentation to be used in a study, descriptive theory, or best practices, focus group field-testing is effective if the panel is comprised of subject matter experts (Capella University, 2004). An inductive analysis of opinions from the focus group resulted in the authors identifying five cross-functional processes that establish CRM to be a strategy rather than a program: “[a] a strategy development process, [b] a value creation process, [c] a multichannel integration process, [d] an information management process, and [e] a performance assessment process” (p. 167). Payne and Frow defined strategic CRM as “the cross-functional integration of processes, people, operations, and marketing capabilities that is enabled through information technology and applications” (p. 168). While this research may be prominent in terms of the proposed theoretical implications, the authors indicate the study fails to take into consideration issues related to small- or medium-sized organizations. The customer centric orientation and managerial process control components of strategic CRM proposed in the conceptual framework in this article influenced this research, and a research movement concerned with the components of strategic CRM (Homburg et al., 2008; Finnegan & Willcocks, 2007; Payne & Frow, 2006; Wu, 2010).

In a phenomenological study, Payne and Frow (2006) developed a model for implementing strategic CRM in service industry organizations. Using an interaction research approach (Gummesson, 2002), they interviewed 34 service industry executives and conducted 35 focus group workshops with employees, clients, and analysts from

eighteen CRM vendors. This research is designed as a pilot study based upon the work of Payne and Frow (2005). The model developed as a result of the study implies that there are five factors involved when implementing an enterprise-wide CRM strategy: [a] developing the organizational vision, mission, values, and culture, [b] establishing sales and profitability goals, [c] understanding marketing segments and targets, [d] deciding on the level and customization of service, and [e] allocating the necessary funds to execute the strategy. These factors are essential, along with the coordination of four key cross-functional attributes: [a] customer management and administration, [b] process alignment throughout the organization, [c] the use of technology to capture information, and [d] how department level managers implement the CRM strategy. The authors do not address the importance of workplace learning and the use of management controls when implementing a CRM strategy as it may pertain to the delivery of service. These missing factors may be of importance to the effective implementation of a CRM strategy and are variables of interest to this study.

Organizational Culture

Organizational studies literature has featured wide deliberation of the study of organizational culture, and scholars and theorists have defined it in various ways (Morgan, 1996; Schein, 1983). Morgan defined organizational culture as “the pattern of development reflected in a society’s system of knowledge, ideology, values, laws, and day-to-day rituals” (p. 112). Schein (1983) defined organizational culture as,

The pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal

integration—a pattern of assumptions that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 14)

Smircich simplified the definition of organizational culture as “a fairly stable set of taken-for-granted assumptions, shared beliefs, meanings, and values that form a kind of backdrop for action” (1983, p. 58). These three definitions of organizational culture disseminate the relevant meaning and purpose of the concept as it relates to businesses.

In summary, the purpose of organizational culture is to provide employees with an impression of a shared reality. The value in focusing on the culture within an organization is that it furnishes employees with a structure that conveys acceptable behavioral and ethical actions by way of policy and communication. Culture is predominantly intangible in nature, is distinctly unique to each business, and is the chief facilitation device for managing the implementation of the strategic goals and the overall internal environment of an organization (Schein, 1992; Sharp & Zaidman, 2010).

Organizational culture in hotel organizations. As an implication of the term “hospitality,” people who work within the hospitality industry tend to be extroverts with a need for communication. A service attitude combined with communication skills are key characteristics necessary for an individual to be successful in the hotel industry, and hotels should make a concerted effort to train employees to develop their skills and abilities to collectively build a quality, service-orientated culture (Ford et al., 2008). Miller and Rice (2003) discussed the innate complexities individuals bring to the social circle of an organization, noting that the experiences of individuals over the course of

their lives will contribute to the development of their behavior, personality, and personal code of conduct.

Internal and external environmental variables can trigger positive or negative conflicts with individual personalities, which in turn may result in negative or constructive interactions with fellow employees or customers. The importance of regulating and managing the effect of individual personalities is not merely a matter of creating policies or procedures. It is more of a leadership role that people of authority take to harmonize exchanges between internal customers and the organization's internal and external environments. The task of delighting customers into the state of satisfaction is increasingly more difficult in the hotel industry. In the case of hotels, a focus on training and an indoctrination of the service-oriented culture should be mandated and tailored so it is philosophically customer centered for managing relationships (Payne & Frow, 2005; Torres & Line, 2006).

In a qualitative, inductive single case study, Ford et al. (2008) studied the factors relating to the strategic development of a service-oriented culture in a hotel organization. Using a descriptive and analytical method from a management perspective, this study constructs an understanding of the influence strategy has on the social and collaborative environment of a hotel. The study reveals an eminent bond between the strategic implementation of a service-oriented culture like customer centricity and the financial success of a hotel organization. The authors noted that management controls have a profound effect on the performance of employees within a service-oriented culture, but identified the ambiguity and disparity in the organizational culture literature between qualitative and quantitative scholars as a limitation to the development of a sound defense

for their findings. Applying a narrative research framework, the authors told stories from the life of the founder of the hotel as a lens in this study to explain the importance of service providers to the success of the service-oriented culture. A limitation not identified by the authors in the study is the threat to participant validity being the hotel leadership handpicked each participant interviewed. Recommendations for future research included exploratory research on the effect of particular strategies on organizational culture and the development of frameworks for implementing such strategies. This recommendation for future research influenced the customer centricity variable in this study.

Seminal scholar Levitt (1960) stated an "entire corporation must be viewed as a customer-creating and customer-satisfying organism" (p. 56). The way to achieve this goal is through a strategically oriented internal marketing campaign that instills the enterprise level philosophy and values into the business level culture. In hotel organizations, the enterprise level philosophy and values of the CRM strategy should be customer centric in nature. Hotel organizations generally have cultural attributes specific to service-oriented organizations. Very little research exists on whether hotel organizations have distinctive cultural characteristics unique to only the hotel industry. The hotel industry is infamous for low wages, extensive working hours, and seasonality, resulting in low levels of job security (Gronroos, 1982; Torres & Kline, 2006). These factors, in combination with the few studies on organizational culture as it pertains to the hospitality industry, result in a question of how an individual employee relates to the organizational culture of a hotel that subscribes to the customer centric philosophy required of an effective CRM strategy.

Behavioral management theories. Social constructionists believe all humans are social beings and the state of their being is a complex and interconnected collection of personal experiences arising from the environment and cultural forces of each individual's history (Lit & Shek, 2007). Seminal scholar in the discipline area of organization and management, Mary Parker Follet, had a single objective in her life's work: to learn how to live and work together. Follett proposed organizations as groups with social elements where the members work towards a common goal through the utilization of communication channels. Each person has something to contribute in pursuit of the common goal, where each individual uses behavior to bring his or her own convictions, experiences, and beliefs to the forefront of the conversations among members. Follett stipulated that for a member to buy into the common goal, leadership should clearly define the goal, carried out by formal controls that activate policy oriented nonbehavioral characteristics within individuals to guarantee an outcome. Once members understand the intricacies and principles of the goal, an encouraging environment and organizational strategy should promote collaborative effort, teamwork, and the combination of individual skills and abilities to bring out the behavioral characteristics of the individual (Schermerhorn, 2007).

Motivating employees. The topic of employee motivation has been at the forefront of organizational behavior studies for many years (Dewhurst et al., 2010). The primary question under study has been to determine what motivates an employee member to contribute to the collective purpose of an organization. Scholars have studied the concept of motivating employees since the onset of the Hawthorne studies developed by Elton Mayo between 1924 and 1932. The Hawthorne study identified that employee

motivation does not emerge solely from monetary compensation, and that employee behavior is directly linked to their attitudes. These findings notably developed an understanding of the requirement for human relations in business and management, in which manager's focus on the factors leading to employee motivation (Statt, 1999).

The use of money as a motivator has short-term positive effects and can have undesirable long-term effects on the culture of an organization. It is important for an organization to apply noncash incentives in its efforts to motivate employees, and studies show that many of these tactics can have advantageous long-term effects on organizational synergy (Dewhurst et al., 2010). According to Browning (2008), organizational members become motivated when they relate the work they do to their social existence.

In 1959, Herzberg identified 14 of the most significant motivating factors for organizational members into two categories, motivators and hygiene factors. Herzberg believed the motivating factors enhance employee productivity through fostering high levels of satisfaction. These factors include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, promotion, and growth potential. The hygiene factors, which pertain to the work environment, are of importance as well. These factors include salary and benefits, company policy and administration, supervision, status, relationships with co-workers, job security, conditions of the work environment, and personal life (Herzberg, 1959, as cited in Schermerhorn, 2007). Dewhurst et al. considered consistent internal marketing and communications from leadership to be an effective long-term method used to positively motivate employees.

Motivation has been at the forefront of the discussion on internal customer relations in organizations. In 1943, Maslow asserted people should consider nearly all organisms to act through motivation, and to be motivating. Management and leadership within any organization realize the needs of their internal customers. Maslow is famous for developing a theoretical model proposing various levels of human motivation, termed Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Often illustrated as a pyramid, the hierarchy contains five levels of human needs, beginning with the lowest level of physiological needs, then safety needs, social needs, and self-esteem needs, leading up to the top tier of self-actualization. Maslow asserted the desire to realize and sustain these needs is likely to motivate humans. All five levels are interrelated. The basic premise of the theory denotes that when individuals attain one level of the hierarchy, the next level of needs automatically emerges and subconsciously becomes the focus of achievement (Maslow, 1943, as cited by Schermerhorn, 2007).

Customer centricity. The customer centric philosophy is a large-scale vision maintained by mechanistic type controls, but it requires an organization to operate as an organism, embracing and encouraging innovation and change geared toward customer needs. For an organization to fully adopt a customer centric philosophy, construction of this reality is critical. Internal customers are crucial to the process and success of a customer centered organization (Galbraith, 2005; Morgan, 1996). As stated by Berger and Luckman (1966):

The objectivity of the institutional world, however massive it may appear to the individual, is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity. ...despite the objectivity that marks the social world in human experience, it does not thereby

acquire an ontological status apart from the human activity that produced it. (p. 60)

Berger and Luckman's theory on the social construction of reality implied the individual participants within a social environment interact and eventually develop similar characteristics and actions representative of one another, which become habitual over time. As these interactions become routine, they gradually become socially institutionalized to create a collective reality. In 1938, Barnard and Andrews (as cited in Scott & Davis, 2007) suggested that organizations are comprised of several systems that operate cohesively, reliant on the collective contributions of individual employees. This thinking, and the behavior and actions of each individual participant, socially construct the collective reality and identity of an organization. Through studying the lived experiences of service providers in full-service luxury hotels, this research sought to understand the qualifying characteristics necessary for a service provider to successfully function and contribute to the customer centric culture of a cooperative system employing strategic CRM (Creswell, 2007).

Much of the behavior and actions of the participants arises from motivational factors of either financial or nonfinancial value. Motivation plays an important role in stimulating the interests of participants: motivation may originate from such actions as management or leadership attention, cash incentives, or praise for a job well done (Dewhurst et al., 2010). Such initiatives as training, orienting, and indoctrinating participants can promote communication and interaction. When such initiatives are in place, a positive, socially constructed reality of customer centered habits and motivations

becomes institutionalized and embedded within the organization's culture (Galbraith, 2005).

Customer centricity and CRM. The scholarly literature on CRM in relation to organizational culture has barely developed to date, particularly surrounding the topic of customer centricity. Current beliefs are that a viable CRM strategy requires an organization to institute and maintain a customer centric philosophy that drives its organizational culture. In an academic business text, Galbraith (2005) explained, "In order to be a successful and viable firm in the twenty-first century, a firm must have a customer centric capability" (p. 1). Galbraith continued, explaining that, "To be customer centric, a firm must literally organize around the customer" (p. 3). How organizations can accomplish customer centricity by "organizing around the customer" remains unclear.

With regard to being customer centered, Bolton (2004) suggested organizations using successful CRM strategies have a philosophical view that values the customer. This philosophical view is customer centricity, which is a set of values integrated into the organizational culture. In this exploratory literature review, Bolton correlates four studies, systematically building a conceptual framework referred to as complete customer centric business processing (CCBP). A culture building protocol, CCBP supports the implementation of a CRM strategy in service organizations by differentiating the product-centered organization from a customer centered organization based on several enterprise level strategic characteristics.

1. A customer centered organization will manage customers and customer groups instead of business verticals.

2. A customer centered organization will customize and personalize the marketing of products and services instead of using mass-marketing standards.
3. A customer centered organization will concentrate efforts heavily on maintaining loyal customers, versus placing emphasis on attaining new customers.

Bolton concludes by emphasizing the prevailing factor in successfully implementing a CRM strategy in a service organization is the leadership and social orientation of the culture.

Galbraith (2005) later discussed the difference between product-centered organizations and customer centric organizations. The difference is profound, as a product- or service-centered organization concentrates on developing and delivering the highest quality product or service, spending resources and strategically planning how and what to deliver to the market to gain competitive advantage. The customer centric organization is starkly different in its objective to secure competitive advantage, as the primary focus is on honestly addressing the customer's needs and concerns while providing support by educating customers to make smart decisions. Most organizations such as full-service luxury hotels understand the way to achieve competitive advantage is through building customer relationships. Customer centricity is a philosophy that treats customers as individuals by tailoring products and services to meet and exceed their needs through the delivery of maximum value (Marchand, 2006; Musico, 2009).

Customer centricity in full-service luxury hotels. In a key nonexperimental quantitative study examining the effects of demographic factors, the service climate, and varying levels of employee identification on the ability to predict customer satisfaction, Solnet (2006) surveyed 314 randomly selected hotel employees from four luxury hotels

in Australia. A hierarchical regression analysis found 47 percent of the unique variance of customer satisfaction is related to elements of the service climate. Customer centricity, a dimension of the service climate that relates directly to service encounters, employee empowerment, and service vision was found most important in predicting customer satisfaction. This finding emphasizes the significance of employee perceptions and the level of intensity an organization focuses on customer centric service factors as they relate to quality service delivery. A managerial implication of the study identified by Solnet suggests the integration of both formal and informal managerial controls help to stabilize the service climate, no matter the demographic composition of the workforce. The study did not find a statistically significant relationship between employee performance, service climate element, and the ability to predict customer satisfaction. Limitations to participant sampling are recognized due to geographic restrictions, but it is suggested the results of the study may be generalized across the hotel industry due to the regional variability of Australia. The use of employee perceptions to gauge customer satisfaction is a limitation since employees can only presume whether a customer is truly satisfied. Recommendations for future research included the effect of service climate elements on a hotel organization's financial performance, on employee perceptions of training, and on perceived customer value applying the conceptual framework used within the study.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) classified 10 subjective characteristics of importance, which customers report as influential in their perceptions on quality service: communication, reliability, responsiveness, courtesy, credibility, competence, access, understanding, tangibles, and security. Full-service luxury hotel organizations

recognizing these fundamental customer centric views at the heart of their CRM strategy embed them within their organizational culture (Bolton, 2004; Ford et. al, 2008), and may use workplace learning and management controls to instill these views in each service provider. This study explored how workplace learning and management controls are used to instill these views in service providers through understanding the “lived experiences” of participants in this study (Creswell, 2007, p. 57).

Management Controls

At the business level of strategy, management applies controls systematically to serve the organization’s interests. Schwaninger (2000) formulated a condensed version of the management control concept known as the viable system model (VSM). The three control perspectives recognized in this model include operational management, strategic management, and normative management. Leaders establish operational policies and procedures to form a business-level sub-culture and align the corporate strategies with functional strategies for execution. The normative management process concerns the maintenance and integration of the enterprise level vision, mission, values, and identity of the organization (Schwaninger, 2000, as cited in O’Grady et al., 2010).

Management control strategies and theories create systems and processes for organizations to apply in order to control the behaviors and actions of employees. The overall goal is to bolster productivity while minimizing errors, ultimately leading to competitive advantage and profitability. In the broadest sense, controlling behavior includes controlling the actions of employees and customers alike, to ensure the strategic

direction of an organization engages effectively and efficiently (Merchant, 1988; O'Grady et al., 2010).

Executing strategy requires implementation of extensive system and process controls with the premise of setting the environment so the controls influence employee actions and behaviors in the course of performing service transactions (Mason, 2007). O'Grady et al. (2010) pointed out the benefits of control research to address the issues of change and employee motivations, noting the importance of the connection between employee learning, motivation, behavior, management analysis, and two types of controls. Extensive study of formal and informal controls is present in the marketing strategy, organization, and business literature.

Theory of marketing control. In a landmark grounded theory study, Jaworski and Merchant (1988) define the concept of control as attempts “by management or other stakeholders within the organization to influence the behavior and activities of personnel to achieve desired outcomes” (p. 24). Jaworski and Merchant’s theory of marketing control is unique in terms of its principles, as it seeks to control behavior, and not the actions of employees. The composition of Jaworski and Merchant’s theory is valuable in evaluating the functionality of any business-unit level operation, particularly the CRM strategies designed to enhance the delivery of quality service (Merchant, 1988).

In the conceptual framework of Jaworski and Merchant’s (1988) theory of marketing control, the association among the environmental factors, the control types, and the consequential outcomes appears in Figure 2. The purpose of the conceptual framework is to depict how the environmental forces affect the internal functionality of an operation, leading to the use of process control types.

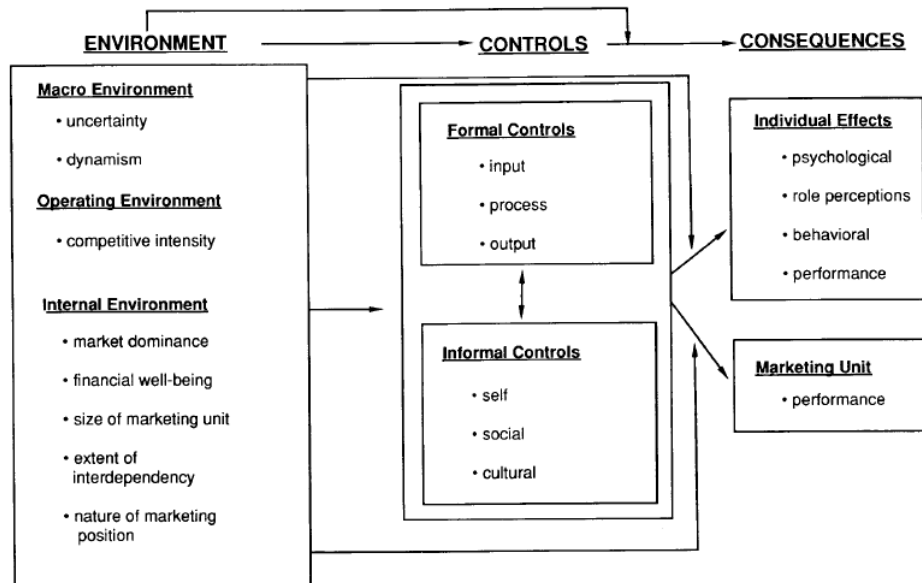


Figure 2. Jaworski & Merchant's (1988) theory of marketing control. Copyright 1988 by the American Marketing Association. Reprinted with permission. From "Toward a Theory of Marketing Control: Environmental Context, Control Types, and Consequences" by B. Jaworski & K. Merchant, 1988, *Journal of Marketing*, 52, p. 22.

Depending upon the decision making of leadership, formal or informal controls may apply to environmental forces and the needs of the organization. Pertinent to this study are the consequences resulting from the application of formal or informal controls applied within the framework of a CRM strategy. The consequences of formal or informal controls will result in variations on the performance or behavior of employees. How these controls correlate with the customer-centric philosophy of a service organization is of concern. Implementation of formal and informal controls takes place within a single organization at many levels, and the propensity for scholars and practitioners to focus studies on formal controls over informal controls in the CRM literature is a weakness (Chan, 2005; Mason, 2007; Payne & Frow, 2005; Zablah et al.,

2004). This study concerns the people issues associated with implementing both formal and informal controls within a strategic CRM framework to enhance the service quality experience.

Formal Controls. According to Jaworski and Merchant (1988), “formal controls are written, management-initiated mechanisms that influence the probability that employees or groups will behave in ways that support the stated marketing objectives” (p. 26). Two of the dominant types of formal controls include process and output controls, which both appear widely in the literature (Kevork & Vrechopoulos, 2009). The difference between these two formal controls is not in the end goal; it is in the approach.

Based on a survey of 220 senior business executives, Jaworski and Kohli (1993) found that substantive process and output controls and not just their existence makes the difference in an organization’s commitment to customers and its overall market orientation. The study indicates that while process controls involve the documentation of systematic procedures to measure and control performance, managers use output controls to document and examine worker performance. Output controls are more suitable for larger organizations, while process controls are more useful in smaller organizations with limited bureaucracy.

In a descriptive research study surveying 318 members of the American Marketing Association, Ramaswami (1996) implies that employees opposed the use of both process and output controls to establish protocols in their operations. Study results showed that process controls diminished employee motivation, and output controls barely affected negative behaviors due to the perception of these formal controls as subjective and excessive. Ramaswami noted employees are typically agreeable to the application of

nonbehavioral, formal type controls if management clearly defines and presents to them the scope of work, the accountability associated with the required tasks, and the level of empowerment in terms they can understand.

Informal controls. According to Jaworski and Merchant (1988), “informal controls are unwritten, typically worker-initiated mechanisms that influence the behavior of individuals or groups in marketing units. These informal controls may or may not be supportive of the stated marketing objectives” (p. 26). Informal controls assist employees when a gap is present in the procedures, or shortcomings are in the application of formal controls. They are particularly useful in service organizations due to the spontaneity and tendency for frequent change. Informal controls promote intercommunication among employees, as the tendency to look for guidance or assistance from coworkers within one’s own workgroup is common in the absence of managerial support. By bolstering internal communications among workgroup members, the delivery of service that meets the expectations of the consumers and the organization alike, may emerge. The failure to deliver quality service links directly with a lack of informal controls that support a viable teamwork-oriented environment (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993).

Aligning organizational strategy and management controls. The way in which an organization develops and navigates the blend of management controls it employs should undergo tedious evaluation, making sure that each control aligns with every level of the organizational strategy and philosophy. Particularly in service-oriented organizations, controls should be both flexible and regimented to streamline processes in order to maximize efficiency (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988; Mason, 2007; O’Grady et al., 2010). The use of formal controls is common in larger, established organizations

operating within conventional environments. Such organizations apply formal controls within a bureaucratic framework to integrate efforts among the various functional elements of the organization. Such functions as financial, administrative, and customer service are likely to have intensive formal controls (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988).

Few studies exist concerned with the relationship between CRM and management controls. In a qualitative case study of a British manufacturing firm, Bull (2003) examines the strategic implications of implementing and using CRM technology. Using narrative description (Stake, 1995), the study illustrates that CRM is a holistic strategy reliant upon management controls, business process, and information technology. The case discusses the failure of a strategic CRM initiative implementation due to a lack of substantive formal controls. Although formal controls were in place, management failed to employ the policies and procedures designed to support the implementation process. The author fails to identify limitations of the study, and interview protocol and purposeful-sampling procedures are neglected, limiting the validity of the study. The author neglected to discuss the impact of informal controls in the case and did not offer recommendations for future research (Bull).

To obtain a competitive advantage in today's volatile business environment, most organizations realistically employ both formal and informal controls to provide support for the employees to execute their job duties (O'Grady et al., 2010). Customer centric service organizations are more likely to employ process controls mixed with informal controls that foster teamwork, socialization among members, and organizational loyalty (Bolton, 2004). Management implements and enforces a mix of formal and informal controls, which ultimately means the dissemination of information, commitment to the

strategic goals, and follow through of customer centric principles are dependent on the performance and effectiveness of each individual manager (Hartline et al., 2000; Kevork, & Vrechopoulos, 2009). Managers should create a plan for monitoring this mix of controls to ensure consistency with the environment, which can affect the ability for service providers to deliver quality service (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Mason, 2007). If inconsistency arises between the environment and the management controls, service providers are likely to show signs of stress through misbehavior and poor judgment. To bridge the gap between the environment and management controls, service providers can be empowered to make sensible service oriented decisions that ensure guest satisfaction (Klidas et al., 2007). Before service providers are empowered to make decisions, it is imperative for a service organization to align individual values and principles with management control ideals to facilitate quality service delivery (O'Grady et al., 2010). Strict application of management controls may suppress a service provider's motivation and desire to be creative, and may have an adverse affect on the delivery of quality service (Wallace & De Chernatony, 2009; Wang & Davis, 2009).

