Hong Kong Productivity Council

Customer Service
&
People Management in the Hospitality Industry

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Main Topics

1. General Characteristics of Customer Service
2. From Customer Satisfaction to Customer Delight
3. People Management

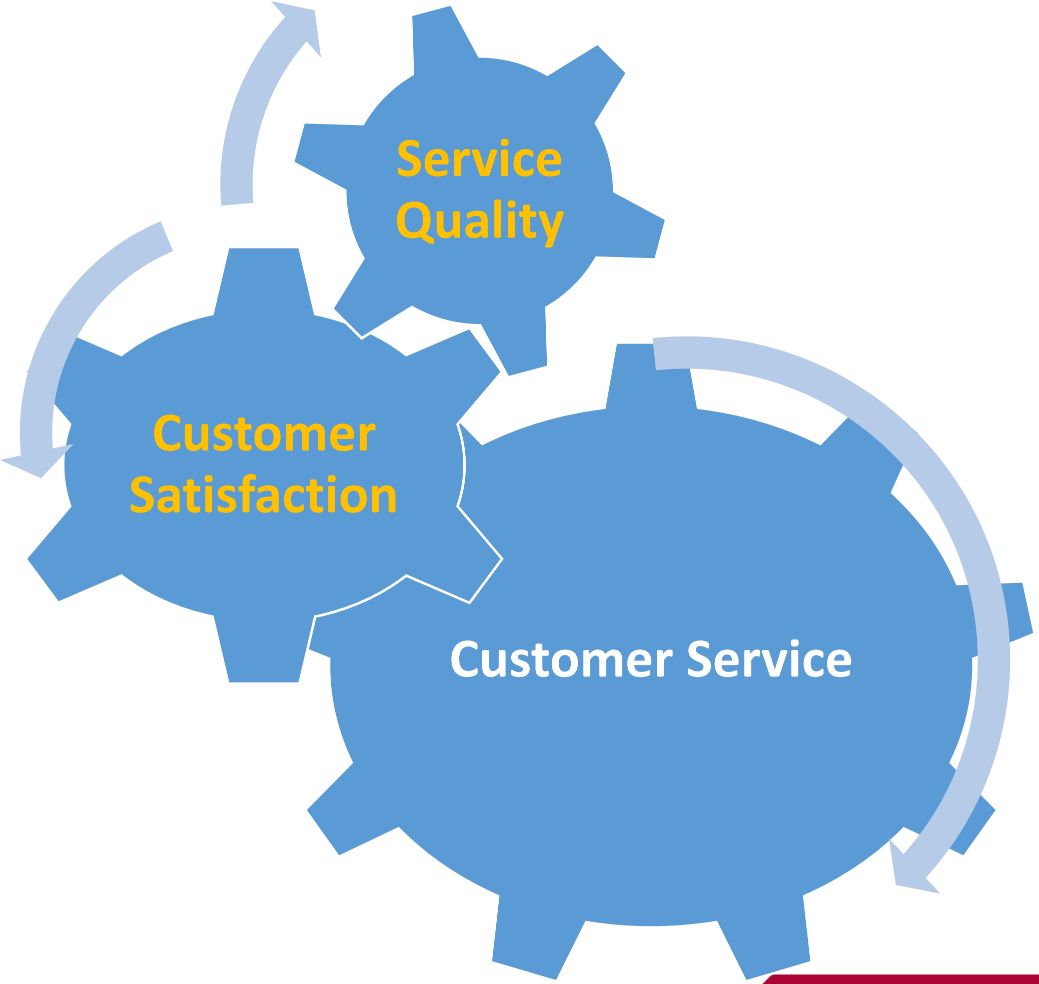
Part 1

General Characteristics of Customer Service

Customer Service

- intangible
- difficult to measure quantitatively
- generated and consumed simultaneously
- a multidirectional exchange process

Two Main Elements of Customer Service Process

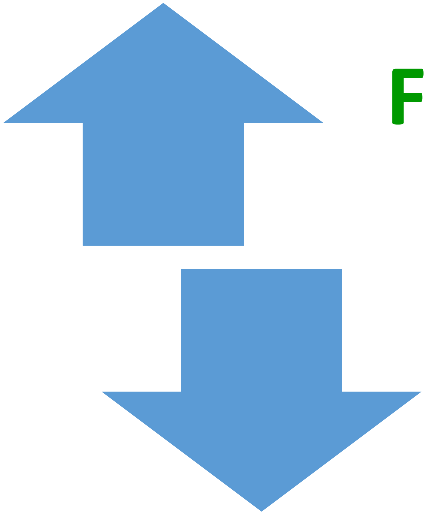

Service Quality
Customer Satisfaction
Customer Service

Part 2

From Customer Satisfaction to Customer Delight

Customer Satisfaction

The individual's perception of the performance of the product or service in relation to his or her expectation (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004)



Fulfilling expectations

Not meeting expectations

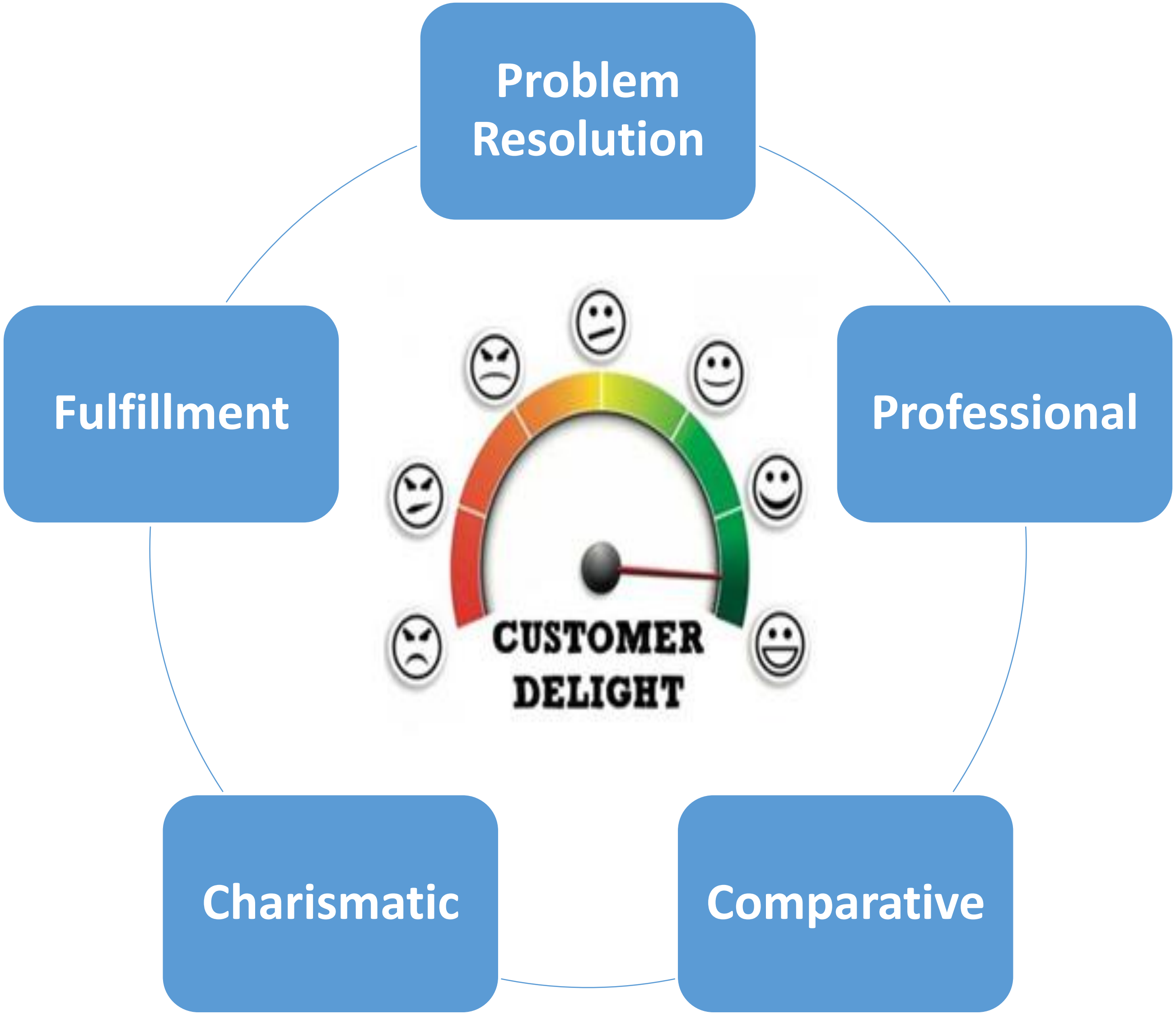
Customer Delight

- Customer experience goes beyond satisfaction
- Involves a pleasurable experience (Patterson, 1997)
- An emotion composed of joy, exhilaration, thrill, or exuberance (Kumar et al., 2001)
- A positive surprise (Berman, 2005)