Empowering service providers. The concept of empowerment refers to the creation and allowance of formal and informal controls that give service employees the authority and autonomy to make decisions to influence work-related processes or customer transactions. Although top service providers possess intrinsic motivation to employ empowerment as a tool, not all service providers have the same morale, and some need extrinsic incentives for motivation (Wang & Davis, 2008). The morale of service

providers can be highly susceptible to the feedback derived from consumer perceptions on service quality (Zeithaml et al., 2006).

In a nonexperimental quantitative study examining the relationship bond between employees and customers, Wang and Davis (2008) found by way of empowerment, service providers have the opportunity to control the feedback results from service delivery. Empowerment is a powerful tool that can motivate service providers to deliver quality service. A structured questionnaire surveyed 780 customer-employee pairs from 72 service firms concerning the perceived balance of trust, value, and benefits in customer relationships. The results of an ANOVA revealed negative motivational consequences when service employees have extensive levels of authority and empowerment, suggesting that abuse of power may be problematic. A practical implication identified in this study addresses a concern that management controls must be coordinated with empowerment initiatives in order to balance the relationship between service employees and customers. The authors claim this to be the first empirical inquiry focused on the imbalanced relationship dilemma in the service industry, which identifies empowerment as an important variable for consideration in this study. With regard to validity, the authors recruited the participants via phone or e-mail without mention of formal consent granting permission for the researchers to contact each of them. This method of recruitment has cause for ethical concern being that workers are a vulnerable population susceptible to repercussions. Future research recommendations include replication of this study within specific industries of the service sector, and experimental designs to analyze the study variables in a more scientific manner.

Empowerment as a highly effective tool typically has formal controls with set boundaries and specific authority. For empowerment to be effective, it should include support, training, information, knowledge, and rewards (Bowen & Lawler, 1995; Klidas et al., 2007). By offering rewards such as additional pay, promotions, or benefits in order to motivate service providers, the providers become encouraged to use empowerment to improve customer satisfaction. How service providers perceive empowerment is vital, whether as a mandate or a tool to aid in the delivery of quality service, decision-making powers should be delegated with the goal of accentuating the customer experience. If an empowerment policy assigns accountability without providing real authority to the service provider, the initiative may fail (Bowen & Lawler). Employees enjoy the flexibility and freedom to use their own discretion, and with clearly defined and measured policy, they will fully participate in their empowered role in a more relaxed manner when interacting with customers (Wang & Davis, 2008).

Maintaining morale is important when empowerment programs are in effect. Organizational leaders recognize the importance of supporting the empowerment initiative by consistently evaluating the systems and processes in place by utilizing double loop learning techniques. By implementing a continuous quality improvement initiative to support the empowerment program, the organization would not be out of place in expecting service providers to take part in skill and ability development in an effort to continuously improve service delivery techniques (Morgan, 1996).

The role of a hotel service provider is crucial in executing the overall objective of a CRM initiative. The subjectivity of a service transaction is a highly emotional experience that can be taxing on the motivation and satisfaction of both internal and

external customers. From the external customer perspective, the assurance of a quality, orderly, and meaningful service experience is most desirable (Solnet, 2006). The situation is much the same for service providers in hotels. The structure and consistency of CRM tools, customer centric cultural values, and protocols lead to repetition, which in turn, leads to confidence and the mastery of delivering quality service. Successful hotel organizations understand the essential need to support service providers by conducting the appropriate amount of customer research. Such research should become the knowledge base for developing a robust service delivery support system that encourages service providers. It should help to preserve the motivation and confidence of service providers who are under the constant pressure and mandate to achieve maximum customer satisfaction while building long-term customer relations (Klidas et al., 2007).

Kildas et al. (2007) studied the predictors of behavior as they pertain to empowered employees throughout the service delivery process to hotel customers. Using an empirical quantitative design, the authors surveyed 356 frontline employees of 16 luxury hotels in seven countries throughout Europe. Four control variables under study included training, performance-related rewards, customer-oriented culture, and empowering management style, which were correlated with empowered behavior. The results of a regression analysis found that two department level control variables correlated significantly with the empowered behavior variable, customer-oriented culture and empowerment style. A management implication in this study established that service provider empowerment is highly effective in the delivery of service when managed carefully. The authors address the validity and reliability of the study in detail within the measurement section of this article. A pilot study was performed among 70 frontline

employees throughout four luxury hotels in Crete, Greece to analyze scale validity and reliability. The pilot resulted in addressing other important issues such as the time it would take for a participant to complete, the design of the survey tool, and the level of understanding the participants have of the questions on the survey. The outcome of the pilot study resulted in a minor revision and finalization of the survey tool. The authors highlight the inability to survey all departments in each hotel to be a limitation, as the results on training and performance related award control variables may have been skewed because of this. The need to replicate this study using other industries as a lens is a recommendation emphasized several times in the conclusive remarks of this study. The focus on organizational culture as a macro level control used to influence the values and principles of service providers to advance the customer oriented philosophy of the organization influenced the customer centricity variable in this study. The emphasis on selection, recruitment, and training as a means to prepare service providers for empowerment resulted in the workplace-learning variable, while the use of management controls to foster desirable service provider behaviors contributed to the management control variable in this case study (Klidas et al.).

Workplace Learning

Service organizations, particularly full-service luxury hotels that strive for competitive advantage, vie for talent, and they understand the necessity of providing service providers with a sense of meaning. The viewpoint of constructionism presumes that individuals construct knowledge by way of taking in fresh information and correlating it with personal experiences to develop practical knowledge. Service

providers benefit from developing knowledge through the construction of meaning derived from continuous workplace experiences. The development and delivery of formalized training programs provide positive results. Giving employees the freedom to learn at their own pace, choice, and discretion will likely lead to increased production and personal job satisfaction. Ultimately, the role of the organization is to provide a structured learning platform containing context and direction for service providers to build their character (Baldwin-Evans, 2007).

The concept of workplace learning is generally about addressing behaviors that improve the actions and performance of employees. Its premise is to motivate employees and to provide them with the support and training needed to foster a personal relationship and commitment from each individual. Such a commitment will equip employees with the knowledge and decision making skills needed to carry out their responsibilities and duties with compassion for the company and the customer. The commitment originates from the organizational philosophy and values, gaining influence from the managerial controls, organizational design, and overall strategic goals (Cazzell & Ulmer, 2009).

Zablah et al. (2004) conducted qualitative evaluative research on the gaps found in the CRM implementation process that lead to failure of such an initiative. Supported by an inductive literature review of fourteen foundational studies, the authors present a conceptual model illustrating the configuration of three primary factors (employees, technology, and process) of a CRM initiative as they relate to the end user accepting a new CRM technology system. The model depicts process gaps between the variables, implying the level of cognitive dissonance produced due to a process gap will determine whether an employee will accept or oppose the new CRM technology. An outcome of

the literature review showed workplace learning to be of high importance to minimizing all process gaps depicted in the conceptual model. “User involvement, communication, and training are critical to the success of any organizational innovation effort, especially when the innovation represents a significant departure from existing organizational standards” (p. 289). Minimizing cognitive dissonance among employees during innovative change initiatives is imperative to the successful application of CRM technology. Formal training can minimize cognitive dissonance among individual employees when an organization implements new CRM technology. Employees having to work within an environment known for progressive technological change, and the affect formal training has on individual cognitive dissonance, influenced the workplace-learning variable in this case study research. Based on the quality of the selected literature used in the study, the authors display confidence regarding the validity of the study. The authors believe an empirical study is the logical continuation of their research. Essential to this case study research is the notion that workplace learning is an effective means used to enhance motivation and to minimize cognitive dissonance in the implementation of CRM initiatives, potentially enabling service providers to deliver consistent quality service with greater competency and confidence (Zablah et al.).

Workplace learning and controlling change. The concept of change has been around since approximately 500 BC, when the Greek philosopher Heraclites pondered the notion of change and its relationship with nature. Heraclites is quoted saying, “There is nothing permanent except change” (Westover, 2010, p. 45). In 1970, Toffler became one of the more recent scholars to raise the world’s awareness concerning the pronounced rate of change in the lives of individuals, in society, and in organizations. He increased

awareness to the certainty of change, the need to adapt to change, and the difficulty of predicting change (Salomann, Kolbe, & Brenner, 2006).

In a critical review of historical literature on the nature of change, Westover (2010) discussed the three forces Noel Tichy posited as cause for change: technical, political, and cultural. To control these forces, an organization can focus on the momentum, course, and intensity of change by being dexterous and willing to explore innovative ideas derived from internal customers. Organizations unable to respond to, or navigate change will likely fail.

It is important that learning in the workplace meet the demands of change. It provides the potential for an organization to meet or exceed the momentum of change in order to be successful. If the organization fails to keep up with the rate of change, it is likely lagging behind its competitors and gradually deteriorating. For an organization to achieve competitive advantage, it can strive to be innovative, maintain control over its processes, operational competencies, managerial abilities, and monitor its organizational design to permit flexibility to adjust to change. Organizations that invest resources in workplace learning will essentially help their internal customers (i.e., employees) to embrace and accept change (Chich-Jen & I-Ming, 2010).

21st century service providers. The configuration of an operation does not necessarily require a robust information technology solution; instead, the design of the solution makes all internal customers leaders and provides them with the knowledge and information needed to deliver quality service. The service provider is of importance by being directly involved in the execution of every transaction as the primary point of contact. Service providers in the 21st century can identify with a customer-oriented

strategy that is free from the intensity of bureaucratic formal controls. An open system that employs informal controls and behavior-based evaluation will be in high demand to secure the talent and commitment of top service providers (Day, 2003; Hartline et al., 2000; Timmerman, 2010).

Top service providers execute the daily functions of a CRM strategy by interacting with customers. They do much more than just play the role of actors in a transaction; they are change agents (Westover, 2010). Organizations should train service providers, provide them with personal and professional development opportunities (Klidas et al, 2007), and treat them with respect to cultivate trust and loyalty in the employment relationship (Evans et al., 2008; Kanagal, 2009). In a qualitative analysis of scientific literature on the development of strategic individual competences, Savanevičienė et al. (2008) asserted that internal customers define an organization's purpose and existence, virtually bringing it to life. This study highlights the importance and strategic relevance of developing individual competences in all organization types with the purpose of embracing change. It emphasizes how each individual contributes to the overall success of an organization, and concludes that an organization must invest in the development of individual competency through rigorous workplace learning initiatives to prepare employees for change. Change should come naturally to employees if workplace-learning initiatives are designed properly (Savanevičienė et al.). These perspectives on individual contribution may be the differentiating factor in the delivery of quality service that sets a full-service hotel apart from the competition, and influenced the workplace-learning variable in this case study research.

Summary

As established, CRM is not simply a technological innovation: it is a strategy, a philosophy, and a cultural movement. The delivery of quality service within a strategic CRM framework from the perspective of the service provider is complicated, and the research literature does little to simplify it. Not enough knowledge is available about the relationship between CRM strategy, customer centricity, management controls, workplace learning and the delivery of quality service from the perspective of the individual service provider (Bolton, 2004; Ford et al, 2008; Hemmington, 2007; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006; Svennson, 2006; Zablah et al., 2004). How service providers perceive the strategic direction, philosophical implications, cultural intensity, service quality expectations, and tactical controls of a CRM initiative is not clear, and there is no apparent understanding about the influence workplace learning may have on service provider's perceptions. Workplace learning is a formidable control mechanism (Savanevičienė et al., 2008), which, if used properly, may establish a customer centric disposition within each individual.

The need for an organization to understand its employees' definition of CRM and customer centricity is crucial (Finnegan & Willcocks, 2007) and training is essential. It is essential for all employees of an organization to be informed about the core principles of a strategic CRM initiative (Bolton; 2004; Dev et al., 2009; Payne & Frow, 2005; Salomann et al., 2006; Savanevičienė et al., 2008; Zablah et al., 2004). Not enough is known about the level of knowledge and understanding service providers should have about a CRM initiative to affect the delivery of quality service.

Because CRM is a strategy embedded within the entire organization, the possibility of employee rejection, a lack of planning, or poor leadership can result in failure. For this reason, all levels of a CRM strategy, from the enterprise level strategy all the way to the functional strategy, should be aligned with management controls. By striking the right balance between formal and informal controls to enhance the goals of a CRM strategy, an organization can make an enormous impact on the effectiveness of its customer relations' goals (Bull, 2003; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Wang & Davis, 2008).

Scholars and practitioners have thoroughly studied the definition of quality service throughout literature. The delivery of quality service is a complex topic, and the research literature is overwhelmingly vague. Notably, a distinguishing factor of delivering quality service is the inherent preoccupation with effective and efficient relations between all stakeholders. A customer centric marketing approach to delivering quality service, such as CRM, requires a consistent message that resonates throughout the organization on the utmost importance of customer responsiveness. Communication is the key to broadcasting this message, so the demand for management commitment and dependable employees is important. In a viable strategic CRM initiative, through the use of management controls, an effective workplace learning initiative, and an authentic customer centric culture, service providers may perceive to be well equipped to deliver quality service (Bolton, 2004; Bull, 2003; Ford et al., 2008; Hemmington, 2007; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006).

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is value in understanding the influence of customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels, from the perspective of the service provider. This chapter establishes the methodological framework for this study, beginning with the purpose of the study, followed by an explanation of the research design. The structure of this chapter is in accordance with Capella University's School of Business and Technology dissertation format. Subsequent to the purpose of the study, the philosophical underpinnings, selected strategy of inquiry, research design and research methods used to frame the research appear (Creswell, 2009; Tight, 2010). The chapter concludes with a discussion on validity, reliability, and ethics.

Restatement of the Purpose

This qualitative case study examined three components of strategic CRM: [a] a customer centric culture [b] management controls, and [c] workplace learning, as they influence the service provider's ability to deliver quality service within the niche hospitality market of full-service luxury hotels (Bolton, 2004; Bull, 2003; Ford et al., 2008; Kanagal, 2009; Klidas et al., 2007; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006; Savanevičienė et al., 2008; Svensson, 2006). These three components of strategic CRM may be the critical factors required to deliver quality service and to attain the distinctive competitive advantage of customer loyalty in the full-

service luxury hotel marketplace (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010; Wu, 2010). This research is intended to expand the understanding of critical components within a strategic CRM framework (Payne & Frow, 2005; Wang & Davis, 2008), and to explore the influence of each component on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service, from the perspective of the service provider.

Research Questions

According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), identifying the management dilemma in a scholar-practitioner based study is an essential step in the research process. A management study should be of real-world value, being practically applicable by contributing to the resolution of problems or realizing opportunities within business and industry (Cooper & Schindler). From an academic perspective, a management study can also add to the body of knowledge on a particular topic (Robson, 2002). This qualitative study was concerned with the opportunity for management of service organizations to realize the value and potential of each service provider for the collective good of the service organization (Ford et al., 2008; Savanevičienė et al., 2008). The primary management question for this study was: Do customer centricity, management controls, and workplace learning enable service provider's to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM? Additionally, five sub-questions guided the study:

1. Do full-service luxury hotels use customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM to contemplate, systematize, and prepare for quality service delivery?

2. Do full-service luxury hotels use customer centricity, workplace learning and management control components of strategic CRM to deliver quality service as a means of achieving competitive advantage?
3. What characteristics should a service provider possess to deliver quality service within a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM?
4. What service delivery training do service providers receive from full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM to ensure quality?
5. What influence do service providers have on the overall success of a strategic CRM initiative in full-service luxury hotels?

Research Design

While qualitative and quantitative research approaches characterize two of the more prominent empirical research designs, each is distinct and is dependent upon the selected strategy of inquiry and research methods applied (Creswell, 2009; Tight, 2010). Everet and Louis (1981) proposed assumptions to help simplify each application by distinguishing the two contrasting research perspectives as polar opposites, indicating that researchers conduct quantitative inquiries from the outside, while researchers conduct qualitative inquiries from the inside of an organization. Outside inquiries objectively produce generalized theory by isolating the phenomenon through methods of reduction and hypotheses testing; while inside inquiries consider a more holistic understanding and meaning of historically unique situations using inductive reasoning. The disparity between these two approaches is visible in the extent of the researcher's engagement in the study, the physical involvement in the study's environment, and the amount of direct contact with participants or subjects (Everet & Louis).

According to Creswell (2009), "quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationships among variables, while qualitative

research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). Creswell suggested quantitative and qualitative research approaches are not contradictory; they complement each other on either end of the research spectrum. Regardless of the ongoing contention among scholars in addressing the rationale of existence between these two approaches, each holds a prominent position in academic research today (Tight, 2010). Scholars and practitioners alike recognize and accept the validity of qualitative research, and they use it widely in organizational science and business research. Modern approaches and theories will continue to challenge quantitative research, and will remain a fixture in academic research over time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the inflexible nature of the outside inquiry approach of quantitative research inhibited the researcher’s ability to study inside phenomena within service organizations. A qualitative approach was appropriate to investigate these phenomena as they exist within their natural environment (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006;).

To expand on the definition of qualitative research, Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) explained it as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p. 15). Qualitative approaches typically allow researchers to study the context of phenomena in their natural environment, where one of the key attributes is flexibility, allowing the application of multiple methods within a single study. Flexible research designs permit studies to be emergent in the construction of knowledge, are predominantly interpretive in nature, and take the subjectivity of the researcher into account (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln,

2011; Robson, 2002). Because this case study uses a qualitative research design, discussion of the philosophical underpinnings appears in the following section.

Philosophical underpinnings. The phrase case study may be familiar to most scholars, but incongruity exists on how philosophical theory applies in case study research. The confusion arises from the cross utilization and overlap of other theoretical frameworks within the quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods paradigms (Bott, 2007). Regardless of which research design a researcher applies in a study, Creswell (2009) suggested the delineation of a philosophical worldview within the “research proposal or plan” to “make explicit the larger philosophical ideas” (p. 5) introduced to support the study. Guba defined the term *worldview* as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (1990, p. 17). The field of qualitative research is a time-honored tradition representing a variety of approaches and techniques scholars have distinctly defined by differing political and worldview perspectives; in particular, within the domain of social research. The various social worldview orientations provide researchers with an arsenal of philosophical perspectives from which they develop assumptions and methods of investigation to aid in the interpretation of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The literature recognizes the topics of strategy, controls, learning, and service quality as largely time-tested and quantifiable, but the variables surrounding the topic of customer centricity are a set of behavioral principles aligned with the qualitative literature of organizational culture (Galbraith, 2005). The interconnectivity of these variables presents an opportunity to qualitatively explore a gap in the literature regarding a service organization’s social dependency on its service providers to collectively deliver quality service. Researchers understand what the individual service providers’ perceptions and

interpretations of these variables may represent in the quality of service they individually provide. With this premise in mind, the worldview of social constructionism is appropriate as the theoretical orientation of the study. The social constructionist worldview suits the exploratory nature of the study, wherein the goal is to uncover the cultural impact of systems and protocol on the individual realities of service providers, as well as their motivation to deliver exemplary quality service.

The literature on social psychology has cultivated the principles of social constructionism (Burr, 2003). Social constructionism is a dominant worldview within qualitative social research, which may be associated with or interchangeably referred to as constructivism (Robson, 2002), interpretive (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), interactionism (Burr), or naturalistic throughout much of today's literature. Social constructionism, like most worldviews, comprises philosophical assumptions such as ontology, epistemology, and methodology, which make up a set of beliefs by which it to define social constructionism (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ontology is the branch of philosophy concerned with nature of reality, whereas epistemology is the nature of knowledge, knowing, and beliefs (Crotty, 1998). Lincoln and Guba described methodology as the type of approach taken, along with the techniques and methods used to execute a study.

At the heart of philosophic worldview constructionism, a relational significance is implied that the concept of meaning lies within relationships, while construction of reality takes place in dialogue (Gergen, 1994). The ontological premise of social constructionism is that reality is socially constructed by individuals (Robson, 2002), and such constructions are flexible, as are their related 'realities'. Constructionism links closely with relativism (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which according to Robson, "maintains

that there is no external reality independent of human consciousness; there are only different sets of meanings and classifications which people attach to the world” (p. 22). For the purpose of this study, the ontological position meets the need to understand multiple perspectives and contributions of individuals in relation to their acceptance and application of CRM strategies within the context of organizational culture (Riad, 2007). Ultimately, individual perspectives and contributions are socially constructed into a collective purpose influencing the quality service phenomenon (Payne & Frow, 2006).

The epistemological principals of social constructionism specify taking a subjectivist and transactional disposition wherein the researcher, participants, and objects of inquiry connect interactively to form the outcomes of the research during the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Social constructionism is a subjective worldview that emerged from the seminal work of Berger and Luckman (1966), in which they contended the reality of knowledge acquisition, most specifically knowledge of common sense, which can develop and perpetuate only by way of social interactions between individuals. Individuals affirmatively interact with awareness that their particular perceptions of realities are analogous, but over time and with action, a collective perception of reality and body of knowledge may actualize.

In stark contrast, quantitative research designs subscribe to the ideals of post-positivism, which is an objective approach seeking to understand the one preexistent reality as the primary focus, knowing that such a goal of entirely understanding such reality is unattainable (Trochim, 2006). People have an aptitude to construct realities of their own (Patton, 2002), which collectively adds richness to the multidimensional context of organizational culture. A customer centric culture, from the perspective of this

study, is a socially constructed phenomenon shared by a group of people, and viewing it solely and narrowly through an objective lens is unrealistic. Social constructionism can help facilitate an understanding of culturally dependent strategies such as CRM and provide insight into how these strategies can augment customer satisfaction.

Phenomenology, the study of phenomenon, is theoretically compatible with the case study design and was adopted as the methodological approach for data collection, analysis, and interpretation in this study. A phenomenological approach is appropriate when an understanding of “the lived experience” of a phenomenon is desired, which complements a case study designed to explore the meaning of a situation and the individuals involved. This form of research usually involves several individuals (Creswell, 2007; Denzin, 2011). Phenomenology is compatible with the viewpoint of social constructionism (Crotty, 1998), both real world approaches that allow collaboration with service provider participants to document their stories and views regarding the phenomenon of quality service delivery in a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Turner & Gray, 2009).

The premise of a methodological approach in a study is to make sense of a phenomenon (Robson, 2002). Seminal thinkers Yin (2008) and Stake (1995) maintained constructionist views in their approaches to case study research, while employing rigor by way of procedural guidelines. The procedural guidelines for this phenomenological approach consist of five methodological components: [a] deconstruction, [b] capture, [c] bracketing, [d], construction, and [e] contextualization.

The deconstruction component requires a constructive overview of information on the subject of inquiry, namely the literature review section of this study. The capture stage provides information on the selection of cases, other data sources, and data collection aspects of the study. The next phase, bracketing, represents the data analysis stage, while the construction phase indicates the interpretation and overall synthesis of the data derived from bracketing. The contextualization phase is the researcher's opportunity to interpret the context of the findings by using thick descriptive language.

Strategy of inquiry. Creswell (2009) identified five of the most widely used strategies of inquiry to choose from when conducting qualitative research: case study, grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, and narrative approaches. The case study, in particular, is a traditional research approach used by practitioners for many years to understand management topics and related phenomena important to business and industry (Yin, 2008). Case studies developed within academia primarily serve teaching purposes, and their design normally has more thoroughness and structure to meet the requirements of qualitative research standards (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2008). The qualitative case study is a method that examines phenomena from multiple perspectives using various data sources. Such treatment offers the researcher an opportunity to explore, identify, and understand a variety of perspectives and realities of the studied phenomenon (Stake, 1995).

A researcher's choice in conducting a case study relates more to making a decision on what to study, rather than simply being a methodological approach (Stake, 1995). According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), case study research is "the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the

participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 436). Employing a case study approach, the intent of this study is to understand the “how” and “what” questions pertaining to the strategic CRM components customer centricity, workplace learning, and management controls; and their influence on a service providers ability to deliver of quality service in full-service luxury hotels (Tight, 2010). A single case study approach is a logical choice for the purpose of this study, in which the researcher sought to explore and document associations between multidimensional variables and has little or no control over what can occur when investigating a situation dependent principally on context (Yin, 1994). The design of a single case study serves to confirm or challenge a theory, or to characterize a unique case. Single case designs require diligence and careful investigation to avoid perversion and to gain full access to evidence (Stake, 1995). Such an approach is ideal when conducting an in-depth investigation, particularly within sociological research studies with a need for the understanding of individual perceptions and perspectives of reality on the organizational culture and systems that influence the delivery of quality service (Riad, 2007).

From the perspective of Yin’s (1994) methodical typologies, this study is an explanatory-exploratory case study, because its goal is to understand what theories and concepts are relative to the realities of service providers and how these concepts play out in a real world setting. Explanatory case studies effectively address “how,” and “why” questions, while the purpose of exploratory case studies is primarily for answering the “what” questions central to understanding a particular phenomenon. The guiding procedures that help delineate a single, explanatory-exploratory case study are outlined in the following sections.

Sample

In single-case inquiries, researchers employ strategies to structure, guide, and govern a study in order to ensure uniformity in the collection of evidence and analysis. Case study research requires a plan detailing procedures for conducting the case, selecting a case, gaining access to participants and evidence, and sampling methods. The following sections include a detailed overview of the case study plan for this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2008).

Case Study Procedures

Because this case study was concerned with discovering how the realities and perceptions of the service provider's understanding for CRM strategies employed within their organizations impact the ability to deliver quality service, the need to employ the proper procedures is imperative to the effectiveness of the study. Seminal scholars have developed procedures outlining the conduct of researchers from the inception to the culmination of a case study project (Creswell, 2009; Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994, 2008). The case study procedures followed in this study included the following components: questions, collection, management, and analysis of evidence, narrative interpretation, write-up, and validation (Creswell, 2009).

Case Selection

Selecting the appropriate case or cases to study is essential when researching phenomena (Stake, 1995). Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasized the importance of identifying the most relevant case when conducting a single case study to take full

advantage of available knowledge within the allotted time of the study. Single-case studies provide substantial understanding of phenomena embedded within the distinct scenario of an organization, and they can substantiate or disprove a theory or realize a unique or extreme case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Conversely, multiple-case studies add vigor and insight into general business practices and concepts, constructing a more compelling argument in understanding phenomena, behaviors, events, or conditions within and across the scope of an industry (Eisenhardt, 1989; Huberman & Miles, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2008). Yin (1994) contends that a single-case study design is acceptable or suitable on the premise that the case is revelatory. Such a case assumes that inherent problems or opportunities discovered in the research of a particular case may be common in other cases. This study serves as a revelatory case, creating a basis for analyzing and describing problems and opportunities identified in other research. For the purpose of this study, a single-case approach is more appropriate since this study seeks to explore the perceived impact components of a strategic CRM initiative may have on quality service.

A full-service luxury hotel will serve as the selected case for this study by way of the American Automobile Association (AAA, 2009) Four Diamond Award ratings list and the Forbes Travel Guide (2009; formerly Mobile Travel Guide) Four-Star Award ratings list. The AAA Four Diamond award criteria concept of a “luxury hotel” is an Establishment that is upscale in all areas. Accommodations are progressively more refined and stylish. The physical attributes reflect an obvious enhanced level of quality throughout. The fundamental hallmarks at this level include an

extensive array of amenities combined with a high degree of hospitality, service, and attention to detail. (n.p.)

The Forbes Travel Guide (2009) Four-Star ratings concept of a “full-service hotel” is a hotel providing impeccable service and a variety of classy and refined amenities, which “may include automatic turndown service, valet parking, and 24-hour room service” (n.p.).

The full-service luxury hotel chosen for this research met the rigorous standards to achieve these award ratings for providing upscale facilities and for delivering quality service. The full criteria of standards for winning the Four-Star and Four Diamond award ratings are in Appendix B. The two rating organizations evaluate and update the criteria on an annual basis, in which the best-in-class establishments earn the highest honors. In the year 2008, the Forbes [Mobile] Travel Guide evaluated over 50,000 hotels and resorts in the United States of America to receive a star rating, resulting in 137 hotels and resorts receiving the Four-Star Award. Of these 137, 16 were in the state of Florida. One hundred seventeen hotels and resorts in the region achieved the AAA Four Diamond award, out of 1,224 hotels to receive the award in the United States of America, Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean. The use of these Four-Star and Four Diamond rating systems augmented the potential for identifying a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM principles to enhance quality service.

Due to the location of the researcher and industry contacts, the chosen geographic location purposefully identified for the study was a major metropolitan city in the United States of America. Within the county region of the chosen full-service luxury hotel under

study, 26 hotels and resorts received the AAA Four Diamond award, and nine hotels received the Forbes [Mobile] Travel Guide Four-Star award. Within the major metropolitan city, eight hotels and resorts received the AAA Four Diamond award, and three hotels received the Forbes [Mobile] Travel Guide Four-Star award in 2009.

The major metropolitan city is a renowned tourist destination that has a high concentration of Four-Star and Four Diamond full-service luxury hotels. The full-service luxury hotel chosen for this study received both awards in 2009 and was willing to participate in the study attributable to the researcher's industry contacts. This highly desirable destination is in high demand for tourists from all over the world. The relaxing ambiance of the region offers many opportunities for tourist exploration, and the full-service luxury hotels chosen for the study provide similar upscale amenities that complement the desirability of the major metropolitan city.

Gaining Access to the Case

Personal industry contacts of the researcher provided access to gatekeepers of the organization, from whom written permission to execute the study was obtained. The initial form of contact occurred as an inquiry of probable participation via a formal letter requesting permission to access participants and company information for the purpose of this research. The letter was mailed to the gatekeeper of the study, the corporate Vice President of Digital Marketing and CRM. The detailed letter included a description, the intentions of the study, a confidentiality agreement, and specific requests for participation in the study including the means for engaging and protecting the participants (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). An acceptance letter granting permission to access participants and

company information was received a few weeks' later that detailed conditions required by the executive management committee and the legal department of the organization. In support for allowing the study, the gatekeeper raised concerns regarding the use of formal observation due to the sensitivity of guest and employee privacy rights. An agreement was made for the researcher to conduct informal observations. The gatekeeper insisted that informal observation was the only appropriate way to gather data, including informal observations and semi-structured interviews. The general manager of the hotel was the internal point of contact, acting as a volunteer research assistant.

Sampling Design

Presented in Appendix C, the sampling plan makes clear the setting, actors, events and processes involved in the collection of evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Purposeful sampling was used to identify potential participants for semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2007). Purposeful sampling, otherwise known as theoretical sampling, is a nonprobability sampling method considered appropriate for the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The strategy of "purposeful sampling," as explained by Patton (2002, p. 230), is one that facilitates the selection of cases and participants that offer depth of context relative to the phenomenon of interest outlined in the purpose of the study. Multiple forms of purposeful sampling are available for use, including that of criterion sampling. For this case, it is necessary to select a population of participants that meet select criteria who have experience and knowledge of the strategic CRM initiative (Cooper & Schindler, 2006; Payne & Frow). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), criterion sampling pertains to "all cases that meet some

criterion; useful for quality assurance” (p. 28). Included in the following sections is an explanation of the setting, actors and research participants, documented events, and the processes orientation involved in the collection of evidence for this study (Creswell, 2009; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Setting. The research setting is a critical component of the exploration process. For the purpose of this study, a major metropolitan hotel, operating in the full-service luxury hotel market is appropriate as the setting in which to assess the perceived influence of CRM strategies on a service provider’s abilities to deliver quality service. Authorized to access and observe the organization selected in this study, data collection took place throughout the service, amenity and administrative areas of this full-service luxury hotel. The researcher gained access to employee areas with the appropriate authorization at the time of observation.

Actors. Five service providers, the general manager, and the front office manager were participants in the study; each considered a unit of analysis in the case (Yin, 1994). Patton (2002) suggested that as a matter of importance, data collection should be from the lowest feasible unit of analysis. A unit of analysis is an individual working as a service provider within a full-service luxury hotel that employs strategic CRM (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The use of units of analysis logically aligns with the purpose of the study and agrees with the premise of purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007). The list of criteria for service provider selection is located in Appendix C. As a matter of convenience and privacy for the participants, the five frontline service providers were chosen at random by the researcher from an all-inclusive list of names provided by the hotel Human Resources Department. The criterion for service provider participation in

the study was simple. Requirements for participation included employment with the hotel for a minimum of two years, holding a service position interfacing with customers on a daily basis, and access to a company e-mail address that they check on a regular basis. A recruitment e-mail letter was sent to all service providers on the list provided, requesting participation. The recruitment e-mail clearly stated the purpose of the study and the criteria involved in being a participant. The general manager and front office manager were the researcher's personal contacts in the hotel organization, agreed to individual interviews to provide the managerial and organizational perspective related to the components of the strategic CRM initiative of the hotel. All participants signed and dated the informed consent document, indicating they agree with all terms and conditions, and they understand the potential risks and benefits involved with the study. The general manager acting as the researcher's internal contact was responsible for delegating the duty of developing and distributing the list of service providers to the researcher. The Human Resources employee responsible for developing and providing the list of participants signed a confidentiality agreement to minimize the risk to the participants of the study.

Actors in the observation phase of the research consisted of all employees and managers working in the hotel at the point of observation. Although different from the actor participants in the interview, the privacy and confidentiality of actors during the observations has been maintained. In this study, customers are identified as guests accommodated by the hotel.

Events. Events significant to this study evolved during the observation phase during the collection of data. Specific events of interest during informal observation

processes included, but was not limited to [a] the way customers are greeted by service providers, [b] how customer complaints are handled by service providers, [c] the effectiveness and demeanor of the concierge service personnel, [d] service delivery in various areas of the hotel, [e] training events and orientations, [f] customer events and meetings, [g] management presence, [h] staff meetings, [i] sales inquiries, and [j] employee recognition or reprimand. Other events included communication with the general manager, security, and other personnel when requesting permission to gain access to employee areas and the premises during times of observation. Interview events took place during off-hours at a designated location away from the hotel to ensure participant confidentiality.

Processes. Observing and learning about processes pertaining to the CRM strategy components workplace learning, quality service, customer centricity, and management controls are of interest. Various forms of behavioral and nonbehavioral observations revealed characteristics necessary for an individual to be employed as a service provider at a full-service luxury hotel. Behavioral type observations included nonverbal and linguistic observations, while nonbehavioral observations included record analysis and physical condition analysis (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Behavioral type observations sought data regarding service provider characteristics during processes such as: [a] social involvement during customer touch points, [b] customer interaction, [c] employee inclusion, [d] management employee exchanges, and [e] informal management controls. Nonbehavioral type observations sought data regarding service provider characteristics within the employee manual and during processes such as: [a] servicing of customer requests, [b] on-the-job training, [c] formal training, [d] customer feedback

initiatives, and [e] employee feedback initiatives. The interview phase of data collection included behavioral and nonbehavioral observation types as well (Cooper & Schindler; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Instrumentation / Measures

The collection of data for this qualitative case study included multiple forms of instrumentation and spending “considerable time in the natural setting gathering information” (Creswell, 2009, p. 181). Yin (1994) suggested six possible sources for collecting evidence in a case study: interviews, documentation, archival records, participant observation, direct observation, and physical artifacts. The types of evidence collected in this study included face-to-face interview transcripts, public documents, informal-direct observation, and field notes taken during visits to each property. To construct validity within the study, these four types of evidence collection methods served as a means of data triangulation. Triangulation is a generally accepted practice consisting of cross checking the data derived from the collection methods by using a variety of techniques to build credibility on the conclusions drawn from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994).

Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview protocol was employed to conduct social research on participants that are central to the phenomenon. Face-to-face interviews took place with five service providers, the general manager, and the front office manager of the hotel to identify trends in the way CRM strategy affects a service provider’s perception on their

ability to deliver quality service. These interviews took place in an effort to learn the intricacies enigmatic in the observation process of individuals (Patton, 2002). As indicated earlier, all participants signed and dated the informed consent form designed for this study. Interviews lasted for duration of ninety minutes. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed, as suggested by Creswell (2009). The use of a semi-structured interview instruments in the collection of evidence facilitated the flow of the interviews, while standardizing the information collected in order to ease the intensity of analysis needed to interpret the data (Patton, 2002). Two different semi-structured interview instruments were used as devices to conduct the interviews. Designed to understand the “essence of the lived phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 78), descriptive accounts of individual perceptions were sought from the participants.

Interview instruments were used to ensure all topics of interest are covered. As discussed previously, an early coding strategy was employed to assist with managing the inflow of evidence. The two interview instruments were used to obtain both dissimilar and parallel information from the two unit groupings: the managers (see Appendix D) and service providers (see Appendix E). Each instrument provided the interviewer with primary and follow-up question suggestions to help collect data suitable for the study.

The interview process included the flexibility to change the order or wording of any question asked, as well as to add or omit questions based upon personal perception of “what seems to be most appropriate” (Robson, 2002, p. 270). Interview questions were designed to be deliberately broad and open-ended, allowing the researcher an opportunity to stray from the interview outline (Creswell, 2007). Open-ended behavioral and experiential questions helped to draw out individual accounts and perceptions of the

participants' experiences with the CRM strategy variables under study: a customer-centric culture, management controls, workplace learning, and service quality in a strategic CRM framework (Patton, 2002). The objective of these questions was to discover participant opinions, sources of information, feelings, dates of events, and ideas (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Each participant answered questions about his or her individual professional and educational backgrounds. This line of questioning aided the researcher in establishing trust and rapport with each participant (Robson, 2002), but was of little value to the study.

Public Documentation

Yin (1994) determined documentation could impart bias on the part of an organization. The benefits can outweigh the negatives, because documents provide easy access for examination without concern that they will change, and they provide descriptive content of events or policies for interpretation. Public documents, including advertising brochures, flyers, maps, local attraction information, annual reports, websites, and other pertinent documents available to the public provided additional data.

The requirement of anonymity, agreed upon between the researcher and the hotel organization, heavily affected the ability to obtain proprietary corporate documents. The hotel organization did provide a heavily edited version of the employee manual for analysis. The omission of proprietary information in the employee manual introduced a potential for bias, preventing the researcher from gaining an unmitigated understanding for the management control, workplace learning, and customer centricity variables in the study. Field notes taken on any form of posted documents that ultimately did not put the

identity of the hotel in jeopardy provided valuable data. Analysis of all documents helped to establish a perspective of how the organization portrays itself to the public concerning the level of service quality expectations set for employees and customers.

Informal-Direct Observation

When conducting research on the delivery of quality service, it is necessary to observe the natural environment in which service delivery transpires (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988). The researcher conducted observations at the hotel on five different occasions throughout a three-week period to collect data. Schutt (2008) described the purpose of observation in exploratory case study research as the tool used by researchers to gain an understanding of the way individuals interact in their environment in a given situation, the issues or events most important to them within the situation, and the meaning of behaviors and actions within the situation. In the flexible direct observation approach, the observer is physically involved in surveying the environment to take note of any events or behaviors that transpire (Cooper & Shindler, 2006). Due to the sensitive nature of disguising proprietary information, the gatekeepers of the organization required an informal approach to observation. Informal observations do not follow any set criteria for monitoring a situation, and such observations provide the observer with significant freedom to decide how to collect and document the data. Informal-direct observations require the researcher to “perform difficult tasks of synthesis, abstraction, and organization of the collected data” (Robson, 2002, p. 313). Yin (1994, 2008) emphasized and warned that collecting observation data is a time consuming task easily influenced by observer bias. Combined with other data collection methods, observation data can be

beneficial in providing rich descriptions to add interpretive value. Types of observations used to capture data include behavioral and nonbehavioral observations, discussed earlier in this chapter.

Field Notes

Entering the field of study to gather qualitative data was advantageous for the researcher to develop an understanding for the lived experiences of the research participants and to actualize the cultural environment of each case. According to Schutt (2008), writing fieldwork notes occurs after completing the observation task and can be effective to attain cultural awareness of an event or phenomenon in a research study. Patton (2002) advised researchers to make field notes in a chronological manner to depict observations and to notate the essential information such as the location, date, time, environment, transactional information, and additional details. This process provided background information while visiting the natural environment to observe the cultural context of the organization. A dictation device was used to record the field notes after each visit, which helped to free the researcher from having to write notes. The field notes resulted in a rich narrative of the ambiance, processes, events, the researcher's perception of internal customer satisfaction, and observed interactions between guests and employees. The text transcribed from the narrative contained vivid thoughts, feelings, intuitions, and observations of the visits to each site. As a reflection tool (Miles & Huberman, 1994), field notes were recorded based on observations and events prior and subsequent to each observation.

Data Collection

Prior to initiating the collection of data, Capella University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed research framework of this study to ensure all collection processes were consistent with protecting the vulnerable population of employees that participated in this study. The researcher took care to protect each individual worker, as repercussion from management, leadership, or coworkers may be a result of their participation in the study. The informed consent forms explained these risks in nontechnical language, indicating that total confidentiality is not guaranteed. The inherent risks of this study to workers as a vulnerable population are minimal, and procedures for producing ambiguity in the selection process further minimize the risks associated with this study (CITI, 2006).

Field Testing

To test the feasibility and relevance of the interview instruments, a field test was conducted using a focus group panel consisting of three hospitality industry subject matter experts. Field tests do not require IRB approval, and occur prior to the initiation of evidence collection (Capella University, 2004). The focus group was comprised of two professors of hospitality management, and one general manager of an undisclosed hotel in New York City. The members of the focus group did not require remuneration for their services. The researcher e-mailed the instruments to each member of the focus group and provided three days for review. The researcher then held a two-hour conference call with the panel, taking one hour to discuss each instrument. This helpful process resulted in the entire reconfiguration of both instruments. Heeding the advice of

the panel, early coding eased the management of incoming data. Using the theoretical and thematic research derived from the literature review, nearly all questions were altered and instrument structures rearranged to coincide with characteristics pertaining to each of the variables identified in the conceptual framework of this study. To draw meaning from participant responses, instrument questions were linked to the Research Questions to build credibility and dependability in the study. Credibility refers to establishing trust and rigor (Robson, 2002), accomplished by dependability, which is concerned with consistency across participant responses in an unavoidable changing dialogue (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Many of the questions in the service provider instrument were incorporated into the management instrument for the sake of cohesion between variables. Some management questions were preserved, and others modified to attain the management perspective on practices, processes, and perceptions.

Pilot Study

A pilot study is an important phase in the research continuum, adding content validity and rigor to the interview instruments used in a study (Latham, 2008; Robson). Robson (2002) defined a pilot study as “a small-scale version of the real thing, a try-out of what you oppose so its feasibility can be checked” (p. 185). Such measures help the researcher to identify ambiguity and structural issues in the protocol. Pilot testing helps the researcher examine assumptions and to determine flaws in the data collection strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Leedy, 1997; Leedy & Omrod, 2005; Robson). This necessary measure occurred subsequent to IRB approval, carried out by interviewing two service provider participants, and one management participant. One onsite observation occurred

during the pilot study to determine feasibility. Results from the pilot test were analyzed and results are presented in Chapter 4.

Data Analysis

As indicated by Schutt (2008), no standard format exists for interpreting qualitative case study evidence. The primary goal of conducting an analysis of the evidence is to form a set of findings (Patton, 2002). Robson (2002) made the point that qualitative research produces a large quantity of evidence. In case study research, the development of a sound set of procedures to assemble and analyze the collection of evidence is essential in producing reliable and credible conclusions. Although the researcher is the primary resource in collecting and analyzing evidence, the use of qualitative software tools in case study research is common to assist in organizing, sorting, and supporting the data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Although many research software programs are available for use in quantitative research, software developers have made significant advancements in qualitative research software development. Many of the available software packages had potential benefits for use, but the researcher found the user-friendly interface of the Atlas.ti® software to be streamlined for organizing and managing data for this study. Understanding the perceived influence of strategic CRM components on quality service delivery necessitated a within-case analysis of the evidence collected from each unit of analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Early Coding

As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), developing an early coding strategy minimizes the burden of an overabundance of data. An early coding strategy is a prefigured set of codes used to reduce the amount of data collected, for the purpose of time management. An early coding strategy was employed from the inception to reduce the amount of data collected. This strategy was constructed using a blend of the conceptual framework variables presented in Chapter 1, theories and concepts discussed in Chapter 2, the Research Questions, and unique service provider contributions identified during interviews to form the first layer of codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Prefigured codes were initially used to assign meaning to the descriptive information in the observation and interview transcripts, and additional codes emerged throughout the data analysis process (Creswell, 2007).

Within-Case Analysis

Within-in case focuses on the understanding, description, and explanation of each unit of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Patton (2002), the collection and analysis of data should occur at the lowest unit level, and the researcher should decide upon the types of analysis in relation to the Research Questions. Eisenhardt (1989) posited, “Within-case analysis typically involves detailed case study write-ups for each site” (p. 540). Patton concurred, stating, “The analyst’s first and foremost responsibility consists of doing justice to each individual case. All else depends on that” (2002, p. 449). The capability to study sub-units within a singular case provides a

significantly stronger analysis when data evaluation within the sub-units takes place independently (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

An initiation of the within-case analysis consisted of organizing, analyzing, and coding the evidence collected from the line-level service providers in order to formulate an embedded case. To avoid common mistakes of novice researchers, a thorough embedded within-case analysis was conducted on each unit of analysis (Yin, 2008). A within-case analysis is a process by which data is organized, interpreted and visually displayed as a form of illustrating evidence in matrix or network format. Both matrices and networks enhanced the depth of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Interpretation of the Data

An interpretational analysis is one that evaluates the collected data for any “constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon studied” (Leedy, 1997, p. 158). Tesch (1990) discussed the interpretation of data in case study research, highlighting two significant types of interpretational analysis: [a] descriptive/interpretive analysis and [b] theory-building analysis. The intent of the study design is to analyze the data using descriptive/interpretive approaches, which is an effective way to carry out research in the fashion of constructionism. Chapter 5 summarizes results of the in-depth analysis and discusses implications of the study.

Validity and Reliability

Central to the premise of quality in research studies are the concepts of validity and reliability. The researcher recognized the fundamental need to confirm validity and

reliability in this study as an ethical obligation (Yin, 1994). As Patton (2002) suggested, the researcher conducted the case study with a tolerance for vagueness, with sensitivity for the biases and variables innate to case study research, and used written and verbal communication skills to ensure a smooth process. Yin proposed that, especially in developing case study research, researchers could accomplish validity and reliability by utilizing multiple types of validation and reliability techniques.

Yin (1994) emphasized the strong possibility for bias in a case study using interviews as the primary method of data collection. This case study research lent itself quite well to the concept of triangulation, which Stake (1995) referred to as a set of protocols employed to ensure precision and accuracy. The researcher employed the method of triangulation to build validity and reliability within the study. Variable data collection strategies were used to derive and corroborate data from interviews, observations, field notes, and public documentation. The four data collection methods facilitated the capture of various characteristics of the service organization and minimized the limitations inherent to each method (Patton, 2002). The informal observations, documents, and field notes helped to broaden the understanding of data collected from the semi-structured interviews. The field notes served as a means to help interpret the data, taking into consideration the thoughts, ideas, feelings, and information gathered throughout the study. The semi-structured interviews provided a glimpse into the lived experiences and realities of the participants, while the documentation was useful in understanding the strategic direction, organizational design, and operational positioning of the hotel (Daft, 2004). These multiple collection strategies ensured the trustworthiness of the research (Creswell, 2007).