Benefits of Delighting Customers

- A better way to engage guests

Customer Delight Typology



Problem Resolution

Professional

Comparative

Charismatic

Fulfillment

Problem Resolution Delight

- proactively solve a guest's problem (not the hotel's responsibility)
  (e.g. offer to bring a suit from home when a guest's luggage doesn't arrive from the airport in time for the event that the guest plans to attend)

Ways to achieve:

- *Empower employees to handle guests' problems*
- *Train employees about how to identify and creatively solve opportunities to assist guests beyond the usual approach*
- *Hire the right employees who are empathetic and creative*

Professional Delight

- Knowledgeable and proper in the execution of his/her job (e.g. to make sure a guest’s event is well planned)

Ways to achieve:

- ➢ *Equip staff with the technical skills and soft skills for providing quality customer service through constant training*

Comparative Delight

- A customer compares the service received from a different hotels and realizes that s/he has obtained superior service

Ways to achieve:

- *Benchmark the services provided*
- *Constantly read competitors' blogs, Facebook pages etc.*
- *Train employees to be more creative*
- *Make service a distinctive competence for the organization*

Charismatic Delight

- Employees are particularly personable and friendly

Ways to achieve:

- *Proactively recruit employees' suitable personality characteristics*
- *Use personality tests in the selection process*
- *Seek employees who are cheerful, extroverted, empathetic, and show a positive attitude*

Fulfillment Delight

- The guest's needs have been satisfied especially those of high esteem and the feeling that the guest is important

  (e.g. It was fantastic to have two people make you feel like the most important person in the world)

Ways to achieve:

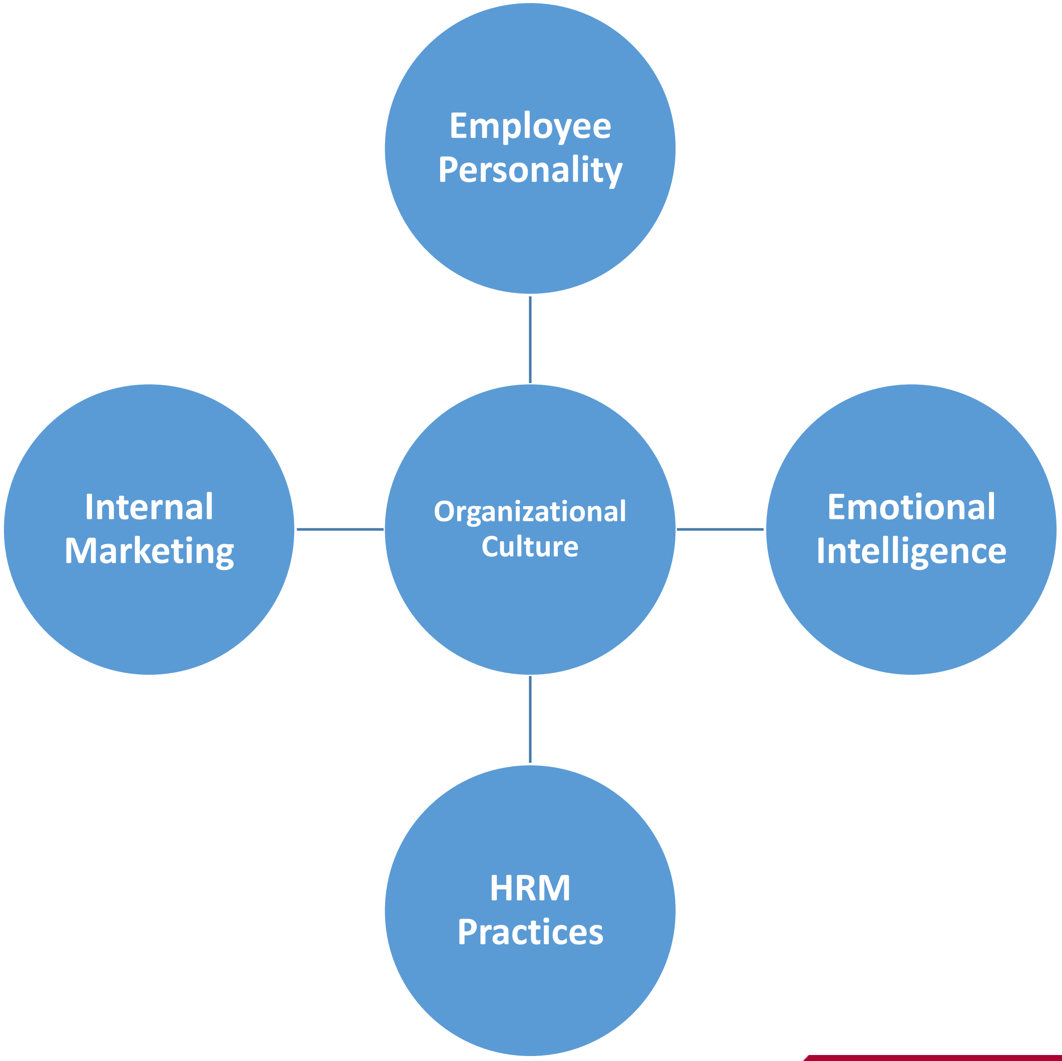
- *Gain a better understanding of human needs in general and individual needs in particular*
- *Make guests feel acknowledged, and special*