Maxwell (1992) discussed descriptive validity as an important consideration in a study based on descriptive observation, interviews, and document analysis. Interviews are particularly challenging when trying to maintain descriptive validity when human participants are involved. When conducting the interviews, the researcher identified and elaborated on human behaviors, which played a key role in establishing descriptive validity (Trochim, 2006; Robson, 2002). In this study, the tonal delivery and body language played an important role in the receipt of data. The researcher used an audio recording device to capture the context of the interview, while taking written field notes in observing the interviewees actions, expressions, and reactions to establish descriptive validity.

To enhance the quality of understanding and to confirm the findings within the study, peer review was an effective means used to strengthen the research reliability and validity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The dissertation committee, comprised of three scholarly experts in the fields of service delivery and qualitative research design, debriefed the researcher throughout the development of this study to ensure honesty, sound methodology, effective analysis and interpretation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To establish reliability of the results of the study, all participants of the study were asked to review the data, analysis, interpretation, and results of the study for accuracy (Creswell, 2007). Three participants, primarily concerned with changing the language used in the study, provided feedback to the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) find this approach to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314).

Ethical Considerations

One prerequisite for conducting quality academic research requires a researcher to subscribe to a code of ethical conduct and sound principles established by the IRB. To prepare for conducting academic research, the IRB requires execution of a set of rigorous ethics modules before the inception of the study. The premise behind these educational modules was to inform and train the researcher on the generally accepted standards of ethical practices in academic research. This study is bound by, and adhered to these ethical standards to protect the interests and privacy of the research participants (Robson, 2002).

Beauchamp and Bowie (2009) discussed three issues surrounding ethical considerations in academic research: [a] respect for people, [b]) beneficence for people, and [c] justice for people. These requirements for ethical considerations refer to subjective variables related to the research participant's gender, race, age, culture, freedom, privacy, and personal preferences. The researcher carefully managed these variables and ensured that all parties involved in the study received treatment with integrity, honesty, and courtesy (Leedy, 1997). Research participants were notified upfront about all information on the benefits or risks associated with participating in the study. Researchers are required to allow the participants to decide whether to participate in a study without concern about consequences for declining participation. The researcher ensured meticulous consideration of these three factors of respect, beneficence, and justice for people and directly and indirectly protected the interests of all participants involved (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). As a measure of anonymity, the researcher agreed with the general manager of the hotel to hold the identities of the

people and the organization confidential to protect their rights and privacy. The organization is specifically identified in the study as the Legendary Hotel (a pseudonym), a name that was suggested by the General Manager of the hotel.

As indicated in the data collection section, workers are a vulnerable population. The researcher took precautionary measures to minimize risks and to enhance the privacy of each individual service provider. The selection process was ambiguous, made vague by the procedures developed to protect and keep confidential, the identities of the service providers. The process of selecting service providers only involved one internal contact working within the Human Resources department. This employee signed a confidentiality agreement, agreeing not to disclose the identities of any of the potential participants on the list. The confidentiality agreement protects participants against misconduct and promotes trust and integrity (Creswell, 2009).

One requirement of the selection criteria was that the service providers must have a company e-mail address. These e-mail systems are internally located and may archive all sent and delivered e-mails that formed part of this investigation. The researcher notified all potential participants of the opportunity to participate in the study via their company e-mail address. Although the only means of responding to the request to participate was via a private phone number, management and leadership had the ability to call on their information systems department to extract these e-mail requests if desired. This poses a threat to the vulnerable worker, and there is no possible way to minimize the risks associated with this method of communication. To minimize this risk, all service providers on the list received invitation e-mails to increase the perceived response rate and reduce the potential of participant identification. All participants were required to

sign an informed consent form prior to being interviewed. The informed consent form explained any potential risks involved in participating in the study, and provided participants with a means of contact in case of any questions or concerns.

Creswell (2009) discussed an ethical consideration in qualitative research, noting its propensity for allowing researcher bias and openness to interpretation. The researcher has an extensive background in the hotel industry working in the capacity of a consultant and in management positions for nearly 20 years. The researcher openly acknowledged the existence of personal biases due to conflicts of interest, which may have influenced the collection and interpretation of data. Conflicts of interest are common in business and industry, and virtually all aspects of life. A conflict of interest exists as an ethical consideration in this study. The researcher personally and professionally knows the hotel general manager and front office manager, as well as potential participants of this study. Each agreed to participate in the study based upon these relationships. The researcher once worked as a contracted consultant for this hotel company, actively working with both the general manager and front office manager on various projects. There was remuneration in exchange for services, but the contractual agreement ended four years prior to this research. More professional in nature, ongoing personal relationships do exist between the researcher and both managers. Through these relationships, the researcher gained access to the gatekeeper of the organization to obtain permission granting access to participants and company information (Creswell, 2009). The personal relationships between the researcher and participants in the study may have influenced the set of quotes extracted from the interview transcripts. Previous experience working as a hired consultant with the hotel organization under study may have influenced the

choice of quotations extracted from the participant voices for inclusion in the study, representing researcher bias (Creswell, 2007; Trochim, 2006). Miles and Huberman (1994) indicated, in qualitative research, a researcher becomes a limitation to a study when the researcher influences the development of the case or when the case influences the researcher. In qualitative research, scholars readily accept such manifestations and do not see them as inadequacies, rather as benefits allowing for the recognition of the researcher's own reality, honesty, and existence within the course of conducting research (Creswell, 2009).

Regarding the issue of privacy, selection criteria were not developed to identify either manager for participation, and further, no steps were taken to protect their identity or privacy within the organization. Although their identities are not disclosed in the study, organizational leadership of the hotel was aware of their participation in the study. Since the managers were considered workers, a known vulnerable population, they were notified of the potential risks involved in the study by way of an informed consent form. Both management participants signed the informed consent form prior to the interview. This requirement helped to develop trust with the managers, imparting a sense of care and integrity in the process.

Conforming to the conditions presented in the letter granting permission to access participants and company information, and in agreement with the terms of the study under the rules set forth by the Capella University IRB, all data, documents, interview recordings, and transcripts are kept in a secure location with access rights limited to only the researcher. Following these precautions will ensure the integrity and privacy of these materials through good management.

As a final ethical consideration, it is necessary to acknowledge potential benefits of the study. One expected benefit of participation in this study is the opportunity for participants to discuss thoughts, opinions, feelings, ideas, perceptions, and concerns related to the experience of being a service provider engaged in a CRM initiative. Other possible benefits as a result of the study may include managerial focus on the importance of individual service provider's professional development, level of job satisfaction, and social integration within the organization.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present and interpret the evidence collected for this single case study of the Legendary Hotel (a pseudonym), a full-service luxury hotel that employs strategic CRM as a method to gain competitive advantage in the marketplace (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010; Payne & Frow, 2005). The Legendary Hotel is a privately owned and operated business unit of GCA Group (a pseudonym), an international hospitality organization. This single case study of the Legendary Hotel uses a phenomenological approach to derive an understanding of the lived experience of service providers, extracting intimate details related to the perceived influences of the strategic CRM components (customer centricity, workplace learning, and management controls) on the service provider's ability to deliver quality service (Creswell, 2007; Robson, 2002). The researcher's role in developing the single case study, involvement in the data collection process, and a brief biography of the researcher's training and professional experience are discussed. Subsequently, an explanation of the data collection process, data analysis, and findings of the study are presented (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995).

The Researcher

This researcher assumed the role of an explorer, on a truth finding mission, investigating the multiple realities and individual perspectives of service providers in relation to the influence components of strategic CRM may have on their ability to deliver quality service. The researcher also embraced the role of a tracker, concerned

with tracing the core competencies of the Legendary Hotel and service provider participants of the study. Strategies for the delivery of quality service have been an interest of the researcher over many years of employment and professional consultancy work throughout the service industries. The full-service luxury hotel market holds a special place in the heart of the researcher, for this niche is where he made his mark as a professional consultant. The researcher worked as a professional consultant throughout many segments of the hotel industry, and was specifically a contractor of the Legendary Hotel. Relationships established long ago between the researcher and the gatekeepers of the organization provided access to the site and participants of this study. Holding a Masters in Business Administration in International Hospitality and Tourism Management, the researcher was educated to conduct fieldwork in the hospitality industry as a researcher and practitioner. The combination of educational training and professional experience working within the hospitality industry and with hospitality professionals over a long career, presented an opportunity to embark on this exploratory journey researching the Legendary Hotel. As chief inquisitor of this study, the researcher immersed himself within the environment of the Legendary Hotel, gathering public documents pertinent to the study, and spent time with the service providers and managers of the establishment to extract the essence of their lived experience (Creswell, 2007). The researcher's goal was to provide substantial direction for future research, along with practical management implications that highlight the value and importance of each individual service provider working within the full-service luxury hotel market.

Data Collection

The delivery of quality service at Legendary Hotel is a complex phenomenon involving service providers, hotel guests, managers, support employees, and the organization as a whole. The Legendary Hotel has a distinctive approach to managing these interactions using strategic CRM. This qualitative single case study was designed as an inductive phenomenological inquiry that used semi-structured interviews, informal-direct observations, field notes, and public documents to collect data about the CRM strategy employed at Legendary Hotel from the perspective of the service provider. Data collected from multiple sources provided a method of triangulation. The data collection process was performed as outlined in Chapter 3.

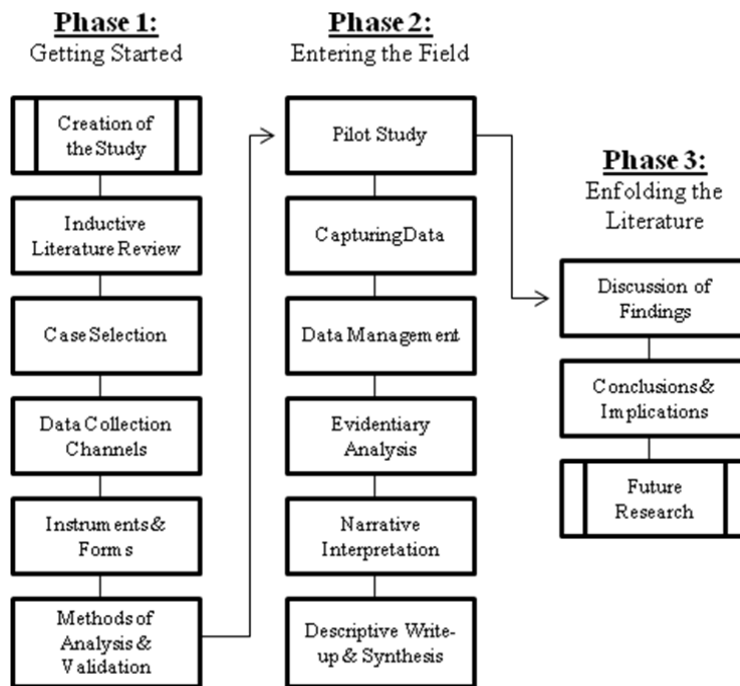


Figure 3. Case research framework

A process flow chart of the case research framework is depicted in Figure 3 for ease of reading and reference. Phase one is concerned with creating the study to follow methodological principles, resulting in Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of this study. Phase two relates to Chapter 4, while phase three outlines Chapter 5.

Entering the Field

With approval from Capella University's IRB and the corporate gatekeepers of the GCA group, proprietors of the Legendary Hotel, the researcher initiated contact with the general manager to gain access to the research site and participants for the study. Access to participants was granted, and a schedule of onsite visits was established for the informal-direct observations. E-mail recruitment letters (Appendix D) were sent to 18 potential participants using the specified criteria for recruitment in Chapter 3. Responses to the request for participation were limited. Six service providers responded within a four-day period, one of which was disqualified as a recently transferred support employee working as a night auditor, resulting in the five participants required for the study. Offsite interviews were scheduled with each participant using personal contact information to protect their identities (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Each participant signed the informed consent form prior to the interview being conducted. The fieldwork took place over a period of two weeks. The total amount of time spent conducting fieldwork was approximately 46 hours, resulting in a cumulative 186 pages of transcripts and field notes generated throughout the data collection process.

Pilot Study

To test the interview and observation procedures, a pilot study was conducted resulting in minimal changes to the data collection and analysis process (Capella University, 2004). The pilot study consisted of interviewing the general manager, one service provider, and conducting one onsite visit for observation. Due to the large number of questions asked in the manager and service provider interview guides, it was necessary to request an additional one-half hour of interview time from each participant, resulting in 90-minute interviews. Participants reacted positively to the questions without hesitation, suggesting each interview guide was effectively developed. The onsite visit was successful and it was determined that each observation event required three hours for the researcher to be fully immersed within the environment.

Capturing Data

The use of a purposeful sampling plan (Appendix C) helped to capture the essence of the CRM strategy at every level within the business unit and its influence on individual service providers' ability to deliver quality service (Steyn, 2003). The setting, actors, processes, and events identified in the purposeful sampling plan helped to structure the collection of data and narrowed the focus of the study. An iterative process of interviewing participants, onsite observations, and reflective memos provided insight into the local configuration of the Legendary Hotel (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher employed interpersonal skills to facilitate the collection of data.

Semi-structured interviews. Qualitative semi-structured interviews with seven participants provided unique perspectives into the influence of strategic CRM on their

ability to deliver quality service. This flexible approach captured the essence of each participant's experience working within the Legendary Hotel. Multiple participants, including two managers and five service providers were interviewed to obtain diverse perspectives (Eisenhardt, 1989). Participants volunteered because of their ability to "articulate their conscious experiences," and is treated as a unit of analysis in an effort to extract the distinguishing characteristics of a service provider that delivers quality service at the Legendary Hotel (Creswell, 1998, p. 111).

Each participant chose interview locations outside the premises of the hotel on a day and at a time of convenience determined by each of the participants (Yin, 2003). With the written consent of each participant, the interviews were tape recorded for transcription using a standard cassette voice recorder. The consent forms were collected and are stored for seven years in a secure location to protect the identities of the participants. The recording equipment was unnoticeable and allowed for a seamless interview process without distraction. The recorded interviews cumulatively resulted in 11 hours of discussion, producing 112 pages of interview transcripts that were coded using the Atlasti© software.

Informal-direct observations. Five onsite observations were conducted over a period of two weeks, with the duration of each visit lasting three hours. Care was taken not to interfere with the guest experience as required by the terms of the study, so an informal approach was taken to observe the behavioral and nonbehavioral aspects of the setting, actors, processes, and events. Due to the informal approach, it was not possible to observe all actors, processes and events occurring within the Legendary Hotel. The ambiance of the Legendary Hotel, guided tours of the operations with a designated escort,

and interactions and encounters with hotel employees were recorded. The guided tours included lunch in the employee cafeteria during each of the five observational periods, within a support area setting. Observation voice recordings resulted in 27 pages of transcripts and were coded in the Atlasti© software.

Field notes. A tape recorder was used to capture the essence of each observation experience. Prior and subsequent to each onsite visit, field notes were verbally recorded, transcribed and coded. During the interviews, hand written notes were taken relating to the behavior of the participants. Hand written memos captured the observational reflections and experiences during the data analysis process (Patton, 2002). Written field notes were typed into electronic format for coding in the Atlasti© software. Ten pages of field notes were generated throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Public documents. Public documents provided data on all aspects of the Legendary Hotel's publicly visible promotional methods, including direct marketing, advertising, public relations, and sales promotions (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). The hotel organization's website was evaluated to identify themes related to quality service delivery. For the purpose of analysis, the gatekeepers provided an edited version of the employee manual. The 27-page employee manual was scanned into electronic format along with 10 pages of notes, each coded using the Atlasti© software.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted by compiling and arranging data collected from interviews and observations using a formal data management process (Figure 4). The

coding, reporting, and analysis tools within the Atlasti© software were used to streamline the data management and coding processes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

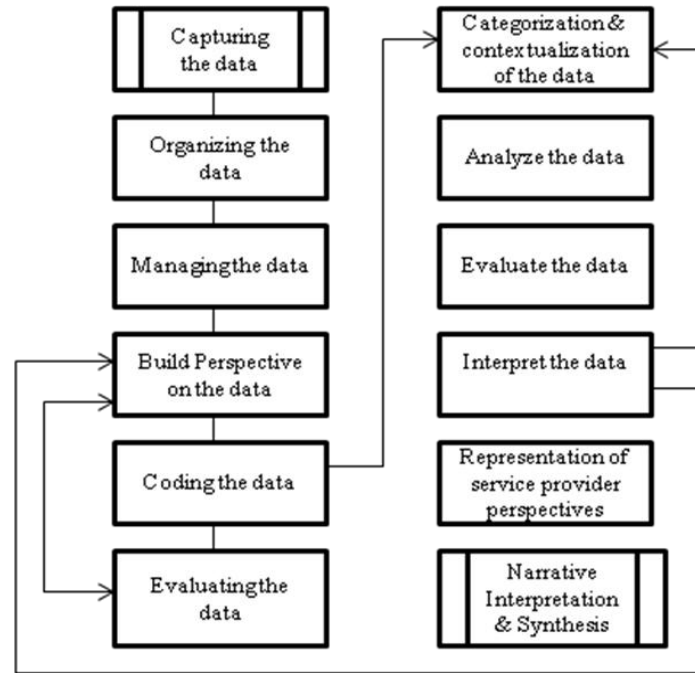


Figure 4. Data management & analysis process

The focus was on one unit of analysis at a time, immediately coding the data collected upon completion of an interview or observation event. Recordings of each account ensured exact interpretation throughout the transcription of the interviews and observations (Yin, 2003). Hycner's (1985) approach to phenomenological research was applied in analyzing the interview and observation transcripts. Noteworthy statements were identified within the transcripts to capture the literal context as stated by the participant. The data was organized and analyzed by applying two qualitative approaches known open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and clustering (Miles & Huberman). Open

coding is a process used to deconstruct the data to identify categories resulting in layers of codes (Corbin & Strauss). Clustering is a process used to identify similarities and differences across each unit of analysis, resulting in the grouping of information into patterns and themes (Miles & Huberman). Using the phenomenological reduction method for analyzing data known as bracketing maintained a neutral position when identifying, constructing, and interpreting themes and patterns from the perspective of the participants (Denzin, 1989; Hycner, 1985).

A layered approach to coding was applied throughout the data management and analysis stage of this study (Creswell, 2008). The first layer of codes (Table 1) identified organizational competencies, service provider competencies, characteristics of the strategic CRM components, and uncovered service provider perspectives from the inception of the collection of data (Creswell, 2003). Upon completion of the data collection phase, a second round of analysis compared the data to the literature review and Research Questions, resulting in a second layer of codes identified as patterns and emerging themes (Table 2). A third evaluation comparing the conceptual framework variables, philosophical underpinnings for the study, literature review, and Research Questions with the data, resulted in a third layer of codes (Table 3). The third layer of codes identified the core competencies of a full-service luxury hotel that enable individual service providers to deliver quality service. To differentiate between the three layers of codes, it was necessary to develop distinguishable identifiers for each layer. Each word was capitalized in the first layer of codes, while secondary layer codes are written in all lower-case letters, and tertiary layer codes are written in uppercase letters. The frequency rates noted next to each code indicate the number of times it appeared in

the observation and interview transcripts. The higher the frequency rate, the greater the importance and focus the code was given in the placement of patterns and themes within the interpretive graphical displays.

Table 1. Early Coding List

Layer 1. (Code frequency rate)	
Quality Service: QS (45)	Customer Centricity: CC (33)
Workplace Learning: WL (26)	Management Controls: MC (19)
Strategic CRM: RM (17)	
Individual contribution (46)	Culture (45)
Policies (43)	Communications (40)
Procedures (36)	Service Provider (34)
Quality Service Perception (32)	Customer Feedback (31)
Mission Statement (26)	Values (25)
Services Marketing (22)	Empowered (18)
Motivation (18)	Assertive (17)
Courtesy (15)	Teamwork (15)
On-The-Job-Training (14)	Personal Development (14)
Customer Relationships (12)	Organizational Philosophy (12)
Cross Training (7)	Meeting Customer Needs (5)
Change Management (3)	

Table 2. Emerging Patterns & Themes: Core Competencies

Layer 2. (Code frequency rate)	
ethos & harmony (12)	individual and unique (10)
reliability and responsiveness (9)	trust and credibility (9)
practice and persistence (7)	generous & accommodating (7)

Table 2. *continued*

Layer 2. (Code frequency rate)	
technology and training (6)	customer feedback initiatives (5)
self concept and confidence (5)	rewards and penalties (4)
ethics and behavior (4)	personality and attitude (4)
competence and execution (3)	

Table 3: Core Competencies Enabling Quality Service Delivery

Layer 3. (Code frequency rate)
HARMONY (67)
SERVICE VISION (55)
HOLISTIC CRM STRATEGY (34)
INDIVIDUALISM (33)
LEADERSHIP (26)

The early coding scheme was comprised of 24 initial codes, each associated with a variable from the conceptual framework for the study (strategic CRM, customer centricity, workplace learning, management controls, and quality service) and a related theory or concept from the literature review. Participants interviewed in the pilot study contributed four additional codes, resulting in 28 first layer codes. Twelve patterns and themes emerged into the second layer of codes during the categorization and contextualization process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), resulting in clusters associated with the Research Questions and literature review (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The third layer of codes emerged as the five core competencies of a full-service luxury hotel that enable quality service delivery. A glossary was developed to define each code for ease of reflection (Appendix F). Definitions echo the voice of the participants and researcher

perceptions of observations (Creswell, 1988). New codes were added to the glossary as they emerged, each being linked to the Research Questions and associated with the conceptual framework variables in the layer one coding scheme.

Identifying themes and patterns within data is a systematic approach that can be illustrated in a matrix and graphical network display format (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

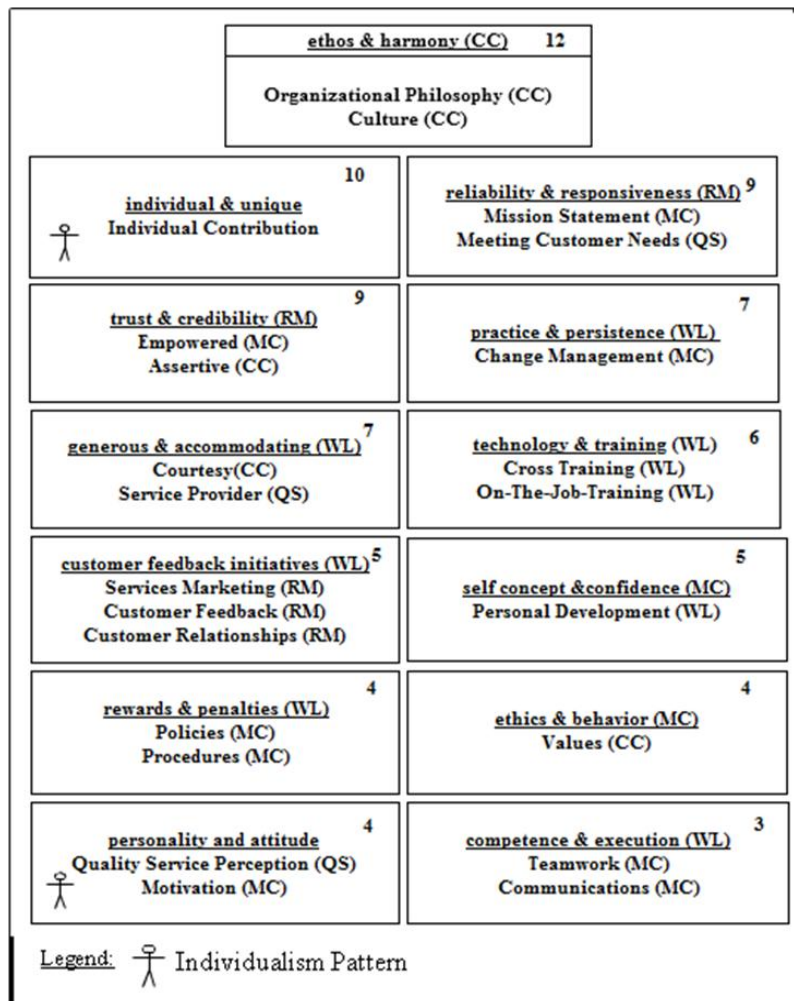


Figure 5. Primary & secondary code associations display

The primary and secondary code associations displayed (Figure 5) presents clusters of themes and patterns listed in order of frequency, which emerged from the primary and secondary code association matrix (Appendix F).