Part 3

People Management

**In order to delight customers,
one must consider
the human resource implications
of such a course of action**

Major Categories in Hotel People Management



Employee Personality

Internal Marketing

Organizational Culture

Emotional Intelligence

HRM Practices

1. Employee Personality

It influences:

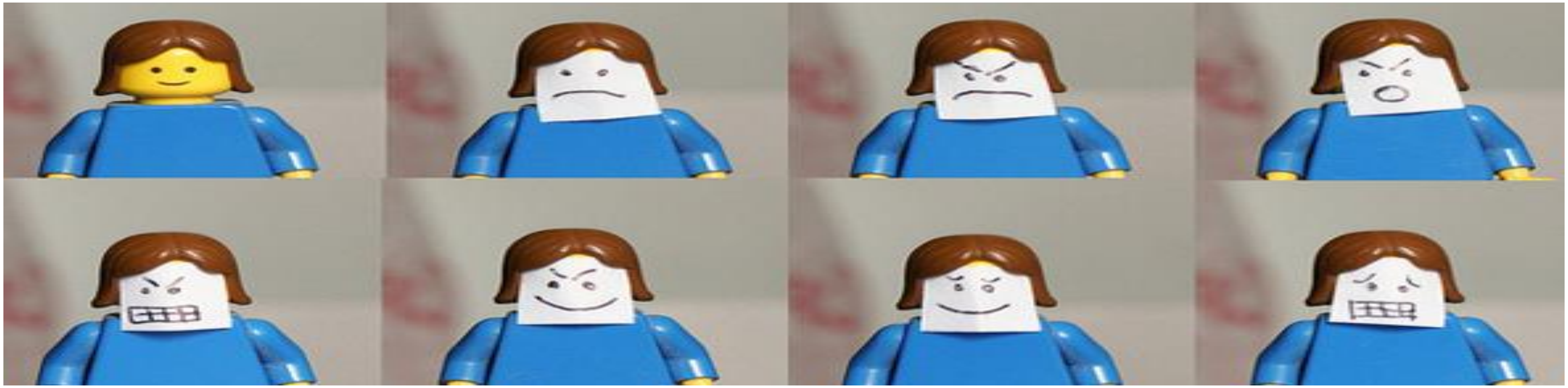
> customer service attitudes & behavior

> customer service skills, &

> overall performance of service providers

2. Emotional Intelligence

the ability to perceive one's own and others' emotions and accurately to express one's own emotions; facilitate thought and problem solving through the use of emotion; understand the causes of emotion and relationships between emotional experiences; and manage one's own and others' emotions.