Each primary layer of codes (Table 1) was evaluated by comparing and contrasting the information from each unit of analysis to identify themes and patterns. Similarities were identified and patterns emerged across the units of analyses to reveal core service provider and organizational competencies (Table 2) that are crucial to the delivery of quality service and success of a strategic CRM initiative (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

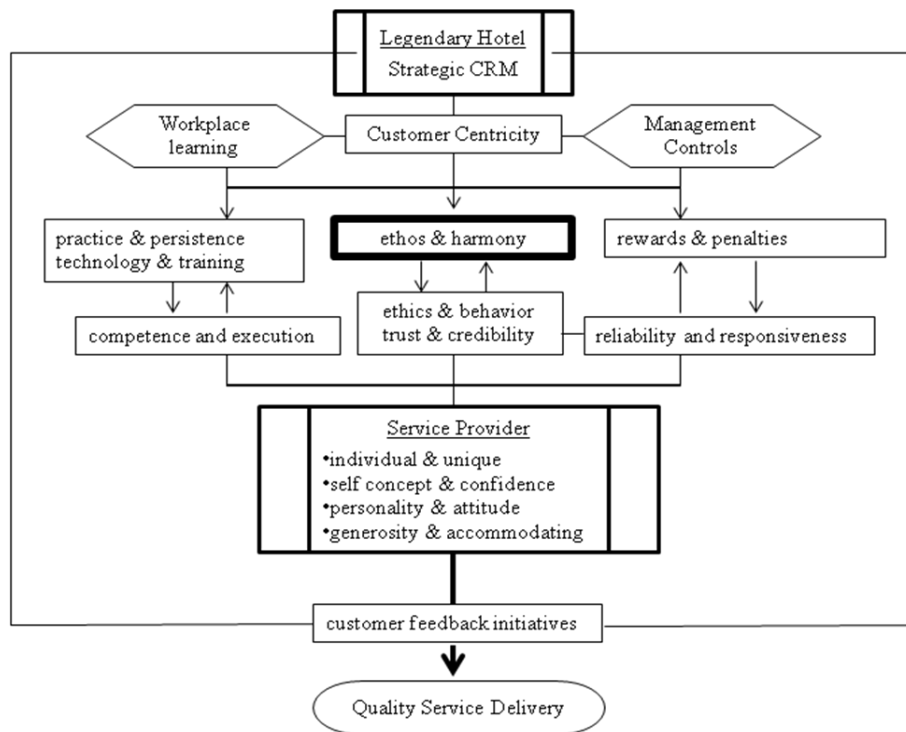


Figure 6. Quality service delivery thematic network

A thematic network of quality service delivery (Figure 6) displayed as a context chart depicts the associations between the core service provider and organizational competencies and the components of strategic CRM (Miles & Huberman, 1994).


Miles and Huberman (1994) explained the use for a context chart as “a network, mapping in graphic form the interrelationships among the roles and groups... that go to make up the context of individual behavior” (p. 102). The voices of the participants put into perspective how service providers experience the interconnected environment within a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM in order to act as a conduit effecting quality service delivery.

An evolving process, a third and final instance of comparing theme and pattern clusters to the original data, conceptual framework variables, philosophical underpinnings, literature review, and Research Questions resulted in the core competencies for enabling quality service delivery (Table 3).

Table 4. Core Competencies for Enabling Quality Service Delivery Matrix

Second Layer Categories	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Tertiary Layer Themes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)
reliability & responsiveness	The characteristics that distinguish a service provider from an employee.	HOLISTIC CRM STRATEGY (RM, WL)	The overarching strategy of the organization that enables a service provider to deliver exceptional quality service.
rewards & penalties	The policies and procedures employed to motivate and reprimand employees.		
customer feedback initiatives	Programs and systems designed to facilitate the extraction of value from hotel guests that foster individual relationships between guests and service providers.		
technology & training	Informal learning initiatives used to familiarize employees with job duties and tasks.		

Table 4. *continued*

Second Layer Categories	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Tertiary Layer Themes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)
ethics & behavior	The values and principles of the hotel organization instilled in service providers to enhance manage conduct.	SERVICE VISION (QS)	A service provider's good sense and character for delivering quality service enhanced by the hotels ethical perspective and continuous improvement initiatives.
personality & attitude	The compelling nature and drive of a service provider to deliver quality service		
practice & persistence	Determination to provide quality service through engaging in continuous improvement initiatives.		
competence & execution	The ability and willingness of an individual service provider to work as part of a team and to take the lead to get things done.	LEADERSHIP (MC, WL)	A true leader in the hotel is not defined as a manager, rather, a service provider who knows how to be a follower, to work in a team environment, or to do anything possible to meet customer expectations.
trust & credibility	Being trustworthy and genuine in relations with guests.		
individual & unique	Service providers are unique people that are drawn to their job because service is part of their character.	INDIVIDUALISM 	A service provider is an individual that is unique in character, has a defined personal brand, and emits confidence. Characteristics include: high tolerance for cultural diversity, a passion for the service industry, responsiveness, trustworthiness, generosity, and accommodating.
self concept & confidence	Through personal development support, individuals are encouraged to build their self concept and confidence levels.		
ethos & harmony	The importance of harmony, culture, and synergy within the organization	HARMONY (CC)	A tranquil environment facilitated by professional synergy
generous & accommodating	The empowered actions of an individual on behalf of the hotel that causes guest delight.		

Memos were used to track the voice of participants to define themes and patterns as they emerged (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). Individual transcripts were reviewed until no new perspectives were identified. A matrix mapped the reduction of second layer codes and

definitions into a tertiary layer of codes and definitions (Table 4), later used for drawing conclusions in the interpretation of the data using the voices of the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Results of the Study

In this section, results of the data analysis are interpreted and related to each of the research sub questions for the purpose of constructing an answer to the primary Research Question: Do customer centricity, management controls, and workplace learning enable service provider's to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM? A synthesis of themes identified in the data analysis, the literature, and researcher observations construct responses to each of the Research Questions. Participant identities are safeguarded by the use of pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and no service provider job titles, demographic information, or personal information are revealed. Actors are represented as General Manager, Front Office Manager, Participants A, B, C, D, and E in the study. All participant voices are represented throughout the results of the study, but no dates were associated with the citations in order to distinguish actors from authors of scholarly literature. Data collected and analyzed from interviews, public documents, observations, and field notes contributed to this interpretation (Stake, 1995).

Research Sub Question 1

The first sub-question for this study was: Do full-service luxury hotels use customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM to contemplate, systematize, and prepare for quality service delivery?

A holistic approach to strategic CRM is used to contemplate, systemize, and prepare for the delivery of quality service at the Legendary Hotel. The General Manager offered insight into the holistic CRM strategy by stating,

We have a comprehensive CRM strategy, but without effective training, without managers controlling the service environment, without quality people to deliver the service, we have nothing. This all comes together through our culture of harmony. So, the CRM strategy we have, you see, is important. It's a complex strategy, but it's a good one. It's an all inclusive package. The key to it is that without the training being effective, it doesn't matter if the managers are controlling the environment because the people wouldn't be up to par. Training our employees to be individuals is part of the culture. And, without the managers controlling the service environment, what good would the training be? It would be like spending good money after bad. So, the CRM strategy is one big circle based on the concept of harmony. Oh... yeah, and the most important thing to the whole CRM strategy equation is the people. If you don't have quality people that buy into the culture, I don't care how good your CRM strategy is, it just won't work. They have to live the culture, than it will work. Than you can use training to prepare them and managers can control them. But not without them buying into that culture that influences the overall CRM strategy first.

The Front Office Manager indicated,

Our CRM strategy is excellent. We have the same strategy than our corporate headquarters does. They require us to adopt their CRM strategy. But it works. But most hotels like us use this general CRM concept that makes their customers their priority. Nobody makes this program that complex either. Our company and our competitors use the same procedures, I think. Give your people good training, watch over them to make sure they are delivering your message, and make sure your following the traditions and beliefs of your company. That's all it takes to administer a complete CRM program. Uh, or strategy, as you put it.

Participant E stated,

Our hotel has a complete CRM strategy, from my knowledge anyway. It's about making me, I mean us. We're the ones who give the guests what they need. So this strategy gives us the power to do our jobs. I don't know how deep it goes, but I do know that the managers are serious about making sure we stick with the company traditions. They always say that's important to our competitiveness. That's probably why we get so much training all the time. Yeah, personally it helps me to know how they want me to approach a guest. You know, like make them happy by giving them what they need. I guess that's what the strategy is, right?

The Legendary Hotel uses the management control component of strategic CRM to contemplate and systemize quality service delivery and recovery methods. Workplace learning is used to instill service providers with the customer centric culture of harmony,

and prepare them to meet guest needs, wants, and desires by contemplating expectations (Front Office Manager; General Manager; Participant A).

Contemplating quality service delivery through strategic CRM. The management controls component of the CRM strategy employed by the Legendary Hotel is used to contemplate human interaction and customer expectations through the compilation and analysis of individual guest information using proprietary software and hardware. This data and research informs empowered service providers of guest needs and expectations, and is instantly retrievable upon guest return to create moments of delight during the delivery of quality service (Front Office Manager; Participant D). Reflecting back to the literature review, Hemmington (2007) suggested “lots of little surprises” create an overall satisfactory service experience, and knowing what guests prefer helps an organization contemplate, systemize, and prepare to deliver on expectations and desires (p. 752). Discussed by Participant B, information warehoused in the proprietary software enables a service provider to contemplate guest needs, expectations and desires:

We use the property management system to understand our guests. Management thinks it's important that we know what they like. And it is. Um. Everything and I mean everything we find out about them is put in the database. Really detailed things like if they like dark chocolate or milk chocolate. We'll use that information to deliver a basket of their favorite, and it usually is a success. We're required to record all these details about our guests and put them in their profile in the database so when they return, yeah, we can know what they like again.

Reservations agents and Internet systems also query guests about their preferences by offering a brief survey that captures unique details. The Front Office Manager is fond of this process, indicating that it “lets us know what they like before they get here.” Taking the pulse of the customer to contemplate their expectations before engaging them as a guest is an important step in delivering an exceptional service experience at every instance (Evans et al., 2008; Hemmington).

Systemizing quality service delivery through strategic CRM. Strategic CRM is employed to systemize the delivery of quality service at the Legendary Hotel through management controls, workplace learning, and customer centricity, to ensure guest satisfaction. Payne and Frow (2005) suggested a successful CRM strategy requires the use of technology to facilitate a cross-functional system of management controls and social constructs across all departments of an organization. According to the Front Office Manager and Participants B and D, each service provider is a trained leader capable of coordinating a guest experience across all departments through the use of technology, common sense, empowerment, and personality to ensure a quality service experience at every instance. This qualitative approach to customer relations fills the gap in transitional service encounters by allowing service providers the freedom to intellectually embrace customer needs using personality, common sense, and empowerment (Homburg et al., 2008; Svensson, 2006); while being technically competent and prepared to meet expectations (Day, 2003; Xu & Chan, 2010 ; Zablah et al., 2004). Participant B provided an example of the cross-functional system in place at the Legendary Hotel indicating,

All guest inquiries are logged into the database and are addressed in at one time, if possible. If I have to transfer a guest to another employee, I use my handheld

computer to record the status of the transfer. It goes into the property management system and the whole guest experience is tracked. They do this to manage all guest relationships.

Participant D elaborated on the transition process by explaining that,

The service provider personally introduces a guest to the next service provider as a courtesy. This is done so no information is lost in the transfer. The information is recorded in the property management system and we have to verbally explain the guest's situation too. It's a really efficient system because we have mobile devices that allow us to move around the hotel without worrying about being locked behind a desk.

These examples demonstrate that although service encounters are socially complex (Svennson), it is possible to contemplate and systemize the customer relationship management process in full-service luxury hotels.

Preparing service providers to deliver quality service. The CRM strategy employed at the Legendary Hotel uses workplace learning to prepare service providers to deliver quality service. The General Manager provided reasoning, stating,

We're a relatively small private company, and we do have the option not to share proprietary information with our employees. But we do it anyway. As part of our CRM strategy, we think it is necessary to train our employees on every aspect of our business. One way we do is by sharing financial figures and performance data with everyone. Some may think we're crazy, but really, it helps reign them into the reality we live in everyday managing the business. They all have a stake in our successes and failures, so they should know what we are up against. It's

good training anyhow. You asked about the training, well, this included in the training we give to our employees. It helps them to put the pieces of the puzzle together. You know, to help lineup their service vision with our mission. They're major players in the success of our CRM strategy, so this kind of training prepares them to be the service champions we need them to be.

According to Participant C and E, service providers are prepared to deliver quality service through workplace learning initiatives aligned with the organization's vision, mission, and traditions. As suggested by Savanevičienė et al. (2008), workplace learning is the component of strategic CRM that prepares service providers to be the catalysts in the service delivery process at the Legendary Hotel (Wallace and De Chernatony, 2009). The General Manager and Participant A conveyed that service providers are prepared to engage guests through formal and informal educational training focused on Legendary Hotel traditions, leading service encounters, communication, technical competency, self awareness and confidence. Participant C corroborated this by stating,

Training sessions are personalized for us compared to how other full-service luxury hotels train their employees. I've worked for two other big hotels and none of them trained us, let alone cared to give us an education. Think about it. If I get to choose from going to college for a degree, taking certifications, or joining associations, things like that. If that's not being dedicated to my education, I don't know what is.

At the Legendary Hotel, workplace learning is not just a Human Resource department function, but also an all-encompassing method of setting expectations for employees, a responsibility that spans the entire organization (Savanevičienė et al., 2008).

The Front Office Manager highlighted the importance of involving all managers, supervisors, and leaders in developing and presenting training programs as a method of preparing individual service providers to become part of a team that delivers quality service. From the perspective of the General Manager, the Legendary Hotel has

A one stop shop approach to service and that requires our employees to communicate, to be technically competent, and to have the necessary knowledge needed to address the guest's needs as a team of individuals. If someone doesn't know how to address guest needs, they are individually trained on how to get the answers. We have a team approach to addressing guest needs. I call it synergy, and no one in this hotel is shy to work together to get the answers they need to make a guest happy. The synergy comes from our CRM strategy and our traditions. It's just how they're trained as service providers.

By focusing on individual development using personalized informal and formal workplace learning methods, service providers are prepared to lead the service delivery process, resulting in a distinct competitive advantage for the Legendary Hotel (Klidas et al., 2008; Steyn, 2003).

Research Sub Question 2

The second sub-question for this study was: Do full-service luxury hotels use customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM to deliver quality service as a means of achieving competitive advantage?

Findings from the data analysis identified the Legendary Hotel as an organization employing a holistic CRM strategy focused on satisfying the needs, wants, and desires of each guest to attain competitive advantage in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace.

According to the General Manager, the Legendary Hotel uses the customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM to ensure quality service delivery. Confirmed by the participants of the study, the customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM are responsible for three competitive advantages that differentiate the Legendary Hotel in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace, including customer loyalty (Galbraith & Schendel, 1983; Kanagal, 2009), empowered service providers (Klidas et al., 2007), and a customer centric culture of harmony (Herman, 2007; Lim, 2011). To achieve these competitive advantages, the core competencies that enable quality service delivery (Table 3), aligned with an effective communications policy, fuse the customer centric, workplace learning, and management control components of the Legendary Hotels CRM strategy.

Customer loyalty is a competitive advantage. Day (2003) emphasized the effectiveness of strategic CRM can be determined by the number of customers loyal to the organization or brand. As indicated by the Front Office Manager, the Legendary Hotel has a sizeable following of loyal customers because “all employees understand one thing, that guest interests come first, and their loyalty matters most.” Corroborated by Participant E, “All else revolves around that guests comes first, and their loyalty matters most concept. The Front Office Manager says that all the time.” Observably, this “guest comes first, and their loyalty matters most” concept is an integral part of the service vision at the Legendary Hotel. Participant B confirmed this by providing insight into the CRM strategy employed at the Legendary Hotel by stating,

Sometimes it's chaotic when a rush of guests expect service at the same time and everyone goes scrambling to give them the best we can. But, let me tell you, it's always game time, no matter how busy or not, as leaders, we put the guest first. Our goal is to always build strong relationships with our guests, and you know what happens next? Customers see the value in coming back over and over like they're home.

Participant C added,

It's about the genuine face-to-face contact with our guests that makes our strategy successful. I can't tell you how many friends I've made out of customers here. I had to buy an address book because my phone couldn't hold all of these numbers. You see this book; most everyone in here is a customer. I can't ever lose this book because these people are like family, you hear. Whatever they need, they know they can get from me, or I'll find it for them at the hotel if I can. It's what keeps them coming back.

Participant A expressed that at the Legendary Hotel,

...it's all about how effectively we communicate with one another throughout the service delivery system, and with the guests that makes the difference in our ability to develop loyal customers.

These beliefs of the participants are consistent with Hemmington's (2007) closing argument that in order for hospitality organizations to gain competitive advantage through customer loyalty, the focus must be on creating a personal, unforgettable, and value added guest experience.

To achieve the treasured competitive advantage of customer loyalty in a full-service luxury hotel that employs strategic CRM (Bolton, 2004), maintaining a consistent service delivery system requires effective communication (Payne & Frow, 2005).

Researcher observations found that effective execution of the communications policy at the Legendary Hotel is a contributing factor in the development of customer loyalty.

Participant A explained,

The goal of the communications policy is to build rapport between customer interfacing employees. It's used to streamline department-to-department communications processes and to, um, address the urgency in meeting guest needs, wants, and desires. Our hopes are that in return, guests come back. If they don't come back within six months and they gave us a great survey, we contact them to see how we can draw them back to the hotel. To me, that's a great communications policy.

The General Manager articulated,

All service providers are trained to act independently as leaders, but function cohesively through effective communication with a single purpose in mind, to serve guest interests in order to build customer loyalty. That's how we dominate the market here, through customer loyalty.

To achieve this goal, management has adopted the second principle of the contingency theory, "there is no one best way of organizing. The appropriate form depends on the kind of task or environment with which one is dealing" (Morgan, 1996, p. 44).

Participant A addressed the concept of communications with guests as a formal management control supported by policy, asserting,

We insist that our service providers be professional, thoughtful, but concise about things like processing guest transactions, inquiring on behalf of a guest, or even simply delivering service. But, we have a very formal approach to handling guest's transactions. Our communications policy is very clear about how every employee must operate and handle their business. And they follow the guidelines because they know if they do, they have a ninety percent chance of seeing that guest again.

The communications policy outlined in the employee manual corroborates this statement,

Your common sense and basic values will guide your ability to function successfully at this hotel. You are a trusted representative of the hotel, and you have the apparent authority to satisfy guest needs within the boundaries set forth in section 2 of this manual. You are required to effectively and efficiently communicate with coworkers and managers throughout the property to satisfy our guest's needs. Should you have a problem or guest need that requires special attention, contact your manager for assistance. (p. 11)

Empowered service providers are a competitive advantage. The data revealed that empowered service providers, an informal management control, are a competitive advantage of the Legendary Hotel. From triangulating data collected from the communications policy, participant perceptions, and researcher observations, it is evident that individual service providers of the Legendary Hotel are accountable for the guest experience, a best practice for organizations employing strategic CRM (Wang & Davis, 2008). The General Manager expressed,

...service providers give us the competitive edge, so we make sure everyone hired here is a born leader. They have to be a good fit for our traditions and culture, and a good fit for our guests. The guest experience is all in their hands, and we choose them to be a service provider, a provider of service they will be. We train them. We develop them. They are the best in class service providers in town.

Since individual service providers are a recognized competitive advantage of the Legendary Hotel, the organization must be committed to trust each individual, accept the risk of individual inadequacies, and to allocate resources for personal and professional development for each individual service provider (Evans et al., 2008). To confirm the level of commitment to each individual, the General Manager shared this belief,

Being risk adverse is not our style here, we trust our employees to do the right thing. It's just a part of the way we do things. It's part of our so-called customer centric culture. We put our money where our interests are, and our interests are our guests. So, we use our management abilities to find the right people to become part of our team, to service our customers and we train them to represent us as representatives of our values. Our principles. Our traditions. That's how we make the difference for our guests at the Legendary Hotel. We wouldn't let just anyone be a service provider, I don't care if there are unions or not.

Substantiating this statement by the General Manager, Participant B, shared this perception,

Trust is two sided. While I'm an employee and want to be trusted by the hotel, I have to trust them too. And I do trust them. From the very beginning of when I started here, they haven't done anything but showed they care about me. They

really show it. Like, I can't imagine how much money they spend on the different trainings they give us and personal time the managers spend with us to make sure we're comfortable as employees so we can make sure we satisfy the guests.

These examples of mutual respect and accord in the relationship between management and service provider illustrate the synergistic effect of the customer centric culture, management controls, and workplace-learning components of the strategic CRM framework employed at the Legendary Hotel. Management controls play an important role in recruiting and hiring the right candidates, while workplace learning is used to indoctrinate newly hired employees into the customer centric culture of the Legendary Hotel. The ideal candidate for a service provider position at the Legendary Hotel was defined by Participant A, indicating that emphasis is placed on “service oriented people with extraordinary personal and communications skills, and a willingness to adopt the organizations morals, values, and our culture.”

A customer centric culture of harmony is a competitive advantage. The data revealed that the customer centric culture of harmony at the Legendary Hotel is a core competency that differentiates the organization as a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The employee manual defines harmony as the “fundamental philosophy of the company that creates enlightened employees and regulates our culture by synchronizing each individual with the internal and external environment of the Hotel.” This definition is consistent with the Confucian philosophy of harmony. Wang and Juslin (2009) suggest that in order to adopt the Confucian philosophy of harmony, one must appreciate being an individual living in harmony with the cultural, societal, natural, and familial environment instead of in living in likeness. The fundamental principles of the

Confucian philosophy of harmony suggest that an ethical and moral society must educate people to become self-motivated and self-controlled individuals that assume accountability for behavioral actions.

Confirmed by the participants, harmony is an overarching philosophy of the customer centric culture at the Legendary Hotel that enables service providers to deliver quality service. Participant C asserted,

The customer centric culture within the Legendary Hotel is guest focused, but it's also extremely profit driven. That's why it's so important to be consistent and reliable to in our jobs. It's to maintain harmony. It really helps us to deliver the best service. I'm not just saying it either; I really believe it.

Participant D shared this view regarding the customer centric culture,

Part of the culture is not being afraid to make mistakes. This is the way we're taught. We can always recover from a mistake by bringing in help. I like that we're encouraged to practice what they preach and they accept that we're only human. It helps me believe in the culture of harmony that they drill into us. I like it. It helps me strive to be a better person. To make better decisions that can really change the way a guest thinks about me, about the hotel. It even affected me the way I am personally...

Harmony is a cultural phenomenon based on the avoidance of conflict and requires immediate attention to situations where conflict may arise. Maintaining harmony in the service environment of the Legendary Hotel is of the utmost importance to the delivery of quality service, so controversy is contained and handled to ensure customers never experience negativity (Lim, 2011). According to Participant E,

The hotel is always thriving because us employees love the work we do. When something goes down, we know how to handle the issue. The hotel is our second home, so we have to maintain the peace. And for our guests, it's their second home too, and we have to welcome them home, so the ambiance has to be peaceful for them. That's how we do here. It's the culture and our job to make them comfortable. You see how committed we are to guest satisfaction.

The General Manager corroborated this belief, by stating, "Sustaining the culture of harmony directly affects the customer experience and is a commitment that gives the Legendary Hotel a competitive advantage."