- ➢ Associated with job satisfaction
- ➢ Associated with job performance

3. HRM Practices

It involves a series of activities and decisions relating to manpower planning, job design & analysis, recruitment & selection, orientation, training & development, team building, compensation & benefits, promotion, motivation, employee involvement & participation, empowerment, performance appraisals, health & safety, job security, employee & labor relations, and terminations

- ➢ A more strategic approach
- ➢ Employees are viewed as strategic & valuable assets
- ➢ The alignment of HRM with business strategy

4. Internal Marketing

It views all employees as customers – including other employees and departments in the organization to whom employees are also internal suppliers

Internal customers should be satisfied:

- with their employment conditions
- with the internal services they receive from coworkers during service delivery

Resulted in an increase in good service, cooperation with other employees, and commitment to the organization

5. Organizational Culture

The shared values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and core values of organization members

GUEST
ASSOCIATE
OWNER

- Influence the systems created (e.g. HRM systems and practices)
- Influence the behavior of members
- Influence the organizational performance

Practical HR Management

✓ Be Selective in Staffing

- Career aspirations
- Career expectations
- Education
- Demographic variable

Hire people who fit with the organization’s values, core competencies, & business strategies

Use of personality tests

✓ Provide Orientation & Training

- Organizational values, beliefs and social norms
- Work roles
- Job related tasks

✓ Offer Competitive & Fair Pay & Benefits

- Balance the unfavorable employment conditions
- Consider performance based incentives (monetary / non-monetary)

✓ Practice More Friendly and Humane Supervision & Management Style

- Avoid hierarchical and autocratic styles
- Understand the wants and needs of the employees
- Hire managers who can create commitment, trust, success, and a motivating work environment

✓ Consider Job Characteristics and Job Redesign

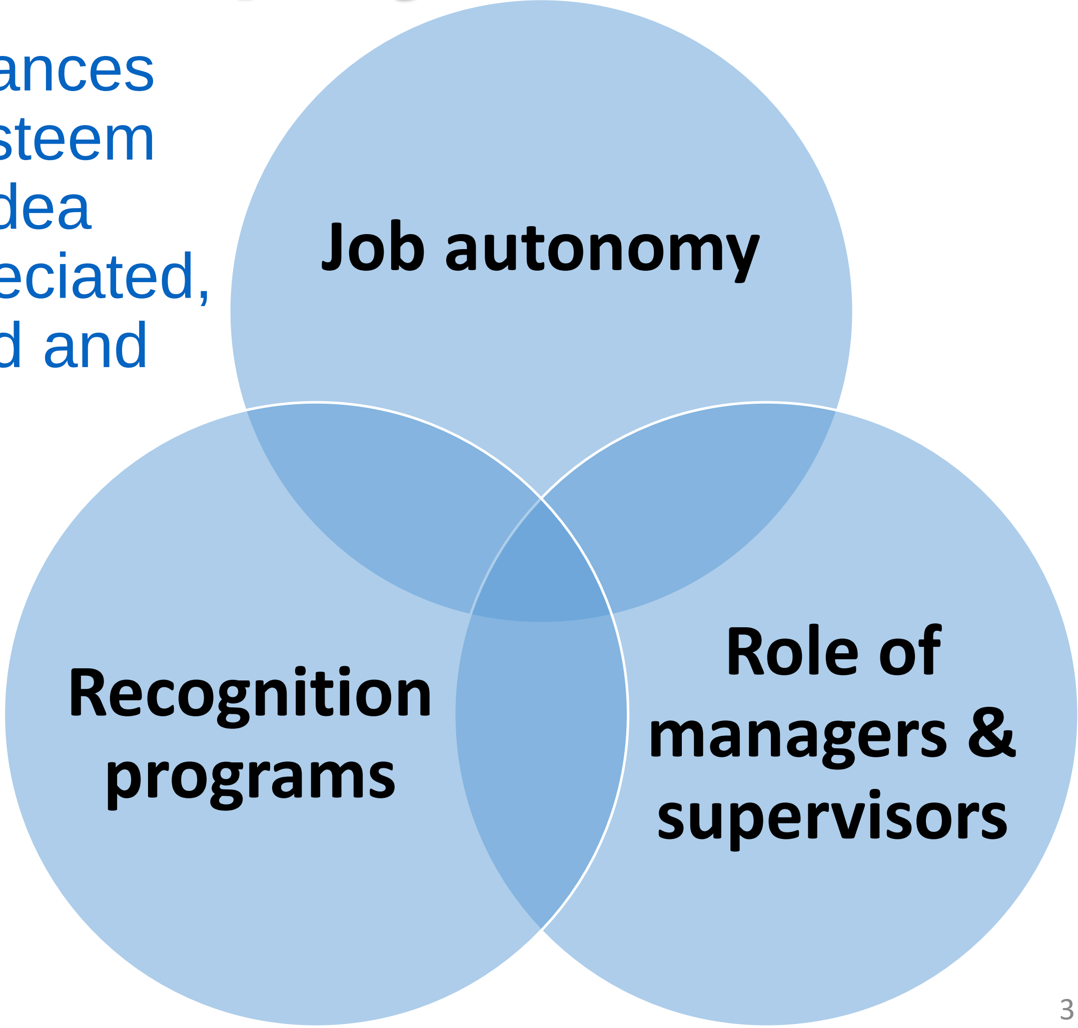
- Make work more interesting
- Alleviate some of the physical strain and boredom
- Consider job rotation, job enlargement & job enrichment

✓ Involve & Empower Employees

- Use a participatory decision-making and management style
- Help generate employee commitment, satisfaction, and performance

✓ Recognize, Respect & Reward Employees

- Anything that enhances employees’ self-esteem and conveys the idea that they are appreciated, valued, recognized and respected



Job autonomy

Recognition programs

Role of managers & supervisors

✓ Reduce Job Stress

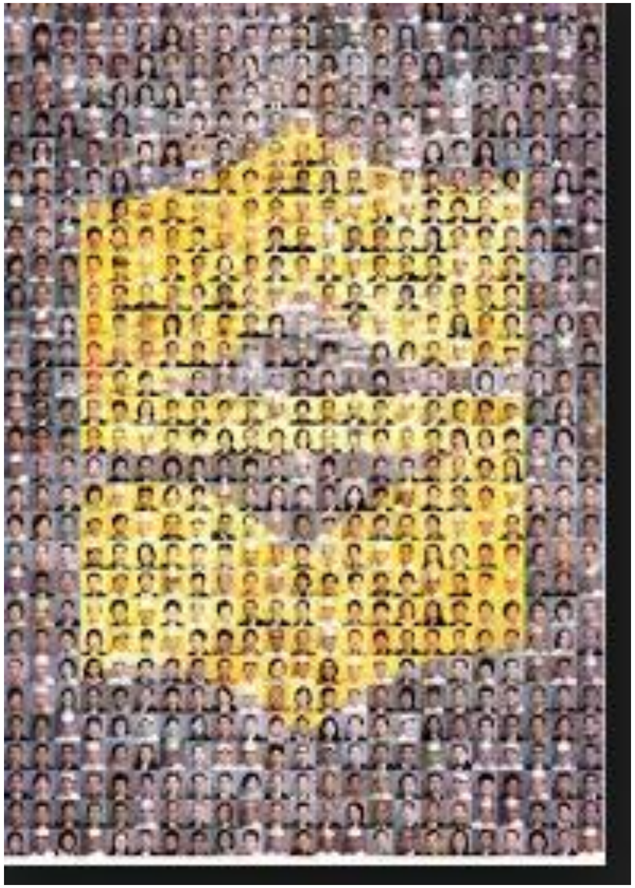
Job stress exists when an employee is unable to fulfil the demands of his/her job

- *Clearly define employees’ roles*
- *Remedy staff shortages*
- *Employ extra personnel during high-demand periods*
- *Reduce long and irregular working hours*
- *Try to ensure job security*
- *Establish family-friendly policies (e.g. child-care referrals)*
- *Provide career guidance*

✓ Improve the Conditions of Employee Accommodation

✓ Create a Culture Conducive to Organizational Performance

- Ensure the culture is in line with organizational missions, objectives, and strategies
- Strengthen the culture via HR practices, organizational symbols, stories, leadership & organizational structure etc.
- Create a sense of membership



✓ Provide Strong Leadership & Vision

- Develop a vision of the organization’s future
- Communicate the vision
- Inspire employees to realize the vision

✓ Design & Implement an HR & Workforce Balanced Scorecard

The balanced scorecard is a management tool that provides a framework to measure facets of organizational performance and integrate and translate business strategy into action

- HR scorecard to capture the effectiveness of HR function
- Workforce scorecard to identify and measure the behaviours, competencies, mindset, and culture required for workforce success

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