Confirmed by member checking, the three competitive advantages of the Legendary Hotel derive from a combination of the core competencies of the organization and the customer centric culture, workplace learning, and management controls of the CRM strategy. The first competitive advantage, customer loyalty, results from service provider efforts to deliver the maximum amount of satisfaction in every customer experience at the Legendary Hotel (Evans et al., 2008). The second competitive advantage, empowered service providers, have the full confidence of management and the organization to make quality decisions to meet guest needs, wants, and desires resulting in the cultivation of customer loyalty (Front Office Manager). The third competitive advantage, a customer centric culture of harmony, naturally influences the guest experience to ensure a stress free environment intended to foster customer delight as a measure to develop customer loyalty (Hemmington, 2007; Lim, 2011).

Research Sub Question 3

The third sub question for this study was: What characteristics should a service provider possess to deliver quality service within a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM?

The data revealed several important characteristics a service provider should possess to deliver quality service within a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM. Characteristics of service providers employed at the Legendary Hotel are unique and play an important role in quality service delivery. Multiple sources revealed service provider characteristics, including General Manager and participant interview transcripts, the employee manual, and researcher observations. The Front Office Manager declined to comment on specific characteristics of an ideal service provider at the Legendary Hotel, stating “our service providers are our competitive advantage, and what they’re made of is our secret.”

The General Manager of the Legendary Hotel emphasized two service provider characteristics necessary to function in the customer centric culture of the Legendary Hotel, requiring a “high tolerance for cultural diversity,” and a “passion for the service industry.” Participant A provided insight into the training programs used to prepare service providers to deliver quality service,

The training programs we have prepare our service employees to meet and exceed guest expectations. They receive training on being responsive, reliable, trustworthy, and confident, to mention a few things. Making them assertive is one of the more important characteristics we focus on too.

Participant C discussed persistence and reliability, by indicating,

Being employees in the front of the house makes us have to be on our toes at all times. We have to respond to guest requests, and if they aren't happy, than we have to keep on it until they are. It's just part of my job to constantly make sure they're happy, and I do. My boss calls it being persistent.

Participant B discussed a need for service providers to be genuine, credible, reliability, and accommodating, by stating,

I'm a believer in being real, and actually, it's part of our job description to be real and keep it real. We give service, make our guests all comfy, and then boom, give them a nice little treat to get them thinking that we're the best. By that time, they know we are real about making them happy like they at home. We have their back, anything they need, I'm on it. No need to worry, my friends, we are here to serve you.

Characteristics identified during behavioral observations of service providers and during interviews include assertiveness, persistence, genuine, self-confidence, courteousness, reliability, and credibility. Nonbehavioral observations derived from the employee manual revealed required service provider characteristics including responsiveness, generosity, trustworthiness, and accommodating. These service provider characteristics provide deeper insight into the communication skills and service attitude required for employment as service providers to deliver quality service at the Legendary Hotel (Ford et al., 2008).

The General Manager confirmed that six characteristics are prerequisites of candidates to be hired as service providers to function successfully as individuals at the Legendary Hotel, including high tolerance for cultural diversity, a passion for the service

industry, responsiveness, trustworthiness, generosity, and they must be accommodating. The Front Office Manager and the General Manager mutually agreed, explaining that not all service provider characteristics are prerequisite to employment at the Legendary Hotel, but over time, service providers will develop and hone each characteristic to develop their service vision and leadership skills to master the service delivery process.

Table 5. Characteristics of a Legendary Hotel Service Provider

Core competencies for enabling quality service delivery	Service provider behavioral observation characteristics	Service provider nonbehavioral observation characteristics
Holistic CRM Strategy	Reliable	Responsive
Leadership	Assertive; Credible	Trustworthy
Service Vision	Persistent; Courteous; Genuine; Passion for Service Industry	Generous
Individualism	Self-confident	Accommodating
Harmony	High Tolerance for Cultural Diversity	

Each service provider characteristic is associated with the core competencies that enable quality service delivery at the Legendary Hotel (Table 3), resulting in a matrix outlining the desirable characteristics of a service provider (Table 5). To function successfully within a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM, service providers should possess these characteristics that align with the core competencies that enable a service provider to deliver quality service (Schermerhorn, 2007). These characteristics variably construct the ideal individual service provider that will function successfully within a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM. Collectively, these characteristics of individual service providers socially construct and facilitate a customer centric culture of harmony at the Legendary Hotel (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Herman, 2007; Lim, 2011).

Recruiting the right candidate. Wang and Davis (2008) suggested that service providers with a lack of experience can have a negative impact on the success of a strategic CRM initiative, making it imperative to recruit the right people with the most desirable characteristics that conform to the organizational culture. The Front Office Manager of the Legendary Hotel emphasized hiring the “right candidate and making them part of the family” as an essential ingredient to the success of the strategic CRM initiative at the Legendary Hotel. Participant A provided insight into the role of the human resources department by stating,

The Human Resources department plays an integral role in recruiting, hiring, training, and monitoring service providers to ensure each individual is meeting or exceeding the policies, standards, and traditions of the Legendary Hotel. You mentioned workplace learning, customer centricity, and what? Management controls. Yeah, they’re all part of choosing the right candidate to become a service provider. It’s serious business.

On the issue of recruiting external candidates, the Front Office Manager stated,

If we can’t find the right candidate internally, then we consider external candidates. But those individuals must have the right stuff to be hired here. I mean, they really have to have the heart of a service provider, and that feature about them must be transparent.

In regard to retaining service providers that possess characteristics of value to the Legendary Hotel, the General Manager stated,

Retaining employees is of the utmost importance to the success of our strategic CRM initiative. Once they possess all of the desirable characteristics of a service

provider, it would be insane to let them go. We invest a great deal of time and capital in each individual, so we do what is possible to retain them.

Internal recruiting has many advantages, such as finding candidates that know the hotel, understand the policies, and requires less training regarding the CRM strategy than external candidates require (Payne & Frow, 2006).

Research Sub Question 4

The fourth research sub question for this study was: What service delivery training do service providers receive from full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM to ensure quality?

Previous studies show that in the hospitality industry, providing quality service equates to competitive advantage, and to deliver consistent quality service requires a robust training system (Cazzell & Ulmer, 2009; Ford et al., 2008). The employee manual of the Legendary Hotel indicates that training has two objectives, including the enhancement of each service provider's practical skills and abilities; the other is personal development through academic achievement. Participant B confirms these policies by stating,

... training we get is two sided. We get professional training most of the time in groups, but we can also do things that develop me as a person. Like I can go to school or get certified and stuff. It's really a lot of training we can get. The group's trainings, they're required. The stuff I do on my own is optional, but they like to see me do it, so I do it.

Participant A also elaborated on the workplace learning system employed at the Legendary Hotel,

Our service employees each contribute to the overall goal of the hotel. It's pretty simple. We want loyal customers, so we help them with training to understand who they are, to build their self concept, and to help them tailor their personal views on service to match the goals of our organizational culture. I mean, it sounds pretty complex, but the way we approach this is quite fundamental.

Service providers receive four distinctive aspects of service delivery training to ensure quality service delivery at the Legendary Hotel, including indoctrination and social integration, technical competency training, continuous training, and individualized training.

Indoctrination and social integration. King (1995) suggested that workplace learning plays an integral role in the indoctrination of service providers into the culture of any organization (King, 1995). Plakoyiannaki et al., 2008 suggested that the premise of an orientation program in organizations employing strategic CRM is to indoctrinate the new employee into the culture, introduce policies and procedures, and to socially integrate them into the professional environment. The opinion of Participant A is in agreement with these ideas, stating,

Training starts the very first day of employment at the Legendary Hotel, with a two-day orientation course for new service employees. They're a social bonding experience for new service employees. They go meeting and greeting employees throughout the hotel and get paired with a seasoned service employee to interact and shadow for two hours. Its informal training they receive. The experience

introduces them to the environment and how the next two weeks of their life will be in the on-the-job training program they must complete. Oh, and they also watch videos about delivering top-notch service, about our tradition of harmony, and the other stuff like being a genuine individual.

Savanevičienė et al. (2008) suggested that the recognition of service providers as assets of the organization is imperative within the first day of orientation, which is a belief put into practice at the Legendary Hotel. The Front Office Manager affirmed this practice at the Legendary hotel by stating, “Immediately acclimating service providers into the social environment is of the utmost importance to us.”

Technical competency training. The second day of orientation covers policies outlined in the employee manual, employee benefits, and new service providers sign all of the required forms. According to the Front Office Manager,

Service providers become active in the hotel’s information systems on the second day of orientation. They’re provided access, and begin technical training to become acquainted with the hardware and software systems we use.

Participant B also elaborated on the second day of orientation by indicating,

The second day of training can be a bit lonely, because on the first day we were introduced to so many people, but, yeah, the second day it’s kind of a drag. I think they do that because they want to make you feel at home on your first day. But the second day, you have to pay the price. You have to buckle down, do what you have to do to learn the systems and technology, and then you become part of the family. Kind of like an initiation.

Training on the use of technology and systems is an integral part of becoming an effective and efficient service provider within an organization that employs strategic CRM (Pombriant, 2007). By immediately immersing new service providers in technology training, it structures their perception and sets expectations for continuous technology training and development initiatives (Zablah et al., 2004).

Continuous training. Participants explained that through ongoing formal training programs, managers at the Legendary Hotel coach and develop new and seasoned service providers on the intricacies of delivering quality service. From a collectivist standpoint (Herman, 2007), Participant A shared that service providers are formally trained together to create synergy among the team. The General Manager emphasized that “formal training helps to make service providers compete for recognition of excellence, and in the process, the important characteristics become instinctive within them.” The idea is while individualism is essential to the success of strategic CRM; teamwork is vital to achieving harmony (Lim, 2011). The General Manager and Participant C expressed the similar sentiment regarding formal training, suggesting it is the origin of the customer centric culture of harmony at the Legendary Hotel, and is directly attributed to guest satisfaction through quality service delivery, ultimately leading to customer loyalty. Management of the Legendary Hotel understands that service providers are not machines, that humans are not perfect (Morgan, 1996) and a focus on training for continuous improvement is the way to ensure organizational goals are persistently achieved (King & Cichy, 2006).

Individualized training. From an individual standpoint, both formal and informal training methods develop and enhance service provider characteristics to enable quality service delivery. The Front Office Manager explained that service providers, ...are fully assessed to take a personal inventory of skills, goals, and ambitions so we know who they are, what they're capable of, and what training they need to improve their service abilities. We coach them, train them in formal classes, and conduct ongoing field training on how to give quality service based on our standards. More importantly though, we do expect our servicers to take their learning into their own hands. They have to make the effort to personally develop themselves too so they are comfortable with who they are, let their personality come out, and that gets translated as genuine in a customer transaction.

Savanevičienė et al. (2008) confirmed that a service provider able to personalize a training program suited to address his or her weaknesses should increase competence in delivering quality service.

Workplace learning is semi-customizable at the Legendary Hotel. Participant A commented that the majority of formal training classes are volunteer computer modules. In regard to face-to-face training classes, Participant A indicated that they are mandatory sessions where service providers practice soft skill development. Participant C offered examples of formal educational based training as an option for service providers to engage focused on developing “service delivery skills, communication skills, handling complaints, and creating friendships with the guests.” Methods of training as mentioned motivate individuals to strengthen service delivery capabilities, adapt to change, and evolve into superior service providers (Browning, 2008).

The General Manager explained that “informal training happens on a daily basis within the professional community, most times in the form of on-the-job training.”

Participant E corroborated this idea by stating,

Since this is a family environment, we take care for one another. What they know, I know, and all around it goes. We’re just that motivated to help each other grow into the best we can be. Who benefits the most? Our guests do of course. It’s just the way it should be.

The data revealed that educational based training programs with curriculum directed at personal and professional development of each individual service provider significantly increases the delivery of quality service in full-service luxury hotels. These findings confirm Payne and Frow’s (2005) opinion that service organizations employing strategic CRM must invest in the training and development of service providers if they expect consistent quality service delivery. This finding further suggests that the focus on developing individual service delivery competencies is imperative to make service providers a competitive advantage to a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM.

Research Sub Question 5

The fifth research sub question for this study was: What influence do service providers have on the overall success of a strategic CRM initiative in full-service luxury hotels?

The data revealed service providers are a competitive advantage of a full-service luxury hotel, with each individual playing a critical role in the overall success of a

strategic CRM initiative (Day, 2003; Payne & Frow, 2005). As a direct response to this sub question, the General Manager stated,

It is the motivated and committed service providers that make the CRM strategy operational, and it is them that create the magic that makes our competitive advantages a reality. Yes, they have an enormous influence over the success of our CRM strategy.

Policies, standards, traditions, and procedures are formal management controls designed to guide a service provider through the delivery of quality service (Payne & Frow, 2005), but according to the General Manager of the Legendary Hotel, “it is up to each individual service provider to execute and give the control systems and the CRM strategy life.”

This belief is contrary to Bull (2003), claiming that the success of a holistic CRM strategy is primarily reliant upon management controls, business processes, and information technology.

Social importance and value of service providers. The Legendary Hotel is a socially constructed organization comprised of individuals working within an open system, designed to be flexible for the purpose of meeting guests needs, wants and desires (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Scott & Davis, 2007). Each individual is an integral actor within this socially constructed organization, each having influence over the CRM strategy in the results of their performance of building relationships within the organization and in the service delivery process. The Front Office Manager emphasized that “service providers must fully understand how their role positively and negatively affects the success of the CRM strategy.” Participant A shared a scenario, indicating that,

...if such an invaluable service employee were to be terminated, the social structure of the hotel would live on, but the physical and intellectual deficit because of the loss would negatively affect the social structure of the hotel. We're all like family here. But we have ways to help each other cope if something like this happens. If we didn't, it could crush what we work so hard to accomplish with our service strategy.

This opinion is consistent with Jaworski and Merchant (1988), who suggested the loss of a well trained service provider may ultimately affect the success of the strategic CRM initiative for a period of time if management controls fail to maintain social equilibrium (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988). For this reason, the General Manager emphasized that, "employee retention of service providers is a primary concern for management." The Front Office Manager alluded to the use of contingency planning as a formal management control used at the Legendary Hotel to negate the impact of a service provider loss on the CRM strategy. A statement from the employee manual exhibits the influence service providers have on the success of the CRM strategy of the Legendary Hotel. The passage reads, "Each employee plays a significant role in shaping, maintaining, and carrying out the CRM strategy of our Hotel. Embrace your duties to service our guests, and welcome to the team."

Primary Research Question

The primary research question for this study was: Do customer centricity, management controls, and workplace learning enable service provider's to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM?

The General Manager confirmed the critical components of strategic CRM for delivering quality service at the Legendary Hotel are the conceptual framework variables in this study, including customer centricity, workplace learning, and management controls. It was found that these variables must be aligned with four of the full-service luxury hotels core competencies (holistic CRM strategy, service vision, leadership, and harmony) to enable service providers to deliver quality service.

One core competency of the Legendary Hotel that enables quality service delivery, individualism, was found to be unrelated to any of the three strategic CRM components. In the words of the participants, individualism is defined as an individual service provider that is unique in character, has a defined personal brand, and emits confidence. The six characteristics of individualism are prerequisite qualifications for a service provider to be employed by the Legendary Hotel, including: [a] high tolerance for cultural diversity, [b] a passion for the service industry, [c] responsiveness, [d] trustworthiness, [e] generosity, and [f] accommodating. It was recognized by all participants in the study that individualism is a distinctive core competency (Hodgson, 2007; Miller & Rice, 2003; Savanevičienė et al., 2008) that enables service providers to deliver quality service within a strategic CRM initiative in full-service luxury hotels.

Customer centricity. All participants described the customer centric philosophy of the Legendary Hotel using the concept of harmony, a core competency that enables each individual service provider to deliver quality service. Participant E stated, “Harmony is our tradition,” while the General Manager identified harmony as a “cultural characteristic, and an essential element of the ambiance” at the Legendary Hotel. Harmony is a collectivist concept that is only achieved through individual contribution

and dedication to the social structure and state of being within the Legendary Hotel (Herman, 2007; Lim, 2011). As declared in the employee manual, to remain employed at the Legendary Hotel, service providers need to belong, support, and work hard to maintain harmony within the professional community. Not all full-service luxury hotels subscribe to the concept of harmony as a customer centric philosophy, therefore making this core competency that enables service providers to deliver quality service unique to the Legendary Hotel. The adoption of harmony as a customer centric philosophy is supported by Bolton (2004), suggesting that a clear set of values must be in place to fortify a strategic CRM initiative. Solnet (2006) also supported the adoption of harmony as a philosophy behind the customer centric culture of the Legendary Hotel. It is common for an organization employing strategic CRM to adopt a philosophy to enhance the customer centric culture with the intention of instilling service-minded behavior. Participant A elaborated on service behavior as a result of harmony, claiming,

We use training to establish service oriented behaviors among service employees during training events, and we always include the tradition of harmony as a key principal in the training and development programs that service providers attend.

Workplace learning. Workplace learning is an integral component of the holistic CRM strategy employed at the Legendary Hotel, a medium by which the organization's values are instilled and individual service provider characteristics are developed to enhance abilities for quality service delivery. Although Participants C and E claimed the focus on workplace learning at the Legendary Hotel may be overly intensive, Participants A, B and D believed the workplace learning requirements are quite helpful in refining their service delivery abilities. Participant A explained,

Training helps us condition our employees, particularly those that deal with customers. But it's not only about that. We extract a lot of information from each individual to help inform our CRM strategy. Whether we use surveys or one-on-one talks to get at the core of our issues, we get a lot of value out of these training sessions.

Participant B explained how formal training enhances service provider abilities through problem-based learning,

...a really interactive cool way that we practice giving service is by having to solve problems. They give us a scenario, and we have to come up with a solution in a short time. It's always about how we react in difficult situations. The best part is we get to act it out. You know, I'm an actor, so it's fun, and it brings out our creativity for problem solving. But really, the practice helps us build the skills we need to handle objections and build relationships with guests.

Yeo (2007) explained that problem based learning is an interactive process that develops competencies and encourages personal improvement, while building confidence, a tolerance for change, and a sense of urgency. This confirms the position of Savanevičienė et al. (2008); suggesting organizations that invest in the ongoing development of employees prepare them to be flexible within an environment where change is constant. The Legendary Hotel prepares service providers to be flexible individuals through indoctrination and social integration into the organization. Formal and informal training to build technical competencies enhance service provider abilities, and individualized training professionally and personally develops each service provider to deliver quality service.

Management Controls. At the Legendary Hotel, formal and informal management controls are employed to contemplate and systemize delivery of service to ensure there is consistency and quality in every service delivery encounter (Jaworski & Merchant, 1988). According to Participant C, “guest service experiences are micro-managed by employees and managers to make sure guests are satisfied with their experience” at the Legendary Hotel. The informal management control most prominently employed at the Legendary Hotel is employee empowerment, which provides the service provider with decision making authority to meet guest needs and expectations. Rewards and penalties are the formal controls used to enforce policies and standards to ensure quality service delivery.

Empowerment is an informal management control used to enhance a service provider’s ability to deliver quality service at the Legendary Hotel. Parasuraman, et al. (1985) suggested that informal management controls like employee empowerment play a crucial role in the successful delivery of quality service. The Front Office Manager and Participant A of the Legendary Hotel confirmed that empowerment is an elemental factor that allows service providers to assume their leadership role in the service delivery process. While the General Manager holds the opinion that the empowerment policy is lenient, Participants B and E refute this notion, citing their belief that Legendary Hotel guests would receive better service if service providers have more decision-making power. Participant E stated,

Our inability to deliver quality service sometimes is because of restrictions on our decision-making powers. I mean, we can’t just change a room if we want to

please the guest; we have to get management approval first. Sometimes this takes time, and guests get impatient and it reflects on me.

Empowered employees that have the ability to take control of a situation, immediately address the needs of the guest, and solve problems (Bowen & Lawler, 1995; Evans et al., 2008). The lack of empowerment frustrates Participant B as well,

I get upset when I can't meet a guests needs. That's what I'm there to do, and I'm judged on how well I can meet those needs. But, their system doesn't allow me to work it out for the customer sometimes.

Participant D shared a favorable opinion regarding the empowerment policy, stating,

In all the hotels I ever worked, I never had this much trust in me. I mean, management lets us make decisions, and even spend the hotels money to make my guests happy. You think I mind that? They give me the power that I need to do my job, not many other hotels can say they trust their employees like they trust us.

The leadership role Legendary Hotel service providers assume in service delivery process suggests that management has confidence in their level of competency and ability to execute. This Front Office Manager substantiated this fact by stating,

The level of empowerment service providers possess has a significant impact on the quality of customer feedback we receive. We trust them to do the job, and to do it right. It's what they do for a living.

Participant A elaborated on the importance of empowerment by stating, "Positive feedback on surveys generally comes from the level of empowerment we have. Our guests benefit from our ability to be generous, and the result is, genuinely happy guests."

Participant E adversely shared an opinion that, "Most times, negative feedback on

surveys comes from not meeting guest expectations or not reading the guest right. It might be because we don't have enough decision making power.”

There is risk in empowering individuals with perceptive decision making authority as an informal management control, making it imperative that such an initiative is regulated by formal control parameters (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). As indicated in the employee manual, rewards and incentives are a formal management control used to drive the empowerment process, and penalties are applied as a measure to ensure compliance. The Front Office Manager gave an example of a reward and penalty system:

We have an ongoing game that has a point system tied to it. If an employee gets a five star feedback rating on a guest survey across all three categories, they get a point. Whoever accrues the most points at the end of every quarter wins something. Last quarter it was an Ipad 2... if someone gets a one star rating on any category on the survey, a point is taken away and they are immediately questioned and must write-up a statement about the guest experience.

Based on these findings, at the Legendary Hotel, customer centricity, workplace learning, and management controls each enhance the service provider's ability to deliver quality service.

Findings from the Results

The findings of the proposed investigation led to the creation of a model that shows how the strategic CRM components, combined with the core competencies that enable service providers to deliver quality service, result in the distinctive competitive advantage of customer loyalty.

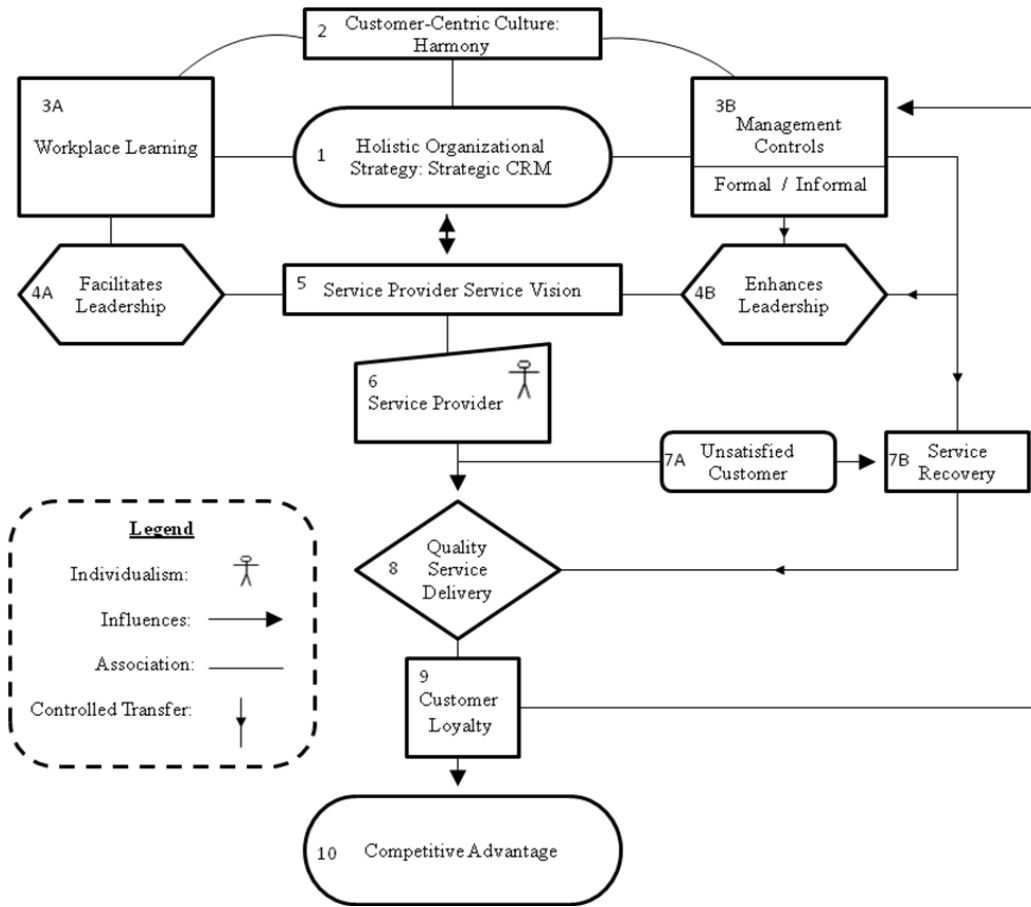


Figure 7. Integrated strategic CRM framework for quality service delivery

The model in Figure 7 is a context chart, inductively constructed based on the interrelationships among the strategic CRM components and the core competencies identified throughout the findings of this study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This model illustrates the integrated nature of the conceptual framework variables and the core competencies that enable quality service delivery in pursuit of competitive advantage through the attainment of customer loyalty. The legend within the model identifies symbols used within the framework. The General Manager and Participants A and C were each mailed a copy of the context chart (figure 7), a verification form, and the

following narrative explanation of the context chart to confirm accuracy based on their perception. The participants confirmed the accuracy of the original configuration, except the General Manager. The General Manager suggested the network be sequentially ordered to depict the process flow. The model was modified to depict the sequential order of the process flow for ease of understanding (Miles & Huberman). Findings common among all units of analysis to construct validity were included (Trochim, 2006), resulting in the development of the Integrated Strategic CRM Framework for Quality Service Delivery (Figure 7).

Narrative Description of the Model. Based on the findings of the study, and member checking of the proposed model, the holistic organizational strategy of the Legendary Hotel implements strategic CRM and is comprised of three critical components: [a] a customer centric culture of harmony, [b] workplace learning, and [c] management controls (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Each component of strategic CRM is a critical factor that drives quality service delivery resulting in customer loyalty, a competitive advantage for a full-service luxury hotel (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). The customer centric culture of harmony is a collectivist approach that rejects the negative social conditioning induced by coercion (Lim, 2011), and is the overarching factor that influences the workplace learning and management control components of strategic CRM at the Legendary Hotel. The customer centric culture of harmony is the dominant strategic CRM component that enables each individual service provider to deliver quality service. Although harmony is a collectivist approach, this tradition requires the principles of individualism to synergize service visions of individual service providers

within a professional community, guarding them from controversy and tyrannical management practices (Hodgson, 2007).

The research also validated that workplace learning is a training investment to develop individual service provider characteristics (Table 5) that align with the organization's goals, policies, and standards. Workplace learning facilitates leadership development, while management controls enhance leadership abilities. Formal management controls play an important role in maintaining the customer centric culture of harmony, but are subdued to allow informal controls like empowerment to cultivate the synergistic environment.

Each service provider's service vision collectively constructs the customer centric culture of harmony, and directly influences the holistic CRM strategy of the Legendary Hotel. Service providers are encouraged to develop a service vision founded on the principles of individualism, ultimately enabling quality service delivery. On occasion, a service provider is unable to satisfy customer needs or expectations, resulting in an unsatisfied customer. To maintain harmony under such circumstances, service recovery is triggered to resolve issues beyond capabilities and authority of a service provider. Service recovery is a management control process designed to placate unsatisfied customers. Service providers remain involved throughout the service recovery process to build rapport and salvage the customer relationship. Making the service provider the champion of the service recovery process enhances leadership through motivation. The service recovery process resolves unsatisfied customer issues by identifying and meeting expectations, resulting in quality service delivery.

According to the research conducted, quality service delivery is a result of the holistic CRM strategy implemented by the individual service provider, often resulting in customer loyalty. The results of the study revealed that the service provider is accountable for customer satisfaction and constructs customer loyalty through relationship building, a distinctive competitive advantage of a full-service luxury hotel. Customer loyalty is used to extract value in the form of ideas and reactions through customer feedback, thus informing management controls for continuous improvement of strategic CRM.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 presented an overview of the data collection, management, analysis, and results of the data analysis. The data were associated with the Research Questions, conceptual framework variables (Figure 1), and the literature to formulate an understanding of service provider experiences in delivering quality service within a full-service luxury hotel that employs strategic CRM for the purpose of attaining competitive advantage. The research conducted consisted of seven interviews, five on-site informal observations, and evaluation of documents. The data were coded and analyzed to identify five core themes that enable service providers to deliver quality service. The data analysis was interpreted to construct answers to the Research Questions, and findings from the results were presented in the form of a model depicting the integrated strategic CRM framework for quality service delivery (Figure 7).

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of three components of strategic CRM (customer centricity, workplace learning, and management controls) on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service to attain competitive advantage in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace. This chapter is comprised of a discussion of conclusions and recommendations presented as follows: [a] restatement of the problem, [b] discussion [c] implications of the study, and (d) recommendations for future research.

Restatement of the Problem

The strategic CRM movement involving the management of relationships between an organization and its customers has seen exponential growth over the last decade (Payne & Frow, 2006). Because service organizations typically face fierce competition (Enz, Canina, & Liu, 2008), their interest lies in building customer loyalty as a competitive advantage (Armstrong & Kotler, 2010). Many service organizations have implemented CRM as a strategy to manage their customer relationships with the prospect of creating customer loyalty to gain competitive advantage, as revealed in numerous studies related to the effectiveness of strategic CRM initiatives in the service industry (Day, 2003; Finnegan & Willcocks, 2007; Musico, 2009; Payne & Frow 2005; Valos et al., 2007; Wu, 2010). Most of these studies focus on the customer perspective and technical issues related to the effective implementation of CRM as a holistic organizational strategy and have measured the impact of CRM strategies on external

customers (Day, 2003; Galbraith, 2005). There have been few studies exploring strategic CRM in relation to quality service delivery (Payne & Frow; Payne & Frow; Wu), and no studies were identified that explicitly examined the perspective of internal customers (employees) to understand the role they play in delivering quality service working on the frontline of a full-service luxury hotel that employs strategic CRM. This gap in the literature presented an opportunity to explore the influence of workplace learning, management controls, and a customer centric culture on the ability of internal customers to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM, from the perspective of the internal customers (Ford et al., 2008; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Payne & Frow, 2005; Payne & Frow, 2006).

Discussion of the Results

This qualitative single case study described the influence customer centricity, workplace learning and management control components of strategic CRM had on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service. These three components of strategic CRM enhance the abilities of service providers to deliver quality service, while the core competencies of the full-service luxury hotel enable quality service delivery.

The Legendary Hotel provided an extraordinary opportunity to explore the perspectives of a service provider in relation to the overall CRM marketing strategy of a prestigious organization known for service excellence. Contributions of service providers and managers in this study helped to describe the core competencies of service providers and the organization that enable the delivery of quality service for the potential attainment of competitive advantage in this industry. There were many positive

comments and attitudes communicated by each of these individuals. Each shared their views about the application of strategic CRM and its effect on their ability to deliver quality service at the Legendary Hotel. Answers to the Research Questions in Chapter 4 guided the interpretation of the findings in the following section.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this study revealed the role of a service provider in the service delivery process and how the workplace learning, management control, and customer centricity components of strategic CRM influence the abilities of service providers to deliver quality service within a full-service luxury hotel employing strategic CRM. Several conclusions were developed as opportunities for managers and leaders to evaluate and consider for adoption as best practices for maintaining a strategic CRM initiative, which may lead to competitive advantages in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace.

Value of the service provider perspective. The results of this study exhibit the value in recognizing individual service provider opinions and capturing their perceptions of experiences in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace. This finding is in agreement with Svensson (2006), who finds the service provider perspective to be neglected as an oversight that is detrimental to the success of any business strategy. The data derived from interviewing each participant is contextually rich with understanding for the strategic CRM initiative, customer centricity, management controls, and workplace learning concepts. The themes and patterns identified across the data exhibited advanced

operational and philosophical knowledge about the organization from the perspective of the customer interfacing representatives on the front line of the service delivery process.

Finding internal equilibrium through harmony. An important finding of the data analysis was the philosophical tradition of harmony, a core competency of the Legendary Hotel that synergizes the CRM strategy to enable quality service delivery. Harmony is a cultural tradition of the GCA Group (a pseudonym), the corporate parent company of the Legendary Hotel. The corporate tradition of harmony is a philosophical underpinning of the customer centric culture employed at the Legendary Hotel. This cultural design is consistent with Gailbraith and Schendel (1983) who suggest that the corporate culture really helps to control the hotels business-unit level culture and environment. The customer centric culture of harmony is an integral component of the CRM strategy, and is used to find equilibrium between the social and operational environments of the organization. As indicated by the Front Office Manager,

Our culture is our secret weapon. Inside the company, harmony regulates the relationships we all have with one another, and it helps our workflow. It's really an amazing concept that once someone learns what it is and how it can help us all to get along and work together, it makes a difference in how we act. But not only how we act with each other, but how we think before we act because we understand how our actions affect the company and each other. It sounds confusing, but it's really simple. This ideal turns ordinary individuals into leaders. Operationally, it is really our guiding light that ultimately helps us make guests happy, and it keeps them coming back.

This belief is consistent with Wang and Juslin (2009), who conclude the goal of applying harmony as a philosophy that enhances culture is to equalize the social and operational environments to create a superior organization. At the Legendary Hotel, harmony is fostered through the workplace learning and management control components of the CRM strategy. The principles of harmony are the basis of all educational workplace learning initiatives, and influence the development of all formal and informal management control policies. Wang and Juslin (2009) contend that organizations must not only preach the cultural values of harmony, they must practice the principles using rigorous training and development exercises. An implication of the Wang and Juslin study suggested that managers monitor actions of individuals as a measure of continuous improvement in the state of harmony to ensure consistency and environmental stability.

Empowered service providers build relationships. Responses to the sub Research Questions in Chapter 4 revealed the importance of informal management controls such as empowered service providers in relation to the delivery of quality service to build customer loyalty in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace. Although two participants indicated the need for more decision making power, five participants found the empowerment policy to be favorable for enabling service providers to deliver quality service. Empowered service providers are integral to the satisfaction of customers at every instance of a customer experience if customer loyalty is to be realized. Individual service providers use their authority derived by empowerment policies and personal judgment to carry out the delivery of quality service. Management has influence over the service approach at the time of delivery through applying formal management controls, but the service provider who is empowered and accountable for the outcome of a

customer experience is able to build bona fide relationships through creating moments of customer delight (Hemmington, 2007), a most effective way to realize the distinctive competitive advantage of customer loyalty. These individuals are 21st-century service providers that understand the significance of their abilities for delivering quality service to build the long lasting customer relationships that sustain a holistic strategic CRM initiative.

Essential training and education for quality service delivery. Lastly, the data indicates that indoctrination and continuous education on the organizational vision, mission, values, standards, and traditions should be the focus of workplace learning initiatives to enhance service provider abilities to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels that employ strategic CRM. This finding was aligned with Zablah, et al. (2004), who indicated that continuous training and development help guide each individual's growth as service providers, making them leaders and champions of the guest experience. Workplace learning should be more than just training sessions on task oriented skills and ability development. Service providers should receive an education on the organizational CRM strategy, financial status, technical competencies, building social skills, and individualized professional development for career advancement throughout their employment. This indoctrination, training, and education program develops service providers into leaders of the guest experience and is responsible for developing the loyalty of internal customers to the full-service luxury hotel organization.

Implications

This research contributes to the services marketing literature on strategic CRM in a number of ways. First, the study introduces a service provider perspective on the influence strategic CRM has on their ability to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels; a perspective largely neglected across the marketing literature. Second, the integrated strategic CRM framework for quality service delivery model (Figure 7) outlines the interrelationships between the strategic CRM components, core competencies of a full-service luxury hotel, and the role of an individual service provider in the service delivery process. This conceptual model is unique in that it explicitly depicts a pathway to attaining a competitive advantage resulting from quality service delivery in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace, from the perspective of the service provider. Lastly, the findings in this study present an opportunity to suggest implications of practical value to managers and leaders of full-service luxury hotel organizations employing strategic CRM. Implications resulting from this research study are three-fold, suggesting social integration, operational efficiency, and a cultural philosophy are required for service providers to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels.

Service providers should be recognized as strategic partners in the implementation and maintenance of a strategic CRM initiative employed by full-service luxury hotels. The success of a CRM strategy is reliant on the synergy of relationships between service providers, employees, and management. A social implication of this study affirms that a customer centric culture as part of a CRM strategy can break down the social barriers of the management hierarchy to a horizontal structure that equalizes the human value of each individual as service providers for the collective good of a full-service luxury hotel

organization (Daft, 2004). At the Legendary Hotel, individual service providers are leaders of the service delivery process within a strategic CRM framework; each a catalyst in the delivery of quality service. This finding is consistent with conclusions from Bolton (2004), Payne and Frow (2005), Plakoyiannaki et al. (2008), and Svensson (2006), each arguing the need for organizations employing customer centricity within a strategic CRM framework to better understand the role of a service provider as the human element within the equation for quality service delivery. This can be accomplished by management if the perspectives of each service provider are considered and applied to improve service delivery processes.

To extract individual service provider perspectives on ways to improve the service delivery process, full-service luxury hotels can use the workplace learning and management control components of strategic CRM. The workplace-learning component of strategic CRM can be used to periodically survey service providers concerning the core issues in the service delivery process during training initiatives. Ideas, solutions, and recommendations to improve the service delivery process can be obtained through open dialogue between managers and individual service providers during formal and informal training initiatives. A finding of this study identified at the Legendary Hotel, empowerment is used to authorize service providers as leaders and decision makers of the service delivery process, increasing information flow between service providers and management. This finding is consistent with Savanevičienė et al. (2008) and Wang and Davis (2008), who suggested that delegation of authority and decision-making power motivates employees, turning them from followers to leaders, making communication channels more efficient. Wang and Davis concluded that through empowerment, service

providers develop the confidence needed to communicate with managers at a perceived equivalent human level. A formal process management control can be used to record in-depth service provider perspectives on the customer experience and service delivery process by supplying each individual with mobile technology equipped with CRM software. This finding is consistent with Bull (2003), who argues the use of technological innovations to capture the essence of the customer experience is an integral part of any strategic CRM initiative. Smutkupt, Krairit, and Esichaikul (2010) suggested mobile technology can provide convenient access to guest profiles for the recordation of critical incidents and details about a guest experience into CRM applications. In full-service luxury hotels, management can use the service provider perspective to identify social and operational issues to improve quality in service delivery.

An operational implication resulting from the integrated strategic CRM framework for quality service delivery model (Figure 7) is the need for full-service luxury hotels to determine and implement the distinctive core competencies of the organization that enable service providers to deliver quality service. This result is consistent with the findings of Wu (2010) and Chich-Jen and Wang (2010), who argued the success of a holistic organizational strategy, is reliant on unique core competencies of an organization that increases operational efficiency in the service delivery process. Chich-Jen and Wang concluded that unique core competencies strengthen the holistic organizational strategy and differentiate an organization in the marketplace as a competitive advantage. Agha, Alrubaiee, and Jamhour (2012) recommended a fundamental marketing analysis to determine the core competencies of a service organization, requiring an internal assessment of strengths and weaknesses as they are

positioned against external environmental forces that threaten or provide the organization opportunity for differentiation in the marketplace. To implement core competencies that enable service providers to deliver quality service, the Legendary Hotel employs strategic CRM protocols that enhance operational efficiency using customer centricity, workplace learning, and management controls. The components of strategic CRM are used to contemplate guest needs and expectations, systemize interdepartmental communications and processes, and prepare service providers as leaders of the service delivery process (Bolton, 2004). A result of the study, managers of full-service luxury hotels may realize competitive advantages in the marketplace if core competencies are identified and implemented in conjunction with strategic CRM.

A cultural implication of this study was identified through the discovery of the Legendary Hotel's tradition of harmony as a core competency of the organization. Confirmed through member checking, harmony is a philosophical underpinning of the customer centric approach to organizational culture, which is a component of the strategic CRM framework employed by the Legendary Hotel. Harmony is used to manage the hotel's internal environment, ensuring social unity and operational accord, resulting in a feeling of tranquility added to the luxury ambiance of the service environment. The tradition of harmony as a philosophical underpinning of customer centricity is a core competency that differentiates the Legendary Hotel as a competitive advantage in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace. This finding is consistent with Rui and Song (2011), who discussed a disproportionate application of Western cultural philosophies in global business and industry, concluding that a unique opportunity exists for Western service organizations to adopt the Eastern philosophy of harmony as a

cultural approach to reduce conflict in internal business relations and increase operational competitive advantage in the marketplace. As indicated by Rui and Song, harmony as a philosophical underpinning of the customer centric approach to organizational culture is not known to many full-service luxury hotel organizations that employ strategic CRM. This study presents an opportunity for decision makers of full-service luxury hotel organizations to consider adopting the tradition of harmony as the philosophy of their customer centric culture to synergize the strategic CRM initiative. To adopt harmony as a philosophical underpinning of customer centricity, managers and leaders of an organization must fully learn the intricacies of this Confucian value system (Lim, 2011), and how they apply to the customer centric approach to organizational culture. Although participants did not provide the basis for understanding how harmony can be integrated as a philosophical underpinning of customer centricity within a strategic CRM framework, the concept of individualism was established as an elemental component of the philosophy of harmony employed at the Legendary Hotel. Lim suggested individuals must naturally adopt and integrate into a culture constructed of genuine values of harmony, and teaching methods must be influential to penetrate the individual's core belief system to instill the collectivist values of interdependence, unity, and trust. Core business values of an organization may also be instilled as requirements of the organizational culture, but they must coincide with the values that are the philosophical basis of harmony. Rui and Song suggested that in order for Western and Eastern philosophies to be joined in a single organizational culture, the Eastern philosophy of harmony requires individuals have liberty and must remain independent from coercive formal controls requiring absolute behavioral conformity. Exploratory groundwork has

been constructed for future research on the influence customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM has on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service in full-service luxury hotels.

Future Research Recommendations

Prior to this study, the influence that three components of strategic CRM (customer centricity, workplace learning, and management controls) have on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service had not been explored from the perspective of the service provider in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace. Future research opportunities regarding the perspective of the service provider in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace are abundant, as the General Manager of the Legendary Hotel remarked,

Understanding luxury hotel operations from the eyes of a service employee is really a unique way to view the operation. There is so much research needed to capture their opinion about things like culture, management styles, and even training. Their opinion is really important, especially when they become loyal and devoted to the hotel.

Based on the results of the study and supported by Wallace and De Chernatony (2009), managers of service organizations should receive the perspective of the service provider as a valuable tool to balance the organizations goals with the expectations of the customer during service delivery. Caldwell (2011) considers devout service providers "corporate citizens" that deserve the respect and trust of management if management expects to receive respect and trust in return (p. 343). Further exploration into the

symbiotic relationship between managers and service providers within service organizations employing strategic CRM is an opportunity for future research.

Many questions arise out of the findings of this exploratory study. This study did not discuss the prospect of customers being the biggest loser if service provider values are not in line with the organizational values and goals. What are the repercussions if service providers abused their empowerment, how does management react under such circumstances to maintain harmony, and how would it affect the organizational culture and application of management controls? Is strategic CRM the most effective organizational strategy to achieve the competitive advantage of customer loyalty by way of quality service delivery in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace? If customer loyalty declines and competitive advantage is lost to the extent that the strategic CRM no longer sustains the financial needs of the organization, would it be difficult to change organizational strategies without losing more customers and service providers? If this were to occur, is the notion of customer centricity just a farce? What of a customer centric philosophy? If profit became the focal point of the organization to sustain its existence, were the guest's interests ever a priority? Could they ever become a priority again once the organization becomes financially stable? These questions and a plethora more, present an opportunity for future research.

Future qualitative research is necessary to expand on the results of this study. A replication of this study in the format of a multiple case study of full-service luxury hotels could build a broader perspective of the core competencies that enable quality service delivery in relation to the strategic CRM components of customer centricity, workplace learning, and management controls. It would be interesting to replicate this

study in other localities within the United States of America and abroad. Replicating this study in other hotel industry segments could construct an expansive understanding of the influence strategic CRM has on a service provider's ability to deliver quality service. Lastly, it would be advantageous to conduct this study using appreciative inquiry as an approach to discover how a living system such as strategic CRM is brought to life by the exemplary individual service providers of a full-service luxury hotel to achieve organizational goals (Bushe, 2010).

Conclusion

The intent of this qualitative single case study was to explore the influence of the customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM on service provider's abilities to deliver quality service. It was found that these components of strategic CRM enhance a service provider's ability to deliver quality service. Combined with the core competencies of a full-service luxury hotel organization, service providers are enabled to deliver quality service for the purpose of attaining competitive advantage in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace.

A socially constructed, symbiotic relationship exists between each service provider and the organization employing strategic CRM. Service providers must possess key characteristics necessary to integrate successfully into the organizational culture of the full-service luxury hotel that employs strategic CRM. The core competencies of a full-service luxury hotel that enable quality service delivery cannot be achieved without service providers that possess these essential characteristics. If the organization cannot

realize the core competencies that enable quality service delivery, the distinct competitive advantage of customer loyalty cannot be attained.

This study of how one organization called the Legendary Hotel makes the most of a popular organizational marketing strategy called strategic CRM to attain competitive advantage in the full-service luxury hotel marketplace highlights the importance and value of individual service provider perspectives. The story of the Legendary Hotel is an encouraging account of trust and faith in individual commitment to service excellence. Studying the lived experiences of Legendary Hotel service providers uncovered the unique characteristics critical for successful integration into the customer centric culture of harmony using workplace learning and management controls. Training initiatives are integral to the development and enhancement of service provider characteristics, which prepares them to become leaders of the service delivery process through personal and professional development programs. Management controls and systems augment service provider abilities to assume their leadership role as champions of quality in the service delivery process of a guest experience, which ultimately leads to the distinctive competitive advantage of customer loyalty.

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APPENDIX A. SELECTED LITERATURE

Author	Variables	Strategy of Inquiry	Selected Results
Bolton (2004)	Customer Centricity	Qualitative exploratory literature review of four emergent articles on crm and customer centricity	Critical evaluation of four emergent studies on CRM and customer centricity is used to develop a conceptual framework referred to as "Customer Centric Business Processing (CCBP)" (Bolton, 2004, p. 44). CCBP is used as a culture building protocol designed to support implementation of strategic CRM.
Bull (2003)	Management Controls	Case study & narrative description consisting of interviews, formal observation, and documentation	Study illustrates that CRM is a holistic strategy reliant upon management controls, business process, and information technology. The case discusses the failure of a strategic CRM initiative implementation due to a lack of substantive formal controls.
Day (2003)	Strategic CRM	Critical ethnography using a survey questionnaire	Descriptive overview of the results derived from a survey of senior managers and employees of 342 medium to large sized organizations operating within the services industry. Study revealed the factors contributing to the retention of customers were the organization's orientation of the customer, the configuration of the operation, technological innovation, and the use of information to hone in on customer needs and desires.
Evans, Stan, & Murray (2008)	Quality Service	Quantitative experimental study of 38 dyads of customers and service providers	A direct counter-argument of customer centricity, the author cautions practitioners to be cautious when deciding to increase customer involvement in the service encounter. Highlighting the social exchange theory as a lens, the study found that the concept of trust revolves around the beliefs of each counterpart in an exchange relationship as it relates to benevolence, capabilities, integrity, and transparency.

Ford, Wilderom, and Caparella (2008)	Customer Centricity	Case Study consisting of interviews, direct observation, documentation, and archival records	This study constructs an understanding of the influence strategy has on the social and collaborative environment of a hotel. The study reveals an eminent bond between the strategic implementation of a service-oriented culture like customer centricity and the financial success of a hotel organization. The authors noted that management controls have a profound effect on the performance of employees within a service-oriented culture, but identified the ambiguity and disparity in the organizational culture literature between qualitative and quantitative scholars as a limitation to the development of a sound defense for their findings.
Hemmington (2007)	Quality Service	Critical historical literature review of 22 articles on service quality	Compares and contrasts 22 articles. This study bridges the gap between the theoretical and practical characterization of quality service delivery. A theoretical model that influenced the workplace-learning variable in this proposed study is presented, offering five dimensions of hospitality within a guest experience that hotel organizations should use to train and raise the awareness of service providers.
Jaworski and Kohli (1993)	Management Controls	Grounded theory study using a survey & systematic literature review	A survey of senior executives from 220 business units revealed that substantive formal rules and not just their existence makes the difference in an organizations commitment to customers and its overall market orientation. The study found that the commitment and willingness of senior management to take risks are also factors in market orientation and the organizations responsiveness.
Jaworski and Merchant (1988)	Management Controls	Grounded Theory Literature Review	Conceptual framework of marketing control, the association among the environmental factors, the control types, and the consequential outcomes appears in Figure 2.
Kanagal (2009)	Strategic CRM	Descriptive Literature Review	Descriptive literature review examining the role of relationship marketing in a competitive marketing strategy using the hotel industry as a lens.

Kohli & Jaworski (1990)	Quality Service Grounded Theory	Literature Review and interviews	62 unstructured interviews were conducted with managers of various organizations to develop a definition of the marketing concept. Resulted in construction of a theoretical framework for building an organizational strategy using marketing as the central theme.
Klidas, Van den Berg, & Wildrom (2007)	Workplace Learning	Empirical quantitative pilot study using regression analysis	Studied the predictors of behavior pertaining to empowered employees throughout the service delivery process. An empirical quantitative design, surveyed 356 frontline employees of 16 luxury hotels in seven countries throughout Europe. Four control variables under study: training, performance-related rewards, customer-oriented culture, and empowering management style. The results of a regression analysis found that two department level control variables correlated significantly with the empowered behavior variable, customer-oriented culture and empowerment style.
Mohsin & Lockyer (2010)	Quality Service	Non experimental quantitative study using survey research	Surveyed 271 four & five star customers anonymously. The purpose of the study was to assist hotel management in identifying the variables related to meeting and exceeding customer expectations. Seven variables were identified. By understanding these most important variables, the authors imply that managers can implement controls designed to meet and exceed customer expectations.
Payne and Frow (2005)	Strategic CRM	Grounded theory literature review & focus group	Conceptual Framework defining the five processes that establish CRM to be a strategy rather than a program: “[a] a strategy development process, [b] a value creation process, [c] a multichannel integration process, [d] an information management process, and [e] a performance assessment process” (p. 167).
Payne and Frow (2006)	Strategic CRM	Phenomenological study using observation, interviews and focus group	A model for implementing strategic CRM is presented and described based upon the author’s interpretation of a critical assessment of information gathered in a pilot study consisting of 34 interviews with service industry executives and 35 focus group workshops with employees, clients and analysts from 18 CRM vendors.

Savanevičienė Stukaitė, & Šilingienė (2008)	Workplace Learning	Qualitative Literature Review Literature Review	Study highlights the importance and strategic relevance of developing individual competences in all organization types with the purpose of embracing change. It emphasizes how each individual contributes to the overall success of an organization, and concludes that an organization must invest in the development of individual competency through rigorous workplace learning initiatives to prepare employees for change.
Solnet (2006)	Customer Centricity	Non experimental quantitative study survey research	Examines the effects of demographic factors, the service climate, and varying levels of employee identification on the ability to predict customer satisfaction. Surveyed 314 randomly selected hotel employees from four luxury hotels in Australia. A hierarchical regression analysis found 47 percent of the unique variance of customer satisfaction is related to elements of the service climate. customer centricity, a dimension of the service climate that relates directly to service encounters, employee empowerment, and service vision was found most important in predicting customer satisfaction.
Svensson (2006)	Quality Service	Qualitative study: inductive- descriptive theory building empirical literature review	Conceptual framework associates important variables such as the behavioral nature of the service provider, human interaction within the service encounter, and the actions and reactions of individuals in the service encounter. Finds the perspective of the service provider is abnormally neglected as a lens in empirical research.
Valos, Bednall, & Callaghan (2007)	Strategic CRM	Mixed methods research using ethnographic approach & quantitative survey research	Interviews with 16 Senior Marketers and Research Managers in the USA were conducted. 240 senior marketing managers responded to the survey. ANOVA analysis found no disparity in the use of CRM among varying strategy types under study. Variation was widely found in four areas of traditional marketing: [a] enhancing strategic decision making, [b] increasing usability of existing data, [c] presenting plans to senior management, and [d] achieving productivity and political outcomes.

Wallace & De Chernatony (2009)	Quality Service	Mixed methods approach using interviews & survey research	Interviewed 20 service providers and 956 service provider survey respondents. SERVQUAL, examined service provider's performance during the delivery of service. Management controls, organizational culture, and ethics directly correlated with the attitudes and expectations of the service provider. Value system of service providers must be directly aligned with service organization for a service provider to successfully deliver quality service.
Wang & Davis (2008)	Management controls	Nonexperimental empirical quantitative study survey research	Examined the relationship bond between employees and customers. By way of empowerment, service providers have the opportunity to control the feedback results from service delivery. Empowerment is a powerful tool that can motivate service providers to deliver quality service. A questionnaire surveyed 780 customer-employee pairs from 72 service firms concerning the balance of customer relationships. The results of an ANOVA revealed negative motivational consequences when service employees have extensive levels of authority and empowerment, suggesting that abuse of power may be problematic.
Wu (2010)	Strategic CRM	Systematic literature review as a synthesis of empirical and critical literature	Systematically synthesizes relevant literature on the CRM process regarding three research variables: [a] causes of CRM failure, [b] the failure to implement CRM due to poor time management, and [c] how essential CRM may be for an organization.
Xu & Chan (2010)	Quality Service	Systematic literature review	Conceptual framework for a hotel "brand equity framework" is presented (p. 182). Suggests that hotel organizations can learn how effective service marketing translates into a quality hotel experience, resulting in brand equity.
Zablah, Bellenger, & Johnston (2004)	Workplace Learning	Qualitative evaluation research seminal literature	Subjective evaluation of fourteen foundational articles and the results used to develop a conceptual model illustrating the configuration of three primary factors (employees, technology, and process) of a CRM initiative as they relate to the end user accepting a new CRM technology system. A model depicts process gaps between the variables, implying level of cognitive dissonance due to a process gap will determine if an employee will accept or oppose new CRM technology.

APPENDIX B. HOTEL AWARD CRITERIA

Despite the economic downturn in the economy, the luxury hotel market has steadily met with the demand of customers seeking quality service and comfort. Consumer Reports (2010) denotes that not all luxury hotels are experiencing this demand, only those hotels that are standing firm by not cutting back on services and providing top-notch customer experiences are fortunate to receive these customers. A trend of modern times is the growth and demand for the luxury experience, as it has become highly desired by a much broader range of people. Hotel organizations realize the advantages of this opportunity, and continue to move toward developing unique products and services to differentiate themselves in this market (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008).

Many service industries are without any formal oversight with regard to the level of service and product quality delivered to customers. An exception is the hotel industry closely monitored by various private organizations that employ formal rating systems that judge hotels based on a strict set of criteria deemed important to the customer experience and overall satisfaction (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008). Known to the public are several reliable ratings organizations, but customers and industry organizations alike, honor and trust the American Automobile Association (AAA) and Forbes Travel Guide to honestly judge hotels based on their standard criteria of product and service quality.

The AAA Diamond rating system is renowned as one of the leading rating programs in the United States of America. “AAA annually evaluates more than 60,000 lodging establishments and restaurants, and rates them on a scale of one to five Diamonds. One Diamond properties meet AAA's basic standards for comfort, cleanliness, and hospitality, while five diamond properties are the premier establishments that provide

the ultimate in quality and service.” AAA employs sixty-five full-time hospitality inspectors to evaluate hotels under their strict set of criteria for the Diamond Rating awards (AAA News Room, 2010, n.p.). A comprehensive list of the Diamond-Rating system criteria is available on the internet at: <http://tinyurl.com/AAA-Chart-of-Lodging-Criteria>. Of particular interest to this study are the criteria of the Four-Diamond award.

The Forbes Travel guide has been conducting quality assurance inspections and rating hotels on a strict set of criteria since 1958. A comprehensive list of criteria for the Star-Rating system is available on the internet at: <http://tinyurl.com/Forbes-Travel-Guide-Criteria>. Of particular interest to this study are the criteria of the Four-Diamond award criteria available on the internet at: <http://tinyurl.com/Forbes-Travel-Guide-Four-Stars>.

APPENDIX C. PURPOSEFUL SAMPLING PARAMETERS

Sampling Parameters	Possible Choices
Setting:	Luxury hotel: lobby, front desk, restaurant, elevators, corridors, employee cafeteria, human resources office lobby, administrative offices, amenity areas
Actors:	Service Providers: front desk agents, reservations agents, concierge, door attendants, bellmen, valet parking attendants, restaurant hosts, food servers, bartenders, room service attendants, administrators, amenity service providers, security, sales and marketing associates
Events:	greeting the customer, customer complaints, concierge inquiries and follow-through, training events, new hire orientations, customer meetings and events, security complaints and events, staff meetings, food service inquiries, sales inquiries, organizational staffing, catered events, management interfacing with customers, employee reprimands, employee recognition, management presence
Process:	customer touch points, interfacing with customers, check-in transactions, check-out transactions, reservations transactions, servicing customer requests, follow-through on customer satisfaction guarantees, security protocols, on-the-job training, formal training, digital training, employee incentives, employee inclusion, employee reprimand process, identification of public documents for study, informal management controls, formal management controls, customer feedback initiatives, management-employee exchanges, employee feed back

APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

Background: CQ

- a. Please tell me about your professional and educational background that contributed to your development into your role as a Manager.
- b. What inspired you to become a service provider in the hotel industry?
- c. In your opinion, what are the most important characteristics of a service provider that sets them apart from the rest?
- d. What are your future goals as a manager in the hotel business?

Quality service: QS

- QS What does quality service mean to you?
- WL Describe any formal or informal training initiatives regarding relationship management for managers and service providers in support of the CRM strategy of your hotel.
- CC Please elaborate on the standards, best practices, and service philosophy used by your organization to deliver quality service.
- MC How are your service providers empowered to handle a customer complaint?
- RM What are the critical elements of quality service in relation to the CRM strategy employed at your hotel?

Strategic CRM: RM

- RM Please describe the organizational and Customer Relationship Management strategy of your hotel organization and business unit.
- CC Please elaborate on the culture and philosophy of your hotel organization and business unit.
- QS Describe the ideal customer that fits the segmentation strategy and target market identified in your CRM strategy.
- MC What is the importance of teamwork in a CRM strategy to the successful delivery of quality service?
- WL Explain how your hotel uses on-the-job training and/or cross training to support the CRM strategy?

Customer centricity: CC

- CC What rewards or incentives are available to service providers for delivering quality service? What are the penalties for not following through with delivering quality service?
- QS Do you feel that customer centricity has an impact on your service provider's ability to deliver quality service?
- WL Describe the personal development opportunities or support systems the hotel provides to service providers (e.g. Discounts to Gym memberships, Legal Services, Family Help and support services, etc...). What is your perception of these benefits?
- MC Describe the processes and service provider's full abilities to fulfill the needs, desires, and wants of a customer.
- RM What formal or informal types of meetings do you lead or attend with your service providers? Please describe the perceived demeanor of management and leadership in these meetings.

Management controls: MC

- MC Does CRM technology affect your service provider's ability to deliver quality service?
- CC How does the hotel receive and use feedback from customers to enhance the customer centric culture environment?
- QS What are some of the policies and procedures related to the CRM strategy of the hotel that are in place to control the service experience of a guest?
- RM What influence does a CRM strategy have over an individual service provider's delivery of quality service?
- WL Describe any formal training or orientations you have attended or lead about the concept of customer centricity in the hotel. Discuss any activities in these sessions that involved your opinion

and participation in the learning. Describe any direct or indirect conversations about customer centricity with other managers, supervisors, service providers, or employees.

Workplace learning: WL

- MC Discuss how management monitors service providers to ensure they are fulfilling the policies and procedures for delivering quality service.
- CC Discuss the willingness of the hotel to receive and use feedback from service providers to enhance the customer centric culture environment?
- QS Describe any required formal training initiatives on quality service delivery for service providers in support of the CRM strategy of your hotel.
- RM Describe the Customer Relationship Management Software employed by your hotel.
- WL Describe your perception of any required formal training initiatives that support the CRM strategy of your hotel.

Conclusive question: Do you have anything to add, or have I missed asking any particular questions on a topic you may find pertinent to this study (Patton, 2002)?

APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Background: CQ

- a. Please tell me about your professional and educational background that contributed to your employment as a service provider.
- b. What are the primary characteristics of a successful service provider?
- c. What inspired you to become a service provider in the hotel industry?
- d. What are your goals and aspirations as a service provider in the hotel industry?

Quality service: QS

- QS What does quality service mean to you?
- WL What kind of training do you receive to enhance your abilities to deliver quality service?
- CC In this hotel, what is the difference between a service provider and an employee?
- MC What is the importance of teamwork to the successful delivery of quality service?
- RM What is your perception of the hotels service approach concerning customer relationships?

Strategic CRM: RM

- RM Does your hotel organization have a CRM as a strategy?
- CC How do you define customer centricity? Does this hotel have a customer centric culture?
- QS Describe a relationship with a customer that you have developed due to your service philosophy.
- MC How are you empowered to handle a customer complaint?
- WL Explain how your hotel uses on-the-job training and/or cross training to support the CRM strategy?

Customer centricity: CC

- CC What rewards or incentives are available to service providers for delivering quality service? What are the penalties for not following through with delivering quality service?- CC (motivation)
- QS Do you feel that customer centricity has an impact on your ability to deliver quality service?
- WL Does the hotel provide personal development opportunities or support systems to you? (e.g. Discounts to Gym memberships, Legal Services, Family Help and support services, etc...) What is your perception of these benefits?
- MC Describe the processes and service provider's full abilities to fulfill the needs, desires, and wants of a customer.
- RM What formal or informal types of meetings do you attend with management? Please describe the nature and demeanor of management and leadership in these meetings.

Management controls: MC

- MC Does CRM technology affect your ability to deliver quality service?
- CC How does the hotel receive and use feedback from customers to enhance the customer centric culture environment?
- QS What are some of the policies and procedures related to the CRM strategy of the hotel that are in place to control the service experience of a guest?
- RM Describe a time when management has ever asked for your input on developing a process to ensure quality service.
- WL Describe any formal training or orientations you have attended about the concept of customer centricity. Describe any activities in these sessions that involved your opinion and participation in the learning. Describe any direct or indirect conversations about customer centricity with managers or supervisors.

Workplace learning: WL

- MC Discuss how management monitors service providers to ensure they are fulfilling the policies and procedures for delivering quality service.
- CC Discuss the willingness of the hotel to receive and use feedback from service providers to enhance the customer centric culture environment?

- QS Related to teamwork, discuss a time when you worked as part of a team of service providers to spontaneously fulfill a customer's need.
- RM Describe the Customer Relationship Management Software employed by your hotel.
- WL Describe your perception of any required formal training initiatives that support the CRM strategy of your hotel.

Conclusive question: Do you have anything to add, or have I missed asking any particular questions on a topic you may find pertinent to this study (Patton, 2002)?

APPENDIX F. PRIMARY & SECONDARY CODE ASSOCIATIONS MATRIX

Primary Question: Do customer centricity, management controls, and workplace learning enable service provider's to deliver quality service in full-service hotels that employ strategic CRM?

Primary Codes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Emerging Themes (Compilation)
Strategic CRM	Competitive advantage tool with a customer centered philosophy, reliant on individual service providers.	1. ethos & harmony 2. individual & unique 3. reliability & responsiveness 4. rewards & penalties 5. trust & credibility
Quality Service	Individuals meeting customer needs, wants, and, desires to their expectations.	6. customer feedback initiatives 7. practice & persistence 8. competence & execution 9. self concept & confidence
Customer Centricity	The organizational beliefs, values, and culture that creates synergy and brings the family together.	10. technology & training 11. ethics & behavior 12. personality and attitude 13. generous & accommodating
Workplace Learning	Training methods used to teach and coach new and old employees the best practices recognized by the hotel as the most effective way to be successful on the job.	
Management Controls	The systems, policies, and procedures used by management to ensure business is conducted as expected, employees are trained as needed, and the hotel stays profitable.	

Sub-question #1: Do full-service luxury hotels use customer centricity, workplace learning, and management control components of strategic CRM to contemplate, systematize, and prepare for quality service delivery?

Primary Codes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Emerging Themes (Compilation)
Communications	The systems of interactions between employees of the hotel related to the jargon, body language, and technology used to efficiently meet the needs of the hotel and the guests.	1. customer feedback initiatives 2. ethics and behavior 3. ethos & harmony 4. practice and persistence 5. technology and training 6. individual and unique 7. rewards and penalties
Teamwork	Collective efforts to execute job responsibilities effectively and efficiently with the ultimate goal being to service the guests needs.	8. reliability and responsiveness 9. generous & accommodating

Appendix F. *continued*

Organizational Philosophy	The hotels belief and value system based on ideological principles.
Values	The hotels ethical considerations for social responsibility.
Mission Statement	A statement of meaning and intent made by the organization that describes how it will achieve its goals.
Culture	The way of life within the hotel like customs and traditions.
Service Provider	The employees that deliver service directly to guests.
On-The-Job-Training	Training employees receive shadowing coworkers to learn the job.
Personal Development	Benefits to employees that are for the purpose of personal growth.
Services Marketing	The marketing of services offered by the hotel to satisfy guests.
Change Management	How the hotel controls the changing environment.
Cross Training	Training that employees get working in other positions so they know the job.
Procedures	The processes used to carry out policies and to meet guest needs.
Policies	The rules of the hotel to make profit and service guests.
Individual Contribution	Efforts made by individual employees to add value to the hotel and guest experience.

Sub-question #2: Do full-service luxury hotels use customer centricity, workplace learning and management control components of strategic CRM to deliver quality service as a means of achieving competitive advantage

Primary Codes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Emerging Themes (Compilation)
Meeting Customer Needs	Providing service to guests to meet their expectations and satisfy their wishes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. customer feedback initiatives 2. ethos & harmony 3. technology and training 4. individual and unique

Teamwork	Collective efforts to execute job responsibilities effectively and efficiently with the ultimate goal being to service the guests needs.	5. trust and credibility 6. rewards and penalties 7. reliability and responsiveness 8. generous & accommodating
Organizational Philosophy	The hotels belief and value system based on ideological principles.	
Values	The hotels ethical considerations for social responsibility.	
Mission Statement	A statement of meaning and intent made by the organization that describes how it will achieve its goals.	
Culture	The way of life within the hotel like customs and traditions.	
Service Provider	The employees that deliver service directly to guests.	
Empowered	The hotel policies willing power to employees to satisfy guests.	
On-The-Job-Training	Training employees receive shadowing coworkers to learn the job.	
Personal Development	Benefits to employees that are for the purpose of personal growth.	
Services Marketing	The marketing of services offered by the hotel to satisfy guests.	
Change Management	How the hotel controls the changing environment.	
Cross Training	Training that employees get working in other positions so they know the job.	
Procedures	The processes used to carry out policies and to meet guest needs.	
Policies	The rules of the hotel to make profit and service guests.	
Individual Contribution	Efforts made by individual employees to add value to the hotel and guest experience.	
Customer Feedback	The opinions of guests personally communicated to the hotel.	

Sub-question #3: What characteristics should a service provider possess to deliver quality service within an organization employing strategic CRM?

Primary Codes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Emerging Themes (Compilation)
Motivation	Enthusiasm of individuals resulting from personal impulse or from hotel management stimulus.	1. Ethics and behavior 2. ethos & harmony 3. self concept and confidence 4. practice and persistence 5. competence and execution
Teamwork	Collective efforts to execute job responsibilities effectively and efficiently with the ultimate goal being to service the guests needs.	6. individual and unique 7. trust and credibility 8. personality and attitude 9. reliability and responsiveness 10. generous & accommodating
Values	The hotels ethical considerations for social responsibility.	
Quality Service Perception	Individuals with the awareness of what it takes to deliver quality service as a hotel employee.	
Culture	The way of life within the hotel like customs and traditions.	
Service Provider	The employees that deliver service directly to guests.	
Change Management	How the hotel controls the changing environment.	
Individual Contribution	Efforts made by individual employees to add value to the hotel and guest experience.	
Courtesy	The good manners and consideration hotel employees give guests.	
Assertive	Taking control of the situation to ensure guest satisfaction.	

Sub-question #4: What service delivery training do service providers receive from organizations that employ strategic CRM to ensure quality?

Primary Codes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Emerging Themes (Compilation)
Values	The hotels ethical considerations for social responsibility.	1. customer feedback initiatives 2. Ethics and behavior 3. ethos & harmony
Mission Statement	A statement of meaning and intent made by the organization that describes how it will achieve its goals.	4. self concept and confidence 5. practice and persistence

Primary Codes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Emerging Themes (Compilation)
Culture	The way of life within the hotel like customs and traditions.	6. technology and training 7. competence and execution 8. individual and unique
Service Provider	The employees that deliver service directly to guests.	9. trust and credibility 10. personality and attitude
On-The-Job-Training	Training employees receive shadowing coworkers to learn the job.	11. reliability and responsiveness 12. generous & accommodating
Personal Development	Benefits to employees that are for the purpose of personal growth.	
Cross Training	Training that employees get working in other positions so they know the job.	
Procedures	The processes used to carry out policies and to meet guest needs.	
Policies	The rules of the hotel to make profit and service guests.	
Individual Contribution	Efforts made by individual employees to add value to the hotel and guest experience.	
Change Management	How the hotel controls the changing environment.	
Teamwork	Collective efforts to execute job responsibilities effectively and efficiently with the ultimate goal being to service the guests needs.	
Customer Relationships	The personal and professional relationships between individual service providers and guests.	
Courtesy	The good manners and consideration hotel employees give guests.	

Sub-question #5: What influence do service providers have on the overall success of a strategic CRM initiative in full-service luxury hotels?

Primary Codes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Emerging Themes (Compilation)
Motivation	Enthusiasm of individuals resulting from personal impulse or from hotel management stimulus.	1. customer feedback initiatives 2. Ethics and behavior 3. ethos & harmony 4. self concept and confidence 5. practice and persistence

Primary Codes	Glossary Definition (Derived from Voices of Participants)	Emerging Themes (Compilation)
Teamwork	Collective efforts to execute job responsibilities effectively and efficiently with the ultimate goal being to service the guests needs.	6. competence and execution 7. individual and unique 8. trust and credibility 9. personality and attitude 10. reliability and responsiveness 11. generous & accommodating
Values	The hotels ethical considerations for social responsibility.	
Quality Service Perception	Individuals with the awareness of what it takes to deliver quality service as a hotel employee.	
Culture	The way of life within the hotel like customs and traditions.	
Service Provider	The employees that deliver service directly to guests.	
Customer Feedback	The opinions of guests personally communicated to the hotel.	
Individual Contribution	Efforts made by individual employees to add value to the hotel and guest experience.	
Services Marketing	The marketing of services offered by the hotel to satisfy guests.	
Cross Training	Training that employees get working in other positions so they know the job.	
Customer Relationships	The personal and professional relationships between individual service providers and guests.	
Courtesy	The good manners and consideration hotel employees give guests.